

instant

ATHENS

inyourpocket

Winter 2008-2009

Introducing Athens

It all started here.

On these same grounds, science, philosophy, drama, architecture and democracy flourished hundreds of years ago and their principles were endowed to the rest of the western world through the centuries.

These days, Athens is an intriguing city: European and Balkan at the same time, charming and ugly, relaxing and frantic.

For many years it has been merely an entry point, a short stopover for holiday-makers moving on to the Greek islands. A hectic visit to the Acropolis and a mousaka-retsina dinner was what most visitors experienced during their short stay.

The Olympics, however, gave the city worldwide publicity and since, Athens is fast becoming a year round city break destination.

Welcome to Athens, put us...in your pocket and let us do what we've been good at doing for the last two decades around Europe: make you feel like a local.

Restaurants
Bars
Clubs
Sights
Hotels
Transport

and a whole host of other useful information

Alcohol

Greeks tend to drink on social occasions and you will rarely witness scenes of extreme drunkenness in the streets or in bars, clubs etc. Alcohol is freely available 24 hours a day even from kiosks in the streets. Go easy on beer as most brands have an alcohol content of five percent or higher. Stick to beer or wine unless you are absolutely certain of the quality of the spirits served. Some bar owners serve cheap (methanol-based) spirit substitutes out of branded bottles and a great night out may end up in a miserable day in bed nursing a seriously nasty hang-over. A visitor should not leave Athens without savouring **Ouzo**, the renowned Greek traditional spirit (together with scotch, to be sure) that is best enjoyed with seafood meals. Diluted with water and ice, it becomes a lovely milky-coloured aniseed-flavoured drink, but be warned: it will give you the worst hangover of your life if you consume it in excessive amounts. Finally, Greece produces a plethora of international and local grape varieties, which make very good wines. **Retsina** is of course the most famous of these, with a pine resin flavour, which is added during fermentation. It is, however, looked down upon by modern-day Athenians, who don't think of it as classy enough for their refined taste buds: more of a peasant or working class wine.

Customs

There are no restrictions placed upon incoming travelers from other E.U. countries (with the exception of tobacco and alcohol products, which are restricted to amounts corresponding to individual personal use only, i.e. 800 cigarettes and 10lit of strong spirits per visitor). If you are arriving from non-EU countries, you are entitled to import products of a total value of €175.

Drugs

All drugs are illegal in Greece and there is a strict zero-tolerance policy. However, smoking hash/cannabis is quite common among many young (and not-so-young) Athenians, but they usually do so in the privacy of their homes. Take our word and don't try to get your hands on dope.

Health & Safety

Athens is a polluted city but has come a long way since the eighties. New technology cars and buses and the transfer of all heavy industries outside city limits have reduced emissions to a bearable level for a city of its size. There are no widespread infectious diseases that should be of concern to the visitor and no vaccinations are required prior to your visit. Greece has a relatively low (but steadily and alarmingly rising) level of HIV infections. Tap water is chlorinated and perfectly safe. Or so the public water company says. If you prefer bottled mineral water you can buy it everywhere cheap. Its street price is strictly regulated (50c for a half litter bottle and

Greece: The facts

Official country name: Hellenic Republic
Population: (2001 census) 10.9 million
Total territory: 131,944 sq km (51,458 sq mi)
Athens population: 3.8 million
Religion: 98% Greek Orthodox, 1.5% Muslim
Political system: Parliamentary democracy
GDP per capita: \$ 28,000
Inflation rate: 4.5%
Unemployment rate: 7.5%
Highest point: Mount Olympus 2,917m
Length of coastline: 15,021 km

1 Euro for a 1.5 litter bottle) as it is considered an essential amenity during the long hot summers.

Athens is one of the safest European capitals (then again, most guides for most capitals tend to claim the same). But here we actually mean it. The good old cliché 'if you don't go looking for trouble you'll be perfectly fine' applies here too. Petty crime does exist, but if you avoid certain areas, such as the backstreets around Omonia and Vathis Squares, especially as a sole traveler and keep an eye on your belongings, your stay in Athens will be trouble-free.

Money

Greece adopted the Euro currency on January 2, 2002. Prices soared as a result of the conversion, a fact which still ranks high as a favourite (and heated) topic of discussion among Greeks, usually embarked upon when presented with their restaurant bill and suddenly filled with nostalgia for the good-old Drachma days. Major international credit cards are accepted everywhere and travelers' cheques can be cashed-in at hotels and banks.

Visas

There is no visa requirement to enter Greece for citizens of the E.U., Australia, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the US. For a full list of countries exempt from visa requirements for up to 90 days visit you can consult the Greek Foreign Ministry website at: www.ypex.gov.gr.

inyourpocket
ESSENTIAL CITY GUIDES

Instant Athens

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Arriving by air

Eleftherios Venizelos Athens International Airport

The primary entry into Athens is its new state-of-the-art airport, situated 27 km (16.8 miles) east of Athens. To get to town you have a choice between metro, suburban railway, bus, taxi and of course, car hire.

Metro is probably the best option (40 minutes to the centre of Athens). Construction of new stations along the line has been planned since last spring and the latest info is that it will start sometime in January, so there will be no metro service to and from the airport for a few months.

Suburban railway-Proastiakos (running every 30 minutes) will take you to Nerantziotissa station, where you must change to enter the metro system. Tickets cost €6 for a single ride (€10 for two and €15 for three persons traveling together).

The **bus** ticket costs €3.20 and will take you to the following destinations: Bus X92 to Kifisia, Bus X93 to the central intercity bus station, Bus X94 to Ethniki Amaryna metro station, Bus X95 to Syntagma Square, Bus X96 to Piraeus & the harbour and Bus X97 to Dafni metro station.

All the above except Bus X94 run 24hrs.

Indicatively, it takes about 45 minutes to get to Syntagma Square by bus, but that of course depends on the traffic.

You can always pick up a **taxi** which costs about €25 during daytime and €35 between 00:00 and 05:00 (but refer to our taxi advice).

Arriving by boat

From Italy to Patras: There are many connections across the Adriatic Sea and a few ferry companies operate between the Italian ports of Brindisi and Ancona and the port of Patras.

If you have your own car, take the road to **Korinthos** and then on to Athens (220 km). Be extremely careful as this poor excuse of a national road is very dangerous and accidents happen very often.

If you're traveling without a car take the intercity bus (KTEL) to Athens central station (single €16.20, return €30).

From the Islands to Piraeus: If you arrive in Piraeus on a boat, chances are that you'll disembark within a walking distance from the metro terminal. If you are too far (i.e. the cruise liners' dock) or your luggage is too heavy, there is a **free bus service** that runs inside the harbour. Try to avoid taxis but if it is necessary to use one, then pick one up from the street outside the harbour area.

Finally, all major **car rental** companies keep desks inside the airport building.

An array of shops and services is available at the airport such as a post office, banks, newsstands, cafés, even an airport museum.

Arriving by train

There are daily international trains from Sofia, Istanbul and Belgrade to **Thessaloniki**, where you have to change to the **intercity** train to the capital. This takes about 5 hours and is very comfortable, reliable and frequent (refer to our 'getting around' pages).

However, a sleeping car coming from Sofia is attached to the night train from Thessaloniki to Athens, so if you are the

Police emergency tel. **100**
Ambulance tel. **166**
Fire Service tel. **199**

Sightseeing Bus 400



The cheapest sightseeing tour in Athens is on the public bus 400. With €5 you'll get to see the most interesting sights of the city. You can hop on and off as many times as you like, the ticket is valid for the whole day, on all means of public transport. The bus departs Irakliou St (National Archaeological Museum) every 60 minutes (10:00-16:00) The full tour takes about ninety minutes.

Public transport

A universal type of ticket is used, at a cost of **€0.80 (going up to €1 from Jan 1st 2009)** and it is usable for **90 minutes** after its validation.

24h tickets cost €3 and **7day tickets** cost €10.

There are also monthly and yearly unlimited travel cards at various costs. For info call 185 or ask at any public transport ticket kiosk or metro station. Fines for fare-dodgers are **60** times the price of the ticket.

Taxis

There are no taxi companies in Athens, all taxis are independent businesses and this often keeps the quality of their service at low levels.

Some taxi drivers try to earn a day's (or even a week's) wages from foreign visitors. This type of taxi-driver usually operates at airports, train stations and harbours.

Always ask for the meter to be on, never accept a fixed price if you pick a taxi in the street. Starting price is at €1 and then there is a fixed rate of €0.34 per km for the single, day-time tariff (05.00-24.00), and €0.64 per km for the double, night-time tariff. The minimum charge for every ride is €2.80. There is an additional charge of €3.2 when you travel from and to Athens Airport and €0.86 from and to harbours, train and bus stations. You can call a radio taxi by paying an extra €1.60 for immediate pick up (which can take some time during rush hours) or €2.65 for an appointment. Please note that the following radio-taxi companies only handle the calls and do not own the taxis. They are not therefore responsible for the conduct of the drivers.

Apollon tel. 210 3636508.
Asteras tel. 210 6144000.
Elias tel. 210 6457000/210 6433400.
Enotita tel. 210 6459000.
Evropi tel. 210 5028574.
Hermes tel. 210 4115200.
Icaros tel. 210 5152800.
Kosmos tel. 18 300.
Protoporia tel. 210 2130400.

Greek food

Mezes (sing.) / Mezedes (pl.): A selection of entrées served in small plates and placed at the centre of the table for sharing among friends.

Souvlaki: Traditional Greek kebab, consisting of meat topped with 'tzatziki' sauce and wrapped in warm pita bread.

Gyros: Pork or chicken donner meat used in 'souvlaki'.

Kalamaki: Small wooden skewer with chunks of pork or chicken meat used in 'souvlaki'.

Tzatziki: Traditional yoghurt, garlic, cucumber and dill dip.

Horiatiiki: Traditional salad consisting of tomatoes, cucumber, green peppers, olives, feta cheese and a generous serving of olive oil, universally known as Greek Salad

Horta: Salad composed of certain varieties of boiled wild herbs or greens.

Saganaki: Pan-fried type of dish served with lemon. Popular varieties are the shrimp, or 'garides saganaki', cheese or 'tiri saganaki' and mussels or 'midia saganaki'.

Gemista: Oven-roasted tomatoes, peppers (and less usually, courgettes and aubergines) stuffed with rice and herbs (and optionally mince meat, pine nuts, raisins).

Gigantes: Giant beans oven-roasted in a tomato and herb sauce.

Meitzanosalata: Aubergine salad (dip).

Taramosalata: Fish roe salad (dip).

Fava: Chick-pea dip served with lemon and chopped onion.

Soutzoukaki: Spicy meatballs flavoured with cumin and served in a red sauce.

Moussakas: Well-known dish of potatoes, topped with layers of mince meat, aubergines and béchamel and oven cooked.

Spanakopita: Traditional spinach pie.

Tiroпита: Traditional cheese pie.

Stifado: Type of meat dish slow-cooked in wine and spices, together with a generous amount of shallots.

Asian

Soul Kitchen D4, Evripidou 65, Psirri, M Omonia, tel. 210 3310907. One of the best gardens in the centre of Athens, hidden in the backyard of a restored neoclassical building. It hosts a bar restaurant with a great ambience serving great cocktails and exotic fare by a chef trained in the Royal Thai School of Culinary Arts. The kitchen therefore is not lacking in attitude and style, as evinced by its refreshing Vietnamese salad, Burmese chicken with caramelised onions or its very own variation on the classical sweet and sour sauce, made with tomatoes. If you prefer just drinks, you can accompany them with a tasty selection of finger food with a distinctive South East Asian touch. The crowds are ultra-stylish 25-40s, and the staff is very professional. ▶ Open 21:00 - 03:00. Closed Sun. €€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Bar Restaurants

Central H5, Kolonaki Sq, M Syntagma, tel. 210 7245938. Right on Kolonaki Square, this is the top meeting point for très chic ladies, after they've spent a fortune in the expensive fashion boutiques which abound in the area. The music is mainstream and loud and the food pricey. The party every Friday starts as soon as the Yuppies walk out of their offices and every Saturday as soon as the shops close ▶ Open 12:00 - 02:00. €€€€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Hell's Kitchen E3, Kleisthenous 13, M Omonia, tel. 210 5241555, www.hellskitchen.gr. This is not a typical Athenian restaurant, in the sense that it has more of a London, Berlin or indeed, New York feel, and that's why we love it. Huge glass windows overlooking the seedy back streets of the City Hall, dim lights, open kitchen and a bar that, unlike most restaurants, makes it worth visiting even just for drinks. The food mainly consists of burgers and sophisticated sandwiches, with a few salads and pasta. Brunch served on weekends. ▶ Open 12:00 - 00:00, Sun-Mon 12:00-18:00 €€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Mommy G3, Delfon 4, Kolonaki, M Panepistimio, tel. 210 3619682. An interesting bar-restaurant packed with old mismatched furniture and a sixties pop-kitsch home feel. It hosts periodical art and photographic exhibitions and boasts of a loyal clientele of ultra-fashionable and avant-garde Athenians who come here to enjoy lazy drinks in the afternoons or lively dj sets in the evenings. The small terrace outside is a good option for a quieter dinner and conversation. ▶ Open 20:00 - 03:00, Sat, Sun 12:00 - 04:00. €€€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

French

Cellier Le Bistot G5, Panepistimiou 10, M Syntagma, tel. 210 3638525. A grand Parisian bistrot right in the centre of Athens. Excellent location to enjoy a glass of wine and a light lunch in style, after a tiring sightseeing or shopping walk. The piano and a sax will add that little bit of extra touch. ▶ Open 12:00 - 01:00. Closed Sun. €€€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Greek Cretan

Alatsi K5, Vrasida 13 (Hilton area), M Evangelismos, tel. 210 7210501/210 7210502. When famous TV journalist Stavros Theodorakis launched this restaurant, it became an instant hit. Politicians and fellow journalists, among others, throng here to savour the Cretan dishes cooked using fresh produce shipped daily from the island of Crete. Snails, rabbit, and 'gamopilafo' (risotto served at Cretan weddings) are among the specialties. ▶ Open 13:00 - 01:00. Closed Sun. €€€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Revaizi Thermopylon 21 & Kastoros, Piraeus, M Piraeus, tel. 210 4080017. Cretan cuisine is extremely en vogue these days in Athens but this is a hidden original Cretan restaurant in the harbour of Piraeus, that was not even featured in Greek listings magazines till recently. You'll enjoy all the usual Cretan fare ('gamopilafo', rabbit etc), excellent meats and real Cretan wine, plus a free welcome 'raki' carafe, to the sounds of Cretan music (live on Friday evenings). Take metro line 1 all the way to the harbour of Piraeus, on exiting the station turn right and walk along the harbour for 500 metres. Take a right turn just before the Church of Agios Dionisios. ▶ Open 12:00 - 01:00. €€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Greek Modern

Athiri B4, Plateon 15, Kerameiko, M Thissio, tel. 210 3462983, athirirestaurant@gmail.com, www.athirirestaurant.gr. Dine in style in this excellent Greek restaurant named after an Aegean grape variety. Here you will enjoy traditional Greek dishes like stifado and beef stew served with hand made pasta, the way tourists usually don't. All the ingredients used are fresh, the atmosphere in the neo-classical building is civilised but not stiff and the service professional yet friendly. A restaurant worth one of your less casual (but not expensive) Athenian evenings. ▶ Open 20:00 - 01:30. Closed Mon. €€€. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Kanella A4, Konstantinoupolis 70 & Efmolpidon , Gazi, ☑ Kerameikos, tel. 210 3476320. One of the great success stories of Gazi and the neo-taverna movement. A combination of a Greek mum's type of cooking, low prices and a fashionable clientele, packs this restaurant and its pavement tables every single day and night. Cold lentil salad, and lemon lamb are our favourites while the house wine is an acceptable choice if you want to keep your bill at really low levels. ▶ Open 14:00 - 03:00. €€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Mamacas A4, Persefonis 41, Gazi, ☑ Kerameikos, tel. 210 3464984. One of the pioneers of the nightlife scene around the Gazi area, this well-known club-restaurant remains very popular with the beautiful partying crowds of the city. Impeccable white couches inside, in a minimalist setting leaving plenty of open space for dancing, while there's also a packed second stage in the basement where fellow dancers and onlookers get up close and personal. Watch out for its live DJ sets. As for dining here, it offers modern Greek cuisine, served in a stylised (and pricier) revamp of tradition. ▶ Open 13:30 - 03:00. €€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

ManiMani E8, Fallrou 10, Makrigranni, ☑ Acropolis, tel. 210 9218180. Mani is the rocky area in the south of the Peloponnese, and many of its local dishes are served in this superb modern restaurant, housed in the first floor of a neoclassical building a few steps away from the new Acropolis museum. If you are looking for real, non-touristy Greek food at surprisingly low prices, this is your first choice. We love dining here and we cannot recommend it enough. ▶ Open 13:00 - 01:00, Sat 13:00 - 01:00, Sun 13:00 - 17:00. Closed Mon. €€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Greek Traditional

Damigos (Bakaliaraki) F6, Kidathineon 41, Plaka, ☑ Syntagma, tel. 210 3225084. Right in the heart of touristy Plaka, this basement taverna serves 'bakaliaraki' (fried cod in batter served with 'skordalia' - the deadly garlic sauce) the same way it has done throughout the twentieth century. Dining here makes one feel like an extra in an old black and white film and rightly so...the place has provided the setting for many Greek films of the sixties. ▶ Open 14:00 - 12:00. €€. ☑☑☑

Doris E4, Praxitelous 30, ☑ Panepistimio, tel. 210 3232671. A daytime-only restaurant, catering to a clientele of local business people and shoppers. Do not be deterred by the colour of the walls (who on earth thought of painting a traditional, old-fashioned Greek restaurant pink?) the food here is excellent. You can choose from an extensive menu (displayed every day on a blackboard, only in Greek) that could in its own right be proclaimed a cook book on Greek cuisine. Prices are dead cheap and, if you prefer to opt for sweets, 'loukoumades' (Greek-style doughnuts topped with honey) are the house specialty. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun. €€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Ilias C5,B5, Thessalonikis 7 & Eptahalkou 5, ☑ Thissio, tel. 210 3422407/210 3458052. The hands-on consumption of copious amounts of barbecued lamb chops constitutes a time-honoured ritual that has survived the refinement of the modern Athenian. In these sister traditional Greek taverns you will enjoy the best lamb chops in town, but be warned: Your clothes, hair and everything else will stink of burnt grease so do not plan a visit to an elegant bar straight after your dinner here. ▶ Open 20:00 - 01:00, Sun 12:00 - 17:00. Closed Mon. €€. ☑☑☑

Fine Dining

Matsuhisa (Nobu) Astir Palace Hotel, Apollonos 40,Vouliagmeni, tel. 210 8960510. No need to travel to Beverly Hills and Aspen (or indeed Malibu, New York, Milan and of course Tokio) anymore, to savour Mr Matsuhisa's heavenly creations. His newest restaurant opened its doors in Athens a few weeks ago, and became immediately the gastronomic talk of the town. If you can appreciate the Nobu experience of creative Japanese cuisine at its best combined with a superb seaside location and an impeccable service, you won't mind the bill, probably the highest you'll pay in Greece (a 'dégustation' menu costs €98 without wine). Important detail: Matsuhisa is the only non-smoking restaurant in Athens. ▶ Open , Tue, Wed, Thu 19:30 - 00:00, Fri, Sat 19:30 - 01:00, Sun 13:00 - 17:30. Closed Mon. €€€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Spondi I8, Pyrronos 5, Pangrati, tel. 210 7520658, spondi@relaischateaux.com, www.spondi.gr. With two Michelin stars and a membership of Rélais & Châteaux, it is considered by many as the best restaurant in Athens. Its French chef creates haute cuisine dishes with imaginative flair, catering for people with exquisitely refined taste buds. The wine list is as comprehensive as you'd expect in a world class restaurant like this and prices reflect the gastronomic experience. But if you choose to dine at Spondi we don't suppose that cost is an issue... ▶ Open 20:00 - 00:00. €€€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Triantafyllo tis nostimias F5, Lekka 22, ☑ Syntagma, tel. 210 3227298. Difficult to pronounce and impossible to find as it is hidden inside a small arcade, this traditional Greek taverna serves the local population of the surrounding offices. There are both meat and fish dishes prepared with fresh ingredients and a genuine taverna atmosphere that every Saturday afternoon comes alive with bouzouki. Add to all that its ridiculous prices and you have a perfect lunch place two minutes from Syntagma Sq. ▶ Open 12:00 - 19:00. Closed Sun. €€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Italian

Il postino Skoufa 64 & Griveon 3, Kolonaki, ☑ Panepistimio, tel. 210 3641414. This Italian-owned osteria serves fresh, simple, well cooked Italian food that you can watch being prepared in its open kitchen. Postcards on the walls and flowery windows give the place a pleasant Italian feel, while outside tables will make you feel like you're dining in a suburb of Rome. Its position is very convenient should you wish to continue your evening in the nearby bars in this small but lively nightlife neighbourhood on the borders Kolonaki and Exarhia. ▶ Open 13:00 - 01:00. €€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Meat Lovers

Butcher A5, Persefonis 19, Gazi, ☑ Kerameikos, tel. 210 3413440. Following the huge success of fish restaurant 'Sardeles', the owners set up shop next door. This meat-only restaurant looks like an old butcher's shop and serves fine organic meats and local varieties of sausage supplied directly from every corner of Greece. Potatoes fried in olive oil are a must. Lemon or chocolate pie and the complimentary liquors will round off your meal nicely. ▶ Open 13:00 - 01:30. €€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Telis D4, Evripidou 86, Psirri, ☑ Monastiraki, tel. 210 3242775. Rich and poor have been eating side by side here for decades. Leave your table manners at home and do not expect pleasant surroundings and fancy decoration. You're only here for one reason: to stuff yourself with the best pork chops in Athens. ▶ Open 13:00 - 01:00. Closed Sun. €€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Mediterranean

Athinaios F4, Stadiou 22, ☑ Panepistimio, Syntagma, tel. 210 3238000, fax 210 3238108, athineos@esperiahotel.com.gr, www.esperiahotel.com.gr. Athinaios is the favourite restaurant of the Athenian establishment. Businessmen and politicians take their (long) lunch breaks over its enormous buffet, which is available daily until 17:00. Prices are not low but still reasonable considering the quality of the cuisine, the large selection and the unlimited consumption. Dinner is à la Carte, but you'll be equally impressed. ▶ Open 13:00 - 17:00 & 19:00-22:00. €€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

GB Corner G5, Hotel Grande Bretagne, ☑ Syntagma, tel. 210 3330000. This classic brasserie, a meeting point for government officials, prominent businessmen and powerful media professionals lives up to the fame and luxury of its host Grande Bretagne hotel. Art-deco atmosphere, leather sofas and immaculate service, together with the well prepared Mediterranean food, make up the GB experience. Probably the most formal business lunch you can have in Athens. And you'll pay for it accordingly. ▶ Open 12:00 - 24:00. Closed Sat, Sun. €€€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Mexican

Meson El Mirador C4, Agsilaiou 88 & Salaminos, Kerameikos, ☑ Kerameikos, tel. 210 3420007, www.el-mirador.gr. This renovated 3-storey residence in Kerameikos takes you back to the 50s when the city hadn't yet lost its neoclassical character. This is home to one of the centre's top Mexican restaurants. The food is excellent and prepared by a Mexican lady. We recommend the "takitos con queso" (cheese pies) to start with, accompanied by the "salpikon" salad. For your main course, go for the burritos, the fajitas, or even the "enchiladas de pollo". The wine list is satisfactory with domestic as well as foreign selections but the sangria is one of the best you can have in town. Its roof terrace (specially converted for the winter) faces directly the Acropolis. ▶ Open 19:30 - 01:00, Sun. 13:00-17:00 €€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Ouzeri

Naxos D5, Hristokopidou 1 Psirri, ☑ Monastiraki, Thissio, tel. 210 3218222. An 'old school' ouzeri in Psirri that pre-existed the charge of the masses. Humble but real food, fried fish and lots of 'mezzedes' as well as charcoaled octopus - usually on weekends- will perfectly accompany the ouzo-drinking experience you ought to have at least once while in Athens. ▶ Open 08:00 - 01:00. ☑☑☑☑☑

Sea Food

Sardeles A5, Persefonis 15, Gazi, ☑ Kerameikos, tel. 210 3478050. This modern and reasonably-priced fish restaurant specializes in humble varieties of fish and has become a huge success. When the weather is good it more than triples its size with pavement tables right on the main Gazi street, where you can watch the crowds go by and enjoy the complimentary limoncello and masticha liquors offered

Cafes

Aiolis E5, Aioulou 23, ☑ Monastiraki, tel. 210 3312839. A large café housed in a lovely neo-classical building. The tables outside are usually occupied by tourists enjoying their drinks in the sun, but the real attraction of Aiolis is the atmospheric interior with its high ceilings and wooden panels. ▶ Open 09:00 - late. ☑☑☑☑☑

Booze E4, Kolokotroni 57, ☑ Monastiraki, tel. 210 3240944, booze@boozecooperativa.com, www.boozecooperativa.com. This is not an ordinary café, it is rather a part of an alternative art house, Booze Cooperativa, that hosts a large number of art events, exhibitions, concerts, video art projections and performances. There is a long wooden table, magazines and board games, and if you feel at home and spend the whole day there, just step upstairs to the night club, an offspring of the historic 90s Booze club. ▶ Open 10:00 - late. ☑☑☑☑☑

Briki Dorileou 6, ☑ Megaro Mousikis, tel. 210 6452380. A laid-back, chilled-out kind of entertainment, your average funky, minuscule Soho square type of bar, open all day for coffee, draft beer and fun cocktails until the early hours of the next morning. This is a standing-up bar so don't bother coming here if you're feeling tired. The soundtrack is excellent, with a wide array of styles. As for the gathered crowds, ages range from 18 to 48. ▶ Open 10:00 - late. ☑☑☑☑☑

Cafeina F3, Akadimias & Zoodochou Pigis, Exarchia, ☑ Panepistimio, Omonia, tel. 210 3841282. Don't you ever get this cozy feeling when you're out that you're still in the comfort of your apartment? That same warmth will surface the minute you step into this small bar. If you get here before 10 o'clock, that two-seater is yours for the taking. Happy people go hand in hand with happy music. Many DJs and musicians are regulars here. ▶ Open 09:30 - 00:00. ☑☑☑☑☑

Da Capo H5, Tsakalof 1, Kolonaki Sq, ☑ Syntagma, tel. 210 3602497. Famous outdoor café, where any self-respecting nouveau riche Athenian wants to be spotted among politicians, actors and high profile celebrities. This isn't just a simple "place to drink your coffee" choice but a way of life for some of its regulars who spend hours here on a daily basis practicing the intricate ancient art of checking out passing crowds. Espresso and cappuccino prices are surprisingly reasonable considering the location and the clientele. ▶ Open 07:30 - 00:00. ☑☑☑☑☑

to pleasantly conclude your meal. ▶ Open 12:30 - 01:30. €€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Thalasa Filomousou Eterias Sq 1, Plaka, ☑ Syntagma, tel. 210 3210005, info@thalasa.gr. Plaka, the bastion of mousaka restaurants is under culinary attack by this new restaurant specialising in lobster. An old neoclassical café on the central square has been converted into a classy restaurant with high ceilings and tasteful decoration. Downstairs you can enjoy coffees and sweets from early in the morning and upstairs in the main restaurant, you'll be served by the friendly staff, lobster prepared in every possible way. As for the bill, it is a nice surprise, lower than what you have in mind when you think lobster. ▶ Open 10:00 - 01:00. €€€. ☑☑☑☑☑

Bars

A Lier Man A4, Sofroniou 2 Gazi, [M]Kerameikos, tel. 210 3426322. This bar-restaurant belongs to the select club of establishments that become trendy as soon as they open their doors to the public. Tucked in a narrow street just off the main Gazi square, it has been one of the big hits of the last season. Although they serve food, the place is primarily a bar with small rooms and smart decoration where freestyle crowds pack themselves to enjoy good music of different genres. When the weather is good a couple of tables outside serve as a much needed chill out retreat. ▶ Open 20:00 - 02:00. [S][G][F]

Alley Cat A4, Konstantinoupolis 50, Gazi, [M]Kerameikos, tel. 210 3454406, thecat@alleycat.gr, www.alleycat.gr. If cold beer and rock is what you need after a good dinner in Gazi, then you'll find it in this old converted house. A welcome change from the almost identical music played in every bar around the area. Music is not too loud, understandably as there are residences around, so don't expect a head-banging kind of evening. ▶ Open 21:00 - 03:00. Closed Mon. [S][G][F]

Bar Guru Bar D3, Theatrou Sq, [M]Omonia, tel. 210 3246530. You'll have to respectfully decline quite a few cheap sex invitations from African girls working the surrounding streets before you actually get there. Not to worry though, as these black beauties are the hustler sort but will not spoil your night out. Buddha-themed decorations, experienced bartenders and a cool clientele will ensure that you leave with a smile on your face. Third floor hosts a live jazz club with excellent performances most nights and in between there is a great Thai restaurant (see our restaurant pages). ▶ Open 21:00 - 03:00. Closed Sun. [S][G][F][T]

Bartesera F5, 25, Kolokotroni St. & Praxitelous Gallery, [M]Syntagma, tel. 210 3229805. This bar is divided into 3 parts. A sitting room for quiet conversations, a bustling section and, in the middle, a space for those who like a bit of both. As for the music, expect nothing less than alternative lashings of jazz, progressive, soul and hip-hop. One of the hottest night spots in town these days, frequented by your average 25-40 freestylers. ▶ Open 12:00 - 02:00. Closed: Aug 10-17. [S][G][F]

Bios B4, Pireos 84, Kerameikos, [M]Kerameikos/Thissio, tel. 210 3425335, bios@bios.gr, www.bios.gr. A point of reference for the alternative-progressive Athenian youth. A minimal bar, a stage for live performances, a basement club hosting experimental djs and two small art house cinemas, all under the same industrial roof of a beautiful Bauhaus building. Founder Vassilis Charalampidis, a designer and his team, have embarked on a 'creative exploration of the multiple manifestations of urban culture', at the same time bringing Athenian nightlife a step closer to Berlin, London and New York. ▶ Open 11:00 - 3:00. [S][G]

Brettos F6, Kydathineon 41, Plaka, [M]Syntagma, tel. 210 3232110, www.brettosplaka.com. A unique store and one of the oldest Athenian family distilleries, selling its own brand of traditional sweet liquors during the day and a bar serving these same spirits in the evening. The colourful bottles on the shelves covering its walls are artfully lit and make the place one of the most recognisable attractions of Plaka. Bring your camera: Switched at low shutter speeds, it will produce some interesting pictures to take home. ▶ Open 10:00 - 02:00. [S][G]

Crudo A4, Konstantinoupolis & Megalou Alexandrou, Gazi, [M]Kerameikos, tel. 210 3477048. Wine bars are rarely found in Athens despite the fact that Greece has come a long way in its appellation products. It was an Italian, Antonio, who finally created a minimal and chic vineria, where you can complement your choice of Italian and Greek labels with a large variety of cheeses and hams supplied directly by the best Italian producers. With prices as low as €4 per glass, your evening here can turn into an interesting and fun wine-tasting experience. The music is appropriately cheerful and discreet. ▶ Open 20:00 - 02:00, Sun 13:00 - 02:00. [S][G][F]

En Delphis G3, Delfon 5, Kolonaki, [M]Panepistimio, tel. 210 3608269. In the summer or when weather permits, large crowds occupy the lovely pedestrianised street with the neoclassical buildings, situated in this quintessential meeting point of the Athenian bar scene. Its locals are neither the posh nor the grungey types that hang around the two districts that it borders, Kolonaki and Exarchia respectively. Basically, a happy medium. ▶ Open 10:00 - 02:00. [S][G]

Galaxy Bar F4, Stadiou 10, [M]Panepistimio/Syntagma, tel. 210 322 77 33. Vintage at its best, a small bar that has existed in Athens for ever, as reflected in its smoke stained walls and furniture. Original seventies, with not-so-young regulars, it has a civilised gentleman-like atmosphere, and, as such, it is not recommended for a crazy night out. Come here instead to experience how people used to enjoy their evenings in an era long gone: fine drinks and meaningless conversation. ▶ Open 10:00 - 03:00. Closed Sun. [S][G]

Gazaki A4, Triptolemu 31, Gazi, [M]Kerameikos, tel. 210 3460901. Those in favour of an evening of drinking and hooking up with complete strangers should head for Gazaki. In a neighbourhood crammed with bars, you'll often find yourself wondering off into the street, glass in hand, only to return a little later to wrap up the evening by knocking back tequila shots and mumbling utter nonsense to the person who as it happened was unfortunate enough to be standing next to you. ▶ Open 21:00 - 03:00. [S][G]

Hoxton A4, Voutadon 42, Gazi, [M]Kerameikos, tel. 210 3413395. In Hoxton's industrial environment, you get the distinctive impression that seamstresses are constantly working behind the Chesterfield couches to shorten those baggy pants of yours. Pop, rock and electro glimpses in an environment alluding more to a workhouse. There are quite a few bars just outside the Kerameikos metro station but make no mistake, this club is one of the top hot spots of Athenian nightlife. ▶ Open 21:00 - 03:00. [S][G]

Intrepid Fox A4, Triptolemu 30, [M]Kerameikos, tel. 210 3466055. With its name borrowed from the legendary London club, this new Gazi entry is of course a pure rock-metal house. There are hundreds of posters and record covers of the genre on the walls, a long bar, a leather sofa and a pool table and the music is thankfully far from the stale old type rock one expects to listen in similar establishments. Live performances organised from time to time. ▶ Open 10:00 - 02:00. [S][G][F][T]

Ippopotamos G3, Delfon 3, Kolonaki, [M]Panepistimio, tel. 210 3634583. Laid-back students and late workers mainly occupy this progressive rock bar. You might even get that "I'm in a New York pub" feeling. If you feel like lounging, there are three rooms to choose from. We suggest standing up though, as you'll manage to appreciate the uplifting music as well as show off your charms to full effect, if you get what we mean. ▶ Open 21:00 - 03:00. [S][G]

Jazz in Jazz I4, Dinokratous 6, Kolonaki. Costas Spanos, the owner, is a legendary figure who hates modern jazz as much as he hates smart asses. If you want to get a drink in this little jazz 'museum' you'd better not mention that you prefer anything recorded after the fifties! If you are in a philosophical mood, Costas will be more than happy to discuss his favourite, Nietzsche and narrate stories from his years as a seaman. Cigarette smoke here is exactly as thick as you'd expect in any self-respecting jazz bar. ▶ Open 21:00 - 02:00. [S]

Mai Tai I4, Ploutarchou 18, Kolonaki, [M]Evangelismos, tel. 210 7258306. This is a good choice for Kolonaki beginners in the sense that it doesn't feel as exclusive as other establishments in the area, (without of course being completely laid back). Typical Kolonaki crowds enjoy early and late drinks: the after work ones, and those who come in later, with a certain number of regulars 'working' both 'shifts'. If too much socializing makes you hungry, there is a Greek Mediterranean selection of dishes to choose from. ▶ Open 11:00 - 02:00. [G][F]

Priza Bar F4, Christou Lada 1, Karitsi Sq, [M]Panepistimio, tel. 210 3244101, www.stinpriza.gr. A bar decorated with hundreds of... sockets, promising to electrify your evenings in Athens. It is fast acquiring its own fans and becoming a distinct presence around Karitsi square, a neighbourhood with many bars of different styles that, nonetheless, all cater for selective crowds of the city. A different dj takes his place behind the decks every evening, playing anything from electronica to house and freestyle. Just watch your fingers, unless of course you are desperate for a funky Einstein hairdo! ▶ Open 20:00 - 03:00. [S][G][F]

Seven Jokers F5, Vouli 7, [M]Syntagma, tel. 210 3219225. A real fun bar for those who want to get sloshed. The owner/bartender puts on an amazing show, with dancing and singing on his everyday menu. Freestylers and media staff love it here, but you'll also get to meet expats as Reuters is at walking distance from here. And when you find yourself awake the next morning on a bench or on one of the bar's seats with a terrible hangover, just order a coffee and one of those delicious sandwiches Seven Jokers offers in the morning and head off straight to work. ▶ Open 10:00 - 03:00, Sun 21:00 - 03:00. [S][G]

Tapas Bar A4, Triptolemu 44, Gazi, [M]Kerameikos, tel. 210 3471844. The Iberian peninsula in the heart of Athens. Start off with interesting Spanish nibbles in the small dining area and end up knocking back the greatest mai tais you've tasted since your last trip to Madrid. Funky Tapas bar used to be low profile and selective, but the owners probably thought their setting was big enough to merit a change. They may have to think again. ▶ Open 21:00 - 03:00. [S][G][F]

The James Joyce D5, Astigos 12, Monastiraki, [M]Monastiraki, Thissio, tel. 210 3235055, fax 210 3235070, www.jjoyceirishpubathens.com. This is precisely what was missing from the Athenian scene: A typical Irish pub. All major sports events are covered and every weekend and some week nights artists from around Europe perform live. The decoration is unpretentious and tasteful: dark wood, barrels, porcelain and books. The interesting black n' white liquor trade photos add an extra touch to the whole drinking ritual. If your stomach begins to complain, order, what else? Fish n' chips. ▶ Open 12:00 - 02:00. [S][G][F][T]

Toy Bar F4, Karitsi 10, [M]Panepistimio/ Syntagma, tel. 210 3311555. This is a small bar that pioneered the nightlife scene around Karitsi Square. A classic already, it encompasses three distinctive bars within the same estab-

ishment: In the morning, it serves coffee and sandwiches, in the late afternoon, it attracts professionals for after work drinks while, in the evening, it transforms itself into a lively and perennially packed bar with a loyal clientele that flocks here to enjoy delicious cocktails and listen to excellent music of different genres, depending on the resident dj. One of our favourites. ▶ Open 10:00 - 02:00, Sun 18:00 - 02:00. [S][G][F][T]

Tribeca G3, Skoufa 46, Kolonaki, [M]Panepistimio, tel. 210 3623541. Young flirty professionals gather here for after-work drinks to see and be seen by their peers. Music is mainstream, drinks are good but if you arrive dressed as if coming straight from the beach, souvlaki-gyros in hand, you will definitely raise a few eyebrows. ▶ Open 10:00 - 02:00. [S][G][F]

Trova E4, Vlahava 9, [M]Monastiraki, tel. 210 3224896, www.trova.gr. A lovely narrow art nouveau building hidden just off Athinas St has been transformed into an authentic Cuban corner complete with a small live stage where jazz and funk bands often perform. Every last detail has been taken care of and an early visit is advisable to savour the fine atmosphere. If you arrive late the chances are that you will have to enjoy your drink outside in the narrow street but that doesn't matter as you'll be among truly hip crowds. ▶ Open 19:00 - 03:00. [S][G][F][T]


Wunderbar G2, Themistokleous 80, Exarchia, [M]Omonia, Panepistimio, tel. 210 3818577. Eclectic electronic sounds in a laid-back and friendly atmosphere - we love the luxuriously soft couches - frequently hosting guest DJs. Definitely head here if you are a fan of electronic music, as the establishment is the spot par excellence catering to fans of the genre. Playful décor that borders on the eccentric, befitting the mischievously unconventional character of Exarcheia itself. ▶ Open 10:00 - 03:00. [S][G][F]

Clubs

Soul Stereo D4, Evripidou 65, Psirri, [M]Monastiraki, tel. 210 3310907. A two stage nightclub playing excellent music, one of the city's favourite night hang outs. The staff is friendly and the clientele are the laid back, shiny happy people of the city. It always gets crowded after midnight and there are frequent theme parties with DJs performing either on the more easygoing atmospheric ground level or on the first floor, where things can get wild. ▶ Open 21:00 - 04:00. [S][G]

Underworld G3, Ippokratous 56, [M]Panepistimio, tel. +30 6972802171, www.underworldclub.gr. An underground club with fans who swear by its name, it's the top fetish/goth venue in the city. The club has just moved to a new two stage venue. Dark futuristic ambience, invites "saints and sinners, outcasts and tortured souls" to its extreme electro-industrial, gothic and dark wave sounds. Frequent live performances and daily thematic parties never let the dark youth of Athens get bored. Check website or call for info on special events. ▶ Open 00:00 - 06:00. [S][G]


Vinilio Poseidonos 33, Glyfada (Hotel Emmantina), tel. 210 9681056, www.discovinilio.com. Fancy a trip to the 70s: disco balls, black neon lights, the works? This is the city's only original discoteque and when we say original we mean it. The music is the exact 60s 70s and 80s hits you'd expect and it's strictly from vinyl records! It's only natural that there aren't many teens among the regulars but what do teens know about good old fashioned fun? Tram from Syntagma Sq to Glyfada, Tram stop: Palaio Dimarheio ▶ Open 22:00 - 04:00. Closed Mon, Tue. [S][G][F][T]

Acropolis of Athens  **Acropolis, tel. 210 3210219.** The archaeological site of the **Acropolis of Athens** covers an area of 30,000 sq.m. and it is a universal symbol of the classical spirit and civilization. It constitutes the supreme expression of the adaptation of architecture to a natural site and it has become an exemplary model for architects throughout the world.

The Acropolis was the most important religious centre of the city of Athens. Its monuments, (the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Propylaea -the monumental entrance to the Acropolis- and the small Temple of Athena Nike) form the greatest architectural and artistic complex bequeathed by Greek Antiquity to Europe and the world.

The sacred rock of the Acropolis was for many centuries the most important religious centre of the city of Athens. The first traces of occupation go back to the Neolithic period (2nd millennium BC). In Mycenaean times (1200-1100BC) it was the seat of the king, whose megaron stood roughly on the site on which the Erechtheion was built many centuries later. After the 11th century BC it became the home of the cult of Athena, patron goddess of the city that took her name and was adorned down to the end of Antiquity with majestic temples, brilliant buildings and a vast number of votive monuments. The most renowned of these were erected in the second half of the 5th century BC, when Athens, following the victories against the Persians and the establishment of Democracy, took a leading position amongst the other city-states of the ancient world. In the age that followed, as thought and art flourished, an exceptional group of artists put into effect the ambitious plans of Athenian statesman Pericles and, under the inspired guidance of the sculptor Pheidias, transformed the rocky hill into a unique monument of thought and art. The most important monuments were built during that time: the Parthenon, built by Ictinos (447-432BC), the Erechtheion,


that housed shrines dedicated both to Athena Polias as well as to Poseidon-Erechtheus and bearing the porch with the famous Caryatids (421-406BC), the Propylaea which were the monumental entrance to the Acropolis designed by Mnesicles (437-431BC) and the small temple of Athena Nike (421-407BC). ▶ Open 08:30 - 15:00. Admission: €12, Concessions: €6.

The Ancient Agora D5,  Monastiraki, Thissio, tel. 210 3210185. It was the heart of the public life of the city, its religious, political and commercial centre, where Athenian Democracy was born and flourished. The Agora was traversed by the Panathenaic way, connected with the religious festival in honour of Athena, patron goddess of the city. According to tradition, the seat of the first law court in Europe was situated on the Areopagus, which is adjacent to the Ancient Agora. The nearby hill of the Phnyx is a unique site, where the meetings of the Assembly of the 'Demos' (Public Assembly of the Citizens), the principal institution in the functioning of the Athenian Democracy, were held. The archaeological site of the Agora and the Areopagus is an area encompassing approximately 400,000 sq.m. NW of the Sacred Rock, including the level area to the north of it. The Agora was the heart of the public life of the city, and it was its religious, political and commercial centre, where Athenian Democracy was born and flourished. Located on the Areopagus, according to tradition, was the seat of the most ancient law court of the Athenians.

The Agora was a large, open square that provided a place for social and cultural activity, commercial exchange, religious festivals, open-air theatrical performances and athletic contests. Beginning in the 6th century BC, the space was gradually surrounded by public buildings that were rebuilt on the same spot during the course of some eight hundred years while the Agora remained the centre of Athens. The Agora was traversed by the Panathenaic Way and by the road known conventionally as the West Road. Important roads led to the Agora, such as the Piraeus road that joined the city with the port, the Areopagus road, the road of the marble workers and so on. Open 08:30 - 15:00, Mon Museum opens at 11:00. Admission: €12, Concessions: €6

Gardens

Lycabettus Hill I3, . It can be reached on foot for the adventurous via a beautiful pedestrian walkway surrounded by pine trees, by the funicular or by car, offering excellent views of the entire city and the Saronic Gulf. There is an open-air theatre atop the Hill that regularly hosts concerts during summer months. Also on the Hill is the small gleaming-white picturesque church of Saint George. A coffee-shop and restaurant (see our restaurant pages) are also to be found here offering the same breathtaking views of the capital.

National Gardens G6, Amalias Street,  Syntagma. Created and designed by Queen Amalia in the 19th century, the National Gardens provide a pleasant green haven in the heart of bustling downtown Athens. Its meandering bench-laden paths, cool trees and popular ponds, make up a favourite stroll for everyone. Feeding the ever-hungry water fowl at the ponds is a must, while you may also visit the Botanical Museum and, for the young (or young at heart) there is the dedicated Children's Museum. A pleasant coffee-shop is also located in its grounds.

Children's Athens


Planetarium-Eugenides Foundation Syngrou 387, Palleo Fallo, tel. 210 9469641, public@eugenfound.edu.gr, www.eugenfound.edu.gr. Fancy a journey to the stars? If you're not a millionaire or an astronaut but just curious what Neptune looks like this time of year, drop by the Eugenides Foundation. This is home to the largest and, by general acclaim, most advanced digital 3-D 360 degrees Planetarium in the world, built in 2003 and designed to seat 280 people at a time. Large format films and planetarium shows are projected on a 25-metre diameter dome. Thanks to the latest digital technology you can scuba dive in the great barrier reef, get up close and personal with a Hawaiian volcano crater and follow Neil Armstrong's footsteps on the surface of the moon. Buses: 126, A2, B2 from Akadimias & Omirou St ▶ Open 19:30 - 20:30, Sat, Sun 10:30 - 20:30. Closed Mon, Tue. Planetarium Digital Shows: €6, iWERKS Shows: €8.

Copa Copana 12th km Athinon Ave. Haidari, tel. 210 5576006, fax 210 5576007, info@copacopana-park.com, www.copacopana-park.com. Copa Copana is a huge winter entertainment park complete with ice skating facilities, ski and snowboard slopes and many winter themed games. The Magic Town, is a big children playground where your little treasures will spend hours of playing. There is a café and a Mediterranean restaurant to keep the grown-ups occupied too. Bus No: A16, B16, E16, 865 from Koumoundourou sq. Bus stop: Afia-Haidari. Taxi costs about €10. ▶ Open 10:00 - 02:00.

Byzantine and Christian Museum I5, Vasilissis Sofias 22,  Evangelismos, tel. 210 7294926, www.byzantinemuseum.gr, info@byzantinemuseum.gr. Exhibiting one of the most important Byzantine collections in the world and set in a beautiful building, surrounded by a serene courtyard -a leisurely outdoor stroll is a must- this Museum offers visitors the opportunity to explore the way of life, art, religious practices and customs of the Byzantine and Medieval periods in Greece. It is especially instructive as regards the intricate interconnections underlying the symbolisms of the pagan -ancient- and early Christian periods, revealing lesser-known facets of this transition. The Museum also houses a very important collection of Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons and frescoes. A gift shop is available. ▶ Open 08:30 - 15:00. Closed Mon. Admission fee: €4.

Herakleidon-Experience in Visual Arts C5, Herakleidon 16,  Thissio, tel. 210 3461981, fax 210 3458225, info@herakleidon-art.gr, www.herakleidon-art.gr.

This excellent private Museum is housed in an attractive listed neoclassical building in the busy heart of the trendy Thissio district. It regularly houses periodic visual arts exhibitions focusing on the work of important twentieth century artists, such as M.C. Escher and V. Vasarely. Its current exhibition is entitled 'Toulouse-Lautrec and the Belle Époque period in Paris and Athens', showing about 70 original works by the seminal 20th century Parisian artist. Don't leave without a visit to the giftshop of the Museum. ▶ Open 13:00 - 21:00, Sun 11:00 - 19:00. Closed Mon. Admission fee: €6, concessions: €4.


National Historical Museum F4, Stadiou 13,  Syntagma, tel. 210 3237617. Housed in the imposing historical building that was Greece's first House of Parliament, this Museum tells the story of Greece since the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, with special focus on the War of Independence (1821-1829), through to the mid 19th century. The commanding statue of Theodoros Kolokotronis, among the leaders of the Greek War of Independence, proudly greets visitors to the Museum. Among its invaluable exhibits are archival records, photographs, costumes, flags, paintings, religious icons, royal portraits and weapons. A giftshop is available. ▶ Open 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Mon.

The National Gallery J5, Michalakopoulou 1,  Evangelismos, tel. 210 7235857, fax 210 7224889, www.nationalgallery.gr. Housing a collection of Greek art from the sixteenth century to the present, mainly spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it includes some works by Dominicos Theotocopoulos (El Greco), as well as works by seminal Greek artists such as Theophilos, Nikiforos Lytras, Nikolaos Gyzis, Georgios Iakovidis, Nikolaos Kounelakis, Nikolaos Chatzikyriakos-Ghikas, Yiannis Tsarouchis, Yiannis Moralis, Nikos Eggonopoulos and Alekos Fassianos. The Gallery frequently organises interesting temporary exhibitions. It also houses conservation laboratories and a library, while plans for its expansion are underway. ▶ Open 09:00 - 15:00, Sun 10:00 - 14:00. Closed Tue. Admission fee: €6.5, concessions: €3.

War Museum I5, Rizari 2,  Evangelismos. Dedicated to the history and practice of warfare, it holds an important collection of war memorabilia from the Mycenaean Period up to present-day Greece, with special focus on the Second World War, the War in Korea and the Cyprus War. The architecture of the building itself is very original, as it is one of the most representative examples of the avant-garde architectural movement in Athens during the 1950's. The historical fighter planes at the entrance are also worth seeing. ▶ Open 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Mon. Free admission.

Archaeological Museum



National Archaeological Museum Patision (28th October) 44,  Victoria, tel. 210 8217724, fax 210 8213573, eam@culture.gr. The National Archaeological Museum is set in a characteristic hefty neoclassical building, designed by L. Lange and remodelled by P. Kalkos, H. Vlachos and E. Ziller (built 1866-1889), housing a unique, recently refurbished, collection of ancient Greek art and artefacts. Its more than 20,000 exhibits showcase the development of Greek civilisation from Prehistory down to the late Roman era. There are vast collections of finds from the **Neolithic, Bronze Age, Cycladic and Mycenaean periods (Prehistoric Collection)** - including the famous gold mask attributed to Agamemnon -, finds from the prehistoric settlement on the island of Thera (Santorini) - including wonderfully preserved colourful wall-murals -, the **Sculpture Collection** (7th-5th centuries BC) showcasing many internationally-acclaimed masterpieces of the genre, some of which attributed to Praxiteles' workshop, the **Near Eastern Antiquities Collection**, as well as the **Metalurgy and Vase & Minor Objects Collections**.

Two of its newest exhibits include a 4th century BC gold funerary wreath and a 6th century BC marble statue of a young woman, returned to Greece in 2007 by the Getty Museum in California and conspicuously displayed.

Another major highlight is its renowned **Egyptian Collection**, 1,100 priceless items of which were recently put on permanent exhibition following years in the Museum's vast underground storage areas. Considered one of the foremost Egyptian collections worldwide, its star items include a wooden body tag for a mummy, the bronze statue of Princess-Priestess Takushit (c. 670BC) adorned with a gown strewn with hieroglyphs, a 3,000-year-old preserved loaf of bread (with a bite-sized chunk missing!) and other intact organic materials, as well as a rare bronze miniature figurine depicting an African boy at a street market. The **Stathatos Collection** was also recently brought up from storage and put on display, mainly showcasing ancient jewellery.

There are plans for the future underground expansion of the Museum's permanent exhibition spaces, but these are not expected to materialise any time soon. It also periodically houses temporary exhibitions. Its amenities include a coffee-shop/restaurant in the pleasant atrium in the basement area, Museum shop, conference facilities and modern conservation workshops.

▶ Open 08:30 - 19:00, Mon 13:00 - 19:00. Admission fee: €7, concessions €3.

Cream of the Crop

Club Hotel Casino Loutraki Poseidonos 48, Loutraki, tel. 27440 60300, fax 27440 60306, Reservations@clubhotelloutraki.gr, www.clubhotelloutraki.gr. An ultra luxurious resort less than an hour away from Athens. Everything you could desire for a dream stay, away from the hustle and bustle of the city centre: Designer furniture, a private beach, large swimming pools and gardens, an excellent invigorating Wellness Centre and, last but not least, the largest Casino in Greece that is worth visiting even if you stay in the city centre. There are regular shuttle bus connections from the centre of Athens. With just €15 you'll get transport, entrance fee, free drinks and lunch as well as the opportunity to spend a few hours of fun and style in a real world class Casino. Even if you are not the gambling type, the experience is worth a visit and you still stand a chance of winning one of the free regular instant cash lottery draws (€1000 & €2000) Transport info & reservations: 210 5234188 & 210 5234144 ▶ 255 rooms, Singles: €225-350, Doubles: €245-370.  ★★★★★

Hotel Grande Bretagne G5, Syntagma Square, M Syntagma, tel. 210 333000/210 3228034, info@grandebretagne.gr, www.grandebretagne.gr. This historic hotel occupies probably the most expensive piece of commercial property in the country. Pure luxury, grandeur and splendour, consistently place GB in every kind of 'top hotels of the world' list. Most impressive though, is the list of its famous guests, more or less all the important people who have visited Athens since the hotel was built back in 1874: Winston Churchill, Maria Callas, Aristotle Onassis and...Naomi Campbell, as well as countless kings, queens and heads of state have in the past slipped between its crisp sheets. The hotel has housed governments and occupying forces during turbulent times and from its balconies, the foreign press has watched and reported on every important event of modern Greek history. Needless to describe its amenities, if you can afford the bill you can find out for yourself. What we need to point out is its Spa, which is definitely worth one of your Athens days, and will only set you back a few hundred euros... ▶ 321 rooms, Singles/Doubles: €250-400, Suites: €500-€5000.  ★★★★★

Over €180


Electra Palace F6, Nikodimou 18-20, Plaka, M Syntagma, tel. 210 3370000, fax 210 3241875, salespath@electrahotels.gr, www.electra-hotels.com. All time classic luxury in the heart of Plaka. You'll certainly feel you're worth a bob or two once you pass the front door. No hi-tech extravagances in the standard rooms and small bathrooms are marked down as a negative, but you can always book a suite with living room, LCD TV and balcony with a startling view of Plaka. The spectacular indoor pool and fitness center will certainly make up for potential bad weather and keep you in shape. ▶ 154 rooms, Singles: €205-300, Doubles: €230-360, Superior rooms: €295-450.  ★★★★★

O&B Boutique Hotel C4, Leokoriou 7, M Thissio, tel. 210 3312950, fax 210 3312942, reserve@oandbhotel.com, www.oandbhotel.com. Hats off to this charming 11 room hotel nestling in the heart of Psirri. Designer Aria Korizi did her very best to give a good name to the "boutique hotel" label, by skillfully taking advantage of its small spaces. Following her intervention, this minuscule establishment looks big enough to host an elegant bar-restaurant, offering an interesting vegetarian, continental or even American break-

fast for anyone passing by. Also on offer are 'Molton Brown' amenities in the chic bedrooms, free-of-charge Internet and personalised services for anyone looking to treat oneself to a pleasant city-break weekend. An expansion is underway. ▶ 11 rooms, Doubles: €190-210, Suites: €300.  ★★★★★

€100-180

Acropolis Museum Hotel E8, Syngrou 48, M Syngrou-Fix, tel. 210 9249050 - 1, fax 210 9249052, info@acropolismuseumhotel.com, www.acropolismuseumhotel.com. This 1930s building was once a clinic. These days, this modern renovated establishment is appreciated most by those who prefer a cozy family atmosphere to impersonal service. The owner's motto is "feel at ease and come and go as you like, because this will be your home for the next couple of days". A philosophy also applied to its sister hotel, Magna Grecia. Rooms designed to suit all kinds of tastes, with high ceilings and a belle époque aura. The wall colors vary depending on the floor you're on. Couples and businessmen love it here and with free Internet access and a warm welcoming ambience, no doubt, so will you. ▶ 22 rooms, Singles: €95, Doubles: €125-145, Family: €200.  ★★★★★

Arion D4, Agiou Dimitriou 18, M Monastiraki, tel. 210 3216777, fax 210 3216779, arion@tourhotel.gr, www.arionhotel.gr. Veiled in a back street of the Psirri area, this was one of the many establishments that were renovated just before the Olympic Games of 2004. You can tell from the photos on the walls showing off all the sports venues. The rooms are modern and most of them have an Acropolis view, which is usually overpriced in Athens. Not here though. First come first served. ▶ 51 rooms, Singles: €90-110, Doubles: €100-120.  ★★★★★

Eridanus C4, Pireaus 78, tel. 210 5205360, fax 210 5200550, eridanus@eridanus.gr, www.eridanus.gr. One of the top small hotels in the city, in the hot nightspot zone of Gazi. It is named after an ancient waterway of Athens, and is singled out for its unique indoor design and modern decoration. Hermes bathroom sets, free Internet access, as many beverages as you can drink and hydro-massage in every room are some of the details that make the difference. Try out the fitness centre, with a sauna and a hamam. A non-smoking wing is also available. An excellent, value for money, highly recommended hotel. ▶ 38 rooms, Standard: €120-170, Acropolis view: €150-190, Suites: €200-350.  ★★★★★

Esperia Palace (Best Western) Stadiou 22, M Panepistimio, tel. 210 3238001, fax 210 3238100, info@esperiahotel.com, www.esperiahotel.com. A central city hotel with an aristocratic feel. The good refurbishment it was given recently didn't change its style and character. All the fittings in the rooms are numbered and designed by Greek rustic furnisher Saridis. Classic luxuries in junior and superior suites are accompanied by a distant but nonetheless enticing Acropolis view. Well-sized conference rooms in case you're in town on business. Sip your Greek coffee in café 'L'angolo', a typical old style upper class Athenian cafeteria and try out the delicious and generous buffet at its excellent restaurant 'Athineos'. ▶ 185 rooms, Singles: €125-180, Doubles: €140-210, Triples: €162-255, Superior/Suites: €185-310.  ★★★★★


Golden Age K5, Michalakopoulou 57, M Megaro Mousikis, tel. 210 7240861-9, fax 210 7213965, goldenage@

ath.forthnet.gr, www.goldenage.gr. It is worth going for one of its two executive suites: Glass roofs and large verandas, minimal decoration and the impressive night city view through its large windows, will make you feel as if you spent a lot more on your accommodation. The standard rooms offer comfortable accommodation too and balconies completely separated from each other, with a high degree of privacy. Overall, a good, modern and reasonably priced business hotel that will do fine for your holiday too. ▶ 122 rooms, Singles/Doubles: €92-126.  ★★★★★

Hera E8, Fallirou 9, M Acropolis/210 9236682, fax 210 9238269, info@herahotel.gr, www.herahotel.gr. If Greek god Zeus's companion were a hotel, she'd probably be as attractive as this small boutique hotel. The 38-room establishment is located in a typical early 20th century Athenian building, right across from the New Acropolis Museum. A lovely roof garden and restaurant is an excellent alternative to going out if you feel a little tired one evening and breakfast will brighten up your day, thanks to a glass roof in the breakfast room. Visitors are mainly holidaymakers and businessmen looking for an elegant and well-placed hotel. ▶ 38 rooms, Singles: €120-150, Doubles: €135-170, Suites: €200-255.  ★★★★★

Herodion D7, Rovertou Gali 4, M Acropolis, tel. 210 9236832-6, fax 210 9211650, herodion@herodion.gr, www.herodion.com. One of the best roof gardens in Athens. Wooden floors, jasmine and olive trees and two jacuzzis looking towards the Acropolis. You can almost reach out and touch the Parthenon. Americans and Australians love it here and soon, when the New Acropolis Museum opens just around the corner, this hotel will become a definite meeting-point for Greeks and visitors alike. ▶ 90 rooms, Singles: €120-150, Doubles: €130-180, Triples: €160-230.  ★★★★★

President Kifisias 43, M Ampelokipoi, tel. 210 6989000, fax 210 6924900, reservations@president.gr, www.president.gr. A mammoth 20 storey Athenian landmark, featuring a large reception area with a distinct good old fashioned jet-set atmosphere. Avenue bar, a meeting-point even for non-residents, stays open until 02:00, quite often with live music. The roof top Penthouse bar and swimming pool will add a cosmopolitan touch to your stay while you'll have a true 360 degrees view of the city skyline. ▶ 516 rooms, Singles: €90-110, Doubles: €100-120.  ★★★★★

Titania F3, Panepistimiou 52, M Panepistimio, Omonia, tel. 210 3326000, fax 210 3300700, titania@titania.gr, www.titania.gr. Large central hotel, with a spacious reception area dominated by marble, gold and a few ancient replicas. The rooms are comfortable, decorated for mainstream tastes and provide all standard amenities. Olive Garden, the rooftop restaurant, offers an almost 360 degrees view of the Athenian skyline and live jazz to pleasantly accompany your Mediterranean dinner. ▶ 385 rooms, Singles: €130, Doubles: €145, Suites: €400.  ★★★★★

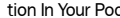
Under €100

Acropolis Select E8, Fallirou 37-39, Makrigranni, tel. 210 9211611, fax 210 9216938, select3@otenet.gr, www.acropolisselect.gr. This is a decent three star hotel housed in a typical seventies building, more impressive once you walk in. Tasteful and low profile decoration as well


as helpful and professional staff guarantee a pleasant stay for those not looking for swimming pools and spa services but good value for money accommodation instead. Some rooms boast large verandas, an extra definitely worth asking for. The location is very convenient too, just two minutes from the metro and within walking distance to the Acropolis and Plaka. ▶ 72 rooms, Singles/Doubles: €80-120.  ★★★★★

Attalos E4, Athinas 29, tel. 210 3212801, fax 210 3243124, info@attaloshotel.com, www.attaloshotel.com. Basic accommodation in this well situated but old building. It has a seventies feel and the staff is polite and helpful. The attraction in this establishment is its roof garden, with a great Acropolis view where we guarantee you'll spend many relaxing hours, and its location on leafy and bustling Athinas Street bordering Psirri and the historic centre, just two minutes walk from the metro. ▶ 80 rooms, Singles: €76, Doubles: €94, Triples: €110.  ★★★★★

Appartments / Studios

EP16 D4, Epikourou 16, M Thissio, tel. 6976 484135, info@boutiqueathens.com, www.EP16.com. Luxury apartment accommodation is scarce in Athens, as is reasonably priced accommodation. Brand new entry EP16 hits both birds with one stone and what's more: it brings a fresh metropolitan air in downtown Athens. Don't think of chandeliers and silver cutlery, the 4 brand new apartments housed in a refurbished 30s building are luxurious in the contemporary sense of the word: Design furniture, pleasant homey but minimal environment, a location right in the arty heart of the city and every modern amenity you may ever need for a comfortable stay. This is definitely the next Athenian super-hit for the knowledgeable and lucky few (reserve well in advance). Minimum stay 3 days. ▶ €110 for the larger apartments and €90 for the smaller ones. Negotiable for long term stay. A complimentary bottle of champagne awaits those who mention in Your Pocket on booking!  ★★★★★

Hostels

Athens Backpackers F7, Makri 12, M Acropolis, tel. 210 9224044, info@backpackers.gr, www.backpackers.gr. With quotes such as "this is not a prison cell, it's a host-cell", "pay in advance and if you're not happy you can obtain a refund", this hostel is a never-to-be-forgotten experience. 18-30 curious Americans adore this fully non-smoking, English speaking joint, but if you hang out here long enough you'll get to meet people from all around the world. You can always chill out for free on the settees if you arrive in the middle of the night and your booking is for the next morning. A heavy duty oven with all necessary food preparation accessories awaits the cooking types. If it's luxury you're after, look elsewhere. What you'll get here is a clean room for a good night's sleep and great opportunities to meet free style travelers like yourself. Look out on the notice board for funny announcements like, "Fabian, call your mother" and prepare for cool parties on the ground floor. Test your 'surviving-on-a-tight-budget' skills by trying out Ed's "3 days in Athens for 30 euros" plan. ▶ Dorms: €18-25, Doubles: €40-50.  ★★★★★