



Greece Ελλάδα

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Best Places to Eat

- » Marco Polo Café, Rhodes (p591)
- » La Cucina, Corfu (p597)
- » Tzitzikas & Meringas, Athens (p565)
- » Fato a Mano, Mykonos (p580)

Best Places to Stay

- » Pension Sofi, Naxos (p582)
- » Pension Marianna, Nafplio (p572)
- » Nassos Guest House, Mithymna (p595)
- » Pension Lena, Knossos (p588)

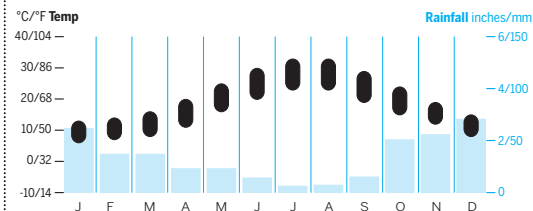
Why Go?

Don't let headline-grabbing financial woes put you off going to Greece. The elements that have made Greece one of the most popular destinations on the planet are still all there, and now is as good a time as any to turn up for some fun in the sun.

That alluring combination of history and hedonism continues to beckon. 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. Throw in welcoming locals with an enticing culture and it's easy to see why most visitors head home vowing to come back. Travellers to Greece inevitably end up with a favourite place 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 Lots happening but be prepared to battle summer crowds, prices and 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 are found all over
- » **Visas** Schengen rules apply; see p1319

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 131,944 sq km
- » **Capital** Athens
- » **Country code** ☎30
- » **Emergency** Police ☎100

Exchange Rates

| | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| Australia | A\$1 | €0.74 |
| Canada | C\$1 | €0.74 |
| Japan | ¥100 | €0.87 |
| New Zealand | NZ\$1 | €0.56 |
| UK | UK£1 | €1.16 |
| USA | US\$1 | €0.72 |

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €50
- » **Two-course evening meal** €20
- » **Museum entrance** €5
- » **Beer** €2.50
- » **Athens metro ticket** €2

Resources

- » **Greece National Tourist Organisation** (GNTO; www.gnto.gr)
- » **Ministry of Culture** (www.culture.gr)
- » **Greek Mythology** (www.theoi.com)
- » **Ancient Greece** (www.ancientgreece.com)
- » **Greek Ferries** (www.greekferries.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, Symi, 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, Macedonia and Turkey from Greece. If you've got your own wheels, you can drive through border crossings with these four countries. There are bus connections with Albania, Bulgaria and Turkey, and train connections with Bulgaria, Macedonia and Turkey. In summer there are direct train services to Moscow.

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 Ionians for a few days. Explore the Zagoria villages before travelling back to Athens via Meteora and Delphi. Take a ferry from Piraeus southeast to Mykonos, then island-hop via Santorini to Crete. After exploring Crete, take the ferry northeast to Rhodes, then northwest to Symi, Kos and Samos. Carry on north to Chios, then head on 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, sometimes fried potatoes and lashings of tzatziki (yoghurt, cucumber and garlic). Expect to pay €2 to €3.
- » **Souvlaki** Skewered meat, usually pork.
- » **Greek salad** Tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, feta and olives.
- » **Grilled octopus** All the better with a glass of ouzo.
- » **Ouzo** Sipped slowly; this legendary Greek aniseed-flavoured tipple turns a cloudy white when ice and water is added.
- » **Raki** Cretan firewater produced from grape skins.
- » **Greek coffee** A legacy of Ottoman rule, Greek coffee should be tried at least once by all visitors.