



The Great  
**Canadian**  
Travel Group  
Inc.

1349 Portage Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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## Greece Practical Information

Greece, officially the Hellenic Republic, historically also known as Hellas, is in Southern Europe. Athens is the nation's capital and largest city, followed by Thessaloniki. The terrain of the mainland of Greece is mostly mountainous while its seas are sprinkled with more than 2000 islands. Greece is a country with a very rich history and the homeland of many famous personalities.



### Documentation



Canadian passports are required for visitors to travel to Greece and must be valid for 3 months beyond the date you leave Greece. Greece is part of the Schengen Area. Canadians do not need a visa to travel to countries within the Schengen area for stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period

### Airports

There are two main airports in Greece and many smaller airports.

#### Athens International Airport

The AIA airport is Greece's busiest airport and it serves as the hub and main base of Aegean Airlines as well as other Greek airlines. It is the 27th busiest airport in Europe with more than 21M passengers (2017).

#### Thessaloniki Airport Macedonia

The International Airport of Thessaloniki "Macedonia" is the second busiest airport in Greece after the Airport of Athens. Located about 15 km from the city center, in the region of Thermi, this airport receives daily flights from Athens and many flights from the Greek islands and from abroad.





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## Location and Geography

Greece is located in south-eastern Europe. It is bordered by sea on three sides and land to the North. To the east is the Aegean Sea, to the south is the Mediterranean Sea and to the west is the Ionian Sea. Greece has more than 2,000 islands, of which about 170 are inhabited. Four-fifths of Greece is covered in mountain terrain. The central mountain range, the Píndos Mountains, forms the core of mainland Greece. The range's highest point, Mount Smólikas is 2,637 metres high and is found in the north. Eastern Greece contains massive limestone formations and the Kamvoúnia Mountains. Among its peaks are Mount Olympus whose often cloud topped summit rises to 2917 metres (the highest in Greece) and Mount Kíssavos and Mount Pelion. Southern Greece forms a peninsula known as Pelopónnisos. Pelopónnisos consists of an oval shaped mountain mass and the Gulfs of Lakonia, Messenia, and Argolikos. Western Greece is not well developed and is a fertile agricultural region. Of the six main islands, Corfu the northernmost island is a fertile and well-watered lowland. The other islands, Paxoí, Lefkáda, Itháki, Kefalonía, and Zákynthos lie farther south and have a lack of rainfall that accentuates their gaunt broken limestone landscape.



## Population

Almost two-thirds of the Greek people live in urban areas, with metropolitan populations of 3.8 million people in Athens and 970,000 in Thessaloniki.



## People and Culture

The population of Greece is characterized by ethnic, religious, and language diversity. Migrations, invasions, imperial conquests, and 20th-century wars all contributed to this cultural diversity, which continues to characterize modern Greece. The Greek government's official position is that there are no ethnic or national minorities in the country and that virtually the entire population is Greek.

## Language

The official language of Greece is Greek. Many other dialects are spoken in Greece as well.



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## Economy

Greece's economy is mostly comprised of tourism and shipping. Tourism has been a key element of the economic activity in the country and one of the country's most important sectors, contributing 18% of the GDP in 2017. Greece welcomed over 28 million visitors in 2016, which is an increase of 1.5 million it welcomed in 2015. This makes Greece one of the most visited countries in Europe in recent years. Popular places to visit in Greece include Athens, Acropolis Museum, the Isle of Santorini, Mykonos Island, Zakynthos and UNESCO World Heritage sites: Delphi, Corfu Town, Meteora Monasteries and Rhodes Town.



## Climate and Weather

The average temperatures in Greece ranges between 14° and 20° C, and the country can be divided into three separate zones according to their climate. The islands of the Aegean, Attica, and Crete experience extensive sunshine, very little rain, and strong winds during the summer. In the winter however rainstorms and low temperatures are common, with snow accumulating briefly in the mountains. In the Greek mainland the summers are just as hot, but the chance of the occasional rainstorm is greater. The winters are very cold with frequent thunder and snow storms, while fall and spring bring plenty of rain and occasional frosty conditions. In the tall mountain ranges of Pindos and Rhodope the sight of snow-covered mountain tops is common for the duration of the season.



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### Electricity



Voltage is 230V 50Hz. There are two associated plug types C and F.

### Currency

Greece currency is the Euro (€). Euros are available in 7 denomination bank notes and 8 denomination coins. There are currency exchanges available in banks, airports and tourist areas.



### Business and Banking Hours

Banks and Public Services work from 8:00am to 2:00pm Monday to Friday. Shops are usually open Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 9:00am to 3:00pm and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:00am to 2:00pm and 5:00pm to 8:00pm. During high tourist season most shops stay open from early morning to late evening.

### Telephone and Emergency

The international dialing code of Greece is +30. To dial to Canada or the United States dial 01-(area code)-(phone number).

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Ambulance</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Fire Department</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Police</b>	<b>100</b>

### Health Information

Greece has a universal health care system that offers a wide range of services. Travel insurance is recommended for all travel to Greece. It is also recommended to bring all prescription medications and any over-the-counter medication you may need while travelling.





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## **National Holidays**

### **Jan 1 - New Year's Day**

New Year's Day, which is on January 1, marks the start of the year in the Gregorian calendar. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

### **Jan 6 – Epiphany**

Many Christians around the world annually celebrate Epiphany on January 6. It is a public holiday in many countries and marks two events in Jesus Christ's life, according to the Christian Bible. The first event was when the three wise men, or kings, visited infant Jesus. The second event was when St John the Baptist baptized Jesus. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

### **Jan 30 - The Three Holy Hierarchs**

Feast day celebrating Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom of Christianity. Businesses operate on normal operating hours.

### **Mar 11 - Clean Monday**

Clean Monday, is considered to be one of the most important feasts all over Greece, each year commencing the 40-day period of the Great Lent for the Eastern Greek Orthodox Church, which is called "Sarakosti." It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

### **Mar 25 - Annunciation of the Lord**

The feast of the Annunciation of the Lord celebrates Angel Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin Mary and his announcement that she had been chosen to be the mother of the savior of the world. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

### **Apr 26 - Good Friday**

Millions of Orthodox Christians commemorate Good Friday to remember the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

### **Apr 28 - Easter Sunday**

It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

### **Apr 29 - Easter Monday**

It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

### **May 1 - Labor Day / May Day**

Associated with the start of spring as well as the celebration of workers. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.



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#### **Jun 17 - Holy Spirit Monday**

Whit Monday or Pentecost Monday is the holiday celebrated the day after Pentecost, a feast in the Christian calendar. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

#### **Jul 24 - The Restoration of Democracy**

Celebrating the end of Military Government and the return of Democracy to Greece. Businesses operate on normal operating hours.

#### **Aug 15 - Dormition of the Holy Virgin**

The feast day of the Dormition of the Holy Virgin celebrates the Christian belief that God assumed the Virgin Mary into Heaven following her death. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

#### **Oct 28 - The Ochi day**

The day celebrates Greece's refusal to yield to the powers of the Axis in 1940. It is commonly referred to as World War II Day. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

#### **Nov 17 - Polytechneio**

Celebrating the uprising of November 1973 that rejected Greek military junta. Businesses operate on normal operating hours.

#### **Nov 21 - Armed Forces Day**

A celebration dedicated to the watchful guardians of the Greek borders, the guarantors of security, peace and prosperity of the Greek people. Businesses operate on normal operating hours.

#### **Dec 25 - Christmas Day**

Celebrates Jesus' birth. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

#### **Dec 26 - Synaxis of the Mother of God**

Feast Day in honor of the Mother of God. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.