

EU-China Summer School Program 2015

Athens: The Capital of Greece

Places to visit



Europe → light Green

Greece → dark Green



Greece



Athens
(capital of Greece)





Athens City



Syntagma or Constitutional Square

Athens' central square (Syntagma, or Constitution Sq) is named for the constitution granted, after uprisings, by King Otto on 3 September 1843. Today, the square serves as a major transport hub, the location of parliament (on the eastern, uphill side) and also, therefore, the epicentre of demonstrations and strikes.

Surrounded by high-end hotels and businesses, the square itself has a marble fountain, a metro entrance and two cafes, which are prime spots for people watching. The western side of the square marks the beginning of one of Athens' main commercial districts, along pedestrianised Ermou.



Parliament & Changing of the Guard



In front of the parliament building, the traditionally costumed evzones (guards) of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier change every hour on the hour. On Sunday at 11am, a whole platoon marches down Vasilissis Sofias to the tomb, accompanied by a band.

The presidential guards' uniform of short kilts and pom-pom shoes is based on the attire worn by the klephts (the mountain fighters of the War of Independence).



The National Garden of Athens



Right in the heart of Athens, between Syntagma Square and the Kallimarmaro (Panathenaic) Stadium, stands the famous National Garden of Athens, a beautiful area to escape the noisy city centre and relax in a lush green environment. It is almost unbelievable that such an amazing garden is situated among the busiest avenues of the city and still it is so well-protected from noise.

The National Garden covers a vast area of about 16 hectares and they have three entrances: from Amalias Avenue, Vassilissis Sofias Avenue and from the Zappeion Megaron. It is situated on the north of Syntagma square, right next to the Greek Parliament.

Zappeion convention center



The Zappeion Exhibition Hall is one of the most important venues for conferences, exhibitions, and special events in Europe. Located in the historic centre of Athens, walking distance from the Acropolis and the marble Panathinaic Stadium of the 1896 Olympic Games, the Zappeion Exhibition Hall is surrounded by over 200,000 square meters of gardens with meandering paths, fountains and over 70 neoclassical sculptures.

In 1888 the Zappeion Exhibition Hall was one of the first buildings in Europe specifically designed for exhibitions and conferences. An extensive interior and exterior renovation, completed in 2006, restored the building to its original splendour while, at the same time, state of the art technology was introduced to the listed building.

The Zappeion Exhibition Hall has served as the headquarters for the Greek EU Presidency, the Press Centre for the Ministry of the Press during the 2004 Olympic Games and is now the home of Greece's twice annual Fashion Week. The Zappeion Exhibition Hall is the pre-eminent venue for domestic and international events in Athens, Greece.

The Grand Panathenaic Stadium

The grand Panathenaic Stadium lies between two pine-covered hills between the neighbourhoods of Mets and Pangrati. It was originally built in the 4th century BC as a venue for the Panathenaic athletic contests. It's said that at Hadrian's inauguration in AD 120, 1000 wild animals were sacrificed in the arena. Later, the seats were rebuilt in Pentelic marble by Herodes Atticus.

After hundreds of years of disuse, the stadium was completely restored in 1895 by wealthy Greek benefactor Georgios Averof to host the first modern Olympic Games the following year. It's a faithful replica of the original Panathenaic Stadium, comprising seats of Pentelic marble for 70,000 spectators, a running track and a central area for field events. It made a stunning backdrop to the archery competition and the marathon finish during the 2004 Olympics. It's occasionally used for concerts and public events, and the annual Athens marathon finishes here.



The National Archaeological Museum of Athens



The National Archaeological Museum of Athens is the largest archaeological museum in Greece and one of the most important museums in the world devoted to ancient Greek art.

It was founded at the end of the 19th century to house and protect antiquities from all over Greece, thus displaying their historical, cultural and artistic value 11.000 exhibits. The museum is housed in an **imposing neoclassical building** of the end of the nineteenth century, which was designed by **L. Lange** and remodelled by **Ernst Ziller**. The vast exhibition space - numerous galleries on each floor accounting for a total of **8,000 square metres** - house five large permanent collections: **the Prehistoric Collection**, **the Sculptures Collection**, **the Vase and Minor Objects Collection**, **the Stathatos Collection**, and the only **Egyptian and Near Eastern Antiquities Collection**.

Hadrian's Arch

The Roman emperor Hadrian had a great affection for Athens. Although he did his fair share of spirited its classical artwork to Rome, he also embellished the city with many monuments influenced by classical architecture. His arch is a lofty monument of Pentelic marble that stands where busy Leoforos Vasilissis Olgas and Leoforos Vasilissis Amalias meet. Hadrian erected it in AD 132, probably to commemorate the consecration of the Temple of Olympian Zeus.

The inscriptions show that it was also intended as a dividing point between the ancient and Roman city. The northwest frieze reads, 'This is Athens, the Ancient city of Theseus', while the southeast frieze states, 'This is the city of Hadrian, and not of Theseus'.



The Acropolis Museum



Acropolis Museum, is an absolute must see. Inside the modern exterior visitors can discover the ancient aesthetic wisdom of the Acropolis and feel the atmosphere of ancient Athens. The Gallery of the Slopes of the Acropolis, the Archaic Gallery and the Parthenon Gallery display sculptures, inscriptions, finds from sanctuaries, as well as objects used in everyday life. Visitors can also watch conservators working, speak to an archeologist host and acquire small souvenirs from the museum shop. The restaurant on the second floor offers a breath taking view of the Acropolis.



The Acropolis

Literally "high city," [the Acropolis](#), is Greece's great marvel. Ascend through the olive groves of the lower slopes to reach the marble crown, before passing through the Propylaia gateway. You'll see the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion and the Parthenon along with numerous fragments arranged for reassembly. The state's grand plan is to put right centuries of sackings, lootings and decay.



Anafiotika



For its size, Athens is remarkably low-rise. A good way to get a feel for life at street level is to stroll through [Anafiotika](#), a 19th century neighborhood on the northern slopes of the Acropolis hill, beside the entrance to the Agora. The masons who built it hailed from the island of Anafi, and were brought here by King Otto I to build his palace. Nestled above Plaka, Athens' center, and bustling Monastiraki, the old bazaar, Anafiotika seems far removed. There, bougainvilleas splash whitewashed walls and cats stalk sunny paths, evoking the island life the masons left behind.

The Ancient Agora

Of all Athens' ruins, the famed marketplace of [Agora](#) makes the most fitting start to your sightseeing — it stands testament to Athens' status as a cradle of Western civilization. It was, in Socrates and Plato's day, the heart of public life, and among the site's extensive excavations you'll find temples, a concert hall and long, colonnaded arcades. Smaller finds, housed in the museum, are no less fascinating — settlement here spans five millennia.



The Metro stations in Athens



One of the unique characteristics of the Athens Metro is the fact that its construction was actually the vessel for the execution of large-scale archaeological excavation works. (spanning over an area of 79000m², which revealed more than 50000 ancient articles). Today, the ancient findings are in public display for the first time in six prestigious Metro Stations, inviting thus every rushing passenger, either Greek or foreigner, to examine and admire them.



Shopping in Monastiraki



Monastiraki is the most famous flea market of the city. At [Avissynias Square](#) you can find for a jumble of curios, from books to paintings, clothes to trinkets.

Afterward, cross Athinas Street to Psiri, where interlocking streets secret away a wealth of galleries and vintage stores.



Shopping in Ermou Street



Ermou Street ("[Hermes Street](#)"), is a one and a half kilometer-long road in central [Athens](#), connecting [Kerameikos](#) archaeological site with the [Syntagma Square](#) through [Monastiraki](#), [Psiri](#) and [Thiseio](#).

It consists of three sections: The east (from Filellinon Street to [Aiolou Street](#), app. 700m long)¹ which is a [pedestrian zone](#) and the city's best-known and busiest shopping street, the middle (from Aiolou Street to Agion Asomaton str.) and the west (from Agion Asomaton to [Peiraios Street](#)) a pedestrian zone also.

With fashion shops and [shopping centres](#) promoting most international brands, it is in the top five most expensive shopping streets in Europe, and the tenth most expensive retail street in the world. Nearby, the renovated Army Fund building in [Panepistimiou Street](#) includes the "Attica" [department store](#) and several upmarket designer stores.



Shopping in Kolonaki

Kolonaki, literally "Little Column" is a neighborhood in central [Athens, Greece](#). It is located on the southern slopes of [Lycabettus](#) hill. Its name derives from the 2 metre column (located in [Kolonaki Square](#)) that defined the area even before a single house had been built there.



Kolonaki is a wealthy and upmarket district. As one of the capital's leading shopping areas, it includes a number of high-end boutiques from young adult to casual fashion to prestigious [haute couture](#) from Greek and international designers. One of its main shopping streets, [Voukourestiou Street](#), is now known for its jewellery.



Mount Lycabettus

Twilight is the best time to venture up this abrupt peak. At 745 ft. (277 m), [Lycabettus](#) stands high above Athens, commanding a clear view across the Attica basin and the Aegean. Facing the viewing platform is Agios Georgios, the tiny white-stuccoed chapel of St. George. There is also a superb café. To get there, hike up the path that starts at the end of Aristippou Street in Kolonaki and winds upwards.



Sources of Information

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