



Greece Ελλάδα

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Best Places to Eat

- » Marco Polo Café (p294)
- » Alaloum (p258)
- » Café Avyssia (p247)
- » Spondi (p249)
- » Taverna Lava (p282)

Best Places to Stay

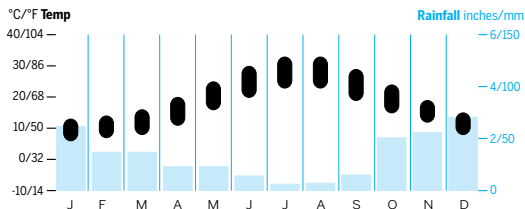
- » 1700 (p269)
- » Amfitriti Pension (p257)
- » Francesco's (p280)
- » Pension Sofi (p278)
- » Hotel Afendoulis (p296)

Why Go?

Don't let headline-grabbing financial woes put you off going to Greece. The alluring combination of history and hedonism, which has made Greece one of the most popular destinations on the planet, continues to beckon, and now is as good a time as ever to turn up for some fun in the sun. Within easy reach of magnificent archaeological sites are breathtaking beaches and relaxed tavernas serving everything from ouzo to octopus. Wanderers can island-hop to their heart's content, while party types can enjoy pulsating nightlife in Greece's vibrant modern cities and on islands such as Mykonos, Ios and Santorini. Add welcoming locals with an enticing culture to the mix and it's easy to see why most visitors head home vowing to come back. Travellers to Greece inevitably end up with a favourite site they long to return to – get out there and find yours.

When to Go

Athens



May & Jun Greece opens the shutters in time for Orthodox Easter; the best months to visit.

Jul & Aug Be prepared to battle summer crowds, high prices and soaring temperatures.

Sep & Oct The season winds down; a relaxing and pleasant time to head to Greece.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** euro (€)
- » **Language** Greek
- » **Money** ATMs all over; banks open Mon-Fri
- » **Visas** Schengen rules apply

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 131,944 sq km
- » **Capital** Athens
- » **Country code** ☎30
- » **Emergency** ☎112

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.82
Canada	C\$1	€0.77
Japan	¥100	€0.83
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.65
UK	UK£1	€1.18
USA	US\$1	€0.78

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €50
- » **Two-course meal** €20
- » **Museum entrance** €5
- » **Beer** €2.50
- » **Athens metro ticket** €1.40

Resources

- » **Greek National Tourist Organisation** (www.gnto.gr)
- » **Virtual Greece** (www.greecevirtual.gr)
- » **Ancient Greece** (www.ancientgreece.com)
- » **Greek Ferries** (www.openseas.gr)

Connections

For those visiting Greece as part of a trip around Europe, there are various exciting options for reaching onward destinations overland or by sea.

There are regular ferry connections between Greece and the Italian ports of Ancona, Bari, Brindisi and Venice. Similarly, there are ferries operating between the Greek islands of Rhodes, Kos, Samos, Chios and Lesbos and the Aegean coast of Turkey. Island-hopping doesn't have to take you back to Athens.

Overland, it's possible to reach Albania, Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey from Greece. If you've got your own wheels, you can drive through border crossings with these four countries. There are train and bus connections with Greece's neighbours, but check ahead, as these have been affected by the financial crisis. At the time of writing, no international train services from Greece were running.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Explore Athens' museums and ancient sites on day one before spending a couple of days in the Peloponnese visiting Nafplio, Mycenae and Olympia; ferry to the Cyclades and enjoy Mykonos and spectacular Santorini.

One Month

Give yourself some more time in Athens and the Peloponnese, then visit the Ionian Islands for a few days. Explore the villages of Zagorohoria before travelling back to Athens via Meteora and Delphi. Take a ferry from Piraeus south to Mykonos, then island-hop via Santorini to Crete. After exploring Crete, take the ferry east to Rhodes, then north to Symi, Kos and Samos. Carry on north to Chios, then head to Lesbos. Take the ferry back to Piraeus when you're out of time or money.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Gyros Pitta** The ultimate in cheap eats. Pork or chicken shaved from a revolving stack of sizzling meat is wrapped in pitta bread with tomato, onion, fried potatoes and lashings of tzatziki (yoghurt, cucumber and garlic). Costs €2 to €3.
- » **Souvlaki** Skewered meat, usually pork.
- » **Greek salad** Tomatoes, cucumber, onion, feta and olives.
- » **Grilled octopus** All the better with a glass of ouzo.
- » **Ouzo** Sipped slowly, this legendary aniseed-flavoured tipple turns a cloudy white when ice and water are added.
- » **Raki** Cretan fire water produced from grape skins.
- » **Greek coffee** A legacy of Ottoman rule, Greek coffee should be tried at least once.