

ATHENS

FALL & WINTER GUIDE 2011 – 2012



The best places to eat, sleep and play in Athens this fall and winter

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INTRODUCTION



TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 50 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.



You'll find reviews for more than 520,000 hotels, 125,000 vacation rentals, 155,000 attractions and 715,000 restaurants on TripAdvisor.com. Learn from other travelers what to expect before you make your plans.



PACKING TIPS

1. Like the ancient Greeks, pack your **sandals**. "Go for two pairs of shoes. Bring one light running athletic or a white tennis pair for afternoon and one more elegant—possibly a sandal—but not a high heel, for evening."—TripAdvisor Member, Athens
2. "**Sunglasses** are a MUST. I found the sunlight to be blinding in Greece compared to our overcast/dreary days here in the Boston area."—TripAdvisor Member, Massachusetts
3. "The fall and winter months in Athens are most likely to be rainy, but there can be occasions of fantastic **sunny weather** in October and November."—TripAdvisor Member
4. Athens inevitably means a lot of walking, so pack a **backpack**. "While not aesthetically as nice as a suitcase, it is certainly more practical."—TripAdvisor Member, Athens

Inside ATHENS

Once known more for its smog, traffic and tacky architecture, Athens is now a city reformed thanks to the billions of euros brought by the 2004 Olympics. If you haven't been to Athens in a while, you'll be amazed to see spotless parks and streets (constantly cleaned by street sweepers), a flashy, ultra-modern subway, spanking new freeways, an easily accessible airport and all signs in perfect English. To be sure, this metropolis of over 3 million (over a third of Greece's population) is not as stately and comely as other European capitals, and the adoption of the euro hiked prices up to some of the highest in the region. But Athens is now more sophisticated and modern than ever. Its residents are amazingly friendly and easy-going, and enjoy the laissez-faire lifestyle typical of the temperate Mediterranean.

The height of the Athens travel season falls during July and August. When traveling to the city in the summer, prepare for heat. The hottest time of day is the afternoon, when temperatures can reach over 86°F. The dry heat of the summer gives way to the cooler, wetter winter season, when temperatures average around 53°F. Rain is common, although the city rarely sees snow.

Most tourists speed in and out of Athens on their way to the Greek Islands, but this important city, filled with so many of the pillars of Western history, is worth a look in its own right.

Top VIEWS



ATHENS BEST VIEWS

Lesser known than the Acropolis but taller, **Mount Likavitos** has a funicular and a restaurant at the top to easily enjoy the views.

Mount Lycabettus (Likavitos), take the Funicular from Odos Ploutarchou

Higher yet is the 3,366-foot **Mount Hymettus**. Located just five miles from downtown Athens, this summit monastery, complete with a lovely church, offers great panoramas of the entire area.

Mount Hymettus, 210 723 1769

"The **Acropolis** is one of the most amazing places I have ever seen. When you consider the historical significance of the place, the beauty of the Parthenon and the view from up top, you can't go to Greece without seeing it."—TripAdvisor Member, Naperville, Ill.

Acropolis, Dionysiou Areopagitou St., 210 923 8175

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. New Acropolis Museum, Dionysiou Areopagitou St.
2. Acropolis, Dionysiou Areopagitou St., 210 923 8175
3. Philopappos Hill, Southwest of the Acropolis
4. Agora, Northwest of the Acropolis, 210 321 0185
5. Benaki Museum, I Koumbari St. & Vas. Sofias Ave., 210 367 1000
6. Parthenon, Acropolis, Dionysiou Areopagitou St., 210 321 4172
7. National Archaeological Museum, 44 Patission St., 201 821 7724
8. The Plaka, base of the hill topped by the Acropolis
9. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (Mnimeio Agnostou Stratiotou), Constitution Square
10. Odeum of Herodes Atticus (Odeion / Irodion), Odos Dionissiou Areopagitou, 201 323 2771



FAMILIES

"Go for a walk in the **National Garden**, see the turtle and the duck ponds, visit the little zoo and see some old monuments." There's even a children's library with books in English. Admission is free!—TripAdvisor Member, Belgium

National Garden, Amalias Avenue, 210 721 1178

"Having been to London Planetarium, the **Eugenides Foundation Planetarium** was far superior. It uses state-of-the-art 3-D digital technology and has a 30 minute show covering Greek mythology/history and the stars/planets. Kids and adults alike will sit back and marvel in awe!"—TripAdvisor Member, Brighton, England

Eugenides Foundation Planetarium, Singru 387, 210 946 9600

"**Hellenic Cosmos** is a children oriented museum & exhibition hall presenting historical info on a very child-friendly basis."—TripAdvisor Member

Hellenic Cosmos, 254 Pireos St., 177 78 Tavros, 212 254 0000

"Kids and adults alike will sit back and marvel in awe!"



ROMANCE

Take a romantic evening stroll in **Mikrolimano**. "Arriving around sunset is the best because you can watch the lights go on in the city and then, stroll down the hill to the harbor, which is lined with wonderful restaurants."—TripAdvisor Member

Mikrolimano, 10-minute drive from Plaka

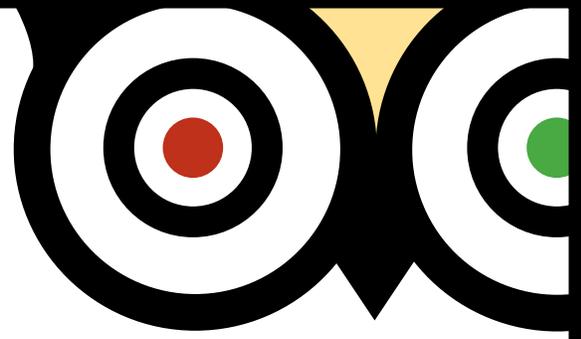
Take a detour to "the top of **Philopappou Hill** for a beautiful view of the Parthenon. This is one of my favorite views of the Acropolis, and it is often possible to contemplate ancient civilization in complete solitude."—TripAdvisor Member, Athens

Philopappou Hill (Hill of the Muses)

The ancient, winding streets of the **Plaka neighborhood** near the Acropolis are a tourist favorite. "It is so quaint and pleasant to walk around. There are cobbled little roads and around every corner is a surprise little jewelry shop."—TripAdvisor Member, Surrey, England

Plaka

Where to **PLAY**



BUDGET



The Athens oceanfront offers many fine **beaches**. You may need to pay a small admission fee, but it's well worth it. "From Glyfada we rented small bikes and rode along the coast to Laganossi. Again, some pristine beaches! The water is just awesome!"—TripAdvisor Member, Belgrade, Serbia

Athens beaches

"The water is just awesome!"

A great (free) attraction is the optimistically-named 12th-century **Little Mitropolis**, also called Panayia Gorgoepikoos (Virgin Who Answers Prayers Quickly). This tiny, domed church has crazy-quilt masonry and is a place women go with prayers for childbirth.

Little Mitropolis, Platia Mitropoleos

Visit the ruins of an ancient marketplace at **Agora** and "take a walking tour where Socrates walked."—TripAdvisor Member, Lehigh, Pa.

Agora, Northwest of the Acropolis, 210 331 0963

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 8,000,000 traveler photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It's almost like being there!



ADVENTURE



The ancients called the **Delphi Ruins** "the 'navel' of the earth, believing this is where the earth began. When you visit, you'll understand why. Plan to spend at least a couple of hours here, plus an hour or more to visit the museum. An escorted tour can give you information about each ruin."—TripAdvisor Member, Red Deer, Alberta

Delphi Ruins, Delphi (about 110 miles northwest of Athens), 226 508 2312

The **Temple of Poseidon** at Sounion is an easy and popular half-day side trip from Athens, either on your own or with a tour. The stunning Cliffside perch makes the temple one of the most picturesque in all of Greece. "Sunsets from Poseidon Temple are gorgeous."—TripAdvisor Member, Hazleton, Pa.

Temple of Poseidon at Sounion, Sounion

"I set out on a course for **Mt. Lycabettus** with no directions, except to go up any stairs that I found. Weaving through the local hill top neighborhoods, resting in parks, and browsing the boutique shops was the highlight of this journey. Great view, exercise and, best of all - free!"—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Mt. Lycabettus (Likavitos)

"...the beauty that can be found in the rubble"

EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL



The **National Archaeological Museum** in Athens is one of the premier establishments of its kind, full of treasures from antiquity. "Although it's not a huge museum, it definitely needs some hours to fully explore it."—TripAdvisor Member, Athens

National Archaeological Museum, 44 Patission St., 210 821 7724

"The **Benaki Museum** was full of ancient Greek costumes, everyday wear and artifacts. So interesting to see the evolution of Greek clothing, from the noblemen, queens and kings, down to everyday clothing. Their attention to detail was exquisite."—TripAdvisor Member, San Pedro, Calif.

Benaki Museum, 1 Koumbari St. and Vassilissis Sofias Avenue, 210 367 1000

"Up high over Athens, with the burning sun beating down, the view of the whole city and the Mediterranean nearby, the details of these buildings and even the beauty that can be found in the rubble, you cannot help but admire all the work that was put into the **Acropolis**."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Acropolis, Dionysiou Areopagitou St., 210 923 8175

RELAXATION



The spa at the **Saint George Lycabettus Hotel** "is luxurious. Great staff with therapies that make you feel like you are in paradise. Try the aromatherapy treatment!"—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Saint George Lycabettus Hotel Spa, 2 Kleomenous St, 210 729 0711

"Even the tallest person looks small next to the columns of the **Temple of Olympian Zeus**! Pick the right time and you will be the only people there."—TripAdvisor Member, Portsmouth, U.K.

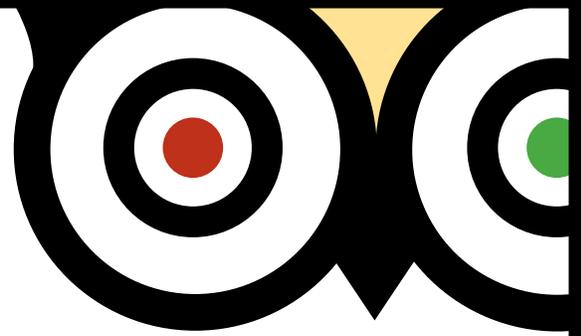
Temple of Olympian Zeus, Leoforos Vas. Olgas, 210 922 6330

The **National Library of Greece** is a soothing respite from the crowds and noise of Athens. Reading rooms containing ancient manuscripts and rare books are open to the public.

National Library of Greece, 32 Panepistimiou St., 210 338 2601

What's the **TOUR**

How to Get Around



"We used **GO TOURS** while in Athens and were very pleased. The one day bus tour to Delphi was very nice. Great scenery!"—TripAdvisor Member, Amelia Island, Fla.

One of the best-known operators in Athens is **CHAT Tours**, which offers an "Athens by Night" tour, various day trips out of the city, folk dance performances and dinner shows.

For one-of-a-kind helicopter tours over Athens, contact **Pimenidis Travel**, a company that sets up half-hour flights over the Acropolis, Port of Piraeus, the new Olympic Stadium, the Panathenian Stadium and more.

To avoid crowds at the **Acropolis**, "go early or late for photos without tons of random people."—TripAdvisor Member

Want more information on Athens? TripAdvisor.com offers free weekly e-mail updates filled with new deals, reviews and articles for Athens or any other destination you choose.

WHERE to eat



"Even in Plaka, the most touristy of tourist places, if you take the time to read menus and poke around on the side streets, you'll have the opportunity to eat in the less expensive tavernas. They won't be the ones on the main squares or streets, nor will they be the ones where you hear a lot of English being spoken. But the food will be good, affordable, and the portions will be of decent size."—TripAdvisor Member, Kamloops, British Columbia

FAMILIES

With a menu of authentic Greek fare, **Kitsoulas** "is a good taverna for having fun and a nice meal with friends or family."—TripAdvisor Member

Kitsoulas, 25 Filikis Etairias, 210 681 4798

Vlassis is a family-run establishment and one of the oldest and best-known taverns in Athens, serving up "traditional Greek dishes very well-prepared in a traditional neoclassical old house."—TripAdvisor Member, Athens

Vlassis, 15 Maiandrou St., 210 725 6335

"The **Smile Cafe** was perfect for my husband, 19 month old daughter and me. The staff were very accommodating and the food was good and very reasonably priced. This is one of the few restaurants that provided us with a baby high chair."—TripAdvisor Member, Coventry, U.K.

Smile Cafe Restaurant, Tsokri Park 1, Syngrou Avenue 24, 210 921 8911

ROMANCE

"My wife and I enjoyed the classic French menu and the excellent service at **L'Abreuvoir**, a romantic place with a carefully selected wine list and the best steak tartare I've ever tried."—TripAdvisor Member, Cyprus

L'Abreuvoir, Xenokratous 51, 210 722 9106

For fine dining with "a delicious view," try **Zafeiri**. "With the sounds of the waves and the cool breeze on the covered patio, we dined on fresh seafood and watched the sun set. What a way to end a perfect day discovering Athens."—TripAdvisor Member, Bowmanville, Ontario

Zafeiri, Iliou 19, 210 895 8603

"The intimate setting at **Kuzina** is very nice, and the view of the Acropolis at night is unforgettable. My wife and I ate here on our last night in Athens and had a wonderful time."—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Kuzina, Adrianou 9 (Thissio), 210 324 0133

WHERE to eat



BUDGET



Along with a “nice atmosphere,” **Nikiforos** has “wonderful Cretan food and very cheap prices.”—TripAdvisor Member

Nikiforos, Laskaridou 7 & Luizis Riankour, Ampelokipi, 210 698 4057

“The quality of the food at **Aspro Alogo** was tops, and it was cooked perfectly. The portions were extremely generous and priced low. The owner was attentive and friendly.”—TripAdvisor Member

Aspro Alogo, Patrou 4, 210 322 0551

Diporto is a tiny but popular-with-the-locals dive with excellent Greek dishes for next to nothing. Wine is drawn directly from the barrels lining the walls.

Diporto, Central Market, Theatrou and Sofokleous, 210 321 1463

HEALTH-CONSCIOUS



Meals at **EverGreen Casual Food Bar** “are totally healthy, and the prices are the best you can find for vegetarian options.”—TripAdvisor Member, Athens

EverGreen Casual Food Bar, Korai 4, 210 331 1660

“The menu at **Avocado** has a large selection of vegan and vegetarian dishes that are very fresh, tasty, and inexpensive. Everything I tasted was different, special and delicious, from the fun smoothies and unique deserts to innovative salads and thin crust pizzas.”—TripAdvisor Member, Munich, Germany

Avocado, Nikis 30, Syntagma, 210 323 7878

One of Plaka’s oldest tavernas, **O Platanos** has been serving healthy home fare since 1932. “It’s always full of Greeks (good sign), and serves barrel retsina. It’s a great place to eat.”—TripAdvisor Member, Ufford, England

O Platanos, 4 Diogenous, 210 322 0666

HIDDEN GEMS



Once a schoolhouse and “now an old-style ‘ouzeri’ with lots of atmosphere, **Sholarhio Ouzeri Kouklis** is located in the picturesque labyrinth of narrow streets and pathways of Anafiotika, down from the Acropolis.”—TripAdvisor Member, Adelaide, Australia

Sholarhio Ouzeri Kouklis, 14 Tripodon St., Plaka, 210 324 7605

“We splurged and had dinner one night at **Spondi**. The restaurant lived up to its Michelin-star reputation in food, service and price.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York

Spondi, 5 Pyrronos, 210 756 4021

“We had dinner at the rooftop garden of restaurant **Strofi**, which gave us a wonderful view of the Acropolis by night. It was relatively quiet, and the food was wonderful.”—TripAdvisor Member, Portland, Ore.

Strofi, 25 Rovertou Galli, 210 921 4130

SPECIAL EVENTS



Lace up and run the road of ancients during the **Athens Marathon**. The course begins in the city of Marathon and ends at the Panathenaic Stadium. If a 42 kilometer run is too much for you, the event also includes 10 km & 5 km runs, as well as a power walk. (November 13)

Athens Marathon, Marathon, 210 933 1113, <http://www.athensclassicmarathon.gr>

Visit **Santa’s Neighborhood** in historic Syntagma Square and enjoy lavish decorations, brilliant light displays and a charming antique carousel as Santa, or St. Basil in Greece, welcomes children and adults alike to celebrate. Sample local sweets and goodies as elves make magic in Santa’s workshop. (December – January)

Santa’s Neighborhood, Syntagma Square

Epiphany, the end of the 12 days of Christmas, is a momentous occasion in Greece, marked by the blessing of the waters and vessels at Piraeus, the ancient Athenian port. The blessing involves a priest heaving a large crucifix out to sea while daring souls brave the frigid waters in a competition to retrieve it. (January 6)

Epiphany, Piraeus, Port of Athens

The annual **Dionysia Wine Tasting** features over 100 Greek wine makers in the National Gardens. (February 11 – 12)

Dionysia Wine Tasting, Zappeion Hall

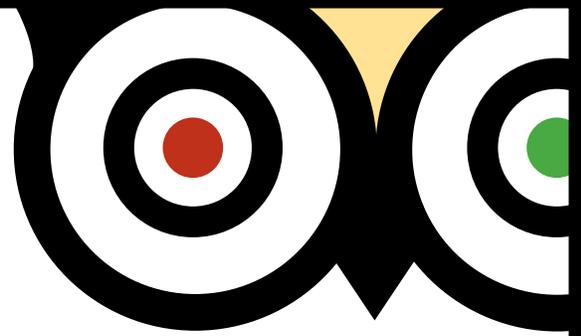
Festivals are plentiful year-round, but February marks the beginning of a hectic **Carnival** season leading up to Lent. Step into the heart of the action in Central Square, where you can soak up the splendor while feasting on local treats. (February 12 – 21)

Carnival, Various venues

Clean Monday, Kathara Deftera in Greek, marks the end of Carnival and the beginning of Lent. Before the traditional house cleaning, Athens celebrates with music, performances, feasting and kite flying on Lycabettus Hill. (February 22)

Clean Monday, Various venues

Where to STAY



FAMILIES

“Our recent trip to Athens proved a big hit with our family, which included two teenagers. **The AVA Hotel** provided all it promised, although the Acropolis view was a little disappointing. Nonetheless, the location was great; rooms were clean and had good facilities.”—
TripAdvisor Member, Australia

The AVA Hotel, 9-11 Lyssikratous St., Plaka, 210 325 9000

“I spent hours searching for an Athens hotel for my family. The **Electra Palace** was perfect. The hotel is in a great location. The service was excellent, and the rooms were spotless. The kids loved the roof top pool with a beautiful view of the Acropolis.”—
TripAdvisor Member, Long Island, N.Y.

Electra Palace Hotel Athens, 18-20 N. Nikodimou St., 210 3370 000

“The **New Hotel** lives up to its expectations. Very stylish and tasteful, extremely clean and in a perfect location. The decor was fun and all of the food on offer was top quality. My daughter was so sad to leave!”—
TripAdvisor Member, Larnaca, Cyprus

New Hotel, 16 Filellinon St., Syntagma Square, 210 327 3000

Have questions about Athens? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions are answered within 24 hours.



ROMANCE

“**The Periscope** is like home. Despite being right in the centre of the city, the hotel is hidden in a quiet neighbourhood. The rooms have a unique, modern style which reinforces a sense of serenity. The real advantage, though, is the staff. They are friendly & efficient - you're always greeted by name and with a smile.”—TripAdvisor Member, Nicosia, Cyprus

The Periscope Hotel, 22 Haritos St., Kolonaki, 210 729 7200

“Here's what we realized as soon as we entered our room at the **Astir Palace**: This place is paradise. The views are incredible, the food is spectacular, and the nights, spent on the giant patio, are perfect.”—
TripAdvisor Member, Dallas, Texas

The Westin Athens Astir Palace Beach Resort, 40 Apollonos St., 210 890 2000

“My wife and I decided on a romantic Christmas in Athens. We were delighted with **King George Palace**. We were welcomed with charm and professionalism. The room was of a very high standard of comfort and luxury, with a great deal of thought given to both its looks and functionality.”—
TripAdvisor Member, London, England

King George Palace, 3 Vassileos Georgiou A' St., Syntagma Square, 210 322 2210

“...the best value in Athens!”

BUDGET

“The **Blue Sky Hotel** was like being back on the islands again—nice and quiet, a pleasant outside seating area in the garden where we sipped frappe and a lovely (if compact) room. Excellent value—an oasis!”—TripAdvisor Member

Blue Sky Hotel, Eleftherias 26, 210 894 7722

Economy Hotel “has to be the best value in Athens! Five stars for being a clean, comfortable hotel, with a great staff and convenient location at a real bargain price.”—TripAdvisor Member, Campbell, Calif.

Economy Hotel, 5 Klisthenous St., 210 522 0520

Centrotel Hotel is a “great hotel with extremely friendly staff and all the amenities you could ask for. As it's slightly out of the touristy area of Athens, it's also very good value for money.”—TripAdvisor Member, Bern, Switzerland

Centrotel Hotel, Peoniou 11, 210 825 8010

“...worth every penny.”

LUXURY

The **Grande Bretagne Hotel** is a little expensive, but “it was worth the cost because of the beautiful surroundings within the hotel and the overall location. All of the public areas are quite beautiful, and the rooms are charming, attractively decorated and well maintained.”—TripAdvisor Member, Canada

Hotel Grande Bretagne, Constitution Square, 210 333 0000

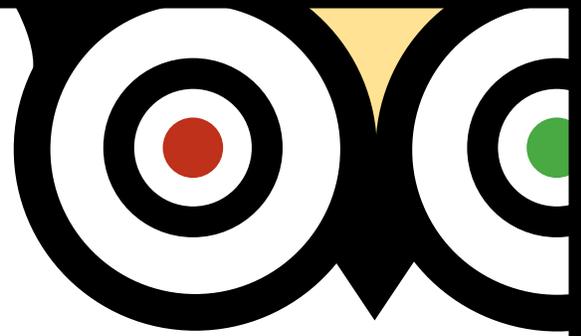
The **Sofitel Athens Airport** “was luxurious, with all the trappings. Great staff, food, amenities and a lovely, lovely room. We felt absolutely pampered and felt that it extended our vacation for just one more wonderful night!”—TripAdvisor Member

Sofitel Athens Airport, Athens International Airport, Spata, 210 354 4000

The **InterContinental Athenaeum** “delivered their promise of service and luxury and was worth every penny.”—
TripAdvisor Member

InterContinental Athenaeum, 89-93 Syngrou Ave., 210 920 6000

Where to **STAY**



HIDDEN GEMS

“The **Eridanus** offers personal service in a hip setting. The location is equidistant to the artsy cafes and the Athens club scene. From the complementary mini-bar beverages to the Hermes bath products, this hotel offers elegant and individualized touches. For those looking for a unique experience while in Athens.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Eridanus Hotel, 78 Piraeus St., 210 520 5360

“The location of the **Athens Gate Hotel** is fabulous, within walking distance of the main sights and close to the Plaka district. We booked a room with a view on the Parthenon and it was a breathtaking experience, especially at night. The view is even better from the roof garden, where you can take pictures of the Acropolis and the Temple of Zeus.”—TripAdvisor Advisor Member, Milan, Italy

Athens Gate Hotel, 10 Syngrou Ave., 210 923 8302

“We spent a brilliant time at the **O&B**, a very comfortable little hotel with charming rooms, great service and an excellent breakfast. Any arrangements we wanted made were handled flawlessly. The staff was so friendly and helpful in each situation.”—TripAdvisor Member

O&B Athens Boutique Hotel, 7 Leokoriou St., 210 331 2950

“...personal service in a hip setting”

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