



Athens

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HISTORY



As Europe's oldest capital and one of the world's oldest cities, Athens is an innovative, beautiful place rich in history. The city is known for being the home of Plato, the famous Athenian philosopher. It also is home to many sculptures of ancient Gods and landmarks.

Athens is full of historical landmarks and preserved areas. In 2011, the city's population was around 665,000. However, its smaller size hasn't hindered Athens from staying innovative. The city is referred to as Europe's Capital of Innovation.

In the Beginning

The name Athens derives from Greek Mythology. It is said that the goddess Athena and Poseidon had a competition to see who would become the protector of the city. Poseidon offered a spring with water while Athena offered an olive tree as she grazed the sacred rock with her hand. Athena ultimately won the challenge, and the people of Athens named the city after the "goddess of wisdom."

Greek Wars

Athens has been through several wars, including the most substantial being the Peloponnesian War. In the Peloponnesian War, Athens and Sparta, Greece's two major cities went to war. Ultimately, the Spartans won. It was during this war (431 to 405 B.C.) that Athens lost nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of their population from a plague.



MONEY

MONEY



The Euro is the currency used throughout Athens. American money is not accepted anywhere in Greece. European banknotes come in the values of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 500. One Euro is equal to USD 1.11. You can get current exchange rates by visiting www.xe.com.

Credit Cards

Visas and Mastercards are accepted nearly everywhere throughout Greece. Because of the higher commissions and strict customer protection measures carried by American Express, these cards aren't typically taken in the country.

ATMs

You will need to have a four-digit PIN, but most ATMs accept Mastercards and Visas. You can find ATMs at banks, restaurants, hotels, and even on the streets. Most withdrawals are charged 2 to 3 Euros.

Exchanging Currency

Most Greek banks and foreign exchange bureaus will exchange your U.S. money for Greece Euros. It is unlikely you will find any store, restaurant, or hotel that accepts foreign cash.



HELPFUL INFO

Climate

Athens has a Mediterranean climate. Sunny, hot summers, and mildly cold, rainy winters are to be expected in Greece. The city doesn't receive much precipitation overall, receiving around 16-inches a year. Since Athens (hottest capital in Europe) is extremely hot in the summer, the best time to visit the city is either between May and June, or September and October.

Electricity

In Greece, the standard electrical frequency is 50-Hz while the standard voltage is 230-V, much higher than in the U.S. Type C and F plugs and outlets are used throughout Greece, so it is necessary to bring along an adapter.

Sofra
RESTAURANT

Castel

STAVROS

VENETO
Restaurant

Dish of the Day

Veal Fillet Chavalais
With
Mushrooms visotlo

Open: 17.00-24.00

Welcome

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Technology & Communication

You shouldn't have any issues using a mobile phone while in Athens. However, it is wise to let your mobile phone carrier know that you plan on traveling to Greece to avoid any possible roaming charges.

Throughout Greece, you can get 3G and 4G mobile broadband access. There is also satellite internet and a broad fiber-optic network. Athens has over 65,000 free WiFi spots throughout the city.

Infrastructure & Transportation

The road network throughout Athens is well-organized and modern. Highways that run east to west and vice-versa are named with even numbers. Highways that run north to south and vice-versa are named with odd numbers. You can find rest areas along most major highways.

Driving through the city to get around is not recommended. The placement of street signs and lights can get confusing, and the traffic can be unbearable. Parking is also an issue. Luckily, Athens has excellent public transportation options that can take you anywhere you'd like to go.



In Case Of An Emergency

Police- 100

Fire Brigade- 199

Emergency Medical Services- 166

Coast Guard- 108

Emergency Social Assistance- 197

Language

Around 99% of Athens' population speaks Greek. You may also run into people that speak English, French, and German, but Greek is the primary language of the entire nation. It is wise to learn some basic terms and phrases in Greek before you leave for your trip.



LGBT Travel

The LGBT scene in Athens is growing at a rapid pace, but that doesn't mean that you'll find avenues full of rainbows and vibrant gay nightclubs just anywhere. Most of the gay community meet up in the up-and-coming Gazi neighborhood. This is where you can find many of the gay bars and clubs.

Religion

Religion plays an overall significant role in Greek heritage. About 98% of Greek natives are Christian Orthodox. The rest of the population consists of Jews, Muslims, and Catholics. As a tourist, it shouldn't be hard to find a place of worship for prayer and to practice your religious beliefs.



Getting There

Unless you catch a cruise, flying is the only way to get to Athens from the U.S.. Dozens of airlines will take you to Greece, but they may not be direct flights. You can catch a direct flight to Athens from New York if you book your trip through Delta. Once you arrive at Athens Airport, you can take public transportation to get to your hotel.

Driving

To legally drive in Athens, you will need to obtain an International Driving Permit. Although driving in Greece isn't that confusing, driving in Athens can quickly become a nightmare. Athens gets horrible traffic jams, and parking in the city isn't at all easy.

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Athens' Greek heritage is apparent no matter where you go in the city. Statues of ancient Greek Gods stand tall throughout Athens and figs, olives, and cheese are just a few of the things the natives take delight in. Throughout the year, there are some festivals worth partaking in, including the Olympic Festival.

For exciting nightlife activities, head to Exarchia or Psyri. All of the best bars, clubs, and restaurants are in these neighborhoods. Exarchia and Psyri are the most happening spots to find a little fun at night. Gazi, Koukaki, Metaxourgeio, and Keramikos are other great neighborhoods to explore.



Bucket List

Catch the sunset at Lake Plaka

Explore the Acropolis

Take a winemaking class

See the Temple of Olympian Zeus

Quickly visit the old cemetery and potter's quarters

Kerameikos

Go shopping in the Plaka neighborhood

See the Church of Panagia Kapnikarea

Visit the busiest spot in Athens, Monastiraki Square

Have a drink and bite to eat at a rooftop bar for great views of the city

Go to Areopagus and Philopappos Hill



Family Travel Highlights

Visit the Acropolis Museum

Explore Ancient Agora and the Temple of Hephaestus

Walkthrough the Roman Agora

Check out Hadrian's Library constructed in 132 AD

Go to the National Archaeological Museum

Take a mythology tour

Ride the Athens Happy Train

Go to Little Kook Cafe

Admire the views at Mount Lycabettus



Tourism Authority

Athens Tourist Information Centre

Dionysiou Areopagitou 18-20

Plaka, Athens 11742, Greece



Foods To Try

Gyros

Moussaka

Greek salad

Dolma

Greek Bouyourdi

Souvlaki

Smyrna meatballs

Saganaki

Soutzoukakia me Hilopitakia



Drinks To Try

Greek wine

Ouzo (the national drink of Greece)

Chios masticha

Raki and Tsipouro

Rakomelo

Greek tea

Metaxa

Mythos beer



Photography Hot Spots

The Acropolis

Mount Lycabettus

Top of Athens rooftop bars

The Plaka

Syntagma Square

Exarcheia's street art

The Temple of Olympian Zeus

Syntagma Square

Hadrian's Arch

Souvenirs To Buy

Greek coffees and teas

Jewelry

Olive oil beauty products

Flokati rugs

Demitasse cup sets

Instruments

Tavli (backgammon)

Worry beads

Ouzo

Handmade items

A Karagiozis figurine

