

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

There is a range of accommodation available in Greece to suit every taste and pocket. All places to stay are subject to strict price controls set by the tourist police. By law, a notice must be displayed in every room, which states the category of the room and the price charged in each season. The price includes a 4.5% community tax and 8% VAT.

Accommodation owners may add a 10% surcharge for a stay of less than three nights, but this is not mandatory. A mandatory charge of 20% is levied if an extra bed is put into a room. During July and August, accom-

## PRACTICALITIES

- Greece is two hours ahead of GMT/UTC and three hours ahead during daylight saving time.
- Use the metric system for weights and measures.
- Plug your electrical appliances into a two-pin adaptor before plugging into the electricity supply (220V AC, 50Hz).
- Keep up with Greek current affairs by reading the daily English-language edition of *Kathimerini* that comes with the *International Herald Tribune*.
- Channel hop through a choice of nine free-to-air TV channels and an assortment of pay TV channels.
- Be aware that Greece is region code 2 when you buy DVDs to watch back home.

modation owners will charge the maximum price, but in spring and autumn, prices will drop by up to 20%, and perhaps by even more in winter.

Rip-offs rarely occur, but if you do suspect that you have been exploited by an accommodation owner, make sure you report it to either the tourist police or the regular police, and they will act swiftly.

Throughout this book we have divided accommodation into budget (up to €60), mid-range (€60 to €150) and top end categories (€150+). This is a per-person rate in high season (July and August). Unless otherwise stated, all rooms have private bathroom facilities.

## BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com). You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

It's difficult to generalise accommodation prices in Greece as rates depend entirely on the season and location. Don't expect to pay the same price for a double on one of the islands as you would in central Greece or even Athens.

## Camping

Camping is a good option, especially in summer. There are almost 350 camping grounds in Greece in almost every location – with the notable exception of the Saronic Gulf islands – and a lot of them are situated in great locations. Standard facilities include hot showers, kitchens, restaurants and minimarkets – and often a swimming pool.

Most camping grounds are open only between April and October. The **Panhellenic Camping Association** (Map pp104-5; ☎ /fax 210 362 1560; www.panhellenic-camping-union.gr; Solonos 102, Athens) publishes an annual booklet listing all its camping grounds, their facilities and months of operation.

Camping fees are highest from 15 June through to the end of August. Most camping grounds charge from €5 to €7 per adult and €3 to €4 for children aged four to 12. There's no charge for children aged under four. Tent sites cost from €4 per night for small tents, and from €5 per night for large tents. Caravan sites start at around €6; car costs are typically €4 to €5.

Between May and mid-September the weather is warm enough to sleep out under the stars. Many camping grounds have covered areas where tourists who don't have tents can sleep in summer; you can get by with a lightweight sleeping bag. It's a good idea to have a foam pad to lie on and a waterproof cover for your sleeping bag.

## Domatia

Domatia (literally 'rooms') are the Greek equivalent of the British bed and breakfast, minus the breakfast. Once upon a time domatia comprised little more than spare rooms in the family home that could be rented out to travellers in summer; nowadays, many are purpose-built appendages to the family house. Some come complete with fully equipped kitchens. Standards of cleanliness are generally high.

Domatia remain a popular option for budget travellers. They are classified A, B or C class. Expect to pay from €25 to €40 for a single, and €35 to €55 for a double, depending

on the class, whether bathrooms are shared or private, the season and how long you plan to stay. Domatia are found throughout the mainland (except in large cities) and on almost every island that has a permanent population. Many are open only between April and October.

From June to September domatia owners are out in force, touting for customers. They meet buses and boats, shouting 'Room, room!' and often carrying photographs of their rooms. In peak season, it can prove a mistake not to take up an offer – but be wary of owners who are vague about the location of their accommodation.

## Hostels

There is only one youth hostel in Greece affiliated to the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF), the Athens International Youth Hostel (p131). You don't need a membership card to stay there; temporary membership costs €1.80 per day.

Most other youth hostels in Greece are run by the **Green Youth Hostel Organisation** (Map p100; ☎ 210 751 9530; www.athens-yhostel.com; Damareos 75, Athens). There are affiliated hostels in Athens, Olympia, Patra and Thessaloniki on the mainland, and on the islands of Crete and Santorini.

Hostel rates vary from €8 to €11 for a bed in a dorm and you don't have to be a member to stay in any of them. Few have curfews.

## Hotels

Hotels in Greece are divided into six categories: deluxe, A, B, C, D and E. Hotels are categorised according to the size of the room, whether or not they have a bar, and the ratio of bathrooms to beds, rather than standards of cleanliness, comfort of the beds and friendliness of staff – all elements that may be of greater relevance to guests.

As one would expect, deluxe, A- and B-class hotels have many amenities, private bathrooms and constant hot water. C-class hotels have a snack bar, rooms have private bathrooms, but hot water may only be available at certain times of the day. D-class hotels may or may not have snack bars, most rooms will share bathrooms, but there may be some with private bathrooms, and they may have solar-heated water, which means hot water is not guaranteed. E-class rooms do not have a snack bar, bathrooms are shared and you may have to pay extra for hot water.

Prices are controlled by the tourist police and the maximum rate that can be charged for a room must be displayed on a board behind the door of each room. The classification is not often much of a guide to price. Rates in D- and E-class hotels are generally comparable with domatia. You can pay from €35 to €60 for a single in high season in C class and €45 to €80 for a double. Prices in B class range from €50 to €80 for singles, and from €90 to €120 for doubles. A-class prices are not much higher.

## Mountain Refuges

There are 55 mountain refuges dotted around the Greek mainland, Crete and Evia. They range from small huts with outdoor toilets and no cooking facilities to very comfortable modern lodges. They are run by the country's various mountaineering and skiing clubs. Prices start at around €7, depending on the facilities. The EOT (Greek National Tourist Organization) publication *Greece: Mountain Refuges & Ski Centres* has details about each refuge; copies are available at all EOT branches. See p730 for more information on EOT.

## Pensions

*Pensions* are indistinguishable from hotels. They are divided into A, B or C class. An A-class *pension* is equivalent in amenities and price to a B-class hotel, a B-class *pension* is equivalent to a C-class hotel and a C-class *pension* is equivalent to a D- or E-class hotel.

## Rental Accommodation

A really practical way to save on money and maximise comfort is to rent a furnished apartment or villa. Many are purpose-built for tourists while others – villas in particular – may be owners' homes that they are not using. The main advantage is that you can accommodate a larger number of people under one roof and can also save money by self catering. This option is best for a stay of more than three days. In fact some owners may insist on a minimum week's stay. A good site to spot prospective villas is www.greekislands.com.

If you're looking for long-term accommodation, it's worth checking the classified section of the *Athens News* – although most of the places are in Athens. In rural areas and islands, the local *kafeneio* (coffee house) is a good place to start your search.

## ACTIVITIES Diving & Snorkelling

Snorkelling can be enjoyed just about anywhere along the coast of Greece. Especially good places are Ammooipi (p537) in southern Karpathos, Velanio (p663) on Skopelos and Paleokastritsa (p687) on Corfu.

Diving is another matter. Any kind of underwater activity using breathing apparatus is strictly forbidden other than under the supervision of a diving school. This law exists to protect the many antiquities in the depths of the Aegean. There are diving schools on the islands of Corfu (p687), in Agios Nikolaos and Rethymno (p479) on Crete, Evia (p650), Hydra (p357), Leros (p576), Milos (p440), Mykonos, Paros, Rhodes, Santorini and Skiathos (p659), Glyfada (p126) near Athens, and Parga (Epiros) on the mainland.

## Hiking

More than half of Greece is mountainous. It would be a hikers' paradise but for one drawback – many of the paths in Greece are overgrown and inadequately marked. Like all organisations in Greece, **EOS** (Greek Alpine Club; ☎ 210 321 2429; Plateia Kapnikarea 2, Athens) is grossly underfunded. But don't be put off by this, as the most popular routes are well walked and maintained. You'll find EOS branches in Epiros (p329), Crete (p479) and Evia. See p726 for information on hiking maps.

On small islands it can be fun to discover pathways for yourself. You are unlikely to get into danger as settlements or roads are never far away. You will encounter a variety of paths; *kalderimia* are the cobbled or flagstone paths that link settlements and date back to Byzantine times. Sadly, many have been bulldozed to make way for new roads. Other paths include shepherd's trails or *monopatia* that link settlements with sheepfolds or link remote settlements via rough unmarked trails.

A number of companies run organised hikes. The biggest of them is Trekking Hellas (p130), which offers a variety of hikes ranging from a four-hour stroll through the Lousios Valley (Peloponnese) to a week-long hike around Mt Olympus and Meteora. The company also runs hikes on Crete and in the Cyclades.

## Kitesurfing

This relatively new action sport that combines windsurfing, snowboarding, wakeboarding, traction kites and paragliding is considered

one of the most extreme water sports. The beaches of Greece are beginning to be festooned with athletic young surfers alternately surfing and flying on short but fat surfboards. The **Greek Wakeboard and Kite Surf Association** (☎ 69445 17963; www.gwa.gr) has details of popular locales in Greece for this growing action sport.

## Skiing

Greece provides some of the cheapest skiing in Europe. There are 16 resorts dotted around the mountains of mainland Greece, mainly in the north. The main skiing areas are Mt Parnassos (p237), 195km northwest of Athens, and Mt Vermio (p301), 110km west of Thessaloniki. There are no foreign package holidays to these resorts; they are used mainly by Greeks. They have all the basic facilities and can be a pleasant alternative to the glitzy resorts of northern Europe.

The season depends on snow conditions but runs approximately from January to the end of April. For further information pick up a copy of *Greece: Mountain Refuges & Ski Centres* from an EOT office (p730). Information may also be obtained from the **Hellenic Skiing Federation** (Map pp102-3; ☎ 210 323 0182; press@ski.org.gr; Karageorgi Servias 7, Syntagma, Athens).

You'll find information about the latest snow conditions on the internet at [www.snowreport.gr](http://www.snowreport.gr).

## Water-skiing

There are three islands with water-ski centres: Kythira, Paros and Skiathos.

Given the relatively calm and flat waters of most islands and the generally warm waters of the Aegean, water-skiing can be a very pleasant activity. August can be a tricky month when the *meltemi* (northeasterly wind) can make conditions difficult in the central Aegean. The island of Poros near Athens is a particularly well organised locale with one organisation, **Passage** (☎ 22980 42540; www.passage.gr; Neorion Bay), hosting a popular school and slalom centre.

## White-water Rafting

The popularity of white-water rafting and other river adventure sports has grown rapidly in recent years as more and more urban Greeks, particularly Athenians, head off in search of a wilderness experience as a release from the stresses of city life.

Trekking Hellas (p130) offers half a dozen possibilities, including the Lousios/Alphios Rivers in the Peloponnese, the River Arahthos in Epiros and the River Aheolos in Thessaly.

**Alpin Club** (☎ 210 675 3514/5; www.alpindub.gr) specialises in the Lousios/Alphios and the River Evinos, near Nafpaktos in Sterea Ellada.

**Eco Action** (☎ 210 331 7866; www.ecoaction.gr; Agion Anargyron, Psyrri) offers rafting and kayaking on the Ladonas River in the Peloponnese, which hosted the kayaking at the 2004 Olympics, as well as on another three rivers throughout Greece.

All the guides/instructors, and most of the participants, speak English and foreigners are made especially welcome. Whatever else, tourists are sure to have an interesting time meeting locals who share a common interest.

## Windsurfing

Windsurfing is the most popular water sport in Greece. Hrysi Akti (p399) on Paros, and Vasiliki (p698) on Lefkada vie for the position of the best windsurfing beach. According to some, Vasiliki is one of the best places in the world to learn the sport, while Afiarti (p537) on Karpathos is for more experienced windsurfers.

You'll find sailboards for hire almost everywhere. Hire charges range from €10 to €15 an hour, depending on the gear. If you are a novice, most places that rent equipment also give lessons.

Sailboards can be imported freely from other EU countries, but the import of boards from other destinations, such as Australia and the US, is subject to some quaint regulations. Theoretically, importers need a Greek national residing in Greece to guarantee that the board will be taken out of the country again. Contact the **Hellenic Windsurfing Association** (Map pp102-3; ☎ 210 323 3696; Filillon 4, Athens) for more information.

## Yachting

Yachting is the best way to see the Greek islands. Nothing beats the experience of sailing the open sea, and the freedom of being able to visit remote and uninhabited islands.

The free EOT booklet *Sailing the Greek Seas*, although long overdue for an update, contains lots of information about weather conditions, weather bulletins, entry and exit regulations, entry and exit ports and guide-

books for yachting. You can pick up the booklet at any GNT0/EOT office either abroad or in Greece (see p730 for locations).

If your budget won't cover buying a yacht, there are several other options open to you. You can hire a bare boat (a yacht without a crew) if two crew members have a sailing certificate. Prices start at €1000 per week for a 28-footer that will sleep six. It will cost an extra €840 per week to hire a skipper.

Individuals can check out the cruises offered by **Ghiolman Yachts & Travel** (off Map pp102-3; ☎ 210 325 5000; www.ghiolman.com; Propyleon, Acropolis, Athens 1 17 42). Ghiolman has seven-day Ionian cruises leaving Corfu every Saturday, and seven-day Dodecanese cruises leaving Rhodes every Thursday. Berths on board these boats are priced from €700, and include half-board and the services of an English-speaking guide. Both cruises operate weekly from early May to the end of September.

**Hellenic Yachting Server** ([www.yachting.gr](http://www.yachting.gr)) has information about yachting and chartering yachts.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Banks are open from 8am to 2pm Monday to Thursday, and from 8am to 1.30pm Friday. Some banks in large towns and cities open between 3.30pm and 6.30pm on weekdays and 8am to 1.30pm Saturday.

Post offices are open from 7.30am to 2pm Monday to Friday. In the major cities they stay open until 8pm, and open from 7.30am to 2pm Saturday.

In summer, the usual opening hours for shops are from 8am to 1.30pm and from 5.30pm to 8.30pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 8am to 2.30pm on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Shops open 30 minutes later during winter. These times are not always strictly adhered to. Many shops in tourist resorts are open seven days a week.

Department stores and supermarkets are open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, from 8am to at least 3pm on Saturday and are closed on Sunday.

*Periptera* (street kiosks) are open from early morning until late at night. They sell everything from bus tickets and cigarettes to razor blades and shaving cream.

Restaurant hours vary enormously. Most places are normally open for lunch from 11am to 3pm, and for dinner between 7pm and 1am, while restaurants in tourist areas remain open

all day. Cafés normally open at about 10am, and stay open until midnight.

Bars open from about 8pm until late, while discos and nightclubs don't usually open until at least 10pm; it's rare to find much of a crowd before midnight. They close at about 4am, later on Friday and Saturday.

## CHILDREN

Greece is a safe and relatively easy place to travel with children. Greeks are well-known for making a fuss of children, who will always be made the centre of attention.

Despite this, it's rare for younger children to have much success making friends with children their own age, partly because Greek children tend to play at home and partly because of the language barrier. The language barrier starts to recede by the age of about 12, by which time many local children are sufficiently advanced with their studies to communicate in English.

Matt Barrett's website ([www.greektravel.com](http://www.greektravel.com)) has lots of useful tips for parents, while daughter Amarandi has put together some tips for kids ([www.greece4kids.com](http://www.greece4kids.com)).

## Practicalities

Travelling is especially easy if you're staying at a resort hotel by the beach, where everything is set up for families with children. As well as facilities like paddling pools and playgrounds, they also have cots and highchairs. Best of all, there's a strong possibility of making friends with other kids.

Elsewhere, it's rare to find cots and highchairs, although most hotels and restaurants will do their best to help. The fast service in most restaurants is good news when it comes to feeding hungry kids.

Mobility is an issue for parents with very small children. Strollers (pushchairs) aren't much use in Greece unless you're going to spend all your time in one of the few flat spots. They are hopeless on rough stone paths and up steps, and a curse when getting on/off buses and ferries. Backpacks or front pouches are best.

Fresh milk is available in large towns and tourist areas, but harder to find on smaller islands. Supermarkets are the best place to look. Formula is available everywhere, as is condensed and heat-treated milk.

Disposable nappies are an environmental curse, but they can be a godsend on the road. They are also available everywhere.

Travel on ferries, buses and trains is free for children under four. They pay half-fare up to the age of 10 (ferries) or 12 (buses and trains). Full fares apply otherwise. On domestic flights, you'll pay 10% of the adult fare to have a child under two sitting on your knee. Kids aged two to 12 pay half-fare.

### Sights & Activities

If you're travelling around, the main problem is a shortage of decent playgrounds and other recreational facilities.

Don't be afraid to take children to the ancient sites. Many parents are surprised by how much their children enjoy them. Young imaginations go into overdrive when let loose somewhere like the 'labyrinth' at Knossos.

### CLIMATE CHARTS

Greece can be divided into a number of main climatic regions. Northern Macedonia and

northern Epiros have a climate similar to the Balkans, with freezing winters and very hot, humid summers; while the Attica Peninsula, the Cyclades, the Dodecanese, Crete, and the central and eastern Peloponnese have a more typically Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and milder winters.

Snow is rare in the Cyclades (it snowed on Paros for the first time in 15 years in 1992), but the high mountains of the Peloponnese and Crete are covered in snow during the winter, and it does occasionally snow in Athens. In July and August, the mercury can soar to 40°C (over 100°F) in the shade just about anywhere in the country. July and August are also the months of the *meltemi*, a strong northerly wind that sweeps the eastern coast of mainland Greece (including Athens) and the Aegean Islands, especially the Cyclades. The wind is caused by air pressure differences between North Africa

and the Balkans. The wind is a mixed blessing: it reduces humidity, but plays havoc with ferry schedules and sends everything flying – from beach umbrellas to washing hanging out to dry.

The western Peloponnese, western Sterea Ellada, southwestern Epiros and the Ionian Islands escape the *meltemi* and have less severe winters than northern Greece, but are the areas with the highest rainfall. The Northeastern Aegean Islands, Halkidiki and the Pelion Peninsula fall somewhere between the Balkan-type climate of northern Greece and the Mediterranean climates. Crete stays warm the longest – you can swim off the island's southern coast from mid-April to November.

Mid-October is when the rains start in most areas, and the weather stays cold and wet until February – although there are also occasional winter days with clear blue skies and sunshine.

For tips on the best times to visit Greece, see p20.

### COURSES

#### Cooking

It is possible to do cooking courses on Santorini, Kea, Icaria and Crete. See p90 for more information on cooking courses.

#### Dance

The Dora Stratou Dance Company (p141) runs one-week courses for foreigners at its headquarters in Plaka during July and August.

#### Language

If you are serious about learning the Greek language, an intensive course at the start of your stay is a good way to go about it. Most of the courses are based in Athens (p129), but there are also special courses on the islands in summer.

**Athens Centre** (Map p100; ☎ 210 701 2268; www.athenscentre.gr; Arhimidous 48, Mets, Athens) is located in the suburb of Mets, and also runs courses on the island of Spetses in June and July. The three-week courses cost €1150, and involve 60 hours of classwork.

**Hellenic Culture Centre** (☎ 22750 61139/40; www.hcc.gr; ☺ May-Oct), in the village of Arethousa, 7km from Evdilos, offers courses in Greek language, culture and literature. All levels of language proficiency are catered for.

### Painting

Painting courses are becoming increasingly popular, and British tour operators offer a range of possibilities.

**Simply Travel** (☎ 020 8541 2200; www.simply-travel.com) runs two-week tours to western Crete, while **Travelux** (☎ 015 8076 4344; www.travelux.co.uk) offers a week in the wonderful Zagorohoria region of Epiros, followed by a week on the island of Lefkada. Another operator, **Tapestry Holidays** (☎ 020 8235 7800; www.tapestryholidays.com), specialises in tours to the Pelion Peninsula.

### CUSTOMS

There are no longer duty-free restrictions within the EU. This does not mean, however, that customs checks have been dispensed with; random searches are still made for drugs.

Upon entering the country from outside the EU, customs inspection is usually cursory for foreign tourists. There may be spot checks, but you probably won't have to open your bags. A verbal declaration is usually all that is required.

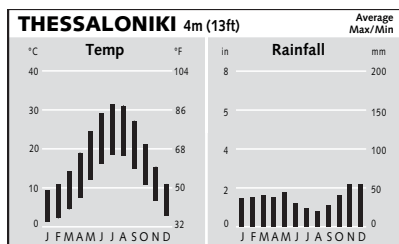
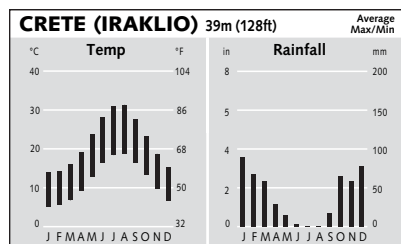
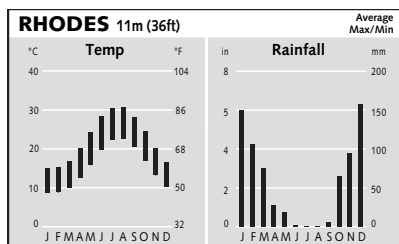
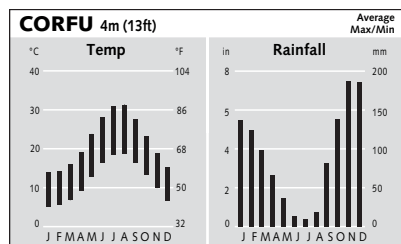
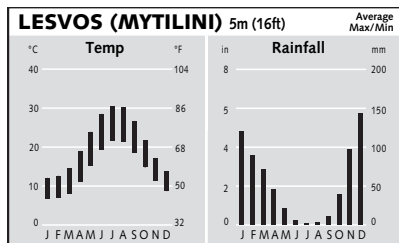
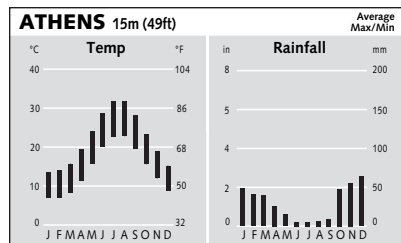
You may bring the following into Greece duty-free: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars; 1L of spirits or 2L of wine; 50ml of perfume; 250mL of eau de Cologne; one camera (still or video) and film; a pair of binoculars; a portable musical instrument; a portable radio or tape recorder; a laptop computer; sports equipment; and dogs and cats (with a veterinary certificate).

Importation of works of art and antiquities into Greece is free, but they must be declared on entry, so that they can be re-exported. Import regulations for medicines are strict; if you are taking medication, make sure you get a statement from your doctor before you leave home. It is illegal, for instance, to take codeine into Greece without an accompanying doctor's certificate.

An unlimited amount of foreign currency and travellers cheques may be brought into Greece. If you intend to leave the country with foreign banknotes in excess of US\$1000, you must declare the sum upon entry.

Restrictions apply to the importation of sailboards into Greece (see p718).

It is strictly forbidden to export antiquities (anything over 100 years old) without an export permit. This crime is second only to drug smuggling in the penalties imposed. It is an offence to remove even the smallest article from an archaeological site.



The place to apply for an export permit is at the Antique Dealers and Private Collections section of the **Athens Archaeological Service** (Map pp102-3; Polygnotou 13, Plaka, Athens).

## Vehicles

Cars can be brought into Greece for six months without a carnet; only a green card (international third-party insurance) is required. Your only proof of entry into the country will be your ferry ticket stub (if arriving from Italy) so don't lose it. Otherwise from other countries, a passport stamp will be ample evidence.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

### Bar Scams

Bar scams continue to be an unfortunate fact of life in Athens, particularly in the Syntagma area. The basic scam is always some variation on the following theme: solo male traveller is lured into bar on some pretext (not always sex), strikes up conversation with friendly locals, charming girls appear and ask for what turn out to be ludicrously overpriced drinks, traveller is eventually handed an enormous bill.

Fortunately, this practice appears confined to Athens at this stage. See p110 for the full run-down on this scam and other problems in the capital.

### Theft

Crime, especially theft, is low in Greece, but unfortunately it is on the increase. The worst area is around Omonia in central Athens – keep track of your valuables here, especially on the metro and at the Sunday flea market.

The vast majority of thefts from tourists are still committed by other tourists; the biggest danger of theft is probably in dormitory rooms in hostels and at camping grounds. So make sure you do not leave valuables unattended in such places. If you are staying in a hotel room, and the windows and door do not lock securely, ask for your valuables to be locked in the hotel safe – hotel proprietors are happy to do this.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

### Senior Cards

Card-carrying EU pensioners can claim a range of benefits such as reduced admission to ancient sites and museums, and discounts on bus and train fares.

## Student & Youth Cards

The most widely recognised form of student ID is the International Student Identity Card (ISIC).

These cards qualify the holder to half-price admission to museums and ancient sites and for discounts at some budget hotels and hostels. Aegean Airlines and Cronus offer student discounts on some domestic flights, but there are none to be had on buses, ferries or trains. Students will find some good deals on international air fares.

Some travel agencies in Athens are licensed to issue cards. You must show documents proving you are a student, provide a passport photo and cough up €10. Visit [www.euro26.org](http://www.euro26.org) and [www.istc.org](http://www.istc.org) for more information.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

### Greek Embassies

Greek diplomatic missions abroad:

**Albania** (☎ 54-223 959; Ruga Frederik Shiroka, Tirana)

**Australia** (☎ 02-6273 3011; 9 Turraena St, Yarralumla, ACT 2600)

**Bulgaria** (☎ 2-946 1027; San Stefano 33, Sofia 1504)

**Canada** (☎ 613-238 6271; 76-80 Maclaren St, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0K6)

**Cyprus** (☎ 02-680 670/671; Vyronos 8-10, Nicosia)

**Denmark** (☎ 33-114 533; Borgergade 16, 1300 Copenhagen K)

**Egypt** (☎ 02-795 0443; Aisha el Taymouria 18, Garden City, Cairo)

**France** (☎ 01-47 23 72 28; [www.amb-grece.fr/presse](http://www.amb-grece.fr/presse); Rue Auguste Vacquerie 17, 75116 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 30-206 260; [www.griechische-botschaft.de](http://www.griechische-botschaft.de); Jaegerstrasse 54-55, 10117 Berlin-Mitte)

**Ireland** (☎ 01-676 7254; 1 Upper Pembroke St, Dublin 2)

**Israel** (☎ 03-695 3060; Tower Bldg, Daniel Frisch 3, Tel Aviv 64731)

**Italy** (☎ 06-853 7551; Via S Mercadante 36, Rome 00198)

**Japan** (☎ 03-3403 0871; [www.greekemb.jp](http://www.greekemb.jp); 3-16-30 Nishi Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0031)

**Netherlands** (☎ 070-363 87 00; Amaliastraat 1, 2514 JC, The Hague)

**New Zealand** (☎ 04-473 7775; 5-7 Willeston St, Wellington)

**Norway** (☎ 2244 2728; Nobels Gate 45, 0244 Oslo 2)

**South Africa** (☎ 12-342 7136; 1003 Church St, Hatfield, Pretoria 0028)

**Spain** (☎ 01-564 4653; Avenida Doctor Arce 24, Madrid 28002)

**Sweden** (☎ 08-5456 6010; Riddargatan 60, 11457 Stockholm)

**Switzerland** (☎ 31-356 1414; Laubeggstrasse, Bern 3006)

**Turkey** (☎ 312-448 0647; Zia ur Rahman Caddesi 9-11, Gaziosmanpasa 06700, Ankara)

**UK** (☎ 020-7229 3850; [www.greekembassy.org.uk](http://www.greekembassy.org.uk); 1a Holland Park, London W11 3TP)

**USA** (☎ 202-939 1300; [www.greekembassy.org](http://www.greekembassy.org); 2221 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008)

### Embassies in Greece

All foreign embassies in Greece are in Athens and its suburbs.

**Albania** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 687 6200; Vekiareli 7, Athens GR-152 37)

**Australia** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 870 4000; Leoforos Alexandras & Kifisias, Ambelokipi, Athens GR-115 23)

**Bulgaria** (☎ 210 674 8105; Stratigou Kalari 33a, Psyhiko, Athens GR-154 52)

**Canada** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 727 3400; Genadiou 4, Athens GR-115 21)

**Cyprus** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 723 7883; Irodotou 16, Athens GR-106 75)

**Egypt** (Map pp102-3; ☎ 210 361 8612; Leoforos Vasilisis Sofias 3, Athens)

**France** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 361 1663; Leoforos Vasilisis Sofias 7, Athens GR-106 71)

**Germany** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 728 5111; Karaoli & Dimitriou 3, Kolonaki, Athens GR-106 75)

**Hungary** (☎ 210 675 2300; Kalvou 16, Psyhiko, Athens GR-154 52)

**Ireland** (Map p100; ☎ 210 723 2771; Vasileos Konstandinou 5-7, Athens GR-153 34)

**Israel** (☎ 210 671 9530; Marathonodromou 1, Athens GR-154 52)

**Italy** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 361 7260; Sekeri 2, Athens GR-106 74)

**Japan** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 775 8101; Athens Tower, Mesogion 2-4, Athens GR-115 27)

**Netherlands** (Map p100; ☎ 210 723 9701; Vasileos Konstantinou 5-7, Athens GR-106 74)

**New Zealand** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 687 4701; Kifisias 268, Halandri, Athens)

**Serbia & Montenegro** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 777 4355; Leoforos Vasilisis Sofias 106, Athens GR-115 21)

**South Africa** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 680 6645; Kifisias 60, Marousi, Athens GR-151 25)

**Turkey** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 724 5915; Vasileos Georgiou 8, Athens GR-106 74)

**UK** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 723 6211; Ploutarhou 1, Athens GR-106 75)

**USA** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 721 2951; Leoforos Vasilisis Sofias 91, Athens GR-115 21)

It's important to know what your embassy – the embassy of the country of which you are a citizen – can and can't do to help if you get into trouble. Generally, it won't be much

help in emergencies if the trouble you're in is remotely your own fault. Remember that you are bound by the laws of the country you are in. Your embassy will not be sympathetic if you commit a crime locally, even if such actions are legal in your own country.

In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance, but only if other channels have been exhausted. For example, if you need to get home urgently, a free ticket home is exceedingly unlikely. If you have all your money and documents stolen, it might assist with getting a new passport, but a loan for onward travel is out of the question.

Some embassies used to keep letters for travellers or have a small reading room with home newspapers, but these days the mail holding service has usually been stopped and even newspapers tend to be out of date.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The Greek year is a succession of festivals and events, some of which are religious, some cultural, others just an excuse for a good party, and some a combination of all three. The following is by no means an exhaustive list, but it covers the most important events, both national and regional. If you're in the right place at the right time, you'll certainly be invited to join the revelry.

More details about festivals and events can be found at [www.cultureguide.gr](http://www.cultureguide.gr).

### January

**Feast of Agios Vasilios (St Basil)** The year kicks off with this festival on 1 January. A church ceremony is followed by the exchanging of gifts, singing, dancing and feasting; the New Year pie (*vasilopita*) is cut and the person who gets the slice containing a coin will supposedly have a lucky year.

**Epiphany (Blessing of the Waters)** The day of Christ's baptism by St John is celebrated throughout Greece on 6 January. Seas, lakes and rivers are blessed and crosses immersed in them. The largest ceremony occurs at Piraeus (p152).

**Gynaikokratia** The villages of the prefectures of Rodopi, Kilkis and Seres in northern Greece hold a day of role reversal on 8 January. Women spend the day in *kafeneia* and other male hang-outs, while the men stay at home to do the housework.

### February

**Carnival Season** The three-week period before the beginning of Lent (the 40-day period before Easter, which is traditionally a period of fasting) is carnival season. The carnivals are ostensibly Christian pre-Lenten celebrations, but many derive from pagan festivals. There are many

regional variations, but fancy dress, feasting, traditional dancing and general merrymaking prevail. The Patra carnival (p163) is the largest and most exuberant, with elaborately decorated chariots parading through the streets. The most bizarre carnival takes place on the island of Skyros (p672) where the men transform themselves into grotesque 'half-man, half-beast' creatures by donning goat-skin masks and hairy jackets.

**Shrove Monday (Clean Monday)** On the Monday before Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent), people take to the hills throughout Greece to have picnics and fly kites.

## March

**Independence Day** The anniversary of the hoisting of the Greek flag by Bishop Germanos at Moni Agias Lavras is celebrated on 25 March with parades and dancing. Germanos' act of revolt marked the start of the War of Independence. Independence Day coincides with the Feast of the Annunciation, so it is also a religious festival.

## April

**Easter** Easter is the most important festival in the Greek Orthodox religion. Emphasis is placed on the Resurrection rather than on the Crucifixion, so it is a joyous occasion. The festival begins on the evening of Good Friday with the *perifora epitafiou*, when a shrouded bier (representing Christ's funeral bier) is carried through the streets to the local church. This moving candle-lit procession can be seen in towns and villages throughout the country. From a spectator's viewpoint, the most impressive of these processions climbs Lykavittos Hill in Athens to the Chapel of Agios Georgios. The Resurrection Mass starts at 11pm on Saturday night. At midnight packed churches are plunged into darkness to symbolise Christ's passing through the underworld. The ceremony of the lighting of candles that follows is the most significant moment in the Orthodox year, for it symbolises the Resurrection. Its poignancy and beauty is spellbinding. If you are in Greece at Easter you should endeavour to attend this ceremony, which ends with fireworks and candle-lit processions through the streets. The Lenten fast ends on Easter Sunday with the cracking of red-dyed Easter eggs and an outdoor feast of roast lamb followed by Greek dancing. The day's greeting is '*Christos anesti*' (Christ is risen), to which the reply is '*Alithos anesti*' (Truly He is risen). On both Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Easter) and Easter Sunday, St Spyridon (the mummified patron saint of Corfu) is taken out for an airing and joyously paraded through Corfu Town. He is paraded again on 11 August.

**Feast of Agios Georgios (St George)** The feast day of St George, Greece's patron saint, and patron saint of shepherds, takes place on 23 April or the Tuesday following Easter (whichever comes first). It is celebrated at several places, but with particular exuberance in Arahova (p238), near Delphi.

## May

**May Day** On the first day of May there is a mass exodus from towns to the country. During picnics, wildflowers are gathered and made into wreaths to decorate houses.

**Anastenaria** This fire-walking ritual takes place on 21 May in the village of Langadas, near Thessaloniki. Villagers clutching icons dance barefoot on burning charcoal.

## June

**Navy Week** This festival celebrates the long relationship between Greeks and the sea with events in fishing villages and ports throughout the country. Volos (p250) and Hydra each have unique versions of these celebrations. Volos re-enacts the departure of the *Argo*, for legend has it that Iolkos (from where Jason and the Argonauts set off in search of the Golden Fleece) was near the city. Hydra commemorates War of Independence hero Admiral Andreas Miaoulis, who was born on the island, at its Miaoulia Festival (p358), which includes a re-enactment of one of his naval victories.

**Feast of St John the Baptist** This feast day on 24 June is widely celebrated around Greece. Wreaths made on May Day are kept until this day, when they are burned on bonfires.

**Hellenic Festival** The Hellenic Festival is the most important of the many festivals staged throughout Greece during summer. It features performances of music, dance and drama at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus (p115) in Athens, and performances of ancient Greek drama at the world famous Theatre of Epidavros (p187), near Nafplio in the Peloponnese.

## July

**Feast of Agia Marina (St Marina)** This feast day is celebrated on 17 July in many parts of Greece, and is a particularly important event on the Dodecanese island of Kasos (p540).

**Feast of Proftis Ilias** This feast day is celebrated on 20 July at the many hilltop churches and monasteries throughout Greece that are dedicated to the prophet.

**Folegandros Festival** The festival (p437) features a week-long programme of music and feasting at a range of locations around the island's beautiful old *hora*.

## August

**Feast of the Assumption** Greeks celebrate Assumption Day (15 August) with family reunions. The whole population seems to be on the move either side of the big day, so it's a good time to avoid public transport. The island of Tinos (p372) gets particularly busy because of its miracle-working icon of Panagia Evangelistria. It becomes a place of pilgrimage for thousands, who come to be blessed, healed or baptised.

**Samothraki World Music Festival** The Northeast Aegean island of Samothraki plays host to Greece's biggest rave party (p636) for a week starting at the end of August.

## September

**Gennisis tis Panagias** The birthday of the Virgin Mary is celebrated throughout Greece on 8 September with religious services and feasting.

**Exaltation of the Cross** This is celebrated on 14 September throughout Greece with processions and hymns.

## October

**Feast of Agios Dimitrios** This feast day is celebrated in Thessaloniki (p282) on 26 October with wine drinking and revelry.

**Ohi (No) Day** Metaxas' refusal to allow Mussolini's troops free passage through Greece in WWII is commemorated on 28 October with remembrance services, military parades, folk dancing and feasting.

## December

**Christmas Day** Although not as important as Easter, Christmas is still celebrated with religious services and feasting. Nowadays much 'Western' influence is apparent, including Christmas trees, decorations and presents.

## FOOD

For large cities and towns, restaurant listings in this book are given in the following order: budget (under €15), midrange (€15 to €40) and top end (over €40), and within each section the restaurants are listed in budget order. For information on Greek cuisine, see p84.

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

In a country where the church still plays a prominent role in shaping society's views on issues such as sexuality, it should come as no surprise that homosexuality is generally frowned upon – especially outside the major cities. While there is no legislation against homosexual activity, it pays to be discreet and to avoid open displays of togetherness.

This has not prevented Greece from becoming an extremely popular destination for gay and lesbian travellers. Athens (p139) has a busy gay scene – but most gay and lesbian travellers head for the islands. Mykonos (p381) has long been famous for its bars, beaches and general hedonism, while Skiathos (p654) also has its share of gay hang-outs.

The island of Lesbos (Mytilini, p618), birthplace of the lesbian poet Sappho, has become something of a place of pilgrimage for lesbians.

## Information

The *Spartacus International Gay Guide*, published by Bruno Gmünder (Berlin), is widely

regarded as the leading authority on the gay travel scene. The Greek section contains a wealth of information on gay venues everywhere from Alexandroupoli to Xanthi.

There's also stacks of information on the internet. **RoZ Mov** ([www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/2225/](http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/2225/)) is a good place to start. It has pages on travel information, gay health, the gay press, organisations, events and legal issues – and links to lots more sites.

Another useful website, **Gayscape** ([www.gayscape.com/gayscape/menugreece.html](http://www.gayscape.com/gayscape/menugreece.html)) has lots of links.

## HOLIDAYS

### Public Holidays

All banks and shops and most museums and ancient sites close on public holidays. National public holidays in Greece:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Epiphany** 6 January

**First Sunday in Lent** February

**Greek Independence Day** 25 March

**Good Friday** March/April

**(Orthodox) Easter Sunday** (April/May) Orthodox Easter Sunday falls on 27 April in 2008 and 19 April in 2009.

**May Day (Protomagia)** 1 May

**Feast of the Assumption** 15 August

**Ohi Day** 28 October

**Christmas Day** 25 December

**St Stephen's Day** 26 December

### School Holidays

The school year is divided into three terms. The main school holidays are in July and August.

## INSURANCE

A travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a good idea. Some policies offer lower and higher medical-expense options; the higher ones are chiefly for countries such as the USA, which have extremely high medical costs. There is a wide variety of policies available, so check the small print.

Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can include scuba diving, motorcycling, even hiking. A locally acquired motorcycle licence is not valid under some policies.

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later make sure you keep all documentation. Some policies ask you to call back

(reverse charges) to a centre in your home country where an immediate assessment of your problem is made.

For more information on health insurance, see p749.

Buy travel insurance as early as possible. If you buy it just before you fly, you may find you're not covered for such problems as delays caused by industrial action. Make sure you have a separate record of all your ticket details – preferably a photocopy.

Paying for your ticket with a credit card sometimes provides limited travel insurance, and you may be able to reclaim the payment if the operator doesn't deliver. In the UK, for instance, credit card providers are required by law to reimburse consumers if a company goes into liquidation and the amount in contention is more than UK£100.

## INTERNET ACCESS

Greece has long since embraced the convenience of the internet big time. There has been a huge increase in the number of hotels and businesses using email, and these addresses have been listed here where available. For a selection of useful websites about Greece, see p22.

Internet cafés are everywhere, and are listed under the Information section for cities and islands where available. Some hotels also offer internet access. Many internet cafés and hotels now offer wi-fi access either for free or for a charge. In midrange hotels that will range from €6 for an hour to €20 for 24 hour access.

Travelling with a laptop computer is a great way to stay in touch with life back home. Today's machines are light and slip easily into a protected daypack. Your laptop becomes your portable office: internet, a VoIP phone, your DVD and CD player, your photo archive and you can even create movies on the fly if you have a lightweight video camera with you too. You simply need to be certain that the power supply of your machine is compatible with Greece's.

Dialing up to connect to the internet has become a thing of the past in Greece. As long as your laptop has a wireless card, or at least an Ethernet port, you can connect seamlessly at internet cafés or hotels or even hot spots in major towns. Syntagma Sq in Athens for example has plenty of hot spots. Many internet cafés will have an Ethernet cable too to connect your laptop if you do not have a wireless

card. Note: internet cafés can often be noisy places as gaming has become big business. If you want to do any VoIP calling, choose your 'i-caf' judiciously.

## Email

By far the easiest way to access your email is via the web-based email programme of your service provider. Dedicated email programmes such as Outlook (Windows) or Entourage (Macintosh) will collect your mail for you via a wireless or Ethernet node, but you will most probably not be able to send mail using these programmes because of relaying blocking by local ISPs. If your service provider does not have an alternative web-based email page then use a service like Gmail, Yahoo! or Hotmail to send and read mail.

## LEGAL MATTERS

### Arrests

It is a good idea to have your passport with you at all times in case you are stopped by the police and questioned. Greek citizens are presumed to always have identification on them; foreign visitors are similarly presumed to by the police. If you are arrested by police insist on an interpreter (*the-lo dhi-ermi-nea*) and/or a lawyer (*the-lo dhi-ki-go-ro*).

### Drugs

Greek drug laws are the strictest in Europe. Greek courts make no distinction between possession and pushing. Possession of even a small amount of marijuana is likely to land you in jail.

## MAPS

Unless you are going to hike or drive, the free maps given out by the EOT will probably suffice, although they are not 100% accurate. On islands where there is no EOT office, there are usually tourist maps for sale for around €1.50 but, again, these are not very accurate.

The best overall maps for coverage are published by the Greek company **Road Editions** (☎ 210 345 5575; www.road.gr; Zozanis 21 & Amfipoleos, Votanikos, Athens), whose maps are produced with the assistance of the Hellenic Army Geographical Service. There is a wide range of maps to suit various needs, starting with a 1:500,000 map of Greece. Motorists should check out the company's 1:250,000 maroon-cover series covering Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly and Epiros, Central Greece, the Peloponnese and

Crete. Even the smallest roads and villages are clearly marked, and the distance indicators are spot-on – important when negotiating your way around the backblocks.

The company's blue-cover Greek island series includes all the main islands. The scale ranges from 1:100,000 for larger islands like Corfu and Rhodes to 1:30,000 for Syros. It also publishes a 1:50,000 green-cover Greek mountain series, produced with hikers in mind.

Equally good if not better for the islands are the *Topo* series published by **Anavasi** (☎ 210 321 8104; www.mountains.gr; Stoa Arsiakiou 6a, Athens). The durable plasticised paper is the main advantage, plus the detailed walking trails for many of the Aegean islands.

Finally the yellow and blue maps published by **Emvelia** (☎ 210 771 7616; www.emvelia.gr; Navarinou 12, Athens) are also detailed, though the paper is of a poorer quality. Their main advantage is the handy index booklet with each map, many of which have excellent plans of the region's main towns.

All maps can be bought online or at major bookstores in Greece.

## MONEY

Greece has been using the euro currency since the beginning of 2002, exactly one year after the Greek drachma (dr) went into the euro-currency basket, fixed at a rate of 340.75 dr to €1.

There are eight euro coins, in denominations of two and one euros, then 50, 20, 10, five, two and one cents, and six notes: €5, €10, €20, €50, €100 and €200.

See inside the front cover for currency exchange rates and p20 for information on costs in Greece.

### ATMs

ATMs are to be found in every town large enough to support a bank – and certainly in all the tourist areas. If you've got MasterCard or Visa/Access, there are plenty of places to withdraw money. Cirrus and Maestro users can make withdrawals in all major towns and tourist areas.

Automated foreign exchange machines are common in major tourist areas. They take all the major European currencies, Australian and US dollars and Japanese yen, and are useful in an emergency. Note that they charge a hefty commission, though.

## Cash

Nothing beats cash for convenience – or for risk. If you lose cash, it's gone for good and very few travel insurers will come to your rescue. Those that will normally limit the amount to approximately US\$300. It's best to carry no more cash than you need for the next few days, which means working out your likely needs whenever you change travellers cheques or withdraw cash.

It's also a good idea to set aside a small amount of cash, say US\$100, as an emergency stash.

Note that Greek shopkeepers and small business owners have a perennial problem with small change. They rarely have any! If buying small items it is better to tender coin or small denomination notes as the seller will inevitably never have any change.

### Credit Cards

The great advantage of credit cards is that they allow you to pay for major items without carrying around great wads of cash. Credit cards are now an accepted part of the commercial scene in Greece just about everywhere. They can be used to pay for a wide range of goods and services such as meals (in better restaurants) and accommodation, car hire and souvenirs.

The main credit cards are MasterCard, Visa (Access in the UK) and Eurocard, all of which are widely accepted in Greece. They can also be used as cash cards to draw cash from the ATMs of affiliated Greek banks in the same way as at home. Daily withdrawal limits are set by the issuing bank. Cash advances are given in local currency only. Credit cards can be used to pay for accommodation in all the smarter hotels. Some C-class hotels will accept credit cards, but D- and E-class hotels rarely do.

The main charge cards are American Express and Diners Club, which are widely accepted in tourist areas but unheard of elsewhere.

### Tipping

In restaurants a service charge is normally included in the bill and while a tip is not expected (as it is in North America), it is always appreciated and should be left if the service has been good. Taxi drivers normally expect you to round up the fare, while bellhops who help you with your luggage to your hotel room



or stewards on ferries who take you to your cabin normally expect a small gratuity of between €1 and €3.

### Travellers Cheques

The main reason to carry travellers cheques rather than cash is the protection they offer against theft. They are, however, losing popularity as more and more travellers opt to put their money in a bank at home and withdraw it at ATMs as they go.

American Express, Visa and Thomas Cook cheques are all widely accepted and have efficient replacement policies. Maintaining a record of the cheque numbers and recording when you use them is vital when it comes to replacing lost cheques – keep this separate from the cheques themselves. US dollars are a good currency to use.

## PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

### Film & Equipment

Digital photography has taken over in a big way in Greece and a range of memory cards can now be bought from camera stores. Film is still widely available, although it can be expensive in smaller towns. You'll find all the gear you need in the photography shops of Athens and major cities.

In Greece, it is possible to obtain video cassettes in larger towns and cities, but be sure to buy the correct format. It is usually worth buying at least a few cassettes duty-free to start off your trip.

### Photography

Because of the brilliant sunlight in summer, you'll get better results using a polarising lens filter.

As elsewhere in the world, developing film is a competitive business. Most places charge around €9 to develop a roll of 36 colour prints. Some shops, or even computer shops, can burn your digital images to compact disk for you if you are running out of storage space on your memory card.

Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography: A Guide to Taking Better Pictures* by respected photographer Richard T'Anson offers a comprehensive guide to technical and creative travel photography.

### Restrictions & Etiquette

Never photograph a military installation or anything else that has a sign forbidding pho-

tography. Flash photography is not allowed inside churches, and it's considered taboo to photograph the main altar.

Greeks usually love having their photos taken but always ask permission first. The same goes for video cameras, probably even more annoying and offensive for locals than a still camera.

At archaeological sites you will be stopped from using a tripod as it marks you as a 'professional'.

### Video

Properly used, a video camera can give a fascinating record of your holiday. As well as videoing the obvious things – sunsets, spectacular views – remember to record some of the ordinary everyday details of life in the country. Often the most interesting things occur when you're actually intent on filming something else.

Make sure you keep the batteries charged, and have the necessary charger, plugs and transformer for Greece (for more information, see p175).

### POST

*Tahydromia* (post offices) are easily identifiable by the yellow signs outside. Regular post boxes are also yellow. The red boxes are for express mail only.

### Postal Rates

The postal rate for postcards and airmail letters to all destinations outside Greece is €0.62 for up to 20g; for items up to 50g within the EU it is €0.90 and €1 outside the EU. Post within Europe takes between four and six days and to the USA, Australia and New Zealand, seven to 10 days. Some tourist shops also sell stamps, but with a 10% surcharge.

Registered mail costs an extra €2.50 and should ensure delivery in three days within the EU.

### Receiving Mail

You can receive mail *poste restante* (general delivery) at any main post office. The service is free, but you are required to show your passport. Ask senders to write your family name in capital letters and underline it, and also to mark the envelope '*poste restante*'. It is a good idea to ask the post office clerk to check under your first name as well if letters you are expecting cannot be located. After one month,

uncollected mail is returned to the sender. If you are about to leave a town and expected mail hasn't arrived, ask at the post office to have it forwarded to your next destination, *c/o poste restante*. Both Athens Central post office (p109) and Syntagma Post Office (p109), also in Athens, hold *poste restante* mail.

Parcels are not delivered in Greece; they must be collected from the parcel counter of a post office.

### Sending Mail

Do not wrap a parcel until it has been inspected at a post office. In Athens, take your parcel to the Syntagma Post Office (p109), and elsewhere to the parcel counter of a regular post office.

## SHOPPING

Shopping in Greece for Greeks and visitors alike is big business. At times a tourist town can look like one big shop with all kinds of goods and trinkets on display. The trouble is a lot of it is overpriced and of inferior quality; the moral of the story is don't shop in tourist areas. That said Athens' Flea Market (p144) has a bewildering array of items on sale and you can find some good bargains. Shoes and clothes are excellent buys, especially in the post-seasonal sales, and if you have room in your suitcase or backpack there are some really excellent quality artisanal works to be picked up from small boutiques and galleries, including pottery, jewellery and metal-worked *objets*.

### Bargaining

Getting a bit extra off the deal through bargaining is sadly a thing of the past in Greece. You might be offered a 'special deal' but the art and sport of bargaining per se has gone the way of the drachma: out the window. Instead, know your goods and decide for yourself if the price you are being offered is worth it before accepting the deal.

## SOLO TRAVELLERS

Greece is a great destination for solo travellers, especially in summer when the Greek islands become an international meeting point. Hostels and other backpacker-friendly accommodation are good places to meet up with other solo travellers. Dining solo in restaurants is not an issue with restaurant owners and there are no real disadvantages to travelling solo – other than that you are unlikely to stay solo for long.

## TELEPHONE

The Greek telephone service is maintained by the public corporation known as OTE (pronounced *o-teh*; Organismos Tilepikoinonion Ellados).

The system is modern and reasonably well maintained. There are public telephones just about everywhere, including in some unbelievably isolated spots. The phones are easy to operate and can be used for local, long distance and international calls. The 'i' at the top left of the push-button dialling panel brings up the operating instructions in English. All public phones use phonecards not coins.

Note that in Greece the area code must always be dialled when making a call (ie all Greek phone numbers are 10-digit).

### Mobile Phones

The number of mobile phones in Greece now exceeds the number of landline phones. Mobile telephony is big business here.

If you have a compatible GSM mobile phone from a country with an overseas global roaming arrangement with Greece, you will be able to use your phone in Greece. You must inform your mobile phone service provider before you depart in order to have global roaming activated.

There are several mobile service providers in Greece – among which Panafon, CosmOTE and Wind are the best known. All offer 2G connectivity. Of these three, CosmOTE tends to have the best coverage in remote areas, so try re-tuning your phone to CosmOTE if you find mobile coverage is patchy. All three companies offer pay-as-you-talk services by which you can buy a rechargeable SIM card and have your own Greek mobile number. The Panafon system is called 'à la Carte', the Wind system 'F2G' and CosmOTE is 'Cosmorkarta'.

USA and Canadian mobile phone users won't be able to use their mobile phones, unless their handset is equipped with a dual or tri-band system.

Note: the use of a mobile phone while driving in Greece is prohibited, but the use of a Bluetooth headset is allowed.

### Phonecards

All public phones use OTE phonecards, known as *telekarta*, not coins. These cards (€3, €5 and €9) are widely available at *periptera*, corner shops and tourist shops. A local call costs €0.30 for three minutes.



It's also possible to use these phones using a growing range of discount-card schemes, which involve dialling an access code and then punching in your card number. The OTE version of this card is known as 'Hronokarta'. The cards come with instructions in Greek and English. The talk time is enormous compared to the standard phone card rates. Definitely consider.

## TIME

Greece maintains one time zone throughout the country and is two hours ahead of GMT/UTC and three hours ahead on daylight-saving time – which begins on the last Sunday in March, when clocks are put forward one hour. Daylight saving ends on the last Sunday in October.

For a rundown of current world times, see the World Time Zone map (pp786–7).

## TOILETS

Most places in Greece have Western-style toilets, especially hotels and restaurants that cater for tourists. You'll occasionally come across Asian-style squat toilets in older houses, *kafeneia* and public toilets.

Public toilets are a rarity, except at airports and bus and train stations. Cafés are the best option if you get caught short, but you'll be expected to buy something for the privilege.

One peculiarity of the Greek plumbing system is that it can't handle toilet paper; apparently the pipes are too narrow. Whatever the reason, anything larger than a postage stamp seems to cause a problem; flushing away tampons and sanitary napkins is guaranteed to block the system. Toilet paper etc should be placed in the small bin provided next to every toilet.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist information is handled by the Greek National Tourist Organization ([www.gnto.gr](http://www.gnto.gr)), known by the initials GNTO abroad and EOT within Greece.

### Local Tourist Offices

The EOT (p110) in Athens dispenses information including a very useful timetable of the week's ferry departures from Piraeus, and details about public transport prices and schedules from Athens. Its free map of Athens is urgently in need of an update, although most places of interest are clearly marked.

The office is about 500m from Ambelokipi metro station.

EOT offices can be found in major tourist locations, though they are increasingly being supplemented or even replaced by local municipality tourist offices.

### Tourist Offices Abroad

GNTO offices abroad:

**Australia** (☎ 02-9241 1663/5; [hto@tpg.com.au](mailto:hto@tpg.com.au); 51-57 Pitt St, Sydney NSW 2000)

**Austria** (☎ 1-512 5317; [grect@vienna.at](mailto:grect@vienna.at); Operring 8, Vienna A-10105)

**Belgium** (☎ 2-647 5770; [gnto@skynet.be](mailto:gnto@skynet.be); 172 Ave Louise Louizalaan, B1050 Brussels)

**Canada** Toronto (☎ 416-968 2220; [gnto.tor@sympatico.ca](mailto:gnto.tor@sympatico.ca); 91 Scollard St, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1G4); Montreal (☎ 514-871 1535; 1170 Place Du Frere Andre, Montreal, Quebec H3B 3C6)

**Denmark** (☎ 33-325 332; Vester Farimagsgade 1, 1606 Copenhagen)

**France** (☎ 01-42 60 65 75; [eot@club-Internet.fr](mailto:eot@club-Internet.fr); 3 Ave de l'Opéra, Paris 75001)

**Germany** Berlin (☎ 30-217 6262; Wittenbergplatz 3a, 10789 Berlin 30); Frankfurt (☎ 69-236 561; [info@gzf-eot.de](mailto:info@gzf-eot.de); Neue Mainzerstrasse 22, 60311 Frankfurt); Hamburg (☎ 40-454 498; [info-hamburg@gzf-eot.de](mailto:info-hamburg@gzf-eot.de); Neurer Wall 18, 20254 Hamburg); Munich (☎ 89-222 035/036; Pachelistrasse 5, 2W 80333 Munich)

**Israel** (☎ 3-517 0501; [hellenic@netvision.net.il](mailto:hellenic@netvision.net.il); 5 Shalom Aleichem St, Tel Aviv 61262)

**Italy** Rome (☎ 06-474 4249; [www.ente-turismoellenico.com](http://www.ente-turismoellenico.com); Via L Bissolati 78-80, 00187 Roma); Milan (☎ 02-860 470; Piazza Diaz 1, 20123 Milano)

**Japan** (☎ 03-350 55 917; [gnto-jpn@t3.rim.or.jp](mailto:gnto-jpn@t3.rim.or.jp); Fukuda Bldg West, 5F 2-11-3 Akasaka, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 107)

**Netherlands** (☎ 20-625 4212; [gnto@planet.nl](mailto:gnto@planet.nl); Kerkstraat 61, Amsterdam GC 1017)

**Sweden** (☎ 8-679 6480; [grekiska.statens.turistbyra@swipnet.se](mailto:grekiska.statens.turistbyra@swipnet.se); Birger Jarlsgatan 30, Box 5298 S, 10246 Stockholm)

**Switzerland** (☎ 01-221 0105; [eot@bluewin.ch](mailto:eot@bluewin.ch); Loewenstrasse 25, 8001 Zürich)

**UK** (☎ 020-7734 5997; 4 Conduit St, London W1R 0DJ)

**USA** Chicago (☎ 312-782 1084; [www.greektourism.com](http://www.greektourism.com); Suite 600, 168 North Michigan Ave, Chicago, Illinois 60601); Los Angeles (☎ 213-626 6696; Suite 2198, 611 West 6th St, Los Angeles, California 92668); New York (☎ 212-421 5777; Olympic Tower, 645 5th Ave, New York, NY 10022)

### Tourist Police

The tourist police work in cooperation with the regular Greek police and EOT. Each tourist police office has at least one member of staff who speaks English. Hotels, restaurants,

travel agencies, tourist shops, tourist guides, waiters, taxi drivers and bus drivers all come under the jurisdiction of the tourist police. If you think that you have been ripped off by any of these, report it to the tourist police and they will investigate. If you need to report a theft or loss of passport, then go to the tourist police first, and they will act as interpreters between you and the regular police. The tourist police also fulfil the same functions as the EOT and municipal tourist offices, dispensing maps and brochures, and giving information on transport. They can often help to find accommodation.

## TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

If mobility is a problem and you wish to visit Greece, the hard fact is that most hotels, museums and ancient sites in Greece are not wheelchair accessible. This is partly due to the uneven terrain of much of the country, which presents a challenge even for able-bodied people, with its abundance of stones, rocks and marble. Visually or hearing impaired people will not find much help in Greece as the current infrastructure has not seriously tackled their needs yet.

If you are determined, then take heart in the knowledge that disabled people do come to Greece for holidays. But the trip needs careful planning, so get as much information as you can before you go. The British-based **Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation** (Radar; ☎ 020 7250 3222; [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk); 12 City Forum, 250 City Rd, London EC1V 8AF) publishes a useful guide called *Holidays & Travel Abroad: A Guide for Disabled People*, which gives a good overview of facilities available to disabled travellers in Europe.

## VISAS

The list of countries whose nationals can stay in Greece for up to three months without a visa includes Australia, Canada, all EU countries, Iceland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the USA. Other countries included are the European principalities of Monaco and San Marino and most South American countries. The list changes – contact Greek embassies for the full list. Those not included can expect to pay about US\$20 for a three-month visa.

## Visa Extensions

If you wish to stay in Greece for longer than three months, apply at a consulate abroad or

at least 20 days in advance to the **Aliens Bureau** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 210 770 5711; Leoforos Alexandras 173; ☎ 8am-1pm Mon-Fri) in the Athens Central Police Station. Take your passport and four passport photographs along. You may be asked for proof that you can support yourself financially, so keep all your bank exchange slips (or the equivalent from a post office). These slips are not always automatically given – you may have to ask for them. Elsewhere in Greece apply to the local police authority. You will be given a permit that will authorise you to stay in the country for a period of up to six months.

Most travellers get around this by visiting Bulgaria or Turkey briefly and then re-entering Greece.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Many women travel alone in Greece. The crime rate remains relatively low and solo travel is probably safer than in most European countries. This does not mean that you should be lulled into complacency; bag snatching and rapes do occur, although violent offences are rare.

The biggest nuisance to foreign women travelling alone are the guys the Greeks have nicknamed *kamaki*. The word means 'fishing trident' and refers to the *kamaki's* favourite pastime: 'fishing' for foreign women. You'll find them everywhere there are lots of tourists; young (for the most part), smooth-talking guys who aren't in the least bashful about sidling up to women in the street. They can be very persistent, but they are a hassle rather than a threat.

The majority of Greek men treat foreign women with respect, and are genuinely helpful.

## WORK

EU nationals don't need a work permit, but they need a residency permit and a Greek tax file number if they intend to stay longer than three months. Nationals of other countries are supposed to have a work permit.

### Bar & Hostel Work

The bars of the Greek islands could not survive without foreign workers and there are thousands of summer jobs up for grabs every year. The pay is not fantastic, but you get to spend a summer in the islands. April and May are the times to go looking. Hostels and trav-

ellers hotels are other places that regularly employ foreign workers.

### English Tutoring

If you're looking for a permanent job, the most widely available option is to teach English. A TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate or a university degree is an advantage but not essential. In the UK, look through the *Times* educational supplement or Tuesday's edition of the *Guardian* newspaper for opportunities – in other countries, contact the Greek embassy.

Another possibility is to find a job teaching English once you are in Greece. You will see language schools everywhere. Strictly speaking, you need a licence to teach in these schools, but many will employ teachers without one. The best time to look around for such a job is late summer.

The notice board at the Compendium (p99) in Athens sometimes has advertisements looking for private English lessons.

### Street Performers

The richest pickings are to be found on the islands, particularly Mykonos, Paros and Santorini. Plaka is the place to go in Athens; the area outside the church on Kydathineon is the most popular spot.

### Volunteer Work

The **Hellenic Society for the Study & Protection of the Monk Seal** (Map pp104-5; ☎ 210 522 2888; fax 210 522 2450; Solomou 53, Athens) and the **Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece** (Map pp104-5; ☎ /fax 210 523 1342; www.archelon.gr; Solomou 57, Athens) use volunteers for the monitoring programmes they run on the Ionian Islands and the Peloponnese.

The **Hellenic Wildlife Hospital** (Elliniko Kentro Perithalpsis Agrion Zoon; ☎ 22970 28367; www.ekpaz.gr in Greek; ☎ 11am-1pm) in Aegina welcomes volunteers, particularly during the winter months. The new centre has also accommodation available for volunteer workers. For more information, see Eco Saronics, p355.

### Other Work

There are often jobs advertised in the classifieds of English-language newspapers, or you can place an advertisement yourself if you wish. EU nationals can also make use of the OAED (Organismos Apasholiseos Ergatikou Dynamikou), which is the Greek National Employment Service, in their search for employment. The OAED has offices throughout the country.

Seasonal harvest work is handled by migrant workers from Albania and other Balkan nations, and is no longer a viable option for travellers.

# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

### ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Visitors to Greece with EU passports are rarely afforded more than a cursory glance. If entering from another EU nation passports are not checked, but customs and police may be interested in what you are carrying. EU citizens may also enter Greece on a national identity card. Some visitors may require a visa to enter the EU so this must be checked with consular authorities before you attempt to enter Greece. For more information on visas, see p731.

### AIR

Most visitors to Greece arrive by air, which is the cheapest and quickest way to get here.

### Airports & Airlines

Greece has 16 international airports, but only those in Athens, Thessaloniki, Rhodes and Iraklio (Crete) take scheduled flights:

**Athens** (Eleftherios Venizelos International Airport; code ATH; ☎ 210 353 0000; [www.aia.gr](http://www.aia.gr))

**Iraklio** (Nikos Kazantzakis International Airport; code HER; ☎ 28102 28401)

**Rhodes** (Diagoras Airport; code RHO; ☎ 22410 83222)

**Thessaloniki** (Macedonia International Airport; code SKG; ☎ 23104 73700)

Greece's other international airports are located at Mykonos, Santorini (Thira), Hania (Crete), Iraklio (Crete), Kos, Karpathos, Samos, Skiathos, Hryssoupoli (for Kavala), Aktion (for Lefkada), Kefallonia and Zakynthos. These airports are used exclusively for charter flights, mostly from the UK, Germany and Scandinavia. Charter flights also fly to all of Greece's other international airports.

Athens handles the vast majority of flights, including all intercontinental traffic. Thessaloniki has direct flights to Amsterdam, Belgrade, Berlin, Brussels, Cyprus, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, İstanbul, London, Milan, Moscow, Munich, Paris, Stuttgart, Tirana, Vienna and Zürich.

### AIRLINES FLYING TO/FROM GREECE

**Olympic Airlines** (OA; ☎ 801 114 4444; [www.olympicairlines.com](http://www.olympicairlines.com)) is the country's national airline, and most flights to Athens and Thessaloniki are with Olympic or the flag carrier of the country of departure. Olympic is not Greece's only international airline. **Aegean Airlines** (A3; ☎ 801 112 0000; [www.aegeanair.com](http://www.aegeanair.com)) flies direct from Athens to Rome and Venice, and via Thessaloniki to Cologne, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich and Stuttgart. Iraklio has direct flights to Cyprus with Olympic, while Aegean Airlines flies

### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

## CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

### Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

### Carbon offset schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

direct to Paris, Germany and Italy. The safety record of both airlines is exemplary.

The contact details for local Olympic and Aegean offices are listed throughout the book.

Other airlines with offices in Athens:

**Aeroflot** (code SU; ☎ 210 322 0986; [www.aeroflot.org](http://www.aeroflot.org))

**Air Berlin** (AB; ☎ 210 353 5264; [www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com))

**Air Canada** (AC; ☎ 210 617 5321; [www.aircanada.ca](http://www.aircanada.ca))

**Air France** (AF; ☎ 210 353 0380; [www.airfrance.com](http://www.airfrance.com))

**Alitalia** (AZ; ☎ 210 353 4284; [www.alitalia.it](http://www.alitalia.it))

**American Airlines** (AA; ☎ 210 331 1045; [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com))

**British Airways** (BA; ☎ 210 890 6666; [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com))

**Cyprus Airways** (CY; ☎ 210 372 2722; [www.cyprusair.com.cy](http://www.cyprusair.com.cy))

**Delta Airlines** (DL; ☎ 210 331 1660; [www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com))

**easyJet** (U2; ☎ 210 967 0000; [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com))

**EgyptAir** (MS; ☎ 210 353 1272; [www.egyptair.com.eg](http://www.egyptair.com.eg))

**El Al** (LY; ☎ 210 353 1003; [www.elal.co.il](http://www.elal.co.il))

**Emirates Airlines** (EK; ☎ 210 933 3400; [www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com))

**Gulf Air** (GF; ☎ 210 322 0851; [www.gulfairco.com](http://www.gulfairco.com))

**Iberia** (IB; ☎ 210 323 4523; [www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com))

**Japan Airlines** (JL; ☎ 210 324 8211; [www.jal.co.jp](http://www.jal.co.jp))

**KLM** (KL; ☎ 210 353 1295; [www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com))

**Lufthansa** (LH; ☎ 210 617 5200; [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com))

**Qatar Airways** (QR; ☎ 210 950 8700; [www.qatarairways.com](http://www.qatarairways.com))

**SAS** (SK; ☎ 210 361 3910; [www.sas.se](http://www.sas.se))

**Singapore Airlines** (SQ; ☎ 210 372 8000, 21035 31259; [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com))

**Thai Airways** (TG; ☎ 210 353 1237; [www.thaiairways.com](http://www.thaiairways.com))

**Turkish Airlines** (TK; ☎ 210 322 1035; [www.turkishairlines.com](http://www.turkishairlines.com))

**Virgin Express** (TV; ☎ 210 949 0777; [www.virgin-express.com](http://www.virgin-express.com))

## Asia

Most Asian countries offer fairly competitive deals, with Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong the best places to shop around for discount tickets.

Khao San Rd in Bangkok is the budget travellers' headquarters. Bangkok has a number of excellent travel agencies, but there are also some suspect ones; ask the advice of other travellers. **STA Travel** (☎ 02-236 0262; [www.statravel.co.th](http://www.statravel.co.th)) is a good place to start.

In Singapore, **STA Travel** (☎ 6737 7188; [www.statravel.com.sg](http://www.statravel.com.sg)) offers competitive discount fares for most destinations. Singapore, like Bangkok, has hundreds of travel agencies to choose from, so it is possible to compare prices. Chinatown Point shopping centre on New Bridge Rd has a good selection of travel agencies.

In Hong Kong, **Four Seas Tours** (☎ 2200 7760; [www.fourseastravel.com](http://www.fourseastravel.com)) is recommended, as is **Shoestring Travel** (☎ 2723 2306).

## Australia

Two well-known agencies are STA Travel and Flight Centre. **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; [www.statravel.com.au](http://www.statravel.com.au)) has its main office in Melbourne, but also has offices in all major cities and on many university campuses. Call for the location of your nearest branch. **Flight Centre** (☎ 13 16 00; [www.flightcentre.com.au](http://www.flightcentre.com.au)) has its central office in Sydney and dozens of offices throughout Australia.

Qantas no longer flies direct to Athens, but you could fly via London with a British Airways connection to Athens. Thai Airways and Singapore Airlines both have convenient connections to Athens as do three of the Persian Gulf airlines – Emirates, Gulf and Qatar Airways. If you're planning on doing a bit of flying around Europe, it's worth looking around for special deals from the major European airlines, including KLM and Lufthansa.

## Canada

Canada's national student travel agency is **Travel CUTS** (☎ 800 667 2887; [www.travelcuts.com](http://www.travelcuts.com)), which has offices in all major cities. For online bookings go to [www.expedia.ca](http://www.expedia.ca) or [www.travelocity.ca](http://www.travelocity.ca).

Olympic Airlines has flights from Toronto to Athens via Montreal. There are no direct flights from Vancouver, but there are connecting flights via Toronto, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and London on Air Canada, KLM, Lufthansa and British Airways.

## Continental Europe

Athens is linked to every major city in Europe by either Olympic Airlines or the flag carrier of each country.

London is the discount capital of Europe, but Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Berlin and Paris are also major centres for cheap airfares.

France has a network of travel agencies that can supply discount tickets to travellers of all ages. They include **OTU Voyages** (☎ 01 40 29 12 22; [www.otu.fr](http://www.otu.fr)), which has branches across the country. Other recommendations include **Voyageurs du Monde** (☎ 01 40 15 11 15; [www.vdm.com](http://www.vdm.com)) and **Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 0825 000 747; [www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr](http://www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr)).

In Germany, **STA Travel** (☎ 01805 456 422; [www.statravel.de](http://www.statravel.de)) has several offices around the country. For online fares, try **Just Travel** (☎ 089 747 3330; [www.justtravel.de](http://www.justtravel.de)) and **Expedia** (☎ 0180 500 6025; [www.expedia.de](http://www.expedia.de)).

In the Netherlands, **Airfair** (☎ 020-620 5121; [www.airfair.nl](http://www.airfair.nl)) and **MyTravel** (☎ 0900 10 20 300; [www.mytravel.nl](http://www.mytravel.nl)) are recommended.

## Cyprus

Olympic Airlines and Cyprus Airways share the Cyprus–Greece routes. Both airlines have three flights daily from Larnaca to Athens, and there are five flights weekly to Thessaloniki. Cyprus Airways also flies from Pafos to Athens once a week in winter and twice a week in summer, while Olympic has two flights weekly between Larnaca and Iraklio.

## Turkey

Olympic Airlines and Turkish Airlines share the İstanbul–Athens route, with at least one flight a day each. There are no direct flights from Ankara to Athens; all flights go via İstanbul.

## UK

Discount air travel is big business in London. Advertisements for many travel agencies appear in the travel pages of the weekend broadsheet newspapers, in *Time Out*, the *Evening Standard* and the free magazine *TNT*.

For students or travellers under 26, a popular travel agency in the UK is **STA Travel** (☎ 087 0160 0599; [www.statravel.co.uk](http://www.statravel.co.uk)). Other recommended travel agencies in London include **Traifinders** (☎ 020 7938 3939; [www.traifinders.co.uk](http://www.traifinders.co.uk)), **Travel Bag** (☎ 0870 814 6614; [www.travelbag.co.uk](http://www.travelbag.co.uk)) and **ebookers** (☎ 0800 082 3000; [www.ebookers.com](http://www.ebookers.com)).

British Airways and Olympic Airlines operate daily flights between London and Athens. Pricing is very competitive, with all four travel agencies offering return tickets for around UK£200+ in high season, plus tax. At other times, prices fall as low as UK£100, plus tax.

The cheapest scheduled flights are with **easyJet** (☎ 0871 750 0100; [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)), the no-frills specialist, which has flights from Luton and Gatwick to Athens. Pricing varies wildly depending on departure days and times. See the website for the current rates.

## USA

**STA Travel** (☎ 800 781 4040; [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com)) has offices in Boston, Chicago, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and other major cities. For online bookings try [www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com), [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com) and [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com).

New York has the widest range of options to Athens. The route to Europe is very competitive and there are new deals almost every day. Olympic Airlines and Delta Airlines both have direct flights but there are numerous other connecting flights.

There are no direct flights to Athens from the west coast. There are, however, connecting flights to Athens from many US cities, either linking with Olympic Airlines in New York or flying with one of the European national airlines to their home country, and then on to Athens.

## LAND Border Crossings

**ALBANIA**  
There are four crossing points between Greece and Albania. The main one is at Kakavia, 60km northwest of Ioannina (see p330). The other crossings are at Sagiada, 28km north of Igoumenitsa; Mertziani, 17km west of Konitsa; and Krystallopigi, 14km west of Kotas on the Florina–Kastoria road.

## BULGARIA

There are three Bulgarian border crossings: one located at Promahonas, 109km northeast of Thessaloniki and 41km from Serres; one at Ormenio in northeastern Thrace; and a new 448m tunnel border crossing at Exohi, 50km north of Drama.

## FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (FYROM)

There are three border crossings between Greece and FYROM. These are at Evzoni, 68km north of Thessaloniki; Niki (p305), 16km north of Florina; and Doirani, 31km north of Kilkis.

## TURKEY

The crossing points are at Kipi (p319), 43km east of Alexandroupoli, and at Kastanies (p319), 139km northeast of Alexandroupoli. Kipi is probably more convenient if you're heading for Istanbul, but the route through Kastanies goes via the fascinating towns of Soufli and Didymoticho in Greece, and Edirne (ancient Adrianoupolis) in Turkey.

## Albania BUS

The Greek Railways Organisation (OSE) operates a daily bus between Athens and Tirana

(€35.20) via Ioannina and Gjirokastra. The bus departs Athens daily from Sidiridromou 1 near the Larisis train station, arriving in Tirana the following day.

See the Florina (p305) and Ioannina (p330) sections of the Northern Greece chapter for alternative public transport options to Albania.

## Bulgaria BUS

The OSE operates a bus from Athens to Sofia (€45.50, 15 hours) at 7am daily except Monday. It also operates Thessaloniki–Sofia buses (€19, 7½ hours, four daily). There is a private bus service to Plovdiv (€29.50, six hours) and Sofia (€35.50, seven hours) from Alexandroupoli on Wednesday and Sunday at 8.30am.

## TRAIN

There is a daily train to Sofia from Athens (€32, 18 hours) via Thessaloniki (€18, nine hours). From Sofia, there are connections to Budapest (€68) and Bucharest (€39).

## Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

### TRAIN

There are two trains daily from Thessaloniki to Skopje (€12, five hours), crossing the border between Idomeni and Gevgelija. They continue from Skopje to the Serbian capital of Belgrade (€30, 13 hours).

There are no trains between Florina and FYROM, although there are one or two trains a day to Skopje from Bitola (€6, 4½ hours) on the FYROM side of the border.

## Russia TRAIN

There is one summer-only train service a week from Thessaloniki to Moscow. It departs Thessaloniki at 7.42am on Sunday and arrives in Moscow at 5.26am on Wednesday. It departs Moscow for the return trip at 11.32pm on the same day. The cost is €147.80 for a berth in a three-bed cabin.

## Turkey BUS

The OSE operates a bus from Athens to Istanbul (22 hours) daily except Wednesday, leaving the former Peloponnese train station in Athens in the evening and travelling via Thes-

saloniki (seven hours) and Alexandroupoli (13 hours). One-way fares are €67.50 from Athens, €44 from Thessaloniki and €15 from Alexandroupoli. Students qualify for a 20% discount and children under 12 travel for half-price. See each city's Getting There & Away sections for information on where to buy tickets.

Buses from Istanbul to Athens leave the Anadolu Terminal (Anatolia Terminal) at the Topkapı *otogar* (bus station) at 10am daily except Sunday.

## TRAIN

There are no direct trains between Athens and Istanbul. Travellers must take a train to Thessaloniki and connect with one of two daily services running to the Turkish city. The best option is the Fila–Tostluk Express service, leaving Thessaloniki at 8pm (€48.25, 11½ hours) and arriving in Istanbul at 7.30am. The other service is the indirect Intercity IC90 service to Orestiada leaving Thessaloniki at 7am; passengers for Istanbul change at Pythio on the Greece–Turkey border.

## Western Europe

Overland travel between Western Europe and Greece is nowadays usually confined to heading to an Italian port and picking up the most geographically convenient ferry. The route through Croatia, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, while quite feasible, is outweighed by the convenience of a 'minicruise' from an Italian port to one of Greece's two main entry ports, and the avoidance of fuel and hotel costs on the trip down through the Balkan peninsula.

## BUS

There are no bus services to Greece from the UK, nor from anywhere else in northern Europe. Bus companies can no longer compete with cheap airfares.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Most intending drivers these days drive to an Italian port and take a ferry to Greece. The most convenient port is Venice, with Ancona coming a close second. The route through Croatia, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia takes, on average, 2½ days from Venice to Athens, whereas a high-speed ferry from Venice to Patra can be completed in around 26 hours. From Patra to Athens is a further 3½ hours' driving.

## TRAIN

Unless you have a Eurail pass or are aged under 26 and are eligible for a discounted fare, travelling to Greece by train is expensive. Indeed, the chances of anyone wanting to travel from London to Athens by train are considered so remote that it's no longer possible to buy a single ticket for this journey. The trip involves travelling from London to Paris on the Eurostar, followed by Paris to Brindisi, then a ferry from Brindisi to Patra – and finally a train from Patra to Athens.

Greece is part of the Eurail network. Eurail passes can only be bought by residents of non-European countries and are supposed to be purchased before arriving in Europe. They can, however, be bought in Europe as long as your passport proves that you've been here for less than six months. In London, head for the **Rail Europe Travel Centre** (☎ 08705 848 848; 179 Piccadilly). Check the Eurail website ([www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com)) for full details of passes and prices.

If you are starting your European travels in Greece, you can buy your Eurail pass from the OSE office at Karolou 1-3 in Athens, and at the stations in Patra and Thessaloniki.

Greece is also part of the Inter-Rail Pass system, available to those who have resided in Europe for six months or more. See the Inter-Rail website ([www.interrailnet.com](http://www.interrailnet.com)) for details.

## SEA Albania

Corfu-based **Petrakis Lines** (☎ 26610 38690; [www.ionian-cruises.com](http://www.ionian-cruises.com)) has daily hydrofoils to the Albanian port of Saranda (€15, 25 minutes).

## Cyprus & Israel

Passenger services from Greece to Cyprus and Israel have been suspended indefinitely. **Salamis Lines** ([www.viamare.com/Salamis](http://www.viamare.com/Salamis)) still operates the route, but carries only vehicles and freight.

## Italy

There are ferries to Greece from the Italian ports of Ancona, Bari, Brindisi and Venice. For more information about these services, see the Patra (p166), Igoumenitsa (p345), Corfu (p680) and Kefallonia (p701) sections.

The ferries can get very crowded in summer. If you want to take a vehicle across it's a good idea to make a reservation beforehand. In the UK, reservations can be made on almost

all of these ferries through **Viamare Travel Ltd** (☎ 020-7431 4560; ferries@viamare.com).

You'll find all the latest information about ferry routes, schedules and services online. For an overview try [www.greekferries.gr](http://www.greekferries.gr). Most of the ferry companies have their own websites:

**Agoudimos Lines** ([www.agoudimos-lines.com](http://www.agoudimos-lines.com))

**ANEK Lines** ([www.aneke.gr](http://www.aneke.gr))

**Blue Star Ferries** ([www.bluestarferries.com](http://www.bluestarferries.com))

**Fragline** ([www.fragline.gr](http://www.fragline.gr))

**Hellenic Mediterranean Lines** ([www.hml.gr](http://www.hml.gr))

**Italian Ferries** ([www.italianferries.it](http://www.italianferries.it))

**Minoan Lines** ([www.minoan.gr](http://www.minoan.gr))

**Superfast Ferries** ([www.superfast.com](http://www.superfast.com))

**Ventouris Ferries** ([www.ventouris.gr](http://www.ventouris.gr))

The following ferry services are for high season (July and August), and prices are for one-way deck class. On these services, deck class means exactly that. If you want a reclining, aircraft-type seat, you'll be up for another 10% to 15% on top of the listed fares. All companies offer discounts for return travel. Prices are about 30% less in the low season.

#### ANCONA

This route has become increasingly popular in recent years. There is at least one boat a day year-round, and can be up to three boats daily in summer. All ferry operators in Ancona have booths at the *stazione marittima* (ferry terminal) off Piazza Candy, where you can pick up timetables and price lists and make bookings.

Blue Star Ferries and Superfast Ferries have two boats daily, taking 19 hours direct to Patra, or 21 hours via Igoumenitsa. Both charge between €60 and €70, and also sell tickets through **Morandi & Co** (☎ 071-20 20 33; Via XXIX Settembre 2/0). Superfast accepts Eurail passes. **ANEK Lines** (☎ 071-207 23 46; Via XXIX Settembre 2/0; per person €74) does the trip daily in 21 hours via Igoumenitsa.

#### BARI

**Superfast Ferries** (☎ 080-52 11 416; Corso de Tullio 6) has daily sailings to Patra via Corfu and Igoumenitsa and also accepts Eurail passes.

**Ventouris Ferries** (☎ 080-52 17 609; Stazione Marittima) has daily boats to Corfu (10 hours) and Igoumenitsa (11½ hours) for €53.

#### BRINDISI

The trip from Brindisi was once the most popular crossing, but it now operates only between

April and early October. **Hellenic Mediterranean Lines** (☎ 0831-54 80 01; Costa Morena) offers services to Patra, calling at Igoumenitsa on the way. It also has services that call at Corfu, Kefallonia, Paxi and Zakynthos. All these services cost €50, and Eurail passes are accepted.

**Agoudimos Lines** (☎ 0831-55 01 80; Via Provinciale per Lecce 29) sails only to Igoumenitsa (€56 high season).

**SNAV** ([www.snv.it](http://www.snv.it)) operates high-speed catamaran services to Corfu (€40 to €85, 4½ hours) and Paxi (€60 to €150, 5¼ hours) daily from July to mid-September.

#### VENICE

**Minoan Lines** (☎ 041-24 07 177; Stazione Marittima 123) has boats to Patra (€74, 29 hours) four times weekly, calling at Corfu and Igoumenitsa. **Blue Star Ferries** (☎ 041-27 70 559; Stazione Marittima 123) sails the route four times weekly for €64.

#### Turkey

There are five regular ferry services between Turkey's Aegean coast and the Greek islands. Tickets for all ferries to Turkey must be bought a day in advance. You will almost certainly be asked to turn in your passport the night before the trip, but don't worry, you'll get it back the next day before you board the boat. Port tax for departures to Turkey is €9.

See the relevant sections under individual island entries for more information about the following services.

#### CHIOS

There are daily Çeşme–Chios boats from July to September, dropping back to two boats a week in winter. Tickets cost €22/25 one way/return. Port tax is extra.

#### KOS

There are daily ferries in summer to Kos from Bodrum (ancient Halicarnassus) in Turkey. The one-hour journey costs €34. Port tax is extra.

#### LESVOS

There are two boats weekly from Turkey to Greece on this route in high season. Tickets cost €35 one way, including port taxes.

#### RHODES

There are daily catamarans to Rhodes from Marmaris from June to September, dropping back to maybe only three or four services a week in winter. Tickets cost €31 one way, plus

€19 Turkish departure tax. In addition there is a weekly passenger and car ferry service on Friday. The cost of ferrying a car to/from the Turkish mainland is €95 one way, while passengers pay €49 including taxes. Return rates usually work out cheaper.

#### SAMOS

There are two boats daily to Kuşadası (for Ephesus) from Samos in summer, dropping to one or two boats weekly in winter. Tickets cost €47 return, €37 one-way. Port tax is €10.

In addition to these services, see the Kastellorizo (p544) and Symi (p547) sections of the Dodecanese chapter for information about excursion boats to Turkey.

## GETTING AROUND

Greece is an easy place to travel around thanks to a comprehensive public transport system.

Buses are the mainstay of land transport, with a network that reaches out to the smallest villages. Trains are a good alternative, where available. To most visitors, though, travelling in Greece means island-hopping on the multitude of ferries that crisscross the Adriatic and the Aegean. If you're in a hurry, Greece also has an extensive domestic air network.

The information in this chapter was recorded in the 2007 high season. You'll find lots of travel information on the internet. The website [www.ellada.com](http://www.ellada.com) is a useful site with lots of links, including airline timetables.

#### AIR

##### Airlines in Greece

The vast majority of domestic flights are handled by the country's national carrier, **Olympic Airlines** (☎ 801 114 4444; [www.olympicairlines.com](http://www.olympicairlines.com)), together with its offshoot, Olympic Aviation. Olympic has offices wherever there are flights, as well as in other major towns.

The prices listed in this book are for full-fare economy, and include domestic taxes and charges. Olympic also offers cheaper options between Athens and some of the more popular destinations such as Corfu, Iraklio, Lesvos, Rhodes and Thessaloniki. There are discounts for return tickets for travel between Monday and Thursday, and bigger discounts for trips that include a Saturday night away. You'll find full details on its website, as well as information on timetables.

The baggage allowance on domestic flights is 15kg, or 20kg if the domestic flight is part of an international journey. Olympic offers a 25% student discount on domestic flights, but only if the flight is part of an international journey.

For more information on Olympic's domestic routes see p144.

Crete-based **Aegean Airlines** (☎ 801 112 0000, 210 626 1000; [www.aegeanair.com](http://www.aegeanair.com)) offers flights from Athens to Alexandroupoli, Corfu, Hania, Ioannina, Iraklio, Kavala, Lesvos, Mykonos, Rhodes, Santorini and Thessaloniki; from Thessaloniki to Iraklio, Lesvos, Mykonos, Rhodes and Santorini; and from Iraklio to Rhodes.

Full-fare economy fares cost much the same as those of Olympic, but Aegean often has special deals. It offers a 20% youth discount for travellers under 26, and a similar discount for the over 60s.

There is a comprehensive and useful website for Athens' Eleftherios Venizelos Airport at [www.aia.gr](http://www.aia.gr).

**AirSea Lines** (☎ 26610 49800; [www.airsealines.com](http://www.airsealines.com)) is a seaplane service that runs flights between Corfu and Paxi, Lefkada, Ithaki and Patra. It also runs a service between Lavrio in Attica and Kos in the Dodecanese via Mykonos and Kalymnos.

**Sky Express** (☎ 28102 23500; [www.skyexpress.gr](http://www.skyexpress.gr)) has daily flights from Iraklio to Rhodes and Santorini and up to three flights a week from Iraklio to Mytilini, Kos, Samos and Ikaria.

#### BICYCLE

Cycling has not caught on yet in Greece, which isn't surprising considering the hilly terrain. Tourists are beginning to cycle in Greece, but you'll need strong leg muscles. There is no inherent danger in cycling here – even in Athens, if you are an experienced pedal pusher – but bike lanes are rare to nonexistent (and helmets apparently are not compulsory). Drivers of vehicles are generally as courteous to cyclists as anywhere else. The island of Kos is about the most bicycle-friendly place in Greece, as is anywhere flat like the plains of Thessaly or Thrace.

Greece-based outfits such as **Cycle Greece** (☎ 210 921 8160; fax 210 921 8285, [www.cyclegreece.gr](http://www.cyclegreece.gr); Falirou 15, Athens) run driver-accompanied cycling tours of Greece such as Sacred Sites & Spas (€2016, eight days) or Cycle Cyclades (€3925, 12 days).

## Hire

You can hire bicycles in most tourist places, but they are not as widely available as cars and motorcycles. Prices range from €5 to €12 per day, depending on the type and age of the bike.

## Purchase

Bicycles are carried free on ferries. You can buy decent mountain or touring bikes in Greece's major towns, though you may have a problem finding a ready buyer if you wish to on-sell it. Bike prices are much the same as across the rest of Europe, anywhere from €300 to €2000.

## BOAT

Greece has a vast and complex ferry network covering every inhabited island. Services are more frequent from May to October and drop back to often quite limited services in between. The fleet is changing and travel is now quite comfortable (for more details see A Sea Change, below).

## Catamaran

High-speed catamarans have become an important part of the island travel scene. They are just as fast as hydrofoils – if not faster – and more comfortable. They are also less

prone to cancellation in rough weather. Fares are the same as for hydrofoils.

Hellenic Seaways is the major player. It operates giant, vehicle-carrying cats from Piraeus and Rafina to the Cyclades, and smaller Flying Cats from Rafina to the central and northern Cyclades and on many routes around the Saronic Gulf.

Blue Star Ferries operates its Seajet catamarans on the run from Rafina to Tinos, Mykonos and Paros.

**Dodekanisos Seaways** (Map p522; ☎ 22410 70590; www.12ne.gr; Afstralia 3) runs two luxurious Norwegian-built passenger catamarans between Rhodes and Patmos in the Dodecanese.

Most services are very popular; book as far in advance as possible, especially if you want to travel on weekends.

## Ferry

For most people, travel in Greece means island-hopping. Every island has a ferry service of some sort, although in winter services to some of the smaller islands are fairly skeletal. Services start to pick up again from April onwards, and by July and August there are countless services crisscrossing the Aegean. Ferries come in all shapes and sizes, from the giant 'superferries' that work the

major routes to the small, ageing, open ferries that chug around the backwaters.

The main ferry companies in Greece:

**ANEK** (☎ 210 419 7420; www.aneke.gr)

**Blue Star Ferries** (☎ 210 891 9800; www.bluestarferries.com)

**GA Ferries** (☎ 210 419 9100; www.ferries.gr/gaferries)

**Hellenic Seaways** (☎ 210 419 9000; www.hellenicseaways.gr)

**LANE Lines** (☎ 210 427 4011; www.lane.gr)

**Minoan Lines** (☎ 210 414 5700; www.minoan.gr)

**NEL Lines** (☎ 22510 26299; www.nel.gr)

## CLASSES

Classes are largely a thing of the past. The public spaces on the more modern ferries are generally open to all and sundry. What does

differ is the level of accommodation. Your 'deck class' ticket typically gives you access to the deck and interior with no accommodation option. Next up, aeroplane-type seats give you a reclining seat in which to relax and hopefully sleep. Then come various shades of cabin accommodation: four-berth, three-berth or two-berth interior cabins are cheaper than their equivalent outside cabins with a port-hole. Then there are luxury cabins with a view to the front of the ship, and which resemble standard cruise-ship cabins.

Deck class remains an economical way to travel, while a luxury cabin ticket will inevitably cost more than an airline ticket to the same destination. On the deck you can usually pitch a sleeping bag and pillow; in a cabin you will

## A SEA CHANGE

Following the sinking of the F/B *Express Samina* off Paros on 26 September 2000, and the subsequent tragic loss of 82 human lives, Greece's domestic ferry scene has undergone a radical transformation. Almost gone are the days of slow rust buckets that made Greek domestic ferry travel an experience to endure rather than enjoy. Sure, there are still a number of slow boats pounding the sea routes between islands and they are fun in an almost anachronistic way – especially if you have time – but you can now travel in serious comfort if you want to arrive at your island relaxed and rested. The sleek, fast ferries and catamarans are more like planes these days. They offer first-, business- and traveller-class seating, no-smoking sections (!), videos, cafeterias and bars. However, there is a trade-off. You are essentially seat-bound (on catamarans) for the duration of your trip as there are no decks to stroll on, no swimming pools to dip into and no benches to park a sleeping bag on. (The superfast ferries do not confine you to a seat though they do have less outside deck space.)

The high-speed ferries such as those run by Minoan Lines and Blue Star Ferries are a better option. They offer all of the above, but are more like conventional ferries. Not as fast as the catamarans, they are still very fast and make travel from one end of the Aegean to the other a breeze. Sea travel can now be quite expensive, especially if you want a bed for the night in a cabin. The cost of a cabin bed from Piraeus to Rhodes can be noticeably more expensive than a discounted airline ticket. However, if you long for the old days, you can still find the smoke-filled cafeterias with three TVs all showing different programmes; the insalubrious bathrooms; and the chug-a-lug voyages across the seas – just choose carefully. The sea change afoot in Greek waters means that those experiences will soon be limited to travellers' memories only.

## FERRY ROUTES





sleep in comfort. Many modern high-speed ferries have limited outside deck space so you may find yourself juggling for floor or lounge seat space to sleep.

Children under four travel for free, while children between four and 10 pay half-fare. Full fares apply for children over 10. Unless you state otherwise, you will automatically be given deck class when purchasing a ticket. Prices quoted in this book are for deck class tickets.

## COSTS

Prices are fixed by the government, and are determined by the distance of the destination from the port of origin. The small differences in price you may find at ticket agencies are the results of some agencies sacrificing part of their designated commission to qualify as a 'discount service'. The discount is seldom more than €0.50. Ticket prices include embarkation tax, a contribution to NAT (the seamen's union) and 10% VAT.

## ROUTES

The hub of Greece's ferry network is Piraeus, the port of Athens. Ferries leave here for the Cyclades, the Dodecanese Islands, the Northeastern Aegean Islands, the Saronic Gulf Islands and Crete. Athens' second port is Rafina, 70km east of the city and connected by an hourly bus service. It has ferries to the northern Cyclades, Evia, Lesbos and Limnos. The port of Lavrio, in southern Attica, is the main port for ferries to the Cycladic island of Kea. There are regular buses from Athens to Lavrio.

Ferries for the Ionian Islands leave from the Peloponnese ports of Patra (for Kefallonia, Ithaki, Paxi and Corfu) and Kyllini (for Kefallonia and Zakynthos); from Astakos (for Ithaki and Kefallonia) and Mytikas (for Lefkada and Meganisi), with both ports in Central Greece (Sterea Ellada); and from Igoumenitsa in Epiros (for Corfu and Paxi).

Ferries for the Sporades leave from Volos, Thessaloniki, Agios Konstantinos, and Kymi on Evia (for Skyros only). The latter two ports are easily reached by bus from Athens.

Some of the Northeastern Aegean Islands have connections with Thessaloniki and all have connections with Piraeus. The odd ones out are Thasos and Samothraki. Thasos is reached from Kavala, and occasionally from Samothraki; the latter can be reached from

Alexandroupoli year-round and also from Kavala in summer.

## SCHEDULES

Ferry timetables change from year to year and season to season, and ferries can be subject to delays and cancellations at short notice due to bad weather, strikes or the boats simply conking out. No timetable is infallible, but the comprehensive weekly list of departures from Piraeus put out by the EOT (Greek National Tourist Organisation) in Athens is as accurate as possible. The people to go to for the most up-to-date ferry information are the local *limenarhio* (port police), whose offices are usually on or near the quayside.

On the internet you'll find lots of information about ferry services. Try [www.greekferries.gr](http://www.greekferries.gr), which has a useful search programme and links, or [www.gtp.gr](http://www.gtp.gr). Many of the larger ferry companies have their own sites (see p740).

Throughout the year there is at least one ferry a day from a mainland port to the major island in each group, and during high season (June to mid-September) there are considerably more. Ferries sailing from one island group to another are not so frequent, and if you're going to travel in this way you'll need to plan carefully, otherwise you may end up having to backtrack to Piraeus.

Travelling time can vary considerably from one ferry to another, depending on how many islands you decide to visit on the way to your destination. For example, the Piraeus-Rhodes trip can take between 15 and 18 hours depending on the route. Before buying your ticket, check how many stops the boat is going to make and its estimated arrival time. It can make a big difference.

## TICKET PURCHASE

Given that ferries are prone to delays and cancellations, it's best not to purchase a ticket until it has been confirmed that the ferry is leaving. If you need to reserve a car space, though, you will inevitably need to book and pay in advance – well in advance in high season. If the service is then cancelled you can transfer your ticket to the next available service with that company.

Agencies selling tickets line the waterfront of most ports, but rarely is there one that sells tickets for every boat, and often an agency is reluctant to give you information

about a boat they do not sell tickets for. This means you have to check the timetables displayed outside each agency to find out which ferry is next to depart – or you can ask the port police.

## High-Speed Ferries

These supermodern leviathans can slash travel times on some of the longer routes. **NEL Lines** (☎ 22510 26299; [www.ferries.gr/nel](http://www.ferries.gr/nel)) leads the way with its futuristic-looking *F/B Panagia Thalassini* and *Aeolos Kenteris II*, which operate from Piraeus to Syros, Tinos, Mykonos, Paros, Naxos, Lavrio, Kythnos and Amorgos. In addition, there is a high-speed service with the *F/B Aeolos Kenteris I* to Rethymno on Crete. These services cost roughly twice as much as standard ferries.

**Blue Star Ferries** (☎ 210 891 9800; [www.bluestarferries.com](http://www.bluestarferries.com)) is almost in the same league as NEL Lines, and its fleet of modern boats serves many destinations in the Cycladic and Dodecanese islands, cutting down travelling time considerably. It charges about 20% more than the regular ferries.

## Hydrofoil

Hydrofoils used to be popular on the Greek transport scene but have seen their heyday come and go. They have been replaced in the main by more comfortable and just as fast catamarans and jet boats. They now just exist in isolation in some of the remoter parts of the Aegean archipelago.

**Aegean Flying Dolphins** (☎ 210 422 1766), based on Samos, links that island with Kos in the Dodecanese and islands in between. Other hydrofoil routes operate between Kavala and Thasos in the Northeastern Aegean, and from Alexandroupoli to Samothraki and Limnos. Hellenic Seaways operate hydrofoils on some of its Sporades services.

Tickets cannot be bought on board hydrofoils – you must buy them in advance from an agent.

## Inter-island Boat

In addition to the large ferries that ply between the large mainland ports and island groups, there are smaller boats linking islands within a group, and sometimes linking an island in one group with an island in another.

In the past these boats were always *caïques* – sturdy old fishing boats – but gradually these are being replaced by new purpose-

built boats, which are usually called express or excursion boats. Some of these are as fast as the larger catamarans or hydrofoils. Tickets tend to cost more than tickets for the large ferries, but the boats are very useful if you're island-hopping.

## Water Taxi

Most islands have water taxis (taxi boats) – small speedboats that operate like taxis, transporting people to places that are difficult to get to by land. Some owners charge a set price for each person, others charge a flat rate for the boat, and this cost is divided by the number of passengers. Either way, prices are usually quite reasonable.

## BUS

All long-distance buses, on the mainland and the islands, are operated by regional collectives known as KTEL (Koino Tamio Eispraxeon Leoforion). Every prefecture on the mainland has a KTEL, which operates local services within the prefecture and to the main towns of other prefectures. Most can be found on the internet at [www.ktel.org](http://www.ktel.org). Fares are fixed by the government.

The network is comprehensive. With the exception of towns in Thrace, which are serviced by Thessaloniki, all the major towns on the mainland have frequent connections to Athens. The islands of Corfu, Kefallonia and Zakynthos can also be reached directly from Athens by bus – the fares include the price of the ferry ticket.

The KTEL buses are safe and modern, and these days most are air-conditioned – at least on the major routes. Some buses are double-deckers. In more-remote rural areas they tend to be older and less comfortable.

Most villages have a daily bus service of some sort, although remote areas may have only one or two buses a week. They operate for the benefit of people going to town to shop, rather than for tourists. They normally leave the villages very early in the morning and return early in the afternoon.

On islands where the capital is inland rather than a port, buses normally meet boats. Some of the more remote islands have not yet acquired a bus, but most have some sort of motorised transport – even if it is only a bone-shaking, three-wheeled truck.

Larger towns usually have a central, covered bus station with seating, waiting

rooms, toilets, and a snack bar selling pies, cakes and coffee. It is important to note that big cities like Athens, Iraklio, Patra and Thessaloniki may have more than one bus station, each serving different regions. Make sure you find the correct station for your destination.

In small towns and villages the 'bus station' may be no more than a bus stop outside a *kafeneio* (coffee house) or taverna that doubles as a booking office. In remote areas, the timetable may be in Greek only, but most booking offices have timetables in both Greek and Roman script. The timetables give both the departure and return times – useful if you are making a day trip. Times are listed using the 24-hour clock system.

When you buy a ticket you will be allotted a seat number, which is noted on the ticket. The seat number is indicated on the *back* of each seat of the bus, not on the back of the seat in front; this causes confusion among Greeks and tourists alike. You can board a bus without a ticket and pay on board, but on a popular route, or during high season, this may mean that you have to stand. Keep your ticket handy for checking.

It's best to turn up at least 20 minutes before departure to make sure you get a seat, and buses have been known to leave a few minutes before their scheduled departure. Buses on less-frequented routes do not usually have toilets on board and they don't have refreshments available, so make sure you are prepared on both counts. Buses stop about every three hours on long journeys. Smoking is prohibited on all buses in Greece.

## Costs

Bus travel is very reasonably priced, with a journey costing approximately €4 per 100km. Some major routes include Athens–Thessaloniki (€31, 7½ hours), Athens–Patra (€16, three hours), Athens–Volos (€20, five hours) and Athens–Corfu (€44 including ferry, 8½ hours).

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

No-one who has travelled on Greece's roads will be surprised to hear that the country's road fatality rate is the highest in Europe. More than 2000 people die on the roads every year, with overtaking listed as the greatest cause of accidents. Ever-stricter traffic laws have had little impact on the toll; Greek roads

remain a good place to practise your defensive-driving techniques.

Heart-stopping moments aside, your own car is a great way to explore off the beaten track. The road network has improved enormously in recent years; many roads marked as dirt tracks on older maps have now been asphalted – particularly in more remote parts of Epiros and the Peloponnese. It's important to get a good road map (for more information, see p726).

All most all islands are served by car ferries, but they are expensive. Sample prices for vehicles up to 4.25m include Piraeus–Mykonos, €76; Piraeus–Crete (Hania and Iraklio), €79; and Piraeus–Samos, €81. The charge for a large motorcycle is about the same as the price for a deck-class passenger ticket.

## Automobile Associations

Greece's domestic automobile association is **ELPA** (Elliniki Leschi Aftokinitou kai Perigeioise; ☎ 210 606 8800; www.elpa.gr in Greek; Leoforos Mesogion 395, Agia Paraskevi).

## Bring Your Own Vehicle

EU-registered vehicles are allowed free entry into Greece but may only stay six months without road taxes being due. A green card (international third-party insurance) is all that's required. Your only proof of the date of entry – if requested by the police – is your ferry ticket if you arrive from Italy, or your passport entry stamp if entering from elsewhere. Non-EU-registered vehicles may be logged in your passport.

## Driving Licence

Greece requires that you possess an International Driving Permit, which should be obtained before you leave home.

## Fuel & Spare Parts

Fuel is available widely throughout the country, though service stations may be closed on weekends and public holidays. Self-service pumps are not the norm in Greece, nor are credit-card pumps, so it is always advisable to keep the reservoir level up just in case. Petrol in Greece is cheaper than in most other European countries, but by American or Australian standards it is expensive. Prices are generally set by the government, but can vary from region to region. Super (leaded) and *amolyvdi* (unleaded) is always available, as

is *petreleo kinisis* (diesel). Given the unprecedented rises in petrol costs in recent years it's hard to be definite about prices, but in mid-2007 unleaded petrol was around the €1 per litre mark. Diesel is usually cheaper.

Spare parts for most Japanese and European cars are available everywhere, though you might have difficulties finding a spare hubcap for a Cadillac or a Hummer.

## Hire

### CAR

Rental cars are available just about everywhere, but it's best to hire from major cities where competition offers better opportunities to bargain. All the big multinational companies are represented in Athens, and most have branches in major towns and popular tourist destinations. Islands nowadays tend to have a number of outlets.

High-season weekly rates with unlimited mileage start at about €280 for the smallest models, such as a Fiat Seicento, dropping to about €200 per week in winter. To these prices must be added VAT of 19%, or 14% on the islands of the Dodecanese,

the Northeastern Aegean and the Sporades. There are also optional extras such as a collision damage waiver of €12 per day (more for larger models), without which you will be liable for the first €295 of the repair bill (much more for larger models). Other costs include a theft waiver of at least €6 per day and personal accident insurance. The major companies offer much cheaper prebooked and prepaid rates.

You can find better deals at local companies. Their advertised rates can be up to 50% cheaper, and they are normally open to negotiation, especially if business is slow.

If you want to take a hire car to another country or onto a ferry, you will need advance written authorisation from the hire company, as the insurance may not cover you. Unless you pay with a credit card, most hire companies will require a minimum deposit of €120 per day. See the Getting Around sections of cities and islands for details of places to rent cars.

The minimum driving age in Greece is 18 years, but most car-hire firms require you to be at least 21 – or 23 for larger vehicles.

## ROAD DISTANCES (KM)

Alexandroupoli	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
Athens	854	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Corinth	884	84	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Edessa	427	569	596	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Florina	497	592	251	353	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Igoumenitsa	816	473	393	380	353	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Ioannina	702	447	364	298	320	96	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Kalamata	1055	284	175	767	763	501	467	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Kastoria	535	489	519	108	67	286	204	690	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Kavala	177	682	655	250	320	615	525	878	358	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Lamia	643	214	244	355	360	353	263	415	274	466	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Larisa	493	361	389	218	231	309	209	561	239	323	151	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Monemvasia	1156	350	266	869	855	613	579	156	756	976	505	655	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Nafplio	947	165	63	659	664	482	427	163	582	770	307	455	215	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Patra	828	220	138	567	513	281	247	220	483	664	193	341	332	201	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Pyrgos	924	320	234	636	643	367	347	119	542	747	284	432	275	208	96	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Sparta	1025	225	145	737	759	517	483	60	660	848	385	533	96	119	236	180	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Thessaloniki	349	513	544	89	159	452	362	715	220	169	303	154	807	610	488	584	711	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Trikala	554	330	356	227	233	247	148	520	159	377	115	62	597	419	310	400	501	216	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Tripoli	964	194	110	713	681	457	430	90	639	820	324	472	157	81	176	155	61	624	466	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Volos	556	326	355	278	293	371	271	518	301	383	115	62	620	417	308	408	524	214	124	435	---	---	---	---	---	---

Some of the major car-hire players in Greece:

**Avis** (☎ 210 322 4951; [www.avis.gr](http://www.avis.gr))

**Budget** (☎ 210 349 8800; [www.budget.gr](http://www.budget.gr))

**Europcar** (☎ 210 960 2382; [www.europcar.gr](http://www.europcar.gr))

**Hertz** (☎ 210 626 4000; [www.hertz.gr](http://www.hertz.gr))

See the company websites for their current rates and special offers.

## MOTORCYCLE

Mopeds, motorcycles and scooters are available for hire wherever there are tourists to rent them. Most machines are newish and in good condition. Nonetheless, check the brakes at the earliest opportunity.

To hire a moped, motorcycle or scooter you must produce a licence that shows proficiency to ride the category of bike you wish to rent; this applies to everything from 50cc up. British citizens must obtain a Category A licence from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in the UK (in most other EU countries separate licences are automatically issued).

Motorcycles or scooters are a cheap way to travel around. Rates range from €10 to €15 per day for a moped or 50cc motorcycle to €25 per day for a 250cc motorcycle. Out of season these prices drop considerably, so use your bargaining skills. By October it is sometimes possible to hire a moped for as little as €5 per day. Most motorcycle hirers include third-party insurance in the price, but it's wise to check this. This insurance will not include medical expenses. Helmets are compulsory and rental agencies are obliged to offer one as part of the hire deal. Police will book you if you're caught without a helmet.

## Warning

Greece is not the best place to initiate yourself into motorcycling. There are still a lot of gravel roads – particularly on the islands. Novices should be very careful; dozens of tourists have accidents every year. Scooters are particularly prone to sliding on gravely bends. Try to hire a motorcycle with thinner profile tyres. If you are planning to use a motorcycle or moped, check that your travel insurance covers you for injury resulting from a motorcycle accident. Many insurance companies don't offer this cover, so check the fine print!

## Insurance

Insurance is always included in any vehicle hire agreements, but you are advised to check whether it is fully comprehensive or third party only. Otherwise you may be up for hefty costs in the event of any damage caused to your vehicle if you are at fault.

## Road Conditions

Main highways in Greece have been improving steadily over the years but are still not up to full steam as far as quality is concerned. The main Athens–Thessaloniki motorway is nearing completion while only segments of the Athens–Patra motorway are up to international motorway standards. Large parts of this road still retain the two-lane/hard shoulder format of the 1960s road planning mentality and can be confusing, if not outright dangerous, at times. The new Via Egnatia (Egnatia Odos) is being completed in sections with only the Epiros to Macedonia sector still remaining unfinished. Where completed it is very good, but completed sections tend to end abruptly.

## Road Hazards

Slow drivers – many of them unsure and hesitant tourists – can cause serious traffic events on Greece's roads. Road surfaces can change rapidly when a section of road has succumbed to subsidence or weathering. Snow and ice can be a serious challenge in winter, and drivers are advised to carry snow chains. Animals in rural areas may wander onto roads, so extra vigilance is required. Roads passing through mountainous areas are often littered with fallen rocks that can cause extensive damage to a vehicle's underside or throw a bike rider.

## Road Rules

In Greece, as throughout Continental Europe, you drive on the right and overtake on the left. Outside built-up areas, traffic on a main road has right of way at intersections. In towns, vehicles coming from the right have right of way. Seat belts must be worn in front seats, and in back seats if the car is fitted with them. Children under 12 years of age are not allowed in the front seat. It is compulsory to carry a first-aid kit, fire extinguisher and warning triangle, and it is forbidden to carry cans of petrol. Helmets are compulsory for motorcyclists if the motorcycle is 50cc or more.

Outside residential areas the speed limit is 120km/h on highways, 90km/h on other roads

and 50km/h in built-up areas. The speed limit for motorcycles up to 100cc is 70km/h and for larger motorcycles, 90km/h.

Drivers exceeding the speed limit by 20% are liable to receive a fine of €60; exceeding it by 40% costs €150. In practice, most tourists escape with a warning.

The police have also cracked down on drink-driving laws – at last. A blood-alcohol content of 0.05% can incur a fine of €150, and over 0.08% is a criminal offence.

If you are involved in an accident and no-one is hurt, the police will not be required to write a report, but it is advisable to go to a nearby police station and explain what happened. A police report may be required for insurance purposes. If an accident involves injury, a driver who does not stop and does not inform the police may face a prison sentence.

## HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country in the world, and we don't recommend it. Travelers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and should let someone know where they are planning to go. Greece has a reputation for being a relatively safe place for women to hitch, but it is still unwise to do it alone. It's better for a woman to hitch with a companion, preferably a male one.

Some parts of Greece are much better for hitching than others. Getting out of major cities tends to be hard work and Athens is notoriously difficult. Hitching is much easier in remote areas and on islands with poor public transport. On country roads it is not unknown for someone to stop and ask if you want a lift, even if you haven't stuck a thumb out.

## LOCAL TRANSPORT

### Bus

Most Greek towns are small enough to get around on foot. All the major towns have local buses, but the only places you're likely to need them are Athens, Patra, Kalamata and Thessaloniki. The procedure for buying tickets for local buses is covered in the Getting Around section for each city.

### Metro

Athens is the only city in Greece large enough to warrant the building of an underground system. For more details, see p150.

## Taxi

Taxis are widely available in Greece except on very small or remote islands. They are reasonably priced by European standards, especially if three or four people share costs.

Yellow city cabs are metered. Flagfall is €0.75, followed by €0.28 per kilometre (€0.53 per kilometre outside town). These rates double between midnight and 5am. Additional costs are €3 from an airport, €0.80 from a bus, port or train station and €0.30 for each piece of luggage over 10kg. Grey rural taxis do not have meters, so you should always settle on a price before you get in.

Many younger taxi drivers now have Sat-Nav systems in their cars, so finding a destination is a breeze as long as you have the exact address.

Some taxi drivers in Athens have been known to take unwary travellers for a financial ride. If you have a complaint about a taxi driver, take the cab number and report your complaint to the tourist police. For more information see p110. Taxi drivers in other towns in Greece are, on the whole, friendly, helpful and honest.

## TOURS

Tours are worth considering only if your time is very limited, in which case there are countless companies vying for your money. The major players are CHAT, GO Tours, Hop In Sightseeing, and Key Tours, all based in Athens and offering almost identical tours (p129). They include day trips to Delphi (€79) and Mycenae and Epidavros (€130). They also offer longer trips such as a three-day tour to Delphi and Meteora (€299) and a four-day tour calling at Mycenae, Nafplio, Epidavros, Olympia and Delphi (€448). These prices include twin-share accommodation and half-board.

More adventurous tours include guided activities involving hiking, climbing, white-water rafting, kayaking, canoeing or canyoning. **Alpin Club** ([www.alpindub.gr](http://www.alpindub.gr)) in Athens operates out of Karitena in the Peloponnese, while outfits like **Trekking Hellas** ([www.trekking.gr](http://www.trekking.gr)) or **Robinson Expeditions** ([www.robinson.gr](http://www.robinson.gr)) run similar deals in the centre and north of Greece. For information on cycling tours around Greece, see p739.

## TRAIN

Trains are operated by **Greek Railways Organisation** (Organismos Sidirodromon Ellados; [www.ose.gr](http://www.ose.gr)), always referred to as the OSE. You'll find

information on fares and schedules on the website. Information on domestic departures from Athens or Thessaloniki can be sought by calling ☎ 1440.

The biggest problem with the Greek railway network is that it is so limited. There are essentially only two main lines: the standard gauge service from Athens to Alexandroupoli via Thessaloniki, and the Peloponnese network, which uses a narrow-gauge track. That said, the train is a useful way to get from Patra to Athens if arriving by ferry from Italy, and the round Peloponnese rail ride is an attraction in itself. Trains also run to Kalambaka (Meteora) and the Pelion port of Volos for onward links to the Sporades islands.

The services that do exist are of a good standard, and are improving all the time. In fact, the network underwent a major overhaul prior to the Olympic Games. The biggest longer-term changes will be in and around Athens, which is slowly building a new station in the northern suburb of Aharnes to handle all intercity trains. This station, due to open in 2008, will replace the old Larisis station that is currently still part of the suburban train network that links Athens' airport with Corinth in the Peloponnese. For more information see p151.

The bulk of the Peloponnese will retain its own narrow-gauge system, for the time being. The big difference will be that the Peloponnese network will begin at Corinth, instead of Athens. The major change in the pipeline is the electrification of the line between Athens and Thessaloniki.

## Classes

Despite the proposed changes to rail networks, other features of OSE operations are expected to remain unchanged. There will still be two types of service: regular (slow) trains that stop at all stations, and faster, modern intercity trains that link most major cities.

The slow trains represent the country's cheapest form of public transport: 2nd-class fares are absurdly cheap, and even 1st class is cheaper than bus travel.

The intercity trains that link the major Greek cities are an excellent way to travel. The services are not necessarily express – the Greek terrain is far too mountainous for that – but the trains are modern and comfortable. Available are 1st- and 2nd-class smoking/

nonsmoking seats and there is a café-bar on board. On some services, meals can be ordered and delivered to your seat.

## Costs

For a 1st-/2nd-class slow-train trip from Athens to Thessaloniki expect to pay €22/15 (six hours). A trip from Thessaloniki to Alexandroupoli costs €12/8 (eight hours).

Ticket prices for intercity services are subject to a distance loading charged on top of the normal fares. Seat reservations should be made as far in advance as possible, especially during summer. Sample 1st-/2nd-class fares: Athens to Thessaloniki €49.50/35.30 (5¼ hours), and Thessaloniki to Alexandroupoli €22/16 (5½ hours). There is an additional nonstop Athens–Thessaloniki express service for €63/48 (four hours).

A comfortable night service runs between Athens and Thessaloniki, with a choice of couchettes (from €8.60), two-bed compartments (€42) and single compartments (€54).

## Train Passes

Eurail and Inter-Rail cards are valid in Greece, but it's not worth buying one if Greece is the only place where you plan to use them. The passes can be used for 2nd-class travel on intercity services without paying the loading.

If you're planning on using trains a lot, another option is to buy a tourist rail pass, which is available for individual passengers, as well as for families and groups of up to five people. Passes are valid for 10, 20 or 30 days and entitle the holder to make an unlimited number of journeys on all the rail routes. An individual pass costs €43.15 for 10 days, €72.20 for 20 days and €92.30 for 30 days. Whatever pass you have, you must have a reservation. You cannot board a train without one.

Senior cards are available to passengers over 60 years of age on presentation of their IDs or passports. They cost €82.50 for 1st-class travel and €54.90 for 2nd class, and are valid for one year from the date of issue. Cardholders get a 50% reduction on train travel, plus five free journeys per year.

Tickets can be bought from OSE booking offices in a few major towns, otherwise from train stations. There is a 30% discount on return tickets, and a 30% discount for groups of 10 people or more.

# Health

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## BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. If you are embarking on a long trip, make sure your teeth are OK and take your optical prescription with you.

### INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC; formerly the E111) covers you for most medical care but not emergency repatriation home or non-emergencies. It is available from health centres, and post offices in the UK. Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Greece. If you do need health insurance, make sure you get a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in

advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

### RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No jabs are required to travel to Greece, but a yellow-fever vaccination certificate is required if you are coming from an infected area. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

The WHO's publication *International Travel and Health* is revised annually and is available online at [www.who.int/ith/](http://www.who.int/ith/). Other useful websites include [www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com) (travel health recommendations for every country; updated daily), [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk) (general travel advice for the layperson), [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk) (advice on travel for the elderly) and [www.marifestopes.org.uk](http://www.marifestopes.org.uk) (information on women's health and contraception).

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility (the longer the flight, the greater the risk). The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle, or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention. To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

### JET LAG

To avoid jet lag drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eat light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust

your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

## IN GREECE

### AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

If you need an ambulance in Greece call ☎ 166. There is at least one doctor on every island and larger islands have hospitals. Pharmacies can dispense medicines that are available only on prescription in most European countries, so you can consult a pharmacist for minor ailments.

All this sounds fine but, although medical training is of a high standard in Greece, the public health service is badly underfunded. Hospitals can be overcrowded, hygiene is not always what it should be and relatives are expected to bring in food for the patient – which could be a problem for a tourist. Conditions and treatment are much better in private hospitals, which are expensive. All this means that a good health-insurance policy is essential.

### TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably in the form of an oral rehydration solution such as dioralyte. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain you should seek medical attention.

### ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS Bites, Stings & Insect-Borne Diseases

Keep an eye out for sea urchins lurking around rocky beaches; if you get some of their needles embedded in your skin, olive oil should help to loosen them. If they are not removed they will become infected. You should also be wary of jellyfish, particularly during the

months of September and October. Although jellyfish are not lethal in Greece, their stings can hurt. Dousing the affected area with vinegar will deactivate any stingers that have not 'fired'. Calamine lotion, antihistamines and analgesics may help reduce any reaction you experience and relieve the pain of any stings. Much more painful than either of these, but thankfully much rarer, is an encounter with the weever fish. The fish buries itself in the sand of the tidal zone with only its spines protruding, and injects a painful and powerful toxin if trodden on. Soaking your foot in very hot water (which breaks down the poison) should solve the problem. Weever-fish stings can cause permanent local paralysis in the worst case.

Greece's only dangerous snake is the adder. To minimise the possibilities of being bitten, always wear boots, socks and long trousers when walking through undergrowth where snakes may be present. Don't put your hands into holes and crevices, and be careful when collecting firewood. Snake bites do not cause instantaneous death and an antivenin is widely available. Keep the victim calm and still, wrap the bitten limb tightly, as you would for a sprained ankle, and attach a splint to immobilise it. Seek medical help, if possible with the dead snake for identification. Don't attempt to catch the snake if there is a possibility of being bitten again. Tourniquets and sucking out the poison are now comprehensively discredited.

Always check all over your body if you have been walking through a potentially tick-infested area as ticks can cause skin infections and other more serious diseases. If a tick is found attached, press down around the tick's head with tweezers, grab the head and gently pull upwards. Avoid pulling the rear of the tick's body as this may squeeze the tick's gut contents through the attached mouth parts into the skin, increasing the risk of infection and disease.

Greece is now officially rabies-free, however even if the animal is not rabid, all animal bites should be treated seriously as they can become infected or can result in tetanus.

Mosquitoes can be an annoying problem in Greece so some precautions may be needed, though there is no danger of contracting malaria. The electric plug-in mosquito repellents are usually sufficient – and more bearable than coils – to keep the insects at bay at night.

Nonetheless choose accommodation that has flyscreen window-protection wherever possible. Mosquito species can vary as can your reaction to their bites. Mosquitoes in northern Greece can provoke a severe reaction. The Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) may be encountered in mountainous areas and can be a voracious daytime biter. It is known to carry several viruses, including Eastern equine encephalitis, which can affect the central nervous system and cause severe complications and death. Use protective sprays or lotion if you suspect you are being bitten during the day.

Invisible bedbugs can be a major irritation if encountered. Symptoms are lots of pinprick bites that you may initially assign to mosquitoes – even if you are covered up. There is no protection other than to change to a noninfested bed. Airing the mattress thoroughly in the sun may alleviate the problem.

### Heatstroke

Heatstroke occurs following excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms of heatstroke include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heatstroke drink water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans.

### Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. As ever, proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting it. Even on a hot day in the mountains, the

weather can change rapidly so carry waterproof garments, warm layers and a hat, and inform others of your route. Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless rewarming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared bodily warmth.

### TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Make sure children are up to date with routine vaccinations and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year old. Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* includes travel health advice for younger children.

### WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern.

If using oral contraceptives, remember some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

### SEXUAL HEALTH

Condoms are readily available but emergency contraception may not be, so take the necessary precautions.

#### WARNING

Codeine, which is commonly found in headache preparations, is banned in Greece; check labels carefully, or risk prosecution. There are strict regulations applying to the importation of medicines into Greece, so obtain a certificate from your doctor that outlines any medication you may have to carry into the country with you.

# Language

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The Greek language is probably the oldest European language, with an oral tradition of 4000 years and a written tradition of approximately 3000 years. Its evolution over the four millennia was characterised by its strength during the golden age of Athens and the Democracy (mid-5th century BC); its use as a lingua franca throughout the Middle Eastern world, spread by Alexander the Great and his successors as far as India during the Hellenistic period (330 BC to AD 100); its adaptation as the language of the new religion, Christianity; its use as the official language of the Eastern Roman Empire; and its proclamation as the language of the Byzantine Empire (380–1453).

Greek maintained its status and prestige during the rise of the European Renaissance and was employed as the linguistic perspective for all contemporary sciences and terminologies during the period of Enlightenment. Today, Greek constitutes a large part of the vocabulary of any Indo-European language, and much of the lexicon of any scientific repertoire.

The modern Greek language is a southern Greek dialect which is now used by most Greek speakers both in Greece and abroad. It is the result of an intralinguistic influence and synthesis of the ancient vocabulary combined with words from Greek

regional dialects, namely Cretan, Cypriot and Macedonian.

Greek is spoken throughout Greece by a population of around 10 million, and by some five million Greeks who live abroad.

## PRONUNCIATION

All Greek words of two or more syllables have an acute accent which indicates where the stress falls. For instance, *ἀγάλμα* (statue) is pronounced *aghalma*, and *ἀγάπη* (love) is pronounced *aghapi*. In the following transliterations, *italic* lettering indicates where stress falls. Note also that **dh** is pronounced as 'th' in 'then' and **gh** is a softer, slightly guttural version of 'g'.

## ACCOMMODATION

### I'm looking for ...

<i>psa-hno yi-a ...</i>	Ψάχνω για ...
<b>a room</b> <i>e-na dho-ma-ti-o</i>	ένα δωμάτιο
<b>a hotel</b> <i>e-na kse-no-dho-chi-o</i>	ένα ξενοδοχείο
<b>a youth hostel</b> <i>e-nan kse-no-na ne-o-ti-tas</i>	έναν ξενώνα νεότητας

### Where's a cheap hotel?

*rou i-ne e-na fti-no xe-no-do-hi-o*

Πού είναι ένα φτηνό ξενοδοχείο;

### What's the address?

*pya i-ne i dhi-ef-thin-si*

Ποια είναι η διεύθυνση;

### Could you write the address, please?

*pa-ra-ka-lo bo-ri-te na ghra-pse-te ti- dhi-ef-thin-si*

Παρακαλώ, μπορείτε να γράψετε τη διεύθυνση;

### Are there any rooms available?

*i-par-chun e-lef-the-ra dho-ma-ti-a*

Υπάρχουν ελεύθερα δωμάτια;

### I'd like to book ...

*tha i-the-la na kli-so ...* Θα ήθελα να κλείσω ...

<b>a bed</b> <i>e-na kre-va-ti</i>	ένα κρεβάτι
<b>a single room</b> <i>e-na mo-no-kli-no dho-ma-ti-o</i>	ένα μονόκλινο δωμάτιο
<b>a double room</b> <i>e-na dhi-kli-no dho-ma-ti-o</i>	ένα δίκλινο δωμάτιο

## THE GREEK ALPHABET & PRONUNCIATION

Greek	Pronunciation Guide	Example			
Α α	a	as in 'father'	αγάπη	a-gha-pi	love
Β β	v	as in 'vine'	βήμα	vi-ma	step
Γ γ	gh	like a rough 'g'	γάτα	gha-ta	cat
Δ δ	y	as in 'yes'	για	ya	for
Ε ε	dh	as in 'there'	δέμα	dhe-ma	parcel
Ζ ζ	e	as in 'egg'	ένας	e-nas	one (m)
Ζ ζ	z	as in 'zoo'	ζώο	zo-o	animal
Η η	i	as in 'feet'	ήταν	i-tan	was
Θ θ	th	as in 'throw'	θέμα	the-ma	theme
Ι ι	i	as in 'feet'	ίδιος	i-dhyos	same
Κ κ	k	as in 'kite'	καλά	ka-la	well
Λ λ	l	as in 'leg'	λάθος	la-thos	mistake
Μ μ	m	as in 'man'	μαμά	ma-ma	mother
Ν ν	n	as in 'net'	νερό	ne-ro	water
Ξ ξ	x	as in 'ox'	ξύδι	ksi-dhi	vinegar
Ο ο	o	as in 'hot'	όλα	o-la	all
Π π	p	as in 'pup'	πάω	pa-o	I go
Ρ ρ	r	as in 'road'	ρέμα	re-ma	stream
		a slightly trilled 'r'	ρόδα	ro-dha	tyre
Σ σ, ς	s	as in 'sand'	σημάδι	si-ma-dhi	mark
Τ τ	t	as in 'tap'	τόπος	to-pos	site
Υ υ	i	as in 'feet'	ύστερα	is-tera	after
Φ φ	f	as in 'find'	φύλλο	fi-lo	leaf
Χ χ	kh	as the 'ch' in Scottish 'loch', or like a rough 'h'	χάνω	kha-no	I lose
Ψ ψ	ps	as in 'lapse'	χέρι	he-ri	hand
Ω ω	o	as in 'hot'	ψωμί	pso-mi	bread
			ώρα	o-ra	time

## Combinations of Letters

The combinations of letters shown here are pronounced as follows:

Greek	Pronunciation Guide	Example			
ει	i	as in 'feet'	είδα	i-dha	I saw
οι	i	as in 'feet'	οικόπεδο	i-ko-pe-dho	land
αι	e	as in 'bet'	αίμα	e-ma	blood
ου	u	as in 'mood'	πού	pu	who/what/where
μπ	b	as in 'beer'	μπάλα	ba-la	ball
	mb	as in 'amber'	κάμπος	kam-bos	forest
ντ	d	as in 'dot'	ντουλάπα	dou-la-pa	wardrobe
	nd	as in 'bend'	πέντε	pen-de	five
γκ	g	as in 'God'	γκάζι	ga-zi	gas
γγ	ng	as in 'angle'	αγγελία	an-ge-ja	announcement
γξ	ks	as in 'minks'	σφιγξ	sfinks	sphynx
τζ	dz	as in 'hands'	τζάκι	dza-ki	fireplace

The pairs of vowels shown above are pronounced separately if the first has an acute accent, or the second a dieresis, as in the examples below:

γαιδουράκι	gai-dhou-ra-ki	little donkey
Κάιρο	kai-ro	Cairo

Some Greek consonant sounds have no English equivalent. The *u* of the groups *au*, *eu* and *nu* is generally pronounced 'v'. The Greek question mark is represented with the English equivalent of a semicolon ';'.



**a room with a double bed**

e-na dho-ma-ti-o me ένα δωμάτιο με  
dhy-o kre-va-ti-a δύο κρεβάτια

**a room with a bathroom**

e-na dho-ma-ti-o me ένα δωμάτιο με  
ba-ni-o μπάνιο

**I'd like to share a dorm.**

tha i-the-la na mi-ra-so e-na ki-no dho-ma-ti-o  
me al-la a-to-ma

Θα ήθελα να μοιράσω ένα κοινό δωμάτιο  
με άλλα άτομα

**How much is it ...?** po-so ka-ni ... Πόσο κάνει ...;  
**per night** ti -vra-dhya τη βραδυά  
**per person** to a-to-mo το άτομο

**May I see it?**

bo-ro na to dho Μπορώ να το δω;

**Where's the bathroom?**

rou i-ne to-ba-ni-o Πού είναι το μπάνιο;

**I'm/We're leaving today.**

fev-gho/fev-ghou-me Φεύγω/φεύγουμε  
si-me-ra σήμερα

**CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS****Hello.**

ya-sas (pol) Γειά σας.  
ya-su (inf) Γειά σου.

**Good morning.**

ka-li-me-ra Καλημέρα.

**Good afternoon/evening.**

ka-li-spe-ra Καλησπέρα.

**Good night.**

ka-li-nikh-ta Καληνύχτα.

**Goodbye.**

an-di-o Αντίο.

**Yes.**

ne Ναι.

**No.**

o-hi Όχι.

**Please.**

pa-ra-ka-lo Παρακαλώ.

**Thank you.**

ef-ha-ri-sto Ευχαριστώ.

**That's fine/You're welcome.**

pa-ra-ka-lo Παρακαλώ.

**Sorry. (excuse me, forgive me)**

sigh-na-mi Συγγνώμη.

**What's your name?**

pos sas le-ne Πώς σας λένε;

**My name is ...**

me le-ne ... Με λένε ...

**Where are you from?**

a-po rou i-ste Από πού είστε;

**I'm from ...**

i-me a-po ... Είμαι από ...

**I (don't) like ...**

(dhen) ma-re-si ... (Δεν) μ' αρέσει ...

**Just a minute.**

mi-so lep-to Μισό λεπτό.

**DIRECTIONS****Where is ...?**

rou i-ne ... Πού είναι ...;

**Straight ahead.**

o-lo ef-thi-a Ολο ευθεία.

**Turn left.**

strips-te a-ri-ste-ra Στρίψτε αριστερά

**Turn right.**

strips-te dhe-ksi-a Στρίψτε δεξιά

**at the next corner**

stin epo-me-ni gho-ni-a στην επόμενη γωνία

**at the traffic lights**

sta fo-ta στα φώτα

**SIGNS**

ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ	Entry
ΕΞΟΔΟΣ	Exit
ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ	Information
ΑΝΟΙΧΤΟ	Open
ΚΛΕΙΣΤΟ	Closed
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ	Prohibited
ΑΣΤΥΝΟΜΙΑ	Police
ΑΣΤΥΝΟΜΙΚΟΣ	Police Station
ΣΤΑΘΜΟΣ	
ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ	Toilets (women)
ΑΝΔΡΩΝ	Toilets (men)

**behind**

pi-so πίσω  
in front of bro-sta μπροστά  
far ma-kri-a μακριά  
near (to) kon-da κοντά  
opposite a-pe-nan-di απέναντι

**acropolis**

a-kro-po-li ακρόπολη  
beach pa-ra-li-a παραλία  
bridge yefira γέφυρα  
castle ka-stro κάστρο  
island ni-si νησί  
main square ken-dri-ki-pla-ti-a κεντρική πλατεία  
market a-gho-ra αγορά  
museum mu-si-o μουσείο  
old quarter pa-li-a po-li παλιά πόλη  
ruins ar-he-a αρχαία  
sea tha-las-sa θάλασσα  
square pla-ti-a πλατεία  
temple na-os ναός

**TRANSLITERATION & VARIANT SPELLINGS: AN EXPLANATION**

The issue of correctly transliterating Greek into the Latin alphabet is a vexed one, fraught with inconsistencies and pitfalls. The Greeks themselves are not very consistent in this respect, though things are gradually improving. The word 'Piraeus', for example, has been variously represented by the following transliterations: *Pireas*, *Piraeivs* and *Pireefs*; and when appearing as a street name (eg Piraeus St) you will also find *Pireos*!

This has been compounded by the linguistic minefield of diglossy, or the two forms of the Greek language. The purist form is called *Katharevousa* and the popular form is *Dimotiki* (Demotic). The Katharevousa form was never more than an artificiality and Dimotiki has always been spoken as the mainstream language, but this linguistic schizophrenia means there are often two Greek words for each English word. Thus, the word for 'baker' in everyday language is *fournos*, but the shop sign will more often than not say *artopoieion*. The baker's product will be known in the street as *psomi*, but in church as *artos*.

A further complication is the issue of anglicised vs hellenised forms of place names: Athens vs Athens, Patra vs Patras, Thiva vs Thebes, Evia vs Euboea – the list goes on and on! Toponymic diglossy (the existence of both an official and everyday name for a place) is responsible for Kerkyra/Corfu, Zante/Zakynthos, and Santorini/Thira. In this guide we usually provide modern Greek equivalents for town names, with one well known exception, Athens. For ancient sites, settlements or people from antiquity, we have tried to stick to the more familiar classical names; so we have Thucydides instead of Thoukididis, Mycenae instead of Mykines.

Problems in transliteration have particular implications for vowels, especially given that Greek has six ways of rendering the vowel sound 'ee', two ways of rendering the 'o' sound and two ways of rendering the 'e' sound. In most instances in this book, **y** has been used for the 'ee' sound when a Greek *upsilon* (υ, Υ) has been used, and **i** for Greek *ita* (η, Η) and *iota* (ι, Ι). In the case of the Greek vowel combinations that make the 'ee' sound, that is *oi*, *ei* and *ui*, an **i** has been used. For the two Greek 'e' sounds *ai* and *ε*, an **e** has been employed.

As far as consonants are concerned, the Greek letter *gamma* (γ, Γ) appears as **g** rather than **y** throughout this book. This means that *agios* (Greek for male saint) is used rather than *ayios*, and *agia* (female saint) rather than *ayia*. The letter *fi* (φ, Φ) can be transliterated as either **f** or **ph**. Here, a general rule of thumb is that classical names are spelt with a **ph** and modern names with an **f**. So Phaistos is used rather than Festos, and Folegandros is used rather than Pholegandros. The Greek *chi* (χ, Χ) has usually been represented as **h** in order to approximate the Greek pronunciation as closely as possible. Thus, we have Haralambos instead of Charalambos and Polytehniou instead of Polytechniou. Bear in mind that the **h** is to be pronounced as an aspirated 'h', much like the 'ch' in 'loch'. The letter *kapa* (κ, Κ) has been used to represent that sound, except where well known names from antiquity have adopted by convention the letter **c**, eg Polycrates, Acropolis.

Wherever reference to a street name is made, we have omitted the Greek word *odos*, but words for avenue (*leoforos*, abbreviated *leaf*) and square (*plateia*) have been included.

**HEALTH****I'm ill.**

i-me a-ro-stos Είμαι άρρωστος.

It hurts here. po-nai-e-dho Πονάει εδώ.

**I have ...**

e-ho ... Εχω ...

**asthma**

asth-ma άσθμα

**diabetes**

za-ha-ro-dhi-a-vi-ti ζαχαροδιαβήτη

**diarrhoea**

dhi-a-ri-a διάρροια

**epilepsy**

e-pi-lip-si-a επιληψία

**I'm allergic to ...**

i-me a-ler-yi-kos/ Είμαι αλλεργικός/

a-ler-yi-ki ... (m/f) Πονάει ... αλλεργικά ...

**antibiotics**

sta an-di-vi-o-ti-ka στα αντιβιοτικά

**aspirin**

stin a-spi-ri-ni στην ασπιρίνη

**penicillin**

stin pe-ni-ki-li-ni στην πενικιλίνη

**bees**

stis me-li-ses στις μέλισσες

**nuts**

sta fi-sti-ki-a στα φυστίκια



**timetable**

dhro-mo-lo-gio δρομολόγιο

**train station**si-dhi-ro-dhro-mi-kos σιδηροδρομικός  
stath-mos σταθμός**Private Transport**

**I'd like to hire a ...** tha i-the-la na Tha ήθελα να  
ni-ki-a-so ... νοικιάσω ...

**car** e-na af-ti-ki-ni-to ένα αυτοκίνητο

**4WD** e-na tes-se-ra ένα τέσσερα  
e-pi tes-se-ra επί τέσσερα

**(a jeep)** (e-na tzip) (ένα τζιπ)

**motorbike** mya mo-to-si-mia μοτοσυ-  
klet-ta κλέττα

**bicycle** e-na po-dhi-la-to ένα ποδηλάτο

**Is this the road to ...?**

af-tos i-ne o dhro-mos ya ...

Αυτός είναι ο δρόμος για ...

**Where's the next service station?**

pu i-ne to e-po-me-no ven-zi-na-dhi-ko

Πού είναι το επόμενο βενζινάδικο;

**Please fill it up.**

ye-mi-ste to pa-ra-ka-lo

Γεμίστε το, παρακαλώ.

**I'd like (30) euros worth.**

tha i-the-la (30) ev-ro

Θα ήθελα (30) ευρώ.

**diesel** pet-re-le-o ki-ni-sis πετρέλαιο κίνησης

**lead petrol** su-per σουπερ

**unleaded petrol** a-mo-liv-dhi αμόλυβδο

**Can I park here?**

bo-ro na par-ka-ro e-dho

Μπορώ να παρκάρω εδώ;

**Where do I pay?**

pu pli-ro-no

Πού πληρώνω;

**ROAD SIGNS**

ΠΑΡΑΚΑΜΨΗ	Detour
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ Η ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ	No Entry
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ Η ΠΡΟΣΠΕΡΑΣΗ	No Overtaking
ΑΠΑΓΟΡΕΥΕΤΑΙ ΗΣΤΑΘΜΕΥΣΗ	No Parking
ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ	Entrance
ΜΗΝ ΠΑΡΚΑΡΕΤΕ ΕΔΩ	Keep Clear
ΔΙΟΔΙΑ	Toll
ΚΙΝΔΥΝΟΣ	Danger
ΑΡΓΑ	Slow Down
ΕΞΟΔΟΣ	Exit

**The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...)**

to af-to-ki-ni-to/mo-to-si-klet-ta cha-la-se sto ...

Το αυτοκίνητο/η μοτοσυκλέττα χάλασε στο ...

**The car/motorbike won't start.**

to af-to-ki-ni-to/mo-to-si-klet-ta dhen per-ni-bros

Το αυτοκίνητο/η μοτοσυκλέττα δεν παίρνει μπρος.

**I have a flat tyre.**

e-pa-tha la-sti-cho

Επαθα λάστιχο.

**I've run out of petrol.**

e-mi-na a-po ven-zi-ni

Εμεινα από βενζίνη.

**I've had an accident.**

e-pa-tha a-ti-chi-ma

Επαθα ατύχημα.

**TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN**

**Is there a/an ...?** i-par-chi ... Υπάρχει ...;

**I need a/an ...** chri-a-zo-me ... Χρειάζομαι ...

**baby change room** me-ros nal-lak-so μέρος ν'αλλάξω  
to mo-ro το μωρό

**car baby seat** ka-this-ma ya κάθισμα για  
mo-ro μωρό

**child-minding service** ba-bi sit-ter μπέμπι σίττερ

**children's menu (disposable)** me-nu ya pe-dhya μενού για παιδιά  
pan-nez Pam-pers πάννες Pampers

**nappies/diapers (English-speaking)** ba-bi sit-ter μπέμπι σίττερ  
pu mi-la που μιλά

**babysitter** an-ghl-ika αγγλικά

**highchair** pe-dhi-ki ka-rek-la παιδική καρέκλα

**potty** yo-yo γιογιό

**stroller** ka-rot-sa-ki καροτσάκι

**Do you mind if I breastfeed here?**

bo-ro na thi-la-so e-dho

Μπορώ να θηλάσω εδώ;

**Are children allowed?**

e-pi-tre-pon-de ta pe-dhya

Επιτρέπονται τα παιδιά;



Also available from Lonely Planet:  
Greek Phrasebook

# Glossary

For culinary terms see Food Glossary (p92), and also see Where to Eat & Drink (p85).

**Achaean civilisation** – see *Mycenaean civilisation*

**acropolis** – citadel; highest point of an ancient city

**agia (f), agios (m)** – saint

**agora** – commercial area of an ancient city; shopping precinct in modern Greece

**Archaic period** – also known as the *Middle Age* (800–480 BC); period in which the city-states emerged from the ‘dark age’ and traded their way to wealth and power; the city-states were unified by a Greek alphabet and common cultural pursuits, engendering a sense of national identity

**arhon** – leading citizen of a town, often a wealthy bourgeois merchant; chief magistrate

**arhontika** – 17th- and 18th-century AD mansions, which belonged to *arhons*

**askitiria** – mini-chapels or hermitages; places of solitary worship

**baglamas** – small stringed instrument like a mini bouzouki

**basilica** – early Christian church

**bouleuterion** – council house

**bouzouki** – long-necked, stringed lutelike instrument associated with *rembetika* music

**bouzoukia** – any nightclub where the *bouzouki* is played and low-grade blues songs are sung

**Byzantine Empire** – characterised by the merging of Hellenistic culture and Christianity and named after Byzantium, the city on the Bosphorus that became the capital of the Roman Empire; when the Roman Empire was formally divided in AD 395, Rome went into decline and the eastern capital, renamed Constantinople, flourished; the Byzantine Empire (324 BC–AD 1453) dissolved after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453

**caïque** – small, sturdy fishing boat often used to carry passengers

**Classical period** – era in which the city-states reached the height of their wealth and power after the defeat of the Persians in the 5th century BC; the Classical period (480–323 BC) ended with the decline of the city-states as a result of the Peloponnesian Wars, and the expansionist aspirations of Philip II, King of Macedon (r 359–336 BC), and his son, Alexander the Great (r 336–323 BC)

**Corinthian** – order of Greek architecture recognisable by columns with bell-shaped capitals that have sculpted, elaborate ornaments based on acanthus leaves; see also *Doric* and *Ionic*

**Cycladic civilisation** – the civilisation (3000–1100 BC) that emerged following the settlement of Phoenician colonists on the Cycladic islands

**cyclops (s), cyclops (pl)** – mythical one-eyed giants

**dark age** – period (1200–800 BC) in which Greece was under *Dorian* rule

**delfini** – dolphin; common name for a hydrofoil

**domatio (s), domatia (pl)** – room, usually in a private home; cheap accommodation option

**Dorians** – Hellenic warriors who invaded Greece around 1200 BC, demolishing the city-states and destroying the *Mycenaean civilisation*; heralded Greece’s ‘dark age’, when the artistic and cultural advancements of the *Mycenaean* and the *Minoan civilisations* were abandoned; the Dorians later developed into land-holding aristocrats which encouraged the resurgence of independent city-states led by wealthy aristocrats

**Doric** – order of Greek architecture characterised by a column that has no base, a fluted shaft and a relatively plain capital, when compared with the flourishes evident on *Ionic* and *Corinthian* capitals

**Ellada or Ellas** – see *Hellas*

**ELTA** – Ellinika Tahydromia; the Greek post office organisation

**EOT** – Ellinikos Organismos Tourismou; main tourist office (has offices in most major towns), known abroad as *GNTO*

**Filiki Eteria** – Friendly Society; a group of Greeks in exile; formed during Ottoman rule to organise an uprising against the Turks

**filoxenia** – hospitality

**flokati** – shaggy woollen rug produced in Central and Northern Greece

**frourio** – fortress; sometimes also referred to as a *kastra*

**Geometric period** – period (1200–800 BC) characterised by pottery decorated with geometric designs; sometimes referred to as Greece’s ‘dark age’

**GNTO** – Greek National Tourist Organisation; see also *EOT*

**Hellas** – the Greek name for Greece; also known as *Ellada* or *Ellas*

**Hellenistic period** – prosperous, influential period (323–146 BC) of Greek civilisation ushered in by Alexander the Great’s empire building and lasting until the Roman sacking of Corinth in 146 BC

**hora** – main town (usually on an island)

**horio** – village

**Ionic** – order of Greek architecture characterised by a column with truncated flutes and capitals with ornaments resembling scrolls; see also *Doric* and *Corinthian*

**kastro** – walled-in town; also describes a fort or castle  
**katholikon** – principal church of a monastic complex  
**kore** – female statue of the *Archaic period*; see also *kouros*

**kouros** – male statue of the *Archaic period*, characterised by a stiff body posture and enigmatic smile; see also *kore*

**KTEL** – Koino Tamio Eispraxeon Leoforion; national bus cooperative; runs all long-distance bus services

**laïka** – literally ‘popular (songs)’; mainstream songs that have either been around for years or are of recent origin; also referred to as urban folk music

**leoforos** – avenue; commonly shortened to ‘leof’  
**limenarhio** – port police

**meltemi** – northeasterly wind that blows throughout much of Greece during the summer

**Middle Age** – see *Archaic period*

**Minoan civilisation** – Bronze Age (3000–1100 BC) culture of Crete named after the mythical King Minos, and characterised by pottery and metalwork of great beauty and artisanship

**moni** – monastery or convent

**Mycenaean civilisation** – the first great civilisation (1900–1100 BC) of the Greek mainland, characterised by powerful independent city-states ruled by kings; also known as the *Achaean civilisation*

**nisi** – island

**odos** – street

**OSE** – Organismos Sidirodromon Ellados; Greek railways organisation

**OTE** – Organismos Tilepikoinonion Ellados; Greece’s major telecommunications carrier

**Panagia** – Mother of God or Virgin Mary; name frequently used for churches

**panigyri (s), panigyria (p)** – festival; the most common festivals celebrate annual saints’ days

**Pantokrator** – painting or mosaic of Christ in the centre of the dome of a Byzantine church

**periptero (s), periptera (pl)** – street kiosk

**plateia** – square

**rembetika** – blues songs commonly associated with the underworld of the 1920s

**Sarakatsani** – Greek-speaking nomadic shepherd community from northern Greece

**spilia** – cave

**stela (s), stelae (pl)** – upright stone (or pillar) decorated with inscriptions or figures

**stoa** – long colonnaded building, usually in an *agora*; used as a meeting place and shelter in ancient Greece

**tholos** – Mycenaean tomb shaped like a beehive

**Vlach** – traditional, seminomadic shepherds from Northern Greece who speak a Latin-based dialect

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