



# Greek

PHRASEBOOK & DICTIONARY

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**Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd**

ABN 36 005 607 983

6th Edition – March 2016

ISBN 978 1 74321 729 0

Text © Lonely Planet 2016

**Cover Image** Restaurant and bars along the waterfront, Mykonos, Greece. Maurizio Rellini / 4Corners ©

Printed in China 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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# acknowledgments

This 6th edition of Lonely Planet's *Greek phrasebook* is based on the previous edition by the Lonely Planet Language Products team and translator Dr Thanasis Spilias.

Thanasis studied in Greece (University of Thessaloniki) and Australia (University of Melbourne, La Trobe University and University of New England). He has taught Greek language and culture at Deakin and La Trobe Universities and worked as the State Consultant for Greek Language (Victoria, Australia). Thanasis' main research interests are in Greek language and literature, Greek–Australian literature and literary translation. He has published articles in both Greece and Australia, and has co-edited *Reflections: Selected Works from Greek Australian Literature*. With G Betts and S Gauntlett, he has translated Vitsentzos Kornaros' *Erotokritos* into English.

Thanks also to the Lonely Planet Language Products team who produced previous editions of the *Greek phrasebook* on which this one is based: Vanessa Battersby, Francesca Coles, Margie Jung, Yukiyoshi Kamimura, David Kemp, Jodie Martire and Meladel Mistica.



## **make the most of this phrasebook ...**

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Anyone can speak another language! It's all about confidence. Don't worry if you can't remember your school language lessons or if you've never learnt a language before. Even if you learn the very basics (on the inside covers of this book), your travel experience will be the better for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort.

### **finding things in this book**

For easy navigation, this book is in sections. The Basics chapters are the ones you'll thumb through time and again. The Practical section covers basic travel situations like catching transport and finding a bed. The Social section gives you conversational phrases, pick-up lines, the ability to express opinions – so you can get to know people. Food has a section all of its own: gourmets and vegetarians are covered and local dishes feature. Safe Travel equips you with health and police phrases, just in case. Remember the colours of each section and you'll find everything easily; or use the comprehensive Index. Otherwise, check the two-way traveller's Dictionary for the word you need.

### **being understood**

Throughout this book you'll see coloured phrases on each page. They're phonetic guides to help you pronounce the language. You don't even need to look at the language itself, but you'll get used to the way we've represented particular sounds. The pronunciation chapter in Basics will explain more, but you can feel confident that if you read the coloured phrase slowly, you'll be understood.

### **communication tips**

Body language, ways of doing things, sense of humour – all have a role to play in every culture. 'Local talk' boxes show you common ways of saying things, or everyday language to drop into conversation. 'Listen for ...' boxes supply the phrases you may hear. They start with the Greek translation (so a Greek speaker can look up the phrase they want to say to you) and then lead in to the pronunciation guide and the English translation.

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# greek



 official language

For more details, see the **introduction**.



Aristotle, Homer, Plato, Sappho, Herodotus and Alexander the Great can't all be wrong in their choice of language – if you've ever come across arcane concepts such as 'democracy', exotic disciplines like 'trigonometry' or a little-known neurosis termed 'the Oedipus complex', then you'll have some inkling of the widespread influence of Greek language and culture. With just a little Modern Greek under your belt, you'll have a richer understanding of this language's impact on contemporary Western culture.

Greek is the official language of Greece and a co-official language of Cyprus, in addition to being spoken by emigrant communities in Turkey, Australia, Canada, Germany and the United States. In total, there are over 13 million Greek speakers worldwide.

Modern Greek constitutes a separate branch of the Indo-European language family, with Ancient Greek its only (extinct) relative. The first records of written Ancient Greek were found in the fragmentary Linear B tablets, dating from the 14th to the 12th centuries BC. By the 9th century BC, the Greeks had adapted the Phoenician alphabet to include vowels – the first alphabet to do so – and the script in use today came to its final form some time in the 5th century BC. The Greek script was the foundation for the Cyrillic script (used in Slavic languages) and the Latin alphabet (used in English and other European languages).

Although written Greek may have been remarkably stable

### at a glance ...

**language name:** Greek

**name in language:**

Ελληνικά *e-li-ni-ka*,

Νέα Ελληνικά *ne-a e-li-ni-ka*

(Greek, Modern Greek)

**language family:**

Indo-European

(Hellenic branch)

**key countries:**

Greece, Cyprus

**approximate number of speakers:**

13 million worldwide

**close relatives:**

Ancient Greek

**donations to English:**

anarchy, astronomy,  
cosmos, democracy,  
drama, logic, politics ...

over the millennia, the spoken language has evolved considerably. In the 5th century, the dialect spoken around Athens (known as 'Attic') became the dominant speech as a result of the city-state's cultural and political prestige. Attic gained even greater influence as the medium of administration for the vast empire of Alexander the Great, and remained the official language of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Orthodox Church after the demise of the Hellenistic world. Once the Ottoman Turks took Constantinople in 1453, the Attic dialect lost its official function. In the meantime, the common language – known as *Koine* (Κοινή *ki-ni*) – continued to evolve. It developed a rich history of popular songs (δημοτικά τραγούδια *ṭhi-mo-ti-ka tra-ghu-ṭhia*) and absorbed vocabulary from Turkish, Italian, Albanian and other Balkan languages.

When an independent Greece returned to the world stage in 1832, it needed to choose a national language. Purists advocated a slightly modernised version of Attic known as *Καθαρεύουσα* *ka-tha-re-vu-sa* (from the Greek word for 'clean'), which no longer resembled the spoken language. *Koine*, or *laiki* as it was also known (λαϊκή *la-i-ki* means 'popular'), had strong support as it was spoken and understood by the majority of Greeks – in the end, this was the language which gained official recognition. By the mid-20th century, *Koine/laiki* was known as 'demotic' and continued in daily use. It was banned during Greece's military dictatorship (1967-74) but then reinstated as the official language of the Hellenic Republic.

This book gives you the practical phrases you need to get by in Greek, as well as all the fun, spontaneous phrases that can lead to a better understanding of Greeks and their culture. Once you've got the hang of how to pronounce Greek words, the rest is just a matter of confidence. Local knowledge, new relationships and a sense of satisfaction are on the tip of your tongue. So don't just stand there, say something!

## abbreviations used in this book

a	adjective	n	neuter (after Greek)
acc	accusative	n	noun (after English)
f	feminine	nom	nominative
gen	genitive	pl	plural
inf	informal	pol	polite
lit	literal	sg	singular
m	masculine	v	verb