



Exploring Athens

A unique experience...

History unfolds with every step in Athens. The modern capital encompasses ancient and medieval history interpreting it into the contemporary era.

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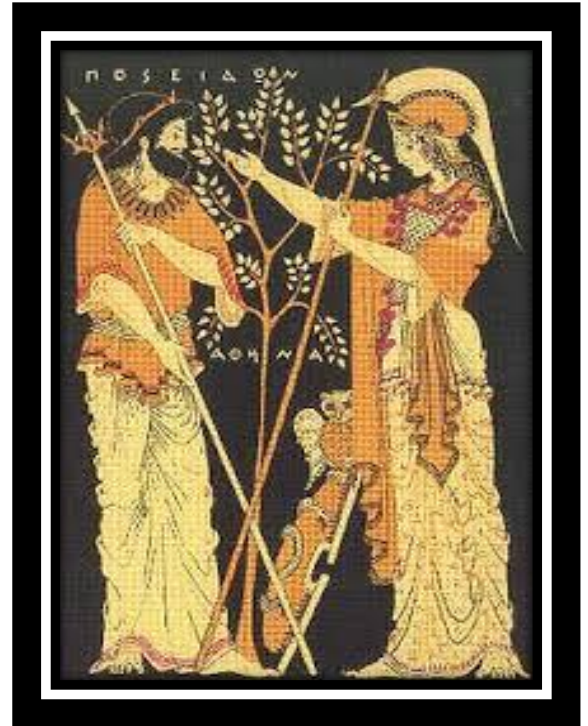
Starting from Mythology ...

Long time ago the first king of Athens, King Cecrops (quite an extraordinary king himself as he was part human and part snake) set out to find a patron deity for his city state; already a prosperous and vibrant city, the crown jewel of all cities.

Olympian Goddess Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, and Poseidon, God of the Sea, both claimed the city as their own. Their rivalry was so intense that they almost went to war and as they were about to attack each other, Athena, with her typical wise approach, suggested that they should hold a contest for the city. During the contest they would both offer a valuable gift to the Athenians and Cecrops would decide which one was the best.

Poseidon lifted his trident and struck the earth with it, offering a spring of salt-water. Athena struck her spear into the ground, stood on her knees and planted an olive tree. This gift turned out to be more useful, granting the Athenians not only the olives themselves as sustenance, but also a source of oil for their lamps and for cooking their food, as well as the wood to build their boats and houses.

As the winner, Athena, named the ancient city after herself. To this day the Goddess dominates Athens' mythology and the city's great monuments are dedicated to her.



More Information...

The history of Athens began more than 3000 years ago when during the prehistoric times its first inhabitants created their first settlement on the rock of Acropolis. It took hundreds of years until the sacred rock of Acropolis became a magnificent landmark with the construction of most of its monuments like the Parthenon by the famous architects Ictinus and Kallikrates and the sculptor Phidias in the Golden age of Pericles 495 - 429 BC.



Athens became the Capital of Greece in 1834, mostly for its location and historical importance. Since then Athens grew to the city we know today, an important financial European capital. The infrastructure of Athens has been developed very fast within the last 10 years.

Since the distances to most of the main sights of Athens are not far, walking is a good idea and a good way to get to know Athens. Of course you will not be able to see Athens within just one or two days, unless, of course, you want to get some pictures of the Acropolis and pack for the Greek islands. In any case, Athens has a lot of attractions that you simply cannot miss!

Visitors are drawn by ancient monuments bathed in the famous greek light, but it's the city's influential, creative vibe that enamours and enlivens!

Best top sights of Athens

1. The Acropolis Area

The crown jewel of Athens! An epic monument, which stands sentinel over the city. The Acropolis is the most important ancient site in the Western World. Crowned by the Parthenon, it rises over Athens, visible from almost everywhere within the city. A glimpse of this magnificent sight cannot fail to exalt your spirit!

The first temples were built during the Mycenaean era in homage to the Goddess of Athena. People lived on the Acropolis until the late 6th century BC, but in 510 BC the Delphic Oracle declared that it should be the province of the Gods. In 480 BC all the buildings of the Acropolis were reduced to ashes by Persians on the eve of the battle of Salamis. During the Golden Age of Greece, in the 5th century BC, the famous Athenian statesman Pericles (whose name means "surrounded by glory" commissioned a team of skilful architects, engineers and sculptors to build the monuments we see today.

The temples have suffered through years of foreign occupation, earthquakes, and most recently, acid rain and pollution. The worst damage was occurred when the Venetians attacked the Turks, in 1687, as they opened fire on the Acropolis, causing an explosion in the Parthenon. Major restoration programs are ongoing.



➤ ***What you shouldn't miss!***

✚ ***Propylaea***

The entrance to the Acropolis begins at the Propylaea, a complex of buildings with two wings and a central entrance way used as the official gateway to the Parthenon. The Propylaea were built by the architect Mnesicles. The Propylaea lead your way to the Parthenon, whose ruins still dominate the centre of Acropolis.



✚ ***Parthenon***

This monument, epitomising more than any other the glory of ancient Greece, is dedicated to Athena Parthenos, the Goddess who embodies the power and prestige of the city. The Parthenon, made of Pentelic marble and of Doric order, was designed by the architects Ictinus and Kallikrates during the period 447-432 BC. It remains the pre-eminent monument of

the Acropolis and was completed in time for the Great Panathenaic Festival of 438 BC.

The Parthenon's fluted Doric columns achieve perfect form. The eight columns at either end were ingeniously curved to create an optical illusion: the foundations are slightly concave and the columns are slightly convex making both appear straight.

The temple's pediments were filled with elaborately carved three-dimensional sculptures. The west side depicted Athena and Poseidon in their contest for the city's patronage and the east Athena's birth from Zeus' head. See their remnants and the rest of the Acropolis' sculptures and artefacts in the Acropolis Museum.



The Parthenon's metopes, designed by Pheidias, are square carved panels set between channelled triglyphs.





Erechthion and the Porch of the Caryatids



Across the Parthenon, at the northern end of the Acropolis hill, stands the Erechtheion, a temple of Ionic architecture. The Erechtheion, completed around 406 BC, was a sanctuary built on the part of the Acropolis that was held most sacred: the spot where Poseidon struck the ground with his trident, and where Athena, patron goddess of Athens, produced the olive tree.

Named after Erechtheus, a mythical king of Athens, the temple housed the cults of Athena, Poseidon and Erechtheus. The Erechtheion was ingeniously built on several levels to counteract the uneven bedrock.

The Erechtheion is immediately recognisable by the Caryatids, the six graceful female statues that support the roof of the temple. Caryatids are modelled on women from Karyai (modern-day Karyes, in Laconia). Each maiden is thought to have held a libation bowl in one hand, and to be drawing up her dress with the other. Those you see are plaster casts. The originals (except for one, which is removed in the British Museum) are in the Acropolis Museum.

Through he didn't win patronage of the city, Poseidon was worshipped on the northern side of Erechtheion. The porch still bears the mark of his trident strike.



Athena Polias: The Original Statue

The Statue for which the temple was built, the Athena Polias (Athena of the City) –was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. It was taken to Constantinople in AD 426, where it disappeared. Designed by Pheidias and completed in 432 BC, it stood almost 12m high on its pedestal and was plated in gold. Athena's face, hands and feet were made of ivory, and the eyes fashioned from jewels.



Theatre of Dionysus

Originally, a 6th century BC timber theatre was built here on the site of the Festival of the Great Dionysia (a festival in the honour of the Olympian God Dionysus). During Athens' Golden Age, the theatre hosted productions of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes (Greek tragic poets). Reconstructed in stone and marble between 342 and 326 BC, the theatre held 17,000 spectators and an altar to Dionysus in the orchestra pit.



Asclepion and Stoa of Eumenes



Above the theatre of Dionysus, steps lead to the Asclepion, built around sacred spring. The worship of Asclepius, God of Medicine, son of Apollon (the Olympian God of Music and Light), began in Epidavros and was introduced to Athens in 429 BC at a time when plague was sweeping the city: People sought cure here.

Beneath the Asclepion, the Stoa of Eumenes is a colonnade built by Eumenes II, King of Pergamum (197-159 BC).

Odeon of Herodes Atticus

The path continues west from the Asclepion to the magnificent Odeon Herodes Atticus. It was built in AD 161 by Herodes Atticus, a wealthy Roman. Performances of drama, music and dance are held here, during the Athens Festival.



Leaving the Acropolis Hill...

✚ The Rock of Mars

As you leave the Acropolis Hill, you meet the Rock of Mars (Areios Pagos): a limestone hill, 115m in height, with steep sides and uneven summit. It used to be the meeting point of the aristocratic council and the courthouse of ancient Athens. According to mythology, it was there that Ares (the Olympian God of War) was tried by the Council of the Gods for the murder of Halirrhothios, son of Poseidon. The hill became the place where murder, treason and corruption trials were heard. The view of the city is excellent from this rocky hill. Here Apostle Pavlos preached Christianity in 51 AD for the first time.



✚ The Temple of Ateron Nike

South of the Acropolis stands the temple of Ateron Nike or Temple of Athena Nike, an example of the work of architect Kallikrates. It was built around 420 BC to honour the celebration of the victory of the Greeks over the Persians.

2. The Acropolis Museum

The grand new Acropolis Museum at the southern foot of the Acropolis Hill(15 Dionysiou Areopagitou Str.), recognized among the best museums in the world, has a total area of 25,000 square meters, with exhibition space of over 14,000 square meters. It took years to construct the Museum according to the "museum" interior design and the "technology".

While the Museum's collection covers the Archaic and Roman periods, the emphasis is on the Acropolis of the 5th century BC, considered the apotheosis of Greece's artistic achievement.

More info: www.theacropolismuseum.gr



➤ *What you shouldn't miss!*



✚ *The Archaic Gallery*

Bathed in natural light, the 1st floor is a veritable forest of statues, mostly offerings to Athena. These statues include stunning examples of 6th century kore (maiden) statues: young women in draped clothing and elaborate braids.

✚ *Early Temple Treasures*

The Archaic Gallery also houses bronze figurines and finds from temples predating the Parthenon which were destroyed by the Persians.



✚ *The Parthenon Gallery*

The Museum's crowning glory, this top-floor glass atrium built in alignment with the Parthenon showcases the Parthenon's pediments, metopes and 160 m frieze.



+ **Caryatids**

Five grand Caryatids, the world-famous maiden columns that held up the porch of the Erechtheion, rule the mezzanine.

+ **The Foyer Gallery**

Finds from the slopes of the Acropolis Hill fill the entryway gallery, while the glass floor allows glimpses of the ruins below.



+ **And finally... Take a break!**

The Museum's cafe-restaurant on the second floor has superb views across the way to the Acropolis, and prices are surprisingly reasonable. Eating inside or sip a coffee alfresco on the terrace.



✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: The Metro is the best option. Acropolis Station (Red Line) sits near the Acropolis Museum at the base of the Acropolis Hill, just off the major boulevard Leoforos Syngrou.

Metro: Arriving at Syntagma Station (Blue Line and Red Line) or Monastiraki Station (Blue Line and Green Line), to the west of the Acropolis hill, allows for a leisurely walk through Plaka's winding lanes to the Acropolis' western entrance.

3. Ancient Agora

The heart of ancient Athens was the 6th century BC Agora, the lively focal point of administrative commercial, political and social activity. Socrates (a Greek 5th century philosopher) expounded his philosophy there. The site was occupied and devastated in all periods of the city's history. Extensive repairs and building activity occurred after the serious damage by the Persians in 480/79 B.C., by the Romans in 89 B.C. and by the Herulae in A.D. 267. From the Byzantine period until after 1834, when Athens became the capital of the independent Greek state, the Agora was developed as a residential area.

✓ **A useful tip:** There are a number of entrances, but the most convenient is the northern entrance on Adrianou (24 Adrianou Str.), easily accessible from the Metro (Monastiraki Station) and Monastiraki's market.

➤ **What you shouldn't miss!**

✚ **Stoa of Attalos**

A stoa is a covered walkway or portico, and the grand Stoa of Attalos served as the first ever-shopping arcade. Built by namesake King Attalos II (159-138 BC), this majestic two-storey stoa has 45 Doric columns on the ground floor and Ionic columns on the upper gallery. Around the stoa's balconies, you will find magnificent marble and bronze statues of the Greek gods.



The Agora Museum

The excellent Agora Museum is housed inside the Stoa of Attalos. It is a great place to start, as it gives context to the site and has a model of the Agora to help get an overview.

The Museum displays an excellent collection of findings from the site, with a special emphasis on early Athenian democracy.



Artefacts range from early voting ballots and an ancient clock to coins and terracotta.



Temple of Hephaestus

The best preserved Doric temple in Greece, this gem on the western area of Agora was dedicated to Hephaestus, God of the Forge, and was surrounded by foundries and metalwork shops. It was built in 449 BC probably by Ictinus, one of the architects of the Parthenon. The temple is very close to Areios Pagos and the Acropolis (entrance from Monastiraki at Adrianou Str.).



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4. Thission

Thission Square is located off the pedestrianised Apostolou Pavlou Street and is lined in one size by neoclassical buildings. On the other side you will find Thission Garden, the first of the city's public gardens, dated from 1862. The Square is full of outdoor cafes, which offer wonderful views of Acropolis.



✓ How to get there!

To enter the Thission neighbourhood directly, use the Thission Station and walk up pedestrianised Apostolou Pavlou Street.

+ About your Entertainment

Excellent restaurants, specializing in regional cuisine and having a remarkable range of tastes, combine a breathtaking, sweeping view of both the Acropolis and Lycabettus Hill. Pedestrianised café-strips (Apostolou Pavlou Str., Thission Railway Station).



5. Monastiraki, Plaka and Psyrri

Busy **Monastiraki's Square** opens on to its packed Flea Market, a warren of antique shops and great people-watching. Just north of Monastiraki lies **Psyrri**, where dilapidated facades belie the lively quarter where restaurants and bars coexist with an offbeat mix of warehouse conversions and workshops.

Emerging at Monastiraki Station



you are confronted with all Athens' chaos and charm! You will be able to wander the warren of shops and ateliers, dine at popular cafes and restaurants or simply watch people passing by in Monastiraki's Square.

You can start your day drinking your coffee at Abyssinia's square (Kynetou Str., Metro: Monastiraki Station). Hidden away on or around colourful Abyssinia's Square, bohemian traditional cafeterias, get top marks for atmosphere and



friendly service.

Another interesting proposal would be landmark cafes, sitting virtually over the railway line (Adrianou Str., Metro: Monastiraki Station). The tables under huge plane trees give the spot a traditional village feel.

Plaka originates from the days of the Greek revolution. Under the Acropolis, Plaka was built by the first construction workers that came from the Cycladic Island of Anafi and built Athens main buildings. The settlement of Anafiotika was created in the 19th century. Settlers from Anafi built their houses on the steep slopes of the Acropolis Hill in their



traditional cycladic island style. Thus, they created a small village with white-washed houses and narrow paths between them. The village comes complete with a tiny church dedicated to St George. A closer look will reveal that the marble used for the construction of the church was taken from an ancient temple. Today Anafiotika is one of the main touristic attractions of Athens.

Plaka's lower reaches are jammed with small museums and galleries, slews of tavernas and souvenir stores, especially on main streets like Kydathineon and Adrianou.

✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: Plaka is also easily reached from the Monastiraki Station (Blue Line and Green Line) to the north and the Acropolis Station (Red Line) to the southwest.

➤ **What you shouldn't miss!**

Kanellopoulos Museum

While wandering the Acropolis area we inadvertently stumble upon the small, exquisite Kanellopoulos Museum (it is on the north side). It is a museum that is filled with the collection of a wealthy Athens couple who donated it in its entirety (complete with the mansion), to the greek state. While small (although when you think that it is all one person's collection it is enormous!), it is beautifully laid out, accessible to visitors and very, very complete. One section is filled with ancient artifacts (from Neolithic Age, Bronze Age, Hellenistic... up) and a second section has a Byzantine and post Byzantine focus (12 Theorias & Panos Str., Plaka, Metro: Monastiraki Station).



Greek Folk Art Museum

The Museum of Greek Folk Art is the central state ethnographic museum of modern cultural heritage. Its rich collections include representative examples of every branch of Greek folk art: Embroidery, Weaving, Regional Costumes, Masquerades, Shadow Theatre, Silverwork, Metalwork, Pottery, Woodcarving, Folk Painting (works of Theophilos Hatzimichail), Stone carving, etc. The permanent exhibition gives prominence to the features that formed the cultural identity of modern Greeks in the period from the 17th up to 20th century. The Museum of Greek Folk Art is organizing a great variety of activities providing opportunities for the appreciation, enjoyment and awareness of greek cultural heritage. Such activities are temporary exhibitions, publications, conferances, lectures, educational programmes, workshops, seminars, cultural events, collaborations (17 Kydathineon Str., Plaka).

More info: <http://www.melt.gr>



The Tower of the Winds

The well- preserved Tower of the Winds was built in the 1st century BC by a Syrian astronomer, named Andronicus. The octagonal marble construction functioned as ingenious sundial, weather vane, water clock and compass (near Roman Agora, between Plaka and Monastiraki).

Roman Agora

Enter the Romans' civic centre through the well preserved Gate of Athena Archegetis, which is flanked by four Doric columns. It was erected sometime during the 1st century AD and financed by Julius Ceasar. The Fethiye Djami (mosque) on the northern side of the Agora is one of the city's few surviving reminders of Ottoman times (corner Pelopida Str.& Eolou Str., Monastiraki).



✚ Athens Cathedral and Little Metropolis

The ornate 1862 Athens Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of Athens. Far more significant historically and architecturally is the small 12th century church next to it (Mitropoleos Square, Monastiraki).

✚ Church of Kapnikarea

This small 11th Century Byzantine church stands smack in the middle of the Ermou shopping strip (Ermou Str., Monastiraki).



✚ Hadrian's Library



Once the most luxurious public building in the city, Hadrian's Library was erected around AD 132. It has an internal courtyard and pool bordered by 100 columns (Areos Str., Monastiraki).

✚ Museum of Traditional Greek Ceramics

This small museum in a lovely neoclassical building around the corner from the Keramikos site is dedicated to the history of (relatively) contemporary Greek pottery, exhibiting a selection from the museum's 4500-plus collection. There's a reconstruction of a traditional potter's workshop. The centre holds periodic exhibitions (1 Areos Str., Monastiraki).



a.antonopoulou.art

One of the original galleries to open in Psyrri's warehouses, this impressive art space hosts a range of exhibitions of contemporary and international art, including installations, videoart and photography (20 Aristofanous Str., Monastiraki).



More info: www.aaart.gr



About your Entertainment!

On Sunday morning make your way to the Flea Market in Monastiraki for a

jumble of curios, from old books and photographs to contemporary paintings, from clothes to trinkets, from souvenirs to antiques... Interlocking streets in Monastiraki, Plaka and Psirri secret away a wealth of traditional tavernas and picturesque art cafes, a perfect way to continue your outing.



In the night you can try Adrianou Street and Agia Eirini Square in Monastiraki or Agiou Anargyrou Street in Psyrri for bars and greek live music!




Charming outdoor cinemas in Thission and Psirri with a walls of cascading bougainvillea, deckchairs and little tables to rest your beer on is also a great option – one of the most entertaining ways to kick off your summer evening in Athens.



6. The Temple of Olympian Zeus & Panathenaic Stadium

To the east of the Acropolis, the Zappeio Gardens and the ruins of the Temple of Olympian Zeus lead to the marble Panathenaic Stadium (Kallimarmaron), built into Ardettos Hill which is planted with pines and other trees. The attractive residential district Met, characterised by delightful neoclassical and prewar houses, runs up and behind the Stadium.

✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: To reach the temple of Olympian Zeus use the Acropolis Station (Red Line ) , or the Syntagma Station, which is closer to Zappeion Gardens (Blue Line  and Red Line ).

➤ ***What you shouldn't miss!***

✚ The Temple of Olympian Zeus

You can't miss the striking marvel, in the centre of Athens. Also known as the Olympeion or Columns of the Olympian Zeus, it is the largest temple in Greece and, as its name suggests, it was dedicated to the supreme God of all Olympian Gods, Zeus. The building of the temple started in the 6th century on the western bank of Ilissos river, but the construction was stalled due to a lack of funds. A succession of leaders tried to fulfill what started in the 6th century, but finally it was Hadrian, who completed the task in AD 131. (Metro: Syntagma or Acropolis Station).



✚ Panathenaic Stadium

The grand Panathenaic Stadium, which is known as the Kalimarmaron, is a classical cultural and touristic monument of Greece and one of the most significant monuments not only for Athens, but for the whole Greece. It is one of our city's most popular touristic attractions and one of Athens' landmarks. It was originally built in the 4th century BC for the Panathenaic athletic contests. Its rich history is directly connected to the Modern Olympic Games as from their revival in 1896 until the Athens Olympic Games in 2004. It is also the place from where the Olympic flame sets up its journey to the cities of the Olympic Games, both Winter, Summer and Youth. (Leoforos Vasileos Konstantinou, Pangrati. Metro: Acropolis Station).



More info: <http://www.panathenaicstadium.gr>

7. Syntagma Square and the Greek Parliament

✚ Syntagma Square

The heart of modern Athens! Syntagma Square with its historic meeting point, political centre and transport hub, is a place of interest. The National Gardens offer a respite from the hustle and a short walk to Plaka, a district in the shadow of Acropolis, has an undeniable charm. Its paved, narrow streets pass by ancient sites, restored and crumbling neoclassical mansions, small museums, Byzantine churches, galleries and vintage stores, and ambient tavernas.

✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: The Syntagma Station (Blue Line and Red Line) sits at the heart of the city. You will emerge right at Syntagma Square, which is a short walk to Plaka.

➤ **What you shouldn't miss!**

✚ Syntagma Square

Athens central square is named for the constitution granted, after uprisings, by King Otto on 3 September 1843. Today the Square serves as a major transportation hub, the location of the seat of power and, therefore, the centre of demonstrations and strikes.



✚ **Parliament and the Changing of the Guard**

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the forecourt of the parliament Building is guarded by the city's famous statuesque *euzones*. The high-kicking changing of the guard occurs every hour on the hour. Sunday at 11 am a whole platoon marches down Vasilissis Sofias to the tomb, accompanied by a band (Metro: Syntagma Square Station).



National Gardens

A delightful, shady refuge during summer, the National Gardens were formerly the royal gardens designed by Queen Amalia. There is also a large children's playground, a duck pond and a shady café (entrances on Leoforos Vasilissis Sofias and Leoforos Vasilissis Amalias).



Zappeion Palace and Gardens

The Zappeion Gardens are surrounded by the streets Irodou Attikou, Vasileos Konstantinou, Vasilissis Olgas, and Vasilissis Amalias and the National Gardens. They are laid out in a network of winding walkways around the grand Zappeion Palace, and are comprised of 83.000 square meters of planted area, 41.000 square meters of paved surfaces and 2400 square meters of atriums and patios. The first trees in the Zappeion Gardens were planted in 1857. The aim was to bring out the beauty of the idyllic and historical landscape of the Ilissos riverside area. The Zappeion Palace (Megaron) was built in the 1870's at the expense of the forerunner of the modern Olympics Evangelis Zappas. It was the first building in the world to be constructed in order to serve Olympic needs. The building, the three-arched stone bridge over the Ilissus River that had been repaired also at the expense of Evangelis Zappas, and the surrounding gardens give us a charming picture of Athens in the early 20th century.

Today the Zappeion Megaron hosts conferences, events and exhibitions and has a pleasant café-bar restaurant among the trees and an open-air cinema (Entrances on Leoforos Vasilissis Amalias & Leoforos Vasilissis Olgas. Metro: Syntagma Station).



National Museum of Contemporary Art

The National Museum of Contemporary Art, established in October 2000, is the sole national institution focused only on collecting and exhibiting contemporary Greek and international art in Athens. It is located in close proximity to the

center of Athens as well as the archaeological sites of the city, including the Acropolis and the New Acropolis Museum.

The restoration of the building is currently in progress in order to create state of the art facilities for the permanent collection, periodic exhibitions, educational programs, and workshops (17-19 Leoforos Vassileos Georgiou B, Metro: Evangelismos Station).



More info: <http://www.emst.gr>

National Historical Museum

The National Historical Museum founded in 1882, is the oldest of its kind in Greece. The museum houses the collection of the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece (IEEE), founded in 1882. The collection contains historical items concerning the period from the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453 to the Second World War, emphasizing especially the period of the Greek Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the modern Greek state. Among the items displayed are weapons, personal belongings and memorabilia from historical personalities, historical paintings by Greek and foreign artists, manuscripts, as well as a large collection of traditional costumes from the various regions of Greece (13 Stadiou 13, Syntagma).



More info: <http://www.nhmuseum.gr>

✚ City of Athens Museum

Once the Residence of King Otto and Queen Amalia, the museum displays some of the royal couple's personal effects and furniture-including the throne-as well as paintings by leading Greek and foreign artists, and models of 19th century Athens (7 Paparigopoulou Str., Syntagma, Metro: Panepistimion Station).



✚ About your Entertainment!

Do not miss traditional little tavernas on the periphery of Plaka, with tables among flower pots on the pavement, traditional look through antique furnitures, authentic greek food and wine and a friendly atmosphere: a hangout for all ages and tastes from early in the noon till late in the night. Favourite music haunts in rustic old-style venues, pretty tiny cafes with marble floors and windows offering a full range of sandwiches, coffee and tea-drinks complete the picture.



8. Benaki Museum and Kolonaki

Kolonaki is an adjective as much as a place: It's the suburb that most epitomises the Athenian elite. In this sense "Kolonaki" is often used to describe the best of anything considered collectively. Undeniably chic, it's where old money mixes with new. Named after an obscure column in the central Kolonaki square, Kolonaki stretches from Syntagma to the foothills of Lycabettus Hill, and is home to popular cafes, restaurants, galleries, museums, boutiques and stylish apartment blocks.



✓ *How to get there!*

Metro: Get off at Evangelismos Station (Blue Line) for the eastern extents of Kolonaki.

Metro: Syntagma Station (Blue Line and Red Line) brings you to Kolonaki's western edge.

➤ *What you shouldn't miss!*

✚ **Benaki Museum**

The Benaki Museum ranks among the major institutions that have enriched the material assets of the Greek state. It is also the oldest museum in Greece operating as a Foundation under Private Law. Through its extensive collections that cover several different cultural fields and its more general range of activities serving more than one social need, the Benaki Museum is perhaps the sole instance of a complex structure within the broader network of museum foundations in Greece.



This group of collections comprises many distinct categories totalling more than 40,000 items, illustrating the character of the Greek world through a spectacular historical panorama: from antiquity and the age of Roman domination to the medieval Byzantine period; from the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the centuries of Frankish and Ottoman occupation to the outbreak of the struggle for independence in 1821; and from the formation of the modern state of Greece (1830) down to 1922, the year in which the Asia Minor disaster took place (1 Koumbari Str. & Leoforos Vasilissis Sofias, Kolonaki).

More info: www.benaki.gr

Museum of Cycladic Art

This exceptional private museum boasts the biggest independent collection of distinctive Cycladic art and holds excellent periodic exhibitions.

More info: www.cycladic.gr



National Art Gallery

The National Art Gallery and Alexandros Soutzos Museum, the most important institution in Greece devoted to the subject of the history of Greek and Western European art, has been in operation, in its present form, since 1976. The Art Gallery gives priority to the presentation of the Greek art of the period after the War of Independence. The initial nucleus of paintings, which had already been formed in the early years of the new state, under governor Capodistria, was enriched by donations, particularly of works of western European art, which had belonged to wealthy Greeks of the diaspora. To the 117 works, which the museum numbered in 1878, were added a large number of paintings donated by Alexandros Soutzos, among which are paintings by Caravaggio, Andrea Pavia, Stefano Tzangarolo, Gyzis, Lytras, Volanakis, etc. Today, the National Gallery possesses a collection of 9.500 paintings, sculptures and engravings as well as miniatures and furniture (1 Michalakopoulou Str., Metro: Evangelismos Station).

More info: www.nationalgallery.gr



Theocharakis Foundation

This excellent art foundation, in a restored neoclassical building is primarily concerned with music and the fine arts in Greece and internationally, has three levels of exhibition space featuring local and international 20th and 21st century artists, a theatre, an art shop and a pleasant café(9 Leoforos Vasilissis Sofias, Kolonaki).

More info: www.thf.gr



Lycabettus Hill

Lycabettus means “hill of wolves” which derives from ancient times when the hill was surrounded by countryside and its pine-cover slopes were surrounded by wolves. Taking the Funicular Railway or teleferik from the top of Ploutarchou & Aristippou Str. in Kolonaki, would be a pleasant way to “climb” the hill. The hill can also be reached by taxi or bus. Perched on the summit is the little Chapel of St George, a large open-air theatre, which has housed many Greek and International concerts, a cafe and a restaurant.



About your Entertainment!

Chic restaurants, tables wrapping around sidewalks in the summer, uplarge mugs of hot chocolate, fredo and cappuccino in a quiet, atmospheric ambience, chilled cocktails on comfy lounges in the verdant garden of Dexameni Square are but few of the options for a perfect outing in Kolonaki. Do not miss the panoramic view of the city from Lycabettus Hill, especially during the night, or a live music, dance or theatre performance in the open-air theatre there (Kolonaki, Metro: Panepistmio Station).

9. The National Archaeological Museum and....alternative Exarchia



The **National Archaeological Museum** is a must-visit. One of the richest collections of ancient Greek art in the world, the exhibits are representative of all the cultures that flourished in Greece, from the prehistoric age until the period of Turkish occupation. The magnificent collections at this museum, housed in an enormous 19th century neoclassical building, could easily fill your whole day. You can wander its rooms examining the priceless Greek art and artefacts. Frescoes from prehistoric era and statues from the classical period, such as the

bronze statue of Poseidon, are some of the museum's highlights.

Ahead of you as you enter the museum is the prehistoric collection, showcasing some of the most important pieces of Mycenaean, neolithic and Cycladic art, many in solid gold. This fabulous collection of Mycenaean antiquities is the Museum's tour de force!. Cycladic collection, galleries that exhibit fine examples of Archaic male statues, named Kouroi and pottery collections, are some of the cultural wonders that you will appreciate only when you enter the gates of the Museum (28 Oktovriou & 44 Patision Avenue corner).



More info: www.namuseum.gr

✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: You can use the Viktoria Railway Station (Green Line ____).

Trolleybus: You can catch the trolley bus no. 2,4,5,9 or 11 from outside of St. Denis Cathedral (24 Panepistimiou Str.) and get off at the Polytechnio bustop.

About Exarchia..

One of the most vibrant and unconventional neighbourhoods of Athens. Exarchia has an eclectic mix of comics stores, record shops, publishing houses and alternative book and clothing stores! Exarchia Square is the epicentre of



neighbourhood life and the local focal point. The vibrant bar scene of this area, which is full of rempetika (Greek blues) clubs and great value eateries, is something unforgettable for those who visited Athens once.

✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: Omonoia Railway Station (Red Line) is west of Exarchia. You can use the Panepistimiou Metro Station (Red Line), in order to get to the Omonoia Metro/Railway Station.

About your Entertainment

Take a break for lunch at Exarchia's alternative restaurants. Traditional local food spots and no-frills bars mingle with modern eateries set in elegant garden courtyards.

Remember! The vibrant bar/music scene of the area is simply a must!

10. Filopappou Hill

Also called the Hill of the Muses, Filopappou Hill - along with the Hills of the Pnyx and Nymphs - was, according to Plutarch, where Theseus, an ancient Greek hero, and the Amazons did battle. Strolling up and down the hill in the morning, photographing the Acropolis, the Saronic Gulf and the mountains of the Attic basin, is something that you should try during the day.





Following the stairs up the hill, you will reach the ruined Shrine of the Muses, to whom this Hill was deemed sacred. Even today grateful or hopeful artists, place offerings on a small cairn.

According to myth, the hill was a strategic bastion for Athenians defending against Amazons. In the 4th and 5th centuries BC, defensive walls – such as the Themistoclean wall and the Diateichisma- stretched over the hill. Extensive ruins still remain there.

✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: To reach Filopappou Hill either walk through Thission (Railway Station: Thission - Green Line) or use the Acropolis Metro Station (Red Line) and walk west, by the Acropolis Museum on either Rovertou Galli or pedestrianised Dionysiou Aerpagitou.

➤ **What you shouldn't miss!**

✚ **Monument of Filopappos**

The 12m Monument of Filopappos crowns the summit of the Hill. Built between AD 114 and 116 in honour of Julius Antiochus Filopappos, a Roman consul and administrator, the top middle niche depicted Filopappos enthroned.



✚ **Hill of the Pnyx**

North of Filopappou, this rochy hill was the meeting place of the Assembly in the 5th century BC, where the great orators Aristedes, Demosthenes, Pericles and Themistocles addressed assemblies. This less-visited site offers great views over Athens and a peaceful walk.



At the Thission base of the Hill along Apostolou Pavlou, do not miss the Kallirroee Fountain next to the Sanctuary of Pan (Railway Station: Thission)

11. Keramikos

The archaeological site of the city's ancient cemetery dated from 3000BC to the 6th century AD (Roman Times)! This city's ceremonial entrance is home to the impressive Street of Tombs. Keramikos was originally a settlement for potters who were attracted by the clay on the banks of the River Iridanos. Because of the frequent flooding, the area was ultimately converted to being the city's primary cemetery, and now lies below street level due to the silt deposits.



Rediscovered by a worker in 1861 during the construction of Pireos Str., Keramikos is now a lush, tranquil site.

A nearby superb small museum including a fine collection of superior sculptural artefacts, illustrates the splendour with which the ancient Greek honoured their dead.

✓ **How to get there!**

To reach the Keramikos archaeological site just walk up the Ermou Str. to the site entrance.

➤ **What you shouldn't miss!**

✚ **Street of Tombs**

This avenue was reserved for the tombs of Athens' most prominent citizens. Some surviving *stelae* (grave slabs) are now in the on-site Museum and the National Archaeological Museum.



✚ **Archaeological Museum of Keramikos**

The small but excellent museum contains remarkable *stelae* (grave slabs) and sculptures from the site, such as the amazing 4th century BC marble bull from the plot of Dionysos of Kollytos, as well as funerary offerings and ancient toys.



12. Gazi

Explore the city's best nightlife district. Like a beacon, the illuminated red chimneys of the old-Athens gas-works (Technopolis) lead you to Gazi. Cool restaurants, bars and nightclubs alternate with museums, theatres and art spaces.



✓ **How to get there!**

Metro: The Keramikos Station (Blue Line —) pops up in the centre of the Gazi neighbourhood. Parking is atrocious, so certainly use the Metro.

➤ **What you shouldn't miss!**

Technopolis

There is always something on at the city's old gasworks, the impressively restored 1862 complex of furnaces and industrial buildings. It hosts multimedia exhibitions, concerts, festivals and has a comfortable café (100 Pireos Str., Gazi, Metro: Keramikos Station).

More info: www.technopolis-athens.com



✚ Benaki Museum Pireos Annexe

This massive Annexe of the Benaki Museum, housed in a former industrial building, helps lead the resurgence in Athens' contemporary visual arts scene. The top-notch modern museum stages, well curated art, historical and cultural exhibitions, major international shows and musical performances are hosted there (138 Pireos & Andronikou, Metro: Keramikos Station).



✚ Museum of Traditional Pottery

Visit this small Museum in a lovely neoclassical building around the corner from Keramikossite, which is dedicated to the history of (relatively) contemporary greek pottery, exhibiting a selection from the Museum's 4500-plus piece collection. There is a reconstruction of a traditional potter's workshop and the centre holds periodic exhibitions (4-6 Melidoni 4-6 Str., Metro: Keramikos Station).



✚ About your Entertainment

Home-made village style bread, mis-matched retro crockery and brown-paper tableclothes set the tone for trendy, modern taverna serving regional greek cuisine in Gazi. Lively cafes, trendy clubs with live bands, roof bars with a great view serve up food and cocktails. (Gazi, Metro: Keramikos Station).



13. And last but not least... Shopping Districts!

Ancient and-yet-so modern Athens provides an extraordinary shopping experience. Do not just constrict yourselves to the truly amazing options for clothing, shoes, bags, souvenirs, jewellery, gourmet food and beauty products. Get inspired by just some of the suggestions mentioned here and then set out to discover the Athenian shopping paradise!



- **Iphestou**, Monastiraki
- **Panepistimiou**, Syntagma
- **Historic Centre**: Best Neighbourhood for Traditional and Contemporary Souvenirs, greek and popular art. **Plaka** (with main shopping streets Kydathineon and Adrianou) and **Monastiraki** (with its Flea Market) are certainly the places for souvenir hunters, from kitsch statues to leather sandals, handmade jewellery and antiques, is the place for more eclectic shoppers, from comics to goth clothing and vinyl.



10 Best Shopping Streets in Athens:

Athens is a relatively small city with a big personality! Put your internal GPS on "shopping mode" and go to any of the following streets to enjoy a fabulous shopping or window-shopping (!) experience.

- **Ermou**, Syntagma
- **Voukourestiou**, Kolonaki
- **Skoufa**, Kolonaki
- **Tsakalof**, Kolonaki



No matter how long you stay in Athens, the time is never enough to discover the numerous pleasures the city offers!!

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