



Athens & Around

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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Electra Palace (p98)
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Why Go?

Ancient and modern, with equal measures of grunge and grace, bustling Athens is a heady mix of history and edginess. Iconic monuments mingle with first-rate museums, lively cafes and al fresco dining – and it's downright fun.

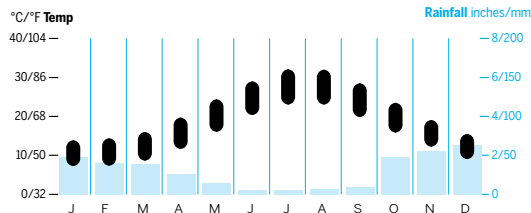
The historic centre is an open-air museum, yet the city's cultural and social life takes place amid these ancient landmarks, merging past and present. The magnificent Acropolis rises above the sprawling metropolis and has stood witness to the city's many transformations.

Post-Olympics Athens, even in the face of current financial issues, is conspicuously more sophisticated and cosmopolitan than ever before. Stylish restaurants, shops and hip hotels, and artsy-industrial neighbourhoods and entertainment quarters such as Gazi, show Athens' modern face.

The surrounding region of Attiki holds some spectacular antiquities as well – such as the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion – and lovely beaches, like those near historic Marathon.

When to Go

Athens



May Soak up the city's ancient history before jumping out to the islands to soak up the sun.

Jun–Aug The Hellenic Festival lights up venues throughout the city with drama and music.

Sep–Oct Weather cools and the social scene heats up as residents return from the islands.



Athens Highlights

- 1 Climbing to the awe-inspiring **Acropolis** (p63).
- 2 Enjoying the majesty of the Parthenon sculptures in the **Acropolis Museum** (p73).
- 3 Promenading around the ancient sights and ruins of **Athens' historic centre** (p62).
- 4 Discovering Athens' hot **nightlife** in lively cafe-bars like Tailor Made (p105).
- 5 Marvelling at antiquities in the **National Archaeological Museum** (p84).
- 6 Catching a show at the **Odeon of Herodes Atticus** (p73).
- 7 Shopping in the **Monastiraki Flea Market** (p111).
- 8 Dining out with views of the floodlit Acropolis, at restaurants like **Strofi** (p100).
- 9 Reveling in ancient feats of strength at the **Panathenaic Stadium** (p90).