

Delos Vacations Guide to Greece



Since the days of Aristotle Onassis in the 1960's Greece has been a top global destination for vacation. The country has so much to offer that one visit is not enough as there is so much to do and see amongst its 6000 islands of which 227 are inhabited.

The country is situated in the southeastern part of Europe and the capital city is Athens. Greece has a population of approximately 11 million people and hospitality is considered to be the highest of all Greek virtues.

This hospitality stems from the ancient Greek word - Philotimo. In its simplest form, the term means doing good actions that ensure that a persons behavior be exemplary and demonstrate his personality and the manner in which he was raised. Philotimo to a Greek is essentially a way of life as is breathing that one performs daily. As a visitor to the Greek Islands you will experience this everywhere you go.

Required Documents

Passport

A valid passport is required with an expiry date three months beyond your stay.

Visa

A visa is not required for a three-month stay. But a transit visa may be required for nationals other than US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and EU passport holders.

Currency/ Credit Cards/Banks

Currency used is the Euro. 1 Euro (€) =100cents

Banknotes are in denominations of €200, €100, €50, €20, €10, and €5. The €500 note is no longer accepted.

The coins are in the denominations of €2, 1€, .50, .20, 10, .5, .2, and .1 cent. Those of smaller value are rarely available. When exchanging it is advisable to ask for notes of €50 and less as they are easier accepted.

Credit Cards

All major cards are accepted; American Express, Diners, Mastercard and Visa. But one should check before entering the shop or making a purchase.

Banks

Bank working hours are Monday-Thursday 08:00-14:30 and on Fridays 08:00-14:00. However, at popular holiday locations they may stay open longer. ATMs are available in all major cities, towns and islands. Exchange currency bureaus are also available at central locations.

Restriction

There is no restriction to the amount of currency upon entering or leaving the country. A declaration is required for an amount exceeding €10,000 if travelling from a country outside the EU.

Pets

Taking your pet along, a pet passport or a microchip for ID is required. Also, a health certificate is required showing the pet had been vaccinated against rabies within a year prior to the date entering the country.

Health Issues

Vaccination is not required unless you enter the country from an infected area. In that case a vaccination against yellow fever, hepatitis A and rabies is required depending on the type of infection.

Medical Insurance

For travelers outside EU a medical insurance is advisable. Especially, if one wishes to do any sports such as scuba diving, water skiing, or gliding.

Emergency care is provided to all without any charge. Public hospitals are well equipped in major cities, private hospitals are quite expensive but all doctors are highly qualified and have a good command of English. On the Greek islands and smaller towns there are medical and health centers.

For minor issues you can consult a pharmacist, they are highly qualified and can provide with first aid and mild medication. A pharmacy is designated with a Green Cross sign outside.

If you are on prescribed medication, it is suggested to take with you enough to last for twice the days of your stay. Always have a two-day amount of medication in your bag or carryon when you travel. A mosquito repellent is also useful.

Summer Heat

During the summer months, especially July-August temperature may reach a 40-42 C. In such a case, drink plenty of water avoid physical activities, walking, sports, staying in the sun, take showers. Wear light, preferable cotton clothes, don't go out without a hat, sunglasses, and sun lotion, especially at midday.

Shopping

In Athens_Monastiraki, the flea market is the ideal place for shopping souvenirs and presents to take back home. Best buys include: lace and embroidery from Crete, pottery, ceramics from Sifnos, "flocati" rugs from Eperus, furs from Kastoria and of course fine jewelry, leather goods, wine, Brandy, olive oil and its by products. All these can also be bought in most cities and islands.

Shopping hours vary depending on the location and shop. On the islands shops remain open till late in the evening.

Tipping

Tipping is optional, however, if you wish to do so a 10-15% of the restaurant bill is the usual tip.

Cuisine

Greek cuisine is considered the healthiest as it is based on the Mediterranean diet, olive oil and fresh produce. You should definitely

try: *dolmades*-stuffed vine leaves, *gemista*-stuffed tomatoes and green peppers with rice, *gigantes*- white beans cooked in tomato sauce and olive oil, *mousaka* aubergenes and ground meat. For seafood, there's grilled fish, *kalamari* (squid) and octopus. All places serve *horiatiki* salad- tomatoes, cucumber, green peppers, onion and feta cheese. Slices of freshly baked bread are always placed on your table before your order. For Greek fast food try *souvlaki* or *gyro* wrapped in pita bread.

All food is safe to consume throughout the country including meat, poultry, fish fruits and vegetables, milk and dairy products.

Water

Water is drinkable in all major cities and towns. On islands and remote areas it is safer to ask for bottled water.

Getting Around

Public Transport

In Athens it is preferred to use the public means of transport, buses, trolley buses and the Metro which reaches the airport. There is a tram system from Syntagma Square to the southern coastal suburbs of Glyfada and Faliro.

Taxi

In all major cities taxis are safe and cheap. Fares double between midnight and 6:00am. However, on the islands taxis are more expensive and few. Thus, you should call in advance and book a ride to your destination. On the islands the fare is fixed for each destination, you should agree on it with the driver beforehand.

Car Hire

Car rental offices operate practically everywhere, at airports, ports, cities, towns and islands. On the mainland there is a safe network of motorways with tolls which vary in cost. Driving on the islands and mountains one needs to beware of narrow, windy roads in some cases taking you to country tracks. On motorways the maximum speed limit is 110-130kph (68-80mph) in city roads 50-90kmh (30-55mph).

Cycling

It is advisable to avoid it in all cities. However, in Peloponnese and Crete there are cycling, rural paths with an amazing scenery.

Buses

There is an extensive long distance bus service, connecting most major cities throughout the mainland, as well as one in Peloponnese, in Crete and on the islands. The service is run by privately owned companies. In all places it is efficient, safe and affordable.

Sea Travel

Yachting

Vacation in Greece means 'islands'. Sailing is the best way to visit more islands and dive in waters only reached by sea. Boats can be hired or chartered with or without a crew. Information is available at the Greek National Tourism Organization.

Ferries

Although highly popular islands such as Mykonos, Paros, Santorini, Crete and more have airports, travelling by ferry is more enjoyable as you get the chance to get a glimpse of the places you will not visit. Booking in advance is a must, especially if you need a cabin or want to take your car. Tickets can be purchased online or at travel agents' and ship line's offices around the ports.

Flying Dolphin

It is a hydrofoil service, a fast way to travel to nearby islands, yet more expensive and best for those who travel light, just a backpack or a carrier.

Climate

Greece has a mild Mediterranean climate. During the summer months it is generally sunny and warm, there may be a spell of heat wave in July or August. But then, there is the 'meltemi' a northeast wind which is quite refreshing. At times it may be too strong of a wind for boats to sail especially in July and August, but fortunately they are short lived.

Spoken Language

Greek is the official language of the country. Nevertheless English is spoken practically by all. People dealing with tourists may speak other languages as well, such as French, Italian, German not to mention Russian, Chinese and Arabic . Being very hospitable, the locals really appreciate when a visitor can utter some words in Greek. It is a cause for some 'ouzo' and 'meze' to suddenly appear along with lively music.

Useful words and phrases

Good morning - kalimera / **Good evening** -kalispera / **Good night**- kalinihta

Hello, Goodbye- yiasou-yiasas (formal) / **Please to meet you**-harika poli

Yes-ne / **No**-ochi / **Please, Welcome** - parakalo / **Thank you**-efharisto

Do you speak English?-Millate Anglika?

I (don't) understand- (Den) katalaveno / **Excuse me**-syngnomi /

Please write it- Mou to grafete parakalo / **How are you?** Ti kanis?- Ti kanete? (F) **Fine, good, well**-Kala

Can you repeat it, please? Xanapesteto parakalo / **I want**.= thelo /

Water-nero **Wine**-krasi/ **tea**=tsai / **coffee**= café/ **milk** - gala / **sugar** - zachari , **salt**- alati / **Pepper**- pipperi / **bread**-psomi / **The bill please**- to logariasmo parakalo /

Here- edo / **There** - eki /**What?** - ti? /

When? - pote? **Why?** -yiati? / **Where?**- pou? **How?** - pos? **How much?**- Posso kani?

Today-simera / **Tomorrow** -avrio / **Yesterday** - chtes

Cheers (drinks) - Stin yiamas

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718.658.0200 @DelosVacations