

# ATHENS

Athens began as a village at the foot of the Acropolis, and is now a sprawling city of 4 million people. Its tangible vibrancy makes it one of the most exciting cities in Europe, and the astonishing reminders of its ancient glory make Athens a museum of antiquity.



## Transportation

The central area of Athens is fairly compact, so sightseeing is best done on foot. Outside the central area there is an electric railway that runs from Piraeus to Omonia Square and then on to Kifissia. Buses run from the center to all suburbs and suburban beaches until about midnight. Buy tickets at yellow kiosks or booths at terminals. You must cancel your own ticket on the bus in the orange machine or you will be fined if the conductor boards to check tickets.



## Banks / Post



Banks and post offices are open weekdays from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, except for the main post office on Syntagma Square, which is open 8:00 am to 8:00 pm weekdays; 7:30 am to 2:00 pm Saturdays; and 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Sundays.



## Telephones

Most curbside kiosks have pay phones for local calls. You can buy a phone card at kiosks or convenience shops. For international calls, go to the Telecommunications Office (OTE); there are several branches in Athens.



## Shopping

Shops are generally open 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, and 5:30 to 8:00 pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays; and from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.

The best buys in Athens are silver and copper items, embroideries, handwoven textiles, rugs, costumed dolls and gold jewelry.

The central shopping area is between Syntagma and Omonia. In the Syntagma area you will find many jewelry, shoe and handicrafts stores. Pandrossou Street is abundant in shops selling antiques and icons, while Kolonaki has the most expensive shops and boutiques.

Museums also sell replicas of small items in their collection.

For bargains, go to the Sunday morning flea market on Pandrossou and Ifestou streets, where you will find anything and everything – secondhand clothes, pots and pans, guitars, etc...



## Eating

There are a variety of eating establishments in Athens, from expensive restaurants to tavernas. For a one-time splurge try Bajazzo in fashionable Kolonaki, an elegant wood-paneled restaurant, serving what is generally considered the best and most creative cooking in Athens. Specialties include duck with sour cherries, salmon roulade, and pheasant, partridge and red deer. A delicious dessert is pear cake with chocolate mousse.

An inexpensive taverna near the Olympic stadium is Karavitis, serving a classic Greek cuisine, such as bekri meze (lamb chunks in spicy red sauce) and stamnaki (beef baked in a clay pot).

Other domestic favorites include dolmades, cabbage or vine leaves rolled around minced meat and rice; moussaka, casserole with layers of eggplant, ground meat and white sauce; and the desserts baklava and kataifi, which are sticky and very sweet.



## Places to Visit

The Acropolis, a limestone hill rising above Athens, is the site of the most outstanding ancient Greek ruins and the main tourist attraction in Greece. The Parthenon, dedicated to the goddess Athena, dominates the Acropolis. It was completed in 438 B.C., and is today regarded as a perfectly proportioned building and one of the world's greatest architectural treasures. The Acropolis Museum, just below the Parthenon, contains many of the archaeological finds uncovered on the Acropolis since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Agora, a wide marketplace, was the center of Athenian public life in Hellenic times and is the site of several outstanding classical buildings.

## More Information

American Embassy  
Vasilissis Sofias 91 ; tel. 01 721-2951

## Emergencies:

Tourist police: 171 Fire: 199 Ambulance: 166