
Travel Guide Thessaloniki

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Quick view

Thessaloniki – a brief overview

After Athens, Thessaloniki is the second-largest city in Greece as well as being the economic and cultural center of the country's region of Macedonia. The port on the Gulf of Thermaí was founded almost three thousand years ago and today is home to a population of some 330,000, industry, a university and an international exhibition center. The upper town (Áno Póli) survived almost unscathed the Great Fire of 1917, which destroyed most of the other inner-city districts. A unique ensemble of early-Christian and Byzantine buildings, since 1988 a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is still intact here, including stretches of the city walls, Agios Dimitrios Church and the Byzantine baths.

Downtown, construction work also unearthed parts of Roman structures. The city also has some museums that thoroughly deserve a visit for their excellent presentations and explanations of its eventful history. Many tourists visit the historical sites or make the most of the lively and varied nightlife scene before continuing on to the nearby beaches of Chalkidiki Peninsula or the Olympus Mountain.



Greece

General Information

Country overview

The rich cultural heritage of Greece and its natural beauty make the country a popular travel destination. Every year, it welcomes around 25 million visitors to its archaeological sites and museums, its mountains and beaches. Throughout the country, visitors will find archaeological evidence of millennia-old civilization, such as the Acropolis in Athens, the early Christian and Byzantine buildings in Thessaloniki, the ancient city of Epidaurus or the ruins of Olympia. There are a total of 17 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Greece.

Swimming and hiking, shopping and surfing – in Greece, you can do it all in one trip.

Greece has been a member of the European Union since 1981, and the country has been using the euro as its currency since 2001.

Geography

Greece is located in southeastern Europe and shares borders with Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey. The eastern part of the country is on the Aegean Sea, and the western part on the Ionian Sea.

Greece consists of the mainland, the peninsula of Peloponnesus, and the Greek islands, which comprise approximately one fifth of the country's territory.

The islands include Rhodes and Crete, the northern Aegean islands like Limnos, Lesbos, Chios and Samos, as well as the Cyclades islands such as Mykonos, Naxos and Paros.

Greece's highest peaks are the Pindus Mountains (2,637 m) and Olympus (2,917 m).

General knowledge

Key facts

Population: 10.7 million (2018)

Capital: Athens

Language

Modern Greek. English and German – and sometimes French and Italian – are also spoken in the regions frequented by tourists.

Currency

Euro (EUR; symbol: €) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, €200, €100, €50, €20, €10 and €5. Coins are in denominations of €2, €1, €0.50, €0.20, €0.10, €0.05, €0.02 and €0.01.

Electricity

230 volts AC, 50 Hz. Round two-pin plugs are used.

Public holidays

Listed below are the public holidays for the period January 2020 to December 2021.

2020

New Year's Day: 1 January 2020
Epiphany: 6 January 2020
Start of orthodox Lent: 2 March 2020
Independence Day: 25 March 2020
Orthodox Good Friday: 17 April 2020
Orthodox Easter Sunday: 19 April 2020
Orthodox Easter Monday: 20 April 2020
Labour Day: 1 May 2020
Orthodox Whit Sunday: 7 June 2020
Orthodox Whit Monday: 8 June 2020
Assumption: 15 August 2020
Ochi Day: 28 October 2020
Christmas: 25 and 26 December 2020

2021

New Year's Day: 1 January 2021
Epiphany: 6 January 2021
Start of orthodox Lent: 15 March 2021
Independence Day: 25 March 2021
Orthodox Good Friday: 30 April 2021
Orthodox Easter Sunday: 2 May 2021
Orthodox Easter Monday: 3 May 2021
Labour Day: 1 May 2021
Orthodox Whit Sunday: 20 June 2021
Orthodox Whit Monday: 21 June 2021
Assumption: 15 August 2021
Ochi Day: 28 October 2021
Christmas: 25 and 26 December 2021

All information subject to change.



Traveler etiquette

How to fit in

Social Conventions

Greeks are proud, have a real sense of their own traditions, and are very hospitable. Children, in particular, are always welcomed with open arms. The Greek Orthodox church is quite influential, especially in rural areas. Casual clothing is acceptable almost everywhere, but even in the hot summer months, it is inappropriate to wear swimwear to a restaurant. Instead, visitors should at least wear a t-shirt and pants, or other light summer clothing. Clothing that fully covers the body is expected when visiting monasteries or churches.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on public transportation and in all public buildings, including cafés, bars and restaurants.

Tipping

A ten-percent tip is customary at restaurants, and it can generally be left on the table. Taxi bills should be rounded up. The cleaning staff at hotels always appreciate a small tip on the day guests check out.



Health

Health

Main emergency number: 112

Food & Drink

Tap water is drinkable in Athens and other cities – in fact, in areas where the local water is good, bars and restaurants are obliged by law to provide customers with glasses or jugs of tap water free of charge upon request. So don't be ashamed to ask. However, visitors should be wary of drinking tap water in remote areas, and on many islands – even if the locals do it, they have probably built up a resistance that newcomers may need time to acquire. Bottled water is widely available and prices are strictly controlled on the mainland and islands. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are considered safe to eat.

Other Risks

Visitors to forested areas should consider getting the vaccination for tick-borne encephalitis three months before their date of travel.



Phone calls & Internet

Phone calls & Internet

Telephone

Country code: +30

Mobile telephony and Internet

Since June 2017, EU citizens traveling within the EU, and also in Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein have been able to use their cell phones and surf the Net without incurring any extra charges: In other words, customers pay the same price for phone calls, text messages and data volume as they do at home. Restrictions do apply to the constant use of SIM cards abroad, however, and caps may be set on data packages.

For full details, contact your mobile telephony provider in your country. Travelers using a SIM card from a non-EU state do not benefit from the new arrangement.

Free Internet access via Wi-Fi is possible in many busy tourist spots. When using public Wi-Fi networks, it is a wise precaution to ensure encryption of all passwords, credit card details and banking TANs entered. Use of a VPN app or security software to check the safety of a hotspot is recommended.



Top 10 sights Top 10 sights in Thessaloniki

White Tower

Built in the 15th century, the 34m tower is the city's most recognisable landmark. Having seen many uses over the years, including being a prison, the highlight today is the panoramic view from the roof.

Lefkos Pirgos, Leoforos Nikis
54640 Thessaloniki
Greece

Tel: +30-2313/30 64 00

Opening times:
daily 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

www.lpth.gr

Archaeological Museum

One of the most important museums in Greece, with a rich collection of historical artefacts from Thessaloniki and across Macedonia – most dating from the classical Greek and Roman periods.

Odos Manoli Andronikou 6
54013 Thessaloniki
Greece

Tel: +30-2313/31 02 01

Opening times:
Daily 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

www.amth.gr

Ayios Dimitrios Church

The largest church in Greece is a magnificent mosaic-covered basilica. Begun in the fifth century AD, it has been destroyed and rebuilt several times following successive fires and earthquakes.

Corner of Odos Ayiou Dimitriou and
Odos Ayiou Nikolaou
54633 Thessaloniki
Greece

Tel: +30-2310/21 36 27

Opening times:
Daily 8:30 am – 10:00 pm

www.inad.gr

Ayios Nikolaos Orfanos Church

This 14th-century Byzantine church is mostly noted for its well-preserved frescoes.

Apostolou Pavlou (entrance on
Irodotou)
54634 Thessaloniki
Greece

Tel: +30-2310/21 44 97

Opening times:
Tue-Sun 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

Museum of Byzantine Culture

With a focus on the late Roman and early Christian era, this museum depicts aspects of Byzantine daily life and religious practices.

Leoforos Stratou 2	Opening times:
54640 Thessaloniki	Daily 8:30 am – 4:00 pm
Greece	
Tel: +30-2313/30 64 00	mbp.gr

Ósios David

Built around 500 AD, this remarkable little church offers a great view of the city. The beautiful mosaic in the interior of its dome depicts an unusually beardless Jesus.

Igoumenou Timotheou 7	Opening times:
54633 Thessaloniki	Mon-Sat 9:00 am – 12:00 pm and 4:00
Greece	am – 8:00 pm

Noesis – Science Centre and Technology Museum

Part planetarium, part technology centre, part interactive science museum, this modern exhibition hall west of central Thessaloniki shows the astonishing levels of scientific knowledge attained by the Ancient Greeks.

km6, Thessaloniki-Thermi Road	Opening times:
57001 Thessaloniki	Various
Greece	
Tel: +30-2310/48 30 00	www.noesis.edu.gr

Greek Agora and Roman Forum

The forum in the ancient agora (marketplace) dates to the second century AD. A small amphitheatre here is still sometimes used for outdoor concerts in summer.

Between Olimbou and Filipou, behind	Opening times:
Dikasterion Square	Tue-Sun 8:30 am – 3:00 pm
Thessaloniki	
Greece	

Museum for the Macedonian Struggle

Through a series of dioramas and other exhibits, this museum tells the story of Macedonia's breakaway from the Ottoman Empire via a series of violent revolts from 1904-1908.

Proxenou Koromila 23	Opening times:
54622 Thessaloniki	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
Greece	Wed 9:00 am – 10:00 pm
Tel: +30-2310/22 97 78	Sat 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

www.imma.edu.gr

Loutra Pozar Thermal Baths

Roughly 100 kilometers north of Thessaloniki, Loutraki is a mountain village built along the banks of the Thermopotamou Toplitsa River, which is fed by hot springs. The water tumbles down the rocks and collects, by this time cooled down to 37 degrees Celsius, in picturesque pools that are perfect for bathing all year round. The village also has several hotels and spas that use the healing waters in their indoor swimming pools and for spa treatments.

Loutra Pozar
Greece

Opening times:
Various

www.loutrapozar.info/en/



Shopping Shopping in Thessaloniki

Key Areas

Thessaloniki's shopping heart is enclosed by four streets: Egnatia, Ethnikis Amynis, Leoforos Nikis and Venizelou. Tsimiski, running down the middle, has the big international names; Mitropoleos and Proxenou Koromila have chic designer boutiques. The most famous department store is Notos Galleries, with more than 250 top fashion brands (Tsimiski 24).

Markets

Modiano is the largest covered market in Greece. Located between Vasileos Irakliou St and Egnatia, it has been part of life since 1930. Most stalls sell food: spices, cheese, fish and meat. A short distance away by Aristotelous Plaza, Kapani – the oldest open market in the city – has been around for centuries.

Shopping Centres

Thessaloniki has some of the largest shopping malls in the Balkans, but most are in out-of-town locations. Among the most central is Plateia Shopping Centre on Tsimiski. It has numerous shops, cafés and restaurants, as well as a bowling alley and cinemas.



Restaurants Restaurants in Thessaloniki

It's the lightness and variety of Mediterranean fare, the fresh herbs and spices and the local wines that make Greek food an absolute delight. Whether you're looking for haute cuisine or just a snack, you'll soon find a restaurant to suit you in Thessaloniki. Most are located in Ladádika, in Áno Póli, the upper town, and in the side streets around Platia Aristotélos square. Many simple taverns and snack bars have set up shop in the market district and around Modiano Market. The local specialty is bougatsa, a phyllo pastry that comes with savory meat and cheese fillings as well as sweet semolina pudding with cinnamon and powdered sugar.

Ta Nisia

Top-end Greek dishes with a modern touch, served in a charming and bright dining room.

Proxenou Koromila 13
54623 Thessaloniki
Greece

Price: Luxurious

7 Thalasses

Modern seafood creations served in an elegant setting.

Kalapothaki 8-10
54624 Thessaloniki
Greece

Price: Moderate

Mavri Thalassa

More classic seafood dishes served with a welcoming smile in a modern restaurant.

Nikolaou Plastira 3
55132 Thessaloniki
Greece

Price: Moderate

Tsarouchas

Traditional and tasty Greek dishes, served by the same family since 1952.

Olympou 78
54621 Thessaloniki
Greece

Price: Moderate

Odos Delfon

Simple but popular café serving cheap snacks and international dishes at low prices.

Odos Delfon 16 and Paraskevopoulou
54640 Thessaloniki
Greece

Price: Budget



Nightlife Nightlife in Thessaloniki

Thessaloniki is a particularly lively place at nighttime, especially during the summer. Start the evening on the seafront strip Leofóros Níkis or in the area around Platía Eleftherias square in the Ladádika district, which is closed to cars. By day, the tiny old shops here sell coffee specialties and other things, but in the evening, the “in” neighborhood comes alive. Then the taverns and bars almost burst at the seams, and people wander through the streets to see and be seen. The Roman Forum is just one venue offering open-air movie shows. For visitors who enjoy classical music and opera while on vacation, there’s the Megaró Moussikis, a modern concert hall right on the waterfront.

Thermaikos

City institution waterfront bar and club, with a fabulous marble and mirror interior, and regular DJs.

Leoforos Níkis 21
54623 Thessaloniki
Greece

Boat Bars

30-minute 'booze cruise' harbour tours leave every 20 minutes and are free if you buy a drink.

Between Olimbou and Filipou, behind
Dikasterion Square
Thessaloniki
Greece

The Hoppy Pub

Friendly international bar with over 150 craft beers from around the world.

Nikiforou Foka 6
54621 Thessaloniki
Greece

Cocktail Bar

There's a clue in the name of this chic joint – the staff also mix customised drinks to order.

Politechniou 17a
54626 Thessaloniki
Greece

Sinatra

A popular meeting place that's coffee bar by day, wine bar in the evening.

Mitropoleos 20 and Komnion
54624 Thessaloniki
Greece



Calendar of events Calendar of events

Thessaloniki Documentary Festival

Dedicated entirely to documentary filmmaking, this festival screens a thought-provoking selection of movies under a number of different categories, such as 'Views of the World', 'Stories to Tell' and 'Human Rights'. Masterclasses, kids' documentaries and glitzy parties are always on the agenda too.

March 2019

www.filmfestival.gr

Venue: Various venues

Street Mode

In a one-day celebration of street culture, graffiti artists create eye-catching murals and DJs spin tunes to bouncing revellers. Street dance shows and breakdancing battles draw cheering crowds, while crazy parkour stunts leave onlookers gasping

in disbelief. Live bands play on stage late into the evening.

August - September 2019

www.streetmode.gr

Venue: Thessaloniki Port

Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art

Held in odd years, Thessaloniki's biennale celebrates the Mediterranean, its culture and its people through art exhibitions, kids' activities and guided tours. Numerous galleries, museums and places of worship play host to an exciting assortment of paintings, photos and sculptures.

September 22 – 28, 2019

thessalonikibiennale.gr

Venue: Various venues

Thessaloniki International Fair

Over 200,000 visitors flock to this annual fair promoting every Greek industry conceivable, from furniture to the farming sector to e-gaming. Visitors can browse new publications in the book market, check out the latest car models and listen to top Greek bands live on stage.

September 7 – 15, 2019

tif.helexpo.gr

Venue: Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre

Reworks

This audio-visual festival showcases an eclectic mix of international and Greek contemporary music and artists, with a particular focus on new trends. Live concerts, visual art displays and buzzing club nights draw a cool crowd, with events running from late evening until dawn each day.

September 19 – 22, 2019

reworks.gr/en/

Venue: Various venues

Dimitria

For a month each autumn, this hugely popular cultural festival stages around 50 different arts events. Classical concerts, theatrical productions, dance shows and art exhibitions all combine to make a world-class celebration which has become the second largest festival in Greece.

October 2019

www.dimitria.thessaloniki.gr

Venue: Various venues

Nightrun Thessaloniki

This half marathon is a race with a difference – it takes place after dark. More than

10,000 runners pound the streets beneath the city lights in both a half marathon and a 5k race, with crowds lining the pavements to cheer them on and DJs spinning tunes at the end.

October 13, 2019

www.thessalonikihalfmarathon.org

Venue: Starts at Nikis Avenue and finishes in front of the White Tower

Thessaloniki International Film Festival

International and Greek films are in the running for awards at this highly esteemed film festival, which is now well into its sixth decade. Movie fans can enjoy a fabulous programme of independent cinema, along with star appearances, dynamic discussions and masterclasses.

November 2019

www.filmfestival.gr

Venue: Various venues



Hotels

Hotels in Thessaloniki

There are hundreds of hotels in Thessaloniki, between them covering every category and comfort level from luxury to budget. In general, rates are very low by Western European standards, but rooms can fill and prices rise during the autumn convention season.

The Excelsior

The last word in city centre opulence for many years, this is an elegant, luxurious option.

Komnion 10

54624 Thessaloniki

Greece

Category: Luxurious

Egnatia Palace

Mid-sized modern hotel with a great central location.

Egnatia 61

54631 Thessaloniki

Greece

Category: Moderate

Kinissi Palace

Charming family-run historical hotel that dates from 1924.

Egnatia 41

54630 Thessaloniki

Greece

Category: Moderate

Anessis

Simple but comfortable modern option with agreeably budget prices.

26is Oktovriou 20
54624 Thessaloniki
Greece

Category: Budget

GEO tip

Culinary discoveries in Thessaloniki

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Culinary discoveries in Thessaloniki

The atmosphere inside the halls of Kapani Market (kapani.gr) is colorfully oriental. At the top of their voices, vendors ply their wares not only in Greek, but in Bulgarian, Albanian and Russian, too. The market specializes mainly in fresh produce, delicatessen items and snacks, so real discoveries are possible here. Take *vlíta*, for instance, a leaf vegetable similar to spinach that's served dressed in olive oil and lemon juice, or tangy *pastourmá jerky*. Both go down well with *likér krána*, a cornelian cherry liquor. For an evening meal in a market-like atmosphere, try the cool food concept store Ergon, (ergonfoods.com), a deli done out like a market hall with tables and counter settings.

www.ergonfoods.com

Mehr auf GEO.de

<https://www.geo.de/reisen/reise-inspiration/17431-vdo-griechenland-die-schoensten-griechischen-inseln>