

# INTERNATIONAL CITY TOURS

## UNIVERSITY CAREER ACTION NETWORK



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# ATHENS

## City Overview

### **Brief History of Greece and Athens**

Accounts of Athens' early days are inextricably woven with mythology, making it difficult to be sure what really happened. We do know, though, that the hilltop site of the Acropolis, endowed with two copious springs, drew some of Greece's early Neolithic settlers. Later, with the rise of city-states, the Acropolis provided an ideal defensive position, and by 1400 BC, it had become a powerful Mycenaean city. Athens fell into a dark age during in 1200 BC, but sprang back in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC to become Greece's artistic center. Until 510 BC Athens was ravaged by war and oppression until Sparta stepped in to help. Following the defeat of the Persian Empire, Athens' power grew enormously. It established a confederacy on the island of Delos, demanding tributes from islands for protection against the Persians. The money was used to transform the city. This was Athens' golden age: monuments were built on the Acropolis, and drama and literature flourished. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; sculptors Pheidias and Myron; and historians Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon all lived at this time. However, Sparta was not willing to accept Athenian domination of the peninsula and hostilities culminated in the Peloponnesian Wars in 431 BC. After 27 years of war, Sparta won out over Athens, although Athens was still the birthplace of the West's greatest philosophers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Athens continued to thrive as an artistic center under Roman rule. However, between 1200 and 1450 Athens was subject to invasions by the Franks, Franks, Catalans, Florentines and Venetians. The Turks invaded in 1453 and settled in for 400 years.

After the War of Independence which ran from 1821 to 1829, Athens replaced Nafplio as the capital of independent Greece. The event that changed the nature of the city greatly was a result of the population exchange that was carried out between Turkey and Greece under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. This meant that the city's population doubled virtually overnight, creating a need to erect concrete apartment blocks to welcome all the newcomers.

Athens also suffered deeply during the German occupation during World War II and during the Civil War that followed. The city continued to grow and expand throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and many of the old Turkish houses and neoclassical buildings were destroyed under the colonel's junta. By the end of the '80s the city had developed a sorry reputation as one of the most traffic-clogged and polluted in Europe. However, Athens continues to grow and change and has done so particularly during the 1990s. The population of Athens is currently generally wealthier, although there are still major economic disparities and a rural-city divide. There is also a current drive by city officials to modernize the city with the expansion of the road and metro networks and a new airport. The Olympics of 2004 clearly accelerated the modernization projects.

### **Culture**

Greeks are particularly proud of their culture and regard it with particular passion, feeling that their culture is a definition of their national and ethnic belonging. In fact, Greece is the cradle of Western thought, literature, art, architecture and democracy. Traditions, religion, music, language, food and wines are the major components of Greek culture. Traditions in Greece and Greek Islands are either of a religious character or coming from paganism. Furthermore, most of the traditions and festivals still followed and celebrated today, are religious. The Greek population is composed of a 97% of Christian Orthodox. The rest of the population is Muslim, Roman Catholic and Jewish. Greece also has a rich culinary heritage as well, which can be sourced from the 400 years of Ottoman rule. Traditional dishes include *tzatziki* (cucumber and yoghurt dip) and octopus pickled in lemon juice and olive oil. Cheap snacks such as *souvlaki* (skewered, grilled meat in pita bread) and *spanakopita* (spinach and cheese pie) are easy to find.

Popular main dishes include *mousakas* (eggplant baked with minced meat and béchamel sauce), stuffed tomatoes, and freshly grilled seafood. The mainstay of the Greek diet is the ubiquitous *horiatiki salata* (country salad), consisting of cucumber, tomatoes, onions, feta cheese and olives. Greek yoghurt is delicious and sold everywhere. Typical Greek drinks include *retsina*, *ouzo*, *tsipouro* and *raki*. A thriving visual-arts scene exists, and traditional folk crafts such as embroidery, weaving and tapestry continue.

## **Weather**

Athens and Greece in general have a temperate climate with mild, wet winters and dry, hot summers.

## **Exchange rates and Cost of Living**

In January 2002 Greece was one of the countries in the European Monetary Union to introduce the common European currency the Euro as the sole currency of daily transactions. The approximate exchange rate in February 2005 was 0.76823 Euros per US dollar. Thus travel to Europe from the United States has become more expensive. However, the cost of living in Athens can be characterized by the following indicators:

One-litre bottle of mineral water:	€0.55
<i>Financial Times</i> newspaper:	€2.40
36-exposure color film	:€4.50
City-centre bus ticket	:€0.45
Adult football ticket:	€15
Three-course meal with wine/beer:	from €30

Additionally, the 2004 the Mercer Human Resource Cost of Living survey ranked Athens number 50, meaning that it is 80% as costly as living in New York City.

## **Job/Internship Search**

### **Job boards/Internship boards/Temp agencies**

The Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) is the equivalent of a job center in the United States. Their website is <http://www.oaed.gr/>.

There are also a small number of employment agencies advertised in the Greek Yellow pages: <http://www.xo.gr/index.jsp>.

The employment agencies listed for Athens include:

ATHANASIADIS TH. PANAGIOTIS  
**Tel.:** 21 08843123

ABSOLUTER - ZISIS NTOGKARIS  
**Tel.:** 21 05200055

ADONIS IGSE  
**Tel.:** 21 05226000

AKIS AGENT  
**Tel.:** 21 08320007

GALANI VOULA & AFRODITI

**Tel.:** 21 03806252

NTAGKOUNAKIS EMMANOUIL & GEORGIOS

**Tel.:** 21 05247109

PAPAVRAMOPOULOS KON/NOS

**Tel.:** 21 05222265

SMYRNIS KON/NOS & SIA OE

**Tel.:** 21 03837005

TSIOTA LOUKIA

**Tel.:** 21 03837586

Jobs are also listed on the following websites:

<http://www.overseasjobs.com/index.html>

<http://jobs.escapeartist.com/Openings/Greece/>

<http://gr.careervenue.com/>

<http://www.jobs-in-europe.net/greece.html>

[http://www.in2greece.com/jobs/job\\_forum.htm](http://www.in2greece.com/jobs/job_forum.htm)

<http://gogreece.about.com/od/jobsingreece/>

<http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/work/shortterm/Mediterranean.shtml>

<http://www.internabroad.com/listings.cfm?countryID=34>

<http://www.jobsabroad.com/listings.cfm?countryID=34>

<http://www.teachabroad.com/listings.cfm?countryID=34>

## **CV & Resume Writing Resources**

Below are links that can give you an idea of what Greek employers would be looking for in a CV or Resume:

<http://www.jobera.com/job-resumes-cvs/international-resumes-cvs/greece/greek-cv.htm>

<http://www.mol.fi/tyonhakijapalvelut/cvmalliulkomaat6.html>

[http://www.fedora.eu.org/cms/ShowPage/Home\\_page/English\\_pages/Country\\_profile\\_Greece/p!epkeeg](http://www.fedora.eu.org/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/English_pages/Country_profile_Greece/p!epkeeg)

[http://europa.eu.int/youth/working/finding\\_a\\_job/index\\_he\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/youth/working/finding_a_job/index_he_en.html)

## **Overview of Industries**

The main industries that drive the Greek economy include:

- Tourism
- Food and tobacco processing
- Textiles
- Chemicals
- Metal products
- Mining
- Petroleum

The public sector accounts for 40% of GDP; tourism provides 15% of GDP

Agriculture accounts for 8.3%; Industry accounts for 27.3%; and Services account for 64.4% of GDP

## **Employers by Industry**

Comprehensive industry lists of companies can be found at:

[www.kompass.com](http://www.kompass.com)

## **Student Visas & Work Permits**

### **Work Permits**

Non EU nationals can obtain a work permit in Greece if a vacancy matching their qualifications exists. They first receive a temporary, pre-approval employment visa from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs or other commissioned authority. US citizens who wish to be employed in Greece must request their employer to apply on their behalf to the appropriate Greek authorities for a work permit

For more information contact the local offices of the Employment Inspection Services or the Ministry of Labor, Dept. for Foreigners Working in Greece.

Tel: (+30) 2105295245

Fax: (+30) 210 524 2942

### **Student Visas**

US citizens do not require a visa for tourist stay for up to 90 days.

General Visa information can be found at:

<http://www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=11&folder=82&article=93>

And more specific information about requirements for U.S. citizens can be found at:

[http://www.usembassy.gr/consular/ac\\_residency.htm](http://www.usembassy.gr/consular/ac_residency.htm)

## **Housing**

### **Housing Links**

<http://www.expatriates.com/classifieds/greece/hs/>

<http://www.expatriates.com/classifieds/ath/hs/>

And limited properties are also available at:

<http://www.greece.com>

### **Universities**

A fairly comprehensive listing of Universities in Greece can be found at the following site:

<http://www.internationaleducationmedia.com/greece/universities.htm>

## **Attractions/Transportation**

### **Brief Overview of Attractions**

A brief listing of the favorite tourist attractions in Athens include the Acropolis, the Ancient Agora, the Benaki Museum, the National Archaeological Museum, the National Gardens, the Roman Agora and Tower of the Winds, the Keramikos, and the Theater of Dionysos.

The Acropolis used to be a city of great grandeur though now it stands in ruins. Pericles transformed the Acropolis into a city of temples after being informed by the Delphic Oracle in 510 B.C. that it should become a province of the gods. The Parthenon, which is now the most prominent building on the

Acropolis, was the largest Doric temple to have been completed in Greece, and was the only one built almost completely (except for the wooden roof) of Pentelic marble.

The Agora was the ancient market place where the main administrative, commercial, political and social activities were centered. In the vicinity there is the Agora Museum in which there is a model of the Ancient Agora and displays of artifacts found from the site.

The Benaki Museum is the oldest museum in Greece, displaying more than 20,000 items beginning with prehistory to the formation of the modern Greek state. It has an excellent Byzantine collection and a gallery focusing on the development of Hellenism under foreign domination. The spectrum of Greek cultural history is covered including Karaghiozi shadow puppets, a wide array of costumes, jewelry, textiles and paintings.

The National Archaeological Museum possesses one of the most comprehensive collection of ancient Greek artifacts despite the pilfering by foreign archaeologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Roman Agora was where Athens' civic center was moved under Roman rule. There are ruins of a 68-seat public latrine, the foundations of a propylon and a row of shops. There is also the octagonal marble Tower of Winds, built by Syrian astronomer Andronicus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C., which served as a sundial, a weather vane, a water clock and a compass.

The Keramikos was the city's cemetery from the 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to the Roman times. Heading away from the city, the Street of Tombs consists of a vast array of funerary monuments with bass-reliefs. To the left of the Keramikos, the Oberlaender Museum displays stelae and sculpture from the site, as well as a collection of terracotta figurines and vases.

The Theater of Dionysus was quite enormous with a capacity of 17,000 people with 64 tiers of seats, of which only 20 survive. The enormous size of the theater attests to the importance of theater in the life of Athenians.

### **Entertainment Link**

<http://www.timeout.com/travel/athens/>  
<http://insider-magazine.gr/athens.asp>

### **Transportation Link**

[http://www.oasa.gr/uk/index\\_gr.asp](http://www.oasa.gr/uk/index_gr.asp)  
<http://www.ametro.gr/#>  
<http://www.greekferries.gr/>

## **Publications**

### **Media in Greece**

(from BBC News.com country profile)

State-run broadcasters enjoyed a near-monopoly in Greece until the late 1980s, when new commercial TV services quickly gained a lion's share of the audience. Public TV lost a large slice of its advertising revenue as a result.

News, domestically-made variety programmes, comedies and game shows dominate the peak-time TV schedules.

Broadcasting in Greece is relatively unregulated by European standards, and many of the country's approximately 1,700 private radio and TV stations are unlicensed. An attempt was made in 2001 to impose some order on the crowded FM dial in Athens, prompting a political row. The Greek media enjoy considerable freedom, although editors and publishers risk prosecution over material deemed offensive to the president or religious beliefs.

### **The press**

[Eleftherotypia](#) - evening daily

[Ta Nea](#) - evening daily

[Kathimerini](#) - morning daily, English-language pages

[Athens News](#) - English-language weekly

### **Television**

[ERT](#) - public, operates entertainment-based ET1, NET, regional and cultural channel ET3

[Mega TV](#) - major commercial station

[Antenna TV](#) - major commercial station

[Alpha TV](#) - major commercial station

### **Radio**

[ERA](#) - public, operates main network ERA1, entertainment station ERA2, cultural station ERA3, sport and music station ERA4, regional services, external service Voice of Greece

[Antenna FM](#) - commercial network

[Athena 98.4](#) - municipal Athens station, one of first non-state radio stations

[Skai 100.3](#) - commercial network

[Sfera 102.2](#) - commercial network

### **News agencies**

[Athens News Agency](#)

[Netnews](#)

### **Yellow pages**

<http://www.xo.gr/index.jsp>

## **Safety**

### **Consular Information Sheet**

<http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/greece.html>

### **US Embassy in Athens**

<http://www.usembassy.gr/>

tel: (+30) 210-721-2951

### **Medical, Legal and other resources for Americans in Athens**

<http://www.usembassy.gr/consular/resources.htm>

### **Emergency Contact Numbers in Greece**

Medical Services: 112 / 166

Fire Dept.: 112 / 199

Police: 112 / 100

**General Information**

**Consular Information Sheet from State Department**  
<http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/greece.html>