

EUROPE · ISLANDS · BEACHES · HISTORY · FOOD · HIKING



Greece

Athens' Acropolis has watched over the city for nearly 2,500 years, Santorini's caldera is one of the Mediterranean's great views, and Meteora's monasteries perch on pillars of rock in Thessaly. Between them lie scores of inhabited islands, mountain villages and tavernas serving grilled fish by the sea. Book island ferries early if travelling in August.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Greece and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 11 August 2026.

 CAPITAL Athens	 CURRENCY Euro (EUR) £1 ≈ €1.19	 LANGUAGE Greek, English	 BEST TIME Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct
 DAILY BUDGET £50–£240 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type C, F 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 3h 35m direct ~£80–£300 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+2 standard time

Greece splits neatly into mainland and islands, and most first trips combine both. Two or three days in Athens cover the Acropolis and the superb museums before a ferry from Piraeus heads into the Cyclades – Naxos, Paros and Milos as well as Santorini and Mykonos. Crete deserves a week of its own for Minoan Knossos, the Samaria Gorge and Chania's Venetian harbour. Mainland road trips loop from Athens to Delphi and Meteora, or around the Peloponnese, where Nafplio, Mycenae, Olympia and the Mani peninsula reward a car.

Summer brings heat, crowds and high prices, especially on Santorini and Mykonos in July and August, when cruise passengers pack the lanes of Oia. The shoulder seasons are the sweet spot: wildflowers in spring, warm seas from June, quieter beaches in late September. Away from the famous islands Greece remains good value, with family-run tavernas, simple rooms and cheap buses. Life runs late – dinner at 10pm is normal – and many island hotels and restaurants close from November to March, which catches out winter visitors.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

HISTORY

Acropolis, Athens

The Parthenon and its companions crown a limestone rock above the city, built in the 5th century BC. Arrive at opening time with a pre-booked timed ticket, then see the originals in the Acropolis Museum.
- 2

NATURE

Santorini's caldera

The flooded crater of a Bronze Age eruption, ringed by whitewashed villages on cliffs some 300 metres high. Hike the clifftop path from Fira to Oia, visit prehistoric Akrotiri, and watch sunset away from Oia's crush.

3

SACRED SITE

Meteora

Six working monasteries sit atop sandstone pillars above Kalambaka, some reached by steps cut into the rock. Go early, check which are open that day and dress modestly; wraps are lent at the entrances.

4

HISTORY

Delphi

The ancient Greeks' navel of the world: Apollo's sanctuary spills down the slopes of Mount Parnassus, with temple, theatre and stadium above an olive-filled valley. The museum holds the bronze Charioteer.

5

ADVENTURE

Samaria Gorge, Crete

One of Europe's longest gorges, walked downhill for about 16 kilometres from the White Mountains to the Libyan Sea at Agia Roumeli, then out by ferry. Open roughly May to October, weather permitting.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Athens

≈ 3.8 million people

Beyond the Acropolis, Athens rewards wandering: the Acropolis Museum, Plaka and Anafiotika, the Central Market, Exarcheia's cafés and the National Archaeological Museum, home of the Antikythera mechanism.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Thessaloniki

≈ 1 million people

Greece's second city has a celebrated food scene, UNESCO-listed Byzantine churches, the White Tower and a long seafront promenade that fills at sunset.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Patras

≈ 215,000 people

Mostly a ferry port for Italy, Patras comes alive during its carnival, Greece's largest, and has a Roman odeon and a hilltop castle above the old town.

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

Holiday regions in Greece

These areas have their own season and weather — see their guides for sea temperatures, resorts and flights.

**Corfu & the Ionian Islands**

Greece Best: May–Jun, Sep 3h 05m from London

Sea up to 26°C ~£125/day

**Crete**

Greece Best: May–Jun, Sep–Oct 4h from London

Sea up to 26°C ~£120/day

**Cyclades (Santorini, Mykonos, Naxos)**

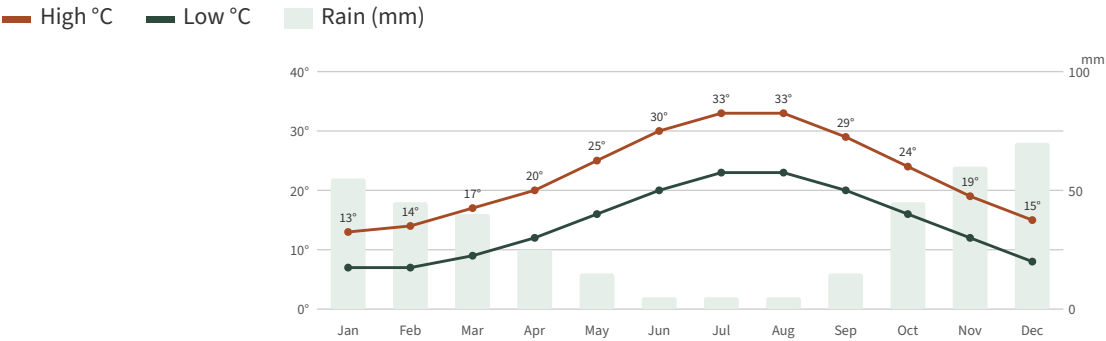
Greece Best: Jun, Sep 3h 55m from London

Sea up to 25°C ~£170/day

When to go to Greece

Best time: **Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct.**

Average climate in Athens



Festivals & events

- Feb–Mar

Patras Carnival

Greece's largest carnival builds over several weeks to a final weekend of satirical floats, costumed parades and the burning of the Carnival King on the waterfront.
- Apr–May

Orthodox Easter

Greece's biggest festival: candlelit processions on Good Friday, midnight services and fireworks on Saturday, then lamb on the spit on Sunday. Corfu and Patmos are famous for it.
- Jun–Aug

Athens Epidaurus Festival

Summer seasons of drama, music and dance in Athens, with ancient Greek tragedy staged under the stars in the 4th-century BC theatre at Epidaurus.

How much does Greece cost?

SHOESTRING £50 per person / day ≈ €59.52 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £110 per person / day ≈ €131 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £240 per person / day ≈ €286 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
---	--	--

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Moussaka

Layers of aubergine, spiced minced lamb or beef and a thick béchamel crust, baked and served warm rather than hot; every taverna has its own version.

Souvlaki

Grilled pork or chicken skewers, often wrapped in pitta with tomato, onion, tzatziki and chips; the cheapest good meal in Greece.

Horiatiki

The real Greek salad: tomato, cucumber, onion, green pepper, olives and a slab of feta, dressed with oregano and olive oil, and no lettuce.

Getting around

Ferries are the backbone: book on operators' websites or aggregators such as Ferryhopper, and expect strong summer winds to cancel smaller boats now and then. Aegean and Sky Express fly to the larger islands. On the mainland, KTEL

buses reach almost every town, while trains cover only a few routes such as Athens–Thessaloniki. Hire a car for Crete and the Peloponnese. In cities, the FreeNow and Uber apps book licensed taxis.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



C F

230V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter

DIALLING CODE

+30

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

TIPPING

Round up or leave 5–10 per cent in tavernas if service was good; leave coins for café staff and round up taxi fares.

ETIQUETTE

Cover shoulders and knees in churches and monasteries. The open-palm 'moutza' gesture is a serious insult, and a slight upward nod of the head means 'no'.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos (ATH), Athens; Heraklion International Airport Nikos Kazantzakis (HER), Heraklion; Thessaloniki Airport Makedonia (SKG), Thessaloniki

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Telephone: **112** (ambulance, fire, police)

Calling **999** from a UK mobile in Greece will automatically transfer you to the Greek emergency services.

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

TIME ZONE

UTC+2 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the right

Visas & entry for Greece

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Greece, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period without a visa. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Greece are different. If you are a touring creative, see details about the Uniform (Schengen) visa.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Greece

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Wed 28 Oct 2026	Ohi Day
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Glorifying Mother of God
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Wed 6 Jan 2027	Epiphany
Mon 15 Mar 2027	Green Monday
Thu 25 Mar 2027	Independence Day
Fri 30 Apr 2027	Good Friday
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Mon 3 May 2027	Easter Monday
Tue 4 May 2027	Labour Day (observed)
Mon 21 Jun 2027	Pentecost Monday
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Dormition of the Mother of God

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Greek

ENGLISH	GREEK	SAY IT
Hello	Γεια σας	YAH-sas
Thank you	Ευχαριστώ	ef-hah-ree-STOH
Please	Παρακαλώ	pah-rah-kah-LOH
Excuse me	Συγγνώμη	seeg-NOH-mee
How much is this?	Πόσο κάνει;	POH-soh KAH-nee

Know before you go

Book August ferries and island rooms months ahead, and leave a buffer day before your flight home, as strong summer winds can delay or cancel sailings.

Buy timed Acropolis tickets online and arrive at opening; during heatwaves the site may close in the hottest part of the afternoon.

Old plumbing means used toilet paper goes in the bin, not the bowl, almost everywhere. On smaller islands, drink bottled or filtered water rather than the tap.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.