

CITY BREAK ATHENS



SO OLD,
YET SO FRESH

ATHENS

ATHENS IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST CITIES WITH ITS RECORDED HISTORY SPANNING AROUND 3,400 YEARS AND BEING INHABITED SINCE THE 11TH MILLENNIUM BCE.



SERENITY

A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

A LARGE PART OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL CENTRE HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO A 3-KILOMETRE PEDESTRIAN ZONE, WHICH IS THE LARGEST IN EUROPE. IT LEADS TO THE MAJOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (THE "ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK"), SIMULATING THE ANCIENT LANDSCAPE. EITHER ON FOOT OR BY BIKE, THE "GRAND PROMENADE" IS AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE, A REAL JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY...

In the 5th Century BCE classical Athens was a centre of arts, democracy, science and philosophy. Home of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, Athens is considered the cradle of western civilization. Over the years, a multitude of conquerors occupied Athens, and erected unique, splendid monuments - a rare historical palimpsest, evident everywhere in the city. In 1834, Athens became the capital of the modern Greek state. The choice was based on the symbolic significance of Athens' classical history. During that period the city was constructed around the Acropolis walls. Today, the greater urban complex of the Greek metropolis is called Attica and includes suburbs and the neighbouring city of Piraeus. Home to more than 4 million people it is the political, social, cultural, financial and commercial centre of Greece. The contemporary urban scenery of the sprawling city reflects its exciting history, its multi-cultural modern personality as well as the infrastructure and facilities. In Athens and the wider Attica area, you will find high standard hotel accommodation, modern means of transportation such as the cutting - edge modern metro, a wide choice of opportunities for shopping, dining and night life but above all the hospitality and warmth of its inhabitants. In other words, Athens is a must destination that combines modern urban innovation with history, culture and natural beauty throughout the year.



A REAL LIVE TOUR OF THE PAST

Start your tour at the temple of Olympian Zeus (6th c. BCE), one of the largest in antiquity. Right next to it, Hadrian's Arch (131 CE) is the symbolic entrance to the city. From there, walk along Dionysiou Areopaghitou Street and pass by the ancient open Theatre of Dionysos (5th c. BCE) where the ancient plays of Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus and Aristophanes were performed. After the ruins of the Asclepieion (5th c. BCE) and the stoa of Eumenes (2nd c. BCE), visit the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, the once closed theatre, which was built in 161 CE and is nowadays the venue of the Athens Festival.



CLASSICISM

Coming down from Acropolis, you arrive at Areios Pagos, the most ancient law court in the world. Right opposite, beautifully cobbled little roads leading to the Roman monument adorn Philopappou Hill. Closeby the ancient Pnyx was the place where Athenians used to assemble and exert their democratic rights. Walking farther along the pedestrian road, you arrive at Ancient Agora, the commercial, political and religious centre of ancient Athens and the Temple of Hephaistos, the best-preserved temple of Greek antiquity. Nearby, you will find Roman Agora with the famed "Tower of Winds" (1st c. BCE) and Hadrian's Library (132 CE).

From there, via Ermou Street, you arrive at Kerameikos, the largest cemetery of the ancient city, with impressive tomb sculptures and stelae



From there you can climb up to the sacred rock of Acropolis. Here you can find some of the most important architectural and art masterpieces in the world, such as Propylaea, the temple of Athena Nike and Erechtheion. The most renowned is the Parthenon temple, built by Callicrates and Iktinos during the 5th c. BCE and gloriously decorated by famous sculptor Phidias. Only 300m. away from the sacred rock of Acropolis stands the impressive new Acropolis Museum, which houses 4,000 priceless finds from the Acropolis monuments.

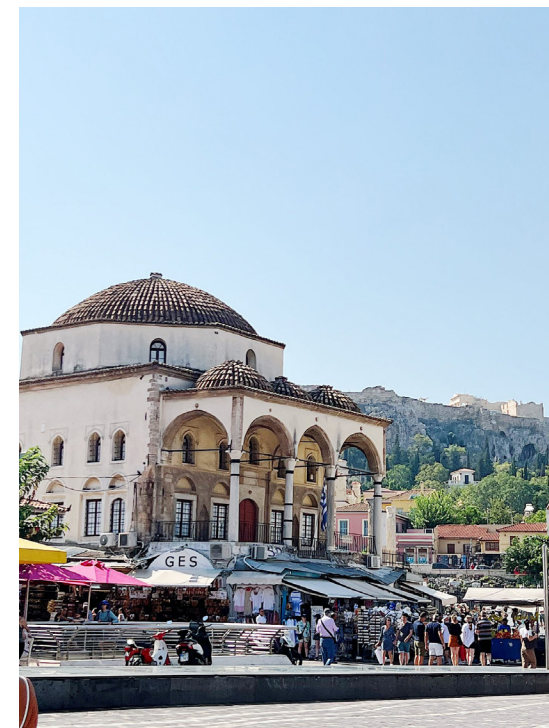




NEVER ENDING

SO MUCH MORE TO SEE

Plaka the Athens' oldest district has been inhabited continuously since antiquity. Walking through the narrow labyrinthine streets lined with houses and mansions from the time of the Turkish occupation and the neoclassical period (19th c.) you encounter more ancient monuments, scores of Byzantine churches and remnants of the ottoman buildings such as mosques, a Turkish bath, a Muslim Seminary. There are also some interesting museums, lots of picturesque tavernas, cafes, bars, as well as shops selling souvenirs and traditional Greek products.



YOU WILL NEED SEVERAL DAYS TO SEE ATHENS. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES NEVER END AND THE MODERN CITY HAS MANY SURPRISES TO OFFER.

Continuing from Plaka, you arrive at Monastiraki, a characteristic area of 'old' Athens, with narrow streets, small buildings and the town's traditional bazaar (Flea Market). Close to it, there is the Psyri area, a traditional neighbourhood, which in the past few years has evolved into one of the most important centres of the city's nightlife. However, the heart of the historical centre is the modern commercial area, with more than 2,500 shops lining the streets surrounding the centrally located Ermou street. The western border of the area is Athinas street and the surrounding area where you can find ethnic shops and bistros. Here are situated, among others, the 19th century neoclassical mansions of the City Hall, the Municipal Market (where meat, fish and vegetables are sold) and spacious Kotzia square.



Syntagma and Omonia, the main central squares of the town, are linked by Stadiou street and Panepistimiou Avenue, along which you can see some of the town's most beautiful neoclassical buildings. Dominating Syntagma Square is the Greek Parliament building and in front the Monument to the Unknown Soldier, guarded by "Evzones", the 19th century soldiers, dressed in traditional costume. Here lies the beautiful 40-acre National Garden south of which stands the impressive neoclassical Zappeion Mansion. From there you can continue towards the Presidential mansion (1897) and thence to the Panathenaikon (Kallimarmaro) Stadium where the first Olympic Games in modern history (1896) were held. From there, crossing the Metz area, the road leads you to the first Cemetery, the oldest one in Athens, which is basically an outdoor sculpture display with a wealth of wonderful monumental tombstones. From Omonia Square, starts the bustling Patission Street, with its interesting buildings such as the Neoclassical mansions of the Polytechnic School and the National Archaeological Museum.

It ranks among the leading museums in the world and hosts rare art treasures from the Neolithic era up to the Roman period. Close to the museum is the Exarchia area, the charming art district with many alternative shops, interesting cafés, organic food places and innovative products. From Exarchia, crossing the Neapoli district, you can climb the verdant Lycabettus Hill. From its top you have the view of the entire city, all the way to the sea. On the other side of the hill is the Kolonaki district, the boundary of which is Vassilissis Sophias Avenue, one of the most grandiose streets of Athens with beautiful buildings and many museums (Museum of Cycladic Art, Benaki Museum, Byzantine and Christian Museum, National Gallery etc). In Kolonaki, one of the places to see and be seen, you will find many upscale restaurants, boutiques and modern cafés. It is worth taking a leisurely walk through the central streets and marvel at the art deco, art nouveau and interwar period buildings.

TODAY

THE OLD MEETS THE NEW



