



Northern Greece

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Paparouna (p248)
- ➔ Castello Restaurant (p298)
- ➔ Kivotos (p258)
- ➔ Sta Riza (p294)
- ➔ Sapore Cucine Italiana (p283)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Colors Central Ladadika (p247)
- ➔ Arhontiko Dilofo (p293)
- ➔ Salvator Villas & Spa Hotel (p298)
- ➔ Cavo Olympo Luxury Resort & Spa (p265)

Why Go?

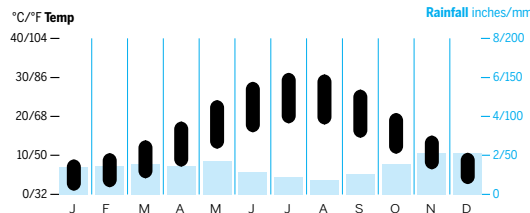
Vast northern Greece (βόρεια Ελλάδα) has the country's wildest terrain, and widest variety of cultures, cuisines and legacies. Its major city, Thessaloniki, is a hip metropolis with arguably the best nightlife in southeast Europe.

The region stretches from the sandy Ionian coast over Epiros' stark mountains, through Macedonia's lakes and vineyards, and across Thrace's mountains and plains all the way to Turkey. It has been for centuries a stomping ground for major civilisations such as the Macedonians, Thracians, Romans, Byzantines, Slavs and Turks. This mixed heritage has graced the region with spectacular churches, monasteries, castles, towers and museums.

For urban action, start with Thessaloniki or Ioannina. Beach-lovers will love the Halkidiki Peninsula's clear waters, the golden 'Epirot Riviera' and beaches east of Mt Olympus. Outdoor activities abound from the Vikos Gorge to the Pre-spa Lakes, protected Evros Delta and Dadia Forest Reserve. And, something is always happening, whatever the season.

When to Go

Thessaloniki



Jun-Aug Hit the beaches at Halkidiki or around Parga in Epirus.

Sep-Nov Dig Thessaloniki's culture scene, at film fests art exhibits and alternative bars.

Dec-Mar Cultivate a ski-lodge glow in Zagorohoria or celebrate a Mt Athos monastic Christmas.

Northern Greece Highlights

- 1 Enjoy fine dining, live music, Byzantine churches, ruins and museums in exuberant **Thessaloniki** (p239)
- 2 Dive clear Ionian waters
- 3 Contemplate snow-capped Mt Olympus and the sandy Aegean coast from atop the **Castle of Platamonas** (p266)
- 4 Chill out on Sithonia's beaches or decamp with Athos' monks on the wildly varied **Halkidiki Peninsula** (p256)
- 5 Partake in Xanthi's riotous **winter carnival** (p276)
- 6 See circling vultures and hawks at Thrace's **Dadia Forest Reserve** (p281)
- 7 Buy handcrafted local silver and explore the castle quarter of **Ioannina** (p285)
- 8 Hike one of Europe's grandest canyons, the **Vikos Gorge** (p293)
- 9 Cycle, kayak, or simply sit back and breathe in **Kastoria's** (p272) enigmatic lake

