

**T**he origin of Western civilization,

myths and darn good appetizers, Greece has it all, including superior weather and sun. Pack this Inside Scoop with your documents for the best of this modern ancient country.

**travel:** delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

### It's All Greek?

As with anywhere you don't speak the language, learn a few common words. English is widely spoken almost everywhere, but politeness, a smile and saying a few words in Greek often does wonders. For "please" say *parakalo*. For "thank you," *ef-khar-isto*. For "hello," *ki-yar-eh-ta*.

### Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats and upgrades
- cancellation/interruption and medical insurance
- getting to the islands
- the best spots for hiking
- information on ancient sites worth seeing.

**LeGrow's Travel**

We Know Travel Best.™

A Maritime Travel Company

# LeGrow's Travel

## Inside Scoop: Greece

### Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

**Y**ou've seen the images in countless movies: clean white buildings perched on cliffs by the bluest water possible. Yes, this is Greece, a gorgeous country. Helpful tips:

- Have a valid passport [www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp) that will not expire six months before the end of your trip.
- Currency: the Euro €, but US bills are widely accepted. Canadian credit cards and debit cards are accepted, ATMs are common. For security, log the dates you are away with your credit card company.
- The weather is nice all year with little rain: June to August, temperatures ~90F/32C.
- For cell phone use, check with your provider (beware of roaming charges!). Internet access is widely available and affordable.
- Always keep wallets and valuables secure, wear your purse crossbody at your front.
- Bottled water is your best bet on many islands. Your hotel will advise you.
- Ferries are cost-effective and relaxing way to travel between the islands. There are also domestic flights; ask your counsellor.
- There's much in the news about Greece's changing economics: don't worry. As with anywhere, don't flash your cash (keep extra on hand in case a bank is closed); know that many merchants insist on cash.
- The electrical supply is 220-230v; bring a power converter/plug adapter.
- We strongly recommend LeGrow's Travel insurance such as cancellation/interruption and medical insurance. Insurance is an investment in peace of mind.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—having patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

### Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags so put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery; over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers with a list, dosage and your doctor's phone number.

Pack liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml (3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often available at airport security), then place the bag in the tray. You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child under 2 years old (0-24 months).

In carry-on pack pens/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg). Items permitted in carry-on include cell phones, laptops, disposable razors, canes, umbrellas and nail clippers. Items you can't take on include knives, corkscrews and sports gear such as golf clubs or pool cues. Check with your airline and [www.catsa.gc.ca/home](http://www.catsa.gc.ca/home) for restrictions.

### Getting Around

Go ahead and rent that car, booking well ahead for an automatic. Just be prepared for narrow roads, limited urban parking, expensive gas, toll roads and signs that can be missed easily. Driving at night can test the least stressable person—with few road lights, get to your lodgings before dusk. **Tips:** Many gas stations are closed Sundays; if your gauge nears 1/4 tank, fill up when you pass an open station. If you aim to go on ferries to drive on islands, know that due to increased damage risks the rental company might not allow it—and not all ferries take cars.

### Oh the Fabulous Food...

Numerous studies reinforce Mediterranean foods as being very healthy (not baklava so much, but that's necessary in a "need something sweet" way). Fresh fish with a squeeze of lemon, olive oil drizzled over grilled vegetables, Greek salad with lettuce or *horiatiki* without lettuce...with a slice of *saganaki* (heavenly fried cheese), you'll certainly eat well. Appetizer dips are fun to share as are the popular triangles of flaky phyllo filled with spinach (*spanikopita*) and *dolmades* (grape leaves stuffed with rice and herbs). No matter the season, soups are fragrant and filling. **Tip:** If you won't be eating bread don't accept it (usually a charge) and check your bill; a 15% tip is usually added.

## Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Many airlines have reciprocal “code-shares;” your ticket is for one airline, you travel on another’s plane. **For check-in or carry-on baggage allowances**, see your airline’s website or ask your counsellor. Size and weight restrictions vary by airline. Keep a separate photocopy or a photo on your cell phone of your passport’s ID page.



**Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips** at [www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops](http://www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops)

☐ Your sense of adventure & humour!

## THE Best Deal in Athens?

Public transit—metro (subway), buses, trolleys and trams—is excellent. Clean and modern, metro stations show archeological finds. The best deal; 5-day “Ath.ena Ticket,” unlimited use for €9 (not airport). A 3-day €22 tourist ticket includes the airport (2018 prices subject to change).

## Souvenirs & Gifts

Besides books to brush up on Ancient Greek history and a Greek-Roman chess set, calendars are good buys. Check out leather sandals, tablecloths and pottery—for a best buys and gifts, go to a market or supermarket and buy bags of spices (think oregano). Ouzo is available in small bottles. It might sound quirky but for fab award-winning British food and treats, Athens has Marks & Spencer. Know limits and exemptions coming home [www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/lgbg-rmf-eng.html](http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/lgbg-rmf-eng.html).



**Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!**

**Canadians:** Emergency? Canada’s embassy in Athens: 48 Ethnikis Antistaseos St, Chalandri, 152 31, tel 30-210-727-3400, [athns-cs@international.gc.ca](mailto:athns-cs@international.gc.ca) and consulate in Thessaloniki, <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates/greece>. Or contact Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca).

## While There...

With a variety of landscapes from seas to mountains to cities, Greece is ideal anytime of year. You’ve heard of popular islands such as **Corfu, Mykonos** (busy; known for nightlife and windmills) and **Santorini** (Oia, pronounced “Eahh” is the town in most photos). Try to see some less popular and smaller islands, which will likely offer more for your money in lower lodging costs. For peaceful getaways try **Koufonisia Amorgos, Kastelorizo** or **Paros**—your counsellor can advise you.

Bring your bathing suit! These are the crystal blue waters you’ve been waiting to swim. Dozens of beaches are “must-see,” so many named as favourites it’s impossible to list. Note: island dressing is very casual.

The largest island, **Crete** gets its share of visitors—no wonder as its different regions offer enough to keep you occupied; walk the beaches and white mountainscapes of the western side in **Chania** region, the caves of **Rethymno** or villages, **Heraklion’s olive groves**. **Tip:** If you don’t consider yourself a boat person, Greece is *the* place to set sail. The abundance of stunning sites will distract you and the numerous coves means the boat is protected while you swim or picnic on board. The **Cyclades** islands are considered a creation of Poseidon, God of the sea.

## Seeking Nightlife?

Greece’s three largest cities—**Athens, Thessaloniki** and **Patras**—offer bars, theatre and restaurants. In Athens, the **Gázi, Thissio** and **Pláka** (foot of the Acropolis) are popular; if folk dancing breaks out, join in. In **Thessaloniki**, head to **Aristotélous Square**, the city centre or **Nýkis Avenue** at the waterfront. Feeling romantic? Head to **Kástra Castle**, the upper part of the city’s historic and picturesque part. In **Patras**, head to **Ayiou Nikoláou** or **Radinou** Street—or of course, to the seaside and wander into a bar with music...

## Cities: Really Really Old or New

It seems everywhere you turn there’s sculptures, a monument or ruins more impressive than the last. The preponderance of archeological sites (more than 100), attractions and museums means you must choose where to visit, for it seems the entire country is a treasure. “The cradle of humanity,” Greece is best observed slowly, contemplating the work of artists, philosophers and scientists.

**Athens’** historic centre is a pedestrian zone: walk the **Pláka, Dionysiou Areopagtou, Apostolou Pavlou** and **Ermou Street** (cheap t-shirts and flea market finds; first offer half the price) are in the **Monastiraki**. Enjoy a coffee watching goings-on in **Karytsi Square**. **Tip:** get oriented via a hop-on-and-off bus tour; pick one with a sun shade and sit up top for the best views.

Like astronomy? Visit the **Athens Observatory**, finished in 1890 (not old, considering the area). Need inspiration? Contemplate the **Hill of the Muses**. The “unified sites” around the **Acropolis** and **Areopagus** include **Ancient Athens** and **Hadrian’s Library, Roman Agora** and the **Olympieion**. It’s a bit heady to think that from circa 3500BC, there was human occupation; to see these sites in person is a once in a lifetime experience.

- ♦ The **Acropolis Museum and galleries** are worth a visit, particularly the glass-encased **Parthenon**, 3D projections (Saturdays/Sundays) and family packages.
- ♦ The **Museum of Greek Children’s Art** exhibits exclusively drawings and artwork created by children 5 to 14 years old.
- ♦ Besides views, restaurants at the **Acropolis Museum** (with its view) and **Benaki Museum** (view of **Greek Parliament and National Gardens**) also offer good food.
- ♦ The **Numismatic Museum** is a must see for those who love coins; 600,000 of them!
- ♦ Visit **Thessaloniki’s Museum of Byzantine Culture**. The Teloglion Fine Arts Foundation’s restaurant is open until 1am.

**Tip:** opening hours and prices change (most museums close Mondays). If something is on your list of priorities, check before you go.

Don’t try and see a ton of things every day. You can get a “beauty overload” and not take everything in—pick what’s most important. Include breaks to sit and just observe.

### Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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