

DESTINATION REPORT

YOUR TRAVEL SPECIALIST

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YOUR TRAVEL SNAPSHOT: Destinations included in this guide

Greece

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INTRODUCTION

Located in southeastern Europe, Greece is one of the most popular holiday destinations in the world—for good reason. It is a country with great, ancient history, one that gave birth to the concepts of democracy and philosophy, the Olympic Games, and drama, namely tragedy and comedy. Visitors will get a glimpse of more than 3,500 years of history, from the Palace of Knossos and the Parthenon to the newly discovered Amphipolis Tomb.

With almost 2,500 islands, sea and sun are at their best in Greece: spotless sands and clear-blue water abound. The landscape offers a picturesque variety, from whitewashed homes and blue-domed churches to neoclassical architecture and traditional authentic villages in the mountainous areas. The Greek cuisine will reward even the most demanding visitors and definitely those who appreciate simple and good quality food (after all, the famous Cretan diet is the cornerstone of the Mediterranean diet). The country's vibrant nightlife is famous and includes a great variety of clubs and bars.

GEOGRAPHY

The landscape of Greece is surprisingly varied, ranging from the cool, wet mountain regions of the northwest and the coastal hills of the Peloponnese, to the plains of Macedonia and the sun-drenched, rocky islands that lie in three different seas off the coast.

Off the western coast, in the Ionian Sea, are the Ionian Islands of Cephalonia, Corfu, Ithaca, Lefkada, Paxi and Zakynthos, plus distant Kythira, which lies at the foot of the Peloponnese. Islands off the eastern coast, in the Aegean, include the Dodecanese islands of Kalimnos, Kos, Patmos, Rhodes and Symi; the Cyclades, a group of 220 islands, includes Paros, Delos, Ios, Mykonos, Naxos, Santorini, Siros and Tinos; the Sporades islands of Alonissos, Skiathos, Skopelos and Skyros; and the large islands of Samos, Icaria, Chios, Lesbos, Limnos and Samothrace.

South from Athens are the Argo-Saronic islands of Aegina, Poros, Spetses and Hydra. The island of Crete, which boasts the warmest weather in Greece, lies far to the south, in the Mediterranean—it's Europe's southernmost border.

HISTORY

The ancient Hellenic world—the lands and regions that embraced Greek culture and civilization—extended far beyond the borders of Greece itself into the whole eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. The impact of ancient Greece on the Western world can't be overstated.

The rediscovery of Greek classics of philosophy, science and literature in the 14th and 15th centuries had a profound influence on the development of Western thought, leading Europe into the Renaissance. The effects of those revelations are still with us today. The notion of democracy, the concept of the atom, the image of the Earth as round, the scientific method itself—all these and more had their birth in the writings of ancient Greece.

Though its recorded history goes back thousands of years, modern-day Greece was largely shaped by the past several centuries. The Ottoman Empire took control of Greece in the 15th century and governed until 1821, when the war of independence began. A monarchy, installed in 1832 under Prince Otto of Bavaria, was abolished and reinstated twice during the 20th century. With its independence from the Ottoman Empire, the island of Crete, after a short period of self-government, became part of Greece in 1913. A military junta took power in Greece in 1967, but was booted out in 1974. That year, the nation finally returned to democracy, a concept that was born there two and a half millennia earlier.

The following years brought a period of political stability and economic development. Greece obtained full membership in the European Union in 1981, and replaced the drachma with the euro in 2002. The influx of EU funds into Greece helped to modernize and enhance the hitherto rustic infrastructure.

However, the EU financial crisis of 2010 revealed an unsustainable level of national debt in Greece, and led to the imposition of the most severe austerity measures the country had ever seen, opening a long period of public

unrest and industrial action. As tourism contributes a large share to the Greek economy, much has been done by all sides to ensure that the disputes do not have an impact on visitors. Greece is still under financial supervision, but the economy is now stable and record-breaking amounts of tourists flocked to the country in recent years.

The long-term conflict with Turkey over Cyprus is much smoother now, as Turkey wishes to join the EU. Before it can do so, a resolution to the island's division must be found.

SNAPSHOT

Greece's main attractions include beaches, historic sites, modern and ancient culture, striking scenery, spas, islands, cave exploration, charming people, casinos, yachting, shopping, food and nightlife.

Nearly everyone will love Greece with its relatively simple way of life and diverse attractions. The country will especially appeal to travelers who enjoy history, philosophy, sailing, beaches and quaint villages. Don't expect lush tropical scenery around the beaches (Greece is quite arid) or a wide variety of international foods, although the offerings have improved considerably in Athens and other primary tourist centers.

POTPOURRI

Name days—the days commemorating the saints—are more important than birthdays in Greece.

The southern part of the Greek mainland is known as the Peloponnese, from the Greek word meaning "island of Pelops." Although this name dates back to mythological times, the area only became an island in 1893 when the Corinth Canal was opened and severed it from the rest of the mainland.

Before the invention of soap, the ancient Greeks used to soak in water and then daub themselves with olive oil. The oil (and accumulated grime) was then scraped off with a curved implement.

Domenicos Theotokopoulos—better known as the artist El Greco—was born on Crete.

Between the towns of Volos and Larissa lie Sesko and Dimini, believed to be the oldest centers of civilization in Greece (dating back to the Neolithic Age).

The Sporades islands attracted international attention with the debut of *Mamma Mia*, the movie version of the megahit Broadway musical. The film was shot primarily on Skopelos and Skiathos.

SIGHTSEEING

With its numerous archaeological sites and treasures, historical museums and cultural venues, Greece has a lot to offer visitors.

Some popular historical places to see include the Acropolis and the National Archaeological Museum in Athens; the infamous site of the Delphi Oracle at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi; Olympia, home of the first Olympic Games; Byzantine churches in Thessaloniki; and Mount Olympus, Greece's tallest mountain and legendary home of the Greek gods.

For a taste of the Greek cultural scene, check out one of the many festivals held throughout the country, such as the Athens and Epidaurus Festival in summer and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival in November. Or, visit the Greek National Opera, or attend a concert at Athens Concert Hall or Thessaloniki Concert Hall.

For wine connoisseurs, a visit to one of Greece's wine makers is an interesting experience. For more details on the country's wineries, visit <http://www.allaboutgreekwine.com>.

BEACHES

Everyone has their own personal favorite beach, but ones that frequently rank among Greece's best include Myrto Beach on Cephalonia, Shipwreck Beach on Zakynthos, Koukounaries on Skiathos, and the renowned party beach of Paradiso on Mykonos.

A small entry fee is usually charged for beaches that are equipped with sun beds and umbrellas, and most of those will also offer showers, snacks and refreshments, plus a lifeguard on duty.

BIRD WATCHING

Greece has rich and largely unexplored bird-watching opportunities to offer visitors. The country has almost 200 important bird areas, mainly in northern Greece, Crete and Lesbos. Spring is the best season for bird-watchers.

BOATING & SAILING

Blessed with a clear blue sea and myriad islands, Greece is a sailor's paradise. Countless charter companies are based there, and most rent their sailing boats on a weekly basis.

The Ionian Islands offer the most protected waters for beginners, with the largest marinas based on Corfu and Levkas. In contrast, the Cycladic islands are more prone to strong winds, especially through July and August, but appeal to many for their glamorous, hedonistic nightlife, most notably on Mykonos and Santorini. Charters heading for the Cyclades usually depart from Athens.

GOLF

Golf is not a particularly popular sport in Greece, but there are well-groomed, 18-hole courses in Athens (Glyfada) and Halkidiki, and on the islands of Corfu, Crete and Rhodes.

SCUBA & SNORKELING

Until recently, scuba diving in Greece was restricted because of the nation's fear of having its subterranean archaeological riches pilfered. Corfu, Crete, Zakynthos and Santorini are popular scuba diving spots. There are dive centers at various locations on the Ionian Islands, the Cyclades, the Dodecanese and Crete.

Greece's pristine, clear seas offer perfect visibility for snorkeling, which is unrestricted.

SKIING

Surprisingly, sun-blessed Greece also offers snow and skiing from December through late March. The most popular venue is the well-equipped Mount Parnassos ski resort near Delphi, followed by the Kalavrita ski resort on Mount Helmos on the Peloponnese.

SURFING

Greece's top sites for windsurfing are Vasiliki on Levkas, Kefalos on Kos, and Prasonissi on Rhodes, all of which have wind-surfing schools and equipment to rent.

SHOPPING

Shop for handicrafts, wines, olive oil, rugs, pottery, lace, embroidery, icons, leather goods and jewelry. Of particular interest is the gold jewelry with Greek designs and beautiful silver jewelry set with precious stones.

The areas around Syntagma Square and Kolonaki Square in Athens are good for general high-quality shopping. Piraeus is usually less expensive than Athens. Don't be afraid to haggle over prices in souvenir shops.

In Crete, shop for colorful handwoven handbags. In Rhodes, look for ceramic tiles and plates, and kilim rugs.

Shopping Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9 am-3 pm; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9 am-2 pm and 5:30-9 pm; Saturday 9 am-3 pm. Many stores are open on Saturday until 5 pm.

DINING OVERVIEW

The preparation of Greek food is usually quite simple. Olive oil is a staple—after all, the Greeks have an olive-growing tradition that dates back 5,000 years. The Greeks also love to make dishes from fresh vegetables, such as eggplants, beans, lentils and tomatoes, and they commonly use lamb and fish. This means that there's more to Greek food than "gyros," the ever-popular hand-held dish of meat and garnish in pita bread. If you've only experienced Greek cuisine as a fast food in another country, you're in for a treat.

Athens has a wide variety of restaurants, ranging from traditional eateries to world-class restaurants. You are well-advised to avoid the tourist traps of Plaka and to eat in tavernas frequented by Greeks, such as the ones found in Psiri. *Estiatorion* are the more expensive conventional restaurants; tavernas are informal, family-run establishments; *psistarias* offer mostly grilled meats; and *psarotavernas* specialize in seafood dishes.

Common everywhere are *tzatziki* (garlic-yogurt spread), *souvlakia* (meat or fish kebabs marinated in garlic), *spanakopita* (spinach pie) and *tiropita* (cheese pie). There is also a huge variety of regional specialties ranging, for example, from pita pies (with fillings such as meat or vegetables) in the northern regions of Macedonia and Epirus to traditional goat and snail dishes on the island of Crete.

Seafood, including fish, squid and octopus, is also popular in Greece and especially on the islands, but it is usually prepared in a simple way—grilled and marinated with lemon and olive oil. Pastries made from filo dough, nuts and honey (such as baklava) shouldn't be missed. Greek coffee (*kafe Elliniko*)—similar to Turkish coffee, although Greeks sometimes are not pleased to hear the comparison—is a dark, dense strong brew served in tiny cups with the coffee grounds at the bottom. Filtered coffee is usually also available.

Greek wines and liqueurs are distinctive and sometimes potent. The anise-flavored liqueur, ouzo, is normally drunk diluted with water (by Greeks and visitors alike). Metaxa is the most commonly found brandy (7-star is the smoothest). Wines vary widely in taste and quality. Retsina, which is given its particular flavor by the addition of pine resin during the fermentation, is an acquired taste, and Mavrodaphne is extremely sweet.

Recent decades have seen a renaissance in the age-old Greek wine-making tradition. The introduction of new vines and the use of better techniques have resulted in some excellent reds and whites on par with the world's best wines.

ETIQUETTE

Although many laud Greece as the birthplace of democracy, the country's heritage as a place of trade and business is also rich. Travelers from North America will find many of the country's practices and customs to be familiar.

Appointments—Set your appointments at least a couple of weeks in advance, if possible. Punctuality is expected, but not strictly adhered to. As a guest, you should be on time, though your Greek counterpart may be less so.

Personal Introductions—A handshake and a brief nod are the typical greeting. First meetings are formal: Use the last name of your new acquaintance.

Negotiating—There is an emphasis on the value of senior statesmen and advisors. Negotiating styles tend to be similar to those in other parts of Europe and North America, if a bit slower than in northern Europe. Personal feelings and subjective criteria can be as important as objective facts to a Greek businessperson.

Business Entertaining—Greeks are as likely to gather over a cup of coffee as they are a meal. If eating is on the agenda, expect it to be a communal affair with large dishes that are shared by everyone at the table.

Body Language—Avoid using head gestures or interpreting them. At one time, the Greek head gesture for "no" was an upward nod of the head and a raised eyebrow, which looks much like the gesture for "yes" in many other countries. These days, many in Greece tend to use more standard head gestures, but you can never be sure. Try to get a verbal answer to avoid confusion.

Do not use the "OK" gesture with the thumb and index finger forming a circle as this will be interpreted as an insult. The "thumbs up" gesture may be used to signal "OK."

Gift Giving—Gifts are appreciated, but avoid gifts that are merely opportunities to expose your company's logo. Flowers are a good gift to take to a home, if invited. Be cautious about showing great admiration for a possession of your acquaintance: He or she may try to give it to you.

Conversation—Greeks are effusive and their conversation lively. In early encounters, avoid the topics of Turkey (Greece's primary rival) and especially the island of Cyprus (divided between Greece and Turkey). Remember that Greeks are also sensitive about Macedonia: They refer to the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia as Skopje (after its capital), and use the name Macedonia exclusively for the region of the same name in northern Greece. Also know that Greeks have always objected to the succession of occupiers that have at one time or another intruded in Greek affairs. Be aware, too, that there are strong feelings on both sides on the subject of the European Union.

PERSONAL SAFETY

The crime rate in Greece is relatively low, except in resort areas where generally tourists are responsible. You can walk safely down almost any street, day or night, though in Athens after dark you should avoid unfamiliar areas. Pickpockets and purse snatchers are the most common threat for visitors. Take care in crowds, particularly in the markets in larger cities and on public transportation. As anywhere, exercise common sense and remain aware of your surroundings.

A special tourist police force and tourist police stations have been established by the Greek police force to assist tourists with any problems that they might encounter while in Greece. For any assistance required, dial 1571.

For a fire, dial 199; for roadside assistance, dial 10400.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

HEALTH

Generally, the food and water are safe to consume, but many visitors prefer bottled water (which does help preserve supplies—an important matter during summer on the smaller islands). Dispose of plastic bottles properly: So many people use bottled drinks that disposing of the plastic bottles has become a problem, particularly on the islands. In rural areas, use discretion when choosing restaurants. You may want to consider a hepatitis vaccination before your trip.

Take along plenty of sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat and a pair of comfortable walking shoes. Some of the ruins require extensive walking, and older travelers should be careful not to wear themselves out in the heat of day. Athens' pollution can be heavy and may aggravate certain respiratory ailments, but things are getting better since the government restricted car usage. The pollution is worst during the hot summer months.

Good hospitals can be found in larger cities, but these may take time to reach from smaller islands or off the beaten track.

For an ambulance, dial 166; for a doctor (SOS Doctors), dial 1016.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

DOS & DON'TS

Do dress conservatively when visiting monasteries or churches: no bare arms or bare legs.

Do show respect for the elderly—it's a custom widely observed in Greece.

Don't refuse offers of food or drink from business associates—doing so is considered an insult.

Do dress in conservative attire if you're visiting on business. A dark suit and tie is normal, even in hot weather.

Do expect to find nude and topless beaches throughout Greece, but be sure you are on one before you strip—Greece is a very religious country.

Do be aware that although smoking is prohibited in all public places, it is widely disregarded, and restaurants, cafes and bars are often full of smokers. If you wish to avoid smoking areas, you will have a hard time.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Passport only needed by Australian, Canadian, U.K. and U.S. citizens for tourist or business visits of up to three months. Reconfirm travel document requirements with carrier before departure.

Population: 10,815,197.

Languages: Greek.

Predominant Religions: Greek Orthodox.

Time Zone: 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+2 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the last Sunday in April through the last Sunday in October.

Voltage Requirements: 220 volts. 50 Hz.

Telephone Codes: 30, country code;

Currency Exchange

The Greek currency is the euro. The Greek letter *u* is written as a *v*, so you may see signs for the "evro." Traveler's checks can be easily exchanged. Credit cards are widely accepted. ATMs are common and can be used with both major credit cards and cash cards.

Currency and traveler's checks can be exchanged at banks and *bureaus de change*, but the latter usually charge a smaller commission. Some post offices also have exchange counters with low rates.

Taxes

A value-added tax (VAT) of 23% is added to almost all goods and services in Greece, with the exception of certain locations, food and other essentials, which are subject to a VAT of 13%. Medicines and some tourism services are subject to only 6.5% VAT.

With a little paperwork, non-European Union residents can obtain a VAT refund for purchases of more than 120 euros in a single Greek store during a single visit. You need to present three things to the VAT refund officer at the airport before departure to get a refund: the article you purchased, the receipt and a refund form (which must be picked up at the place of purchase). If you don't have these three things, then your refund will be denied. Note that only *unused* articles are eligible for a refund: If the article looks used, then you won't get your money back. If everything is in order, the VAT refund officer will give you a final form to be mailed in for your refund. (For your own convenience, see the VAT officer before checking your bags and have your purchases in an easy-to-reach place.)

Some larger stores have a streamlined process: They handle most of the paperwork and then mail the refund to you, sometimes minus a fee. Private VAT refund services, located at the airport, will give you an immediate refund minus a fee, which is usually a percentage of the refund.

If you are traveling to other countries in the EU, you'll have to claim your refunds at your final exit point. In other words, if you're traveling on to Austria and France and are departing the EU from Paris, you have to claim the VAT refunds from all three countries at the airport in Paris.

Tipping

All restaurant bills include a 15% service charge, which should be itemized on the bill. Additional tipping is not required, but customers may leave up to 10% of the total bill if they feel like rewarding very good service or just leave the loose change on the table.

Taxi drivers are given about 10% or the loose change. It is the gesture as much as the actual amount that is important.

Weather

The best time to visit Greece is from mid-May to mid-June and from mid-September to the latter part of October, when the temperatures are mild, normally 68-77 F/20-25 C. The latter part of June to the first part of September is crowded with tourists and hot, with temperatures reaching the 90s F/30s C.

In the winter months, temperatures are often below 50 F/10 C, which is fine for touring, but usually too cold to swim or lie on the beach. Greece has fairly little rain year-round. The breezes that keep the summer bearable are called *meltemi*.

What to Wear

Pack hats and sunscreen, and light, cotton long-sleeved shirts and pants to protect against sunburn. Dress for men and women is casual, though never extremely so. Women might like to dress up a little for a night out. Men should wear long pants when in Athens, though shorts are acceptable on the islands through summer. Also on the islands, carry a sweater or light jacket because evenings get chilly, even in summer.

It's acceptable for women to wear shorts in the summer, but not when visiting churches or monasteries, where they should dress more conservatively. Men should wear trousers, not shorts, for visiting churches or monasteries.

Typical businesswear for men is a suit and tie, though smart trousers and an open-necked shirt may be acceptable during the hottest months (June-August). Women should dress smartly. Skirts and trousers are acceptable.

Telephone

All standard phone numbers throughout Greece have 10 digits, including the city code. When dialing a phone number from outside Greece, dial your international access code, then Greece's country code (30), followed by the number listed. Toll-free numbers may have only three or four digits.

Most phone booths require a phone card, which can be purchased at kiosks, certain hotels, supermarkets or any telephone office. The cards come in varying denominations and can be used for both local and long-distance calls. Many public phone booths have fallen into disuse and are in poor condition; some might not even function.

North American tri-band cell phones work in Greece provided that you are connected to the proper GSM network. However, both local and international calls are expensive. An alternative is to purchase a pay-as-you-go Greek SIM card, which can cost as little as 5 euros. These can be purchased from mobile stores such as Germanos, Cosmote, Vodafone and Wind.

Cell phone coverage is good throughout the country, even on the islands.

Internet Access

Internet cafes are popping up all over the place, not only in Athens but in all the main tourist destinations on the islands, though most of these work through the summer season only, then close for winter. The cost for access is usually about 4.50 euros per hour, though rates vary.

Most cafes and restaurants in tourist destinations offer free Wi-Fi access for their customers. Many hotels offer wireless access to their guests.

Mail & Package Services

Hellenic Post (ELTA)

This is a reliable way to send packages and mail. Many post offices provide various services, including money transfers and selling public transportation tickets. Stamps are also available. (You may be able to buy stamps at your hotel's reception desk, as well.) The large post office located on Syntagma Square in Athens is open Monday-Friday 7:30 am-8:30 pm, Saturday 7:30 am-2:30 pm, Sunday 9 am-1:30 pm. Other small branches throughout the country and on the islands are open Monday-Friday 7:30 am-2:30 pm. Phone 30-800-118-2000. <http://www.elta.gr>.

Address
Greece
Phone
30-800-118-2000

Newspapers & Magazines

The *International Herald Tribune* includes *Kathimerini*, an English-language daily newspaper covering Greek affairs as well as film reviews and extensive entertainment information, <http://www.ekathimerini.com>.

Publications from North America and other European countries are widely available at kiosks in the capital and in more popular resorts such as those in Santorini. Most deluxe hotels also carry foreign-language newspapers.

The bimonthly magazine *Odyssey* addresses Greek expatriates more than visitors. <http://www.odyssey.gr>.

Transportation

The Athens International Airport (ATH) is located in Spata, 16 mi/25 km northeast of downtown Athens. Airport services include restaurants, shops, banks, a post office, travel and tour desks, car rental agencies and free wireless Internet access. Phone 30-210-353-0000. <http://www.aia.gr>.

You can travel directly from Athens International Airport to the Athens Central Railway Station (Larissis Station) and to the port of Piraeus via the suburban railway. Direct rail service also links Greece to most neighboring Balkan countries (direct trains are available from Thessaloniki to Sofia in Bulgaria, Skopje in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, Belgrade in Serbia, Zagreb in Croatia, Ljubljana in Slovenia and Istanbul in Turkey). For information and reservations, contact the Greek Railways Offices at 30-14511. <http://www.ose.gr>.

There is a wide bus network throughout Greece. You can even travel to some islands where the bus takes the ferry. Buses are generally comfortable and clean, and most drivers are helpful. The Hellenic Railways Organization also operates buses between Greece and other countries, including Bulgaria and Turkey. <http://www.ose.gr>.

The metered taxis are inexpensive, although sometimes hard to find (locals share them). On most islands, taxi drivers don't use meters but set fares for most routes (these fares are not officially approved, but the taxi drivers request to be paid according to them—ask before the ride). You need to be assertive in hailing taxis. You also may want to negotiate a price for a day of touring.

Escorted or hosted tours, rental cars, limousine services and taxis are available at reasonable prices. The intracountry rail is not recommended except to the adventurous or well-traveled. Inexperienced travelers should consider either a hosted or escorted tour on their first visit, but driving through Greece isn't a problem for most people (except in Athens): It's our preferred method of seeing the country.

The main Thessaloniki-to-Athens highway is three lanes wide, but the Greeks convert it to four. When you're being passed by another car, you're expected to ease over to the shoulder so the passing car can go up the middle. This is especially important when both directions of traffic have passing cars. Traffic restrictions to control pollution exist in Athens but don't apply to tourists' rental cars.

Cruise lines offer three-day and longer itineraries through the islands. Local ferries (most leaving from Piraeus and Rafina) provide cheap travel throughout the islands; if it's a long trip in a large boat, buy a first-class ticket. Twin-hulled hovercrafts and hydrofoils operate between Piraeus and Mykonos, Santorini, Hydra, Poros and numerous other islands—travel time is about half that of the ferry, but the tickets are more expensive.

If your budget permits it, the best way to visit the islands is via yacht. Private ones are expensive but generally not outrageous when expenses are divided among a group. There are also organized yacht programs that run set schedules, carrying 20-30 people. The boats tend to visit the less-frequented islands. Contact the Greek National Tourism Organisation for information.

Most of the larger islands can be accessed by air from Athens and other Greek destinations. A dense network of domestic flights with frequent departures is offered. Well-heeled travelers may also consider one of the air taxi companies using small aircraft and helicopters to take them to even the most remote islands.

For More Information

Tourist Offices

Greece: 7 Tsoha, Athens, Greece. Phone 30-210-870-7088. <http://www.visitgreece.gr>.

Australia: 37-49 Pitt St., Sydney NSW 2000. Phone 00612-9241-1663.

U.K.: 4 Great Portland St., London W1W 8QJ4. Phone 44-207-495-9300.

U.S.: 305 47th St., New York, NY 10017. Phone 212-421-5777.

Greece Embassies

Australia: 9 Turrana St., Yarralumla, Canberra ACT 2600. Phone 612-627-1010. <http://www.mfa.gr/australia/en/the-embassy>. There are also consulates in Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

Canada: 80 MacLaren St., Ottawa, ON K2P 0K6. Phone 613-238-6271. <http://www.mfa.gr/canada/en/the-embassy>. There are also consulates in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

U.K.: 1A Holland Park, London W11 3TP. Phone 020-7229-3850. <http://www.mfa.gr/uk/en/the-embassy>.

U.S.: 2217 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20008. Phone 202-667-3169. <http://www.mfa.gr/usa/en/the-embassy>. There are also consulates in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Tampa.

Foreign Embassies in Greece

Australian Embassy, Level 6, Thon Building, Kifisias and Alexandra Avenue, Ambelokipi, Athens 11523. Phone 30-210-870-4000. <http://www.greece.embassy.gov.au/athn/home.html>.

Canadian Embassy, 4 Ioannou Gennadiou St., Athens 11521. Phone 30-210-727-3400. <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/greece-grece/index.aspx?lang=eng>.

British Embassy, 1 Ploutarchou St., Athens 10675. Phone 30-210-727-2600. <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-athens.el>.

U.S. Embassy, 91 Vasilisis Sophias Ave., Athens 10160. Phone 30-210-721-2951. <http://athens.usembassy.gov>.

Recommended Guidebooks

The Traveler's Key to Ancient Greece by Richard Geldard (Knopf). Good guide for a historical tour of Greece.

The Mountains of Greece by Tim Salmon (Hunter). The best guide for those contemplating some serious hiking.

Additional Reading

Try to immerse yourself in Greek myths before you go—the places you visit will have more resonance. *Bulfinch's Mythology* is a good basic introduction, and Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths* is a beautifully written interpretation of the myths. *The King Must Die*, *The Bull From the Sea* and other titles by Mary Renault are popular fictional reworkings of the myths of Minoan times. Also take a look at works of classic Greek literature that you may not have glanced at since school days—you'll probably visit places mentioned in Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

The Greeks: The Land and People Since the War by James Pettifer (Viking). An excellent introduction to contemporary Greece as well as its recent past.

Zorba the Greek by Nikos Kazantzakis. An oft-read modern classic about the Greek people.

Prospero's Cell, *Bitter Lemons* and *Reflections on a Marine Venus* by Lawrence Durrell. The author's early works contain excellent descriptions of their Greek settings (Corfu, Cyprus and Rhodes, respectively).