NOTES

AT&T: 00.800.1311
MCI: 00.800.121

TRANSPORTATION

There are plenty of taxis available at the pier. However, please ensure that the meter is turned on in order to avoid being overcharged. Taxi drivers prefer to take tourists on a city tour with a preset price instead of dropping off in the shopping district. A regular bus service (green bus) runs into Athens approx. every 10 mins. For Athens and its suburbs use the “Blue bus”.

There is also a subway system with connections between Piraeus and Athens. The main station is located at Omonia Square in Athens.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Thank-you • Efharisto
Yes • Ne
No • Ochi
Good Day • Kalimera
Good-bye • Ades
You’re Welcome • Parakalo

PLACES OF INTEREST

Beyond Athens

Mycenae was settled as early as 2700 BC, but the period of its greatest power came at the close of the Late Bronze Age (1500 BC – 1100 BC). The Mycenaean civilization spread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and became the center of wealth and power. The archaeological discoveries in this area are some of the most celebrated finds in modern history. Some of the most noted ruins include the Tomb of Agamemnon, and the Lion Gate.

Cape Sounion is located 70 kilometers (43 miles) from Athens at the tip of the Attic peninsula. This is the location of the 5th-century BC Temple of Poseidon. The view off Cape Sounion is spectacular. The original temple was destroyed by Persians in 480 BC, but rebuilt by Pericles in 460 BC. Among the ruins are 16 Doric columns. The lower hill is scattered with remains of the Temple of Athena Sounias, patron goddess of Athens.

Delphi, located 189 kilometers (118 miles) North of Athens, has served as a sanctuary (shrine) throughout many periods of Greek history. It was the home of Apollo as well as the most famous oracle of antiquity. The most prominent figures in Greek history have visited this sacred site to hear the prophecy of the oracle. Among its ruins are the Temple of Apollo and Altar of Apollo.

HISTORY

Athens grew to a city of historic importance around the 5th century BC when it became the artistic center of Greece. It continued to flourish and reached its zenith in the 5th century BC. This period was known as the Golden Age of classical Greek culture and produced some of the most influential historical figures of the Western World. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides wrote tragedy masterpieces while Aristophanes satirized contemporary ideals with his comedies. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle debated the fundamental questions of knowledge and meaning, and early historians such as Herodotus challenged the assumption that gods, not human beings, governed history. Hippocrates developed the science of medicine, and classical architecture and sculpture reached new heights with the construction of the Acropolis and Parthenon.

The end of the Golden Age began with the Peloponnesian War (431 – 404 BC) between Athens and Sparta. Athens continued to be a notable cultural center and 2nd century when the Roman Empire took control of Greece. The city remained the center of Greek education until the fall of Rome to the Byzantine Empire in 476 AD. Emperor Justinian closed Plato’s Academy in Athens and the dark ages (Medieval Era) prevailed for the next 500 years.

Athens experienced a pseudo-renaissance around the 12th and 13th centuries but then fell under Turkish rule for the next 500 years. The Greek War of Independence (1821 – 1829) brought the city out of cultural isolation and in 1834 Athens was proclaimed the capital of the new, independent Greece.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Throughout history, Athens has been one of the most important and influential cities of the Western world. The peak of this civilization occurred during the 7th-year Golden Age in the fifth century BC. It was during this period that great works were made in architecture, literature, music, science, philosophy and medicine. History gave witness to some of the most celebrated men of our time including Sophocles, Euripides, Hippocrates, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Despite its vast history, the Athens of the 20th century is a bustling modern city with overwrought streets, traffic jams, pollution, and characteristics modern cement build- ings. The city has been criticized for lack of overall planning among an enormous population growth in the 19th and 20th centuries. When Athens became the Capital of Greece in 1834, it was a mere village of 6,000 residences. The Athens of today is home to 4.5 million people and covers an area of 165 square miles. Although at first glance the visitor may not see the splendor of ancient Athens, the modern image of an historic civilization comes alive with the first glimpse of its most prominent architectural masterpiece, the Acropolis. Athens is a city whose past and present coexist, sometimes harmoniously, but more often unfortunately. This ever-shall not detract from the tourist from experiencing some of the most awe-inspiring sights of the Western World.

Located 7 miles from the center of Athens, Piraeus has been Athens’s port since the early 5th century BC. The city became an economic center in the 1950’s with the construction of over 75 steam powered factories. The population has now reached 600,000.

PORT EXPLORER and SHOPPING GUIDE

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist information is available in the terminal.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the best of your visit to Piraeus and Athens we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For Information concerning tour content and pricing contact your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take with you only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Tipping: There are no absolute rules for tipping. A 10% tip is expected in most restaurants, and a taxi fare should be rounded up to the nearest Euro.

Local Cuisine: For a starter you will most likely find these three favorites on most menus; taramosalata (a dip or spread made from fish roe), melissoula (made from smoked eggplant), and tzaziki (a yogurt cucumber and garlic dip usually with bread). The traditional main entrées include moussaka (baked dish of minced meat, potatoes and eggplant), gemista (stuffed tomatoes or peppers). Fast-food in Greece consists of the gour (slices of grilled meat with tomato and onions in a pita bread), souvlaki (shish kebab), and pastries filled with a variety of stuffings including spinach, cheese, or meat. A meal is not complete without a piece of baklava (a very sweet phyllo pastry filled with walnut and honey) for dessert.

Drink Specialties: Ouzo, a clear licorice-flavor drink, and brandy (Bisqyra and Metaxa) are the national aperitifs of Greece. Wine is drunk at almost all meals and social gath- ering and is relatively inexpensive. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING FACILITIES

Shopping hours vary considerably and may also change according to the season.

The main shopping areas include Syntagma Square, Ermou Street, Plaka, Omonia Square and Kolonaki (Philikis Etairias) Square. Monastiraki is the famous flea market in the local markets. Local handicrafts and folk crafts include handwoven carpets, tapestries, hand- embroidered tablecloths, and the shaggy woolen flakouri rug.

A Value Added Tax (VAT), is almost always added to most purchases. Visitors from outside the European Union who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re- claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change, and RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in this port of call is the Euro. There are 8 Euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cent pieces. Every euro coin carries a common European face. On the obverse, each Mem- ber State decorates the coins with their own motifs. No matter which motif is on the coin they can be used anywhere inside the Member States. There are 7 Euro notes which also carry a color and size, they are circulated in 50, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euros. The notes are uniform throughout the euro area, unlike coins, they have no national side. All Euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the euro area.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES

The main Post Office is located on the corner of Mitropoleos Street and Syntagma Square. The OTE (International telephone) office is located at 15 Stadium St. Many po-
Byzantine Museum is the only museum in Europe concentrating exclusively on Byzantine art. Each room is arranged to look like Greek churches of different eras and the outer wings contain mostly tombs. The outer grounds are also worth a visit with beautiful rose gardens, a fountain, and fragments of statues. Descriptions are in Greek and French.

Beyond Athens - continued on back page

PREFERRED SHOPPING AND DINING

A

Lithos by Michele - Located at 20 Mitropoleos Street, Near by the Constitution Station Square. • Fine Jewelry: 18K and 22K hand crafted golds with precious and semiprecious stones. Extensive selection of museum reproductions. • Designer with Many Unique Collections: Including colorful enamel, black platinum and Ceylon pearls. • Greek American owners; Tax-free; Service-oriented.

B

Georges Jewellery - Located at 7 Pandrosou Street, near the Cathedral Square. • Large selection of traditional Greek design jewelry. • Their pieces are designed and made in their own workshop. • Select from their fine jewelry museum pieces. • Exceptional hospitality.

C


D

Kontstantin Jewellery - Located at 20 Pandrosou Street. • Timeless Jewelry: Featuring ancient recycling and etching techniques. • Designs in sterling silver and 18K gold inspired by the art, architecture, mythology and people of Greece. • All items are individually crafted in Athens. • Kontstantin-branded jewelry is available at their boutique, Neous Mousica and Saks Fifth Avenue.

E

A & B - Dimos Jewellery - Since 1969; Greek by Birth, American by Choice. • Located at 3 Etaireias Street, 87 Adrianou Street, & 71 Adrianou Street. • Family Owned for Over 40 Years. Creating authentic Greek jewelry from their architects to the timeless winners of the New York Times. • Established service through their Houston, Texas location. Don’t miss their 60% & 71 Adrianou Street. • Family Owned for 40 Years: Creating authentic Greek jewelry from their architects to the timeless winners of the New York Times. • Established service through their Houston, Texas location. Don’t miss their 60%

F

Eféria Café & Restaurant - Located at 48 Adrianou Street, Plaka; 5 Minutes from Minimataro Motor Station. • Greek style cafe and restaurant located in the main Plaka Square. • Plate Pikes Agro; Searing breakfast, lunch and dinner. • Great place for daytime coffee. • Traditional Mediterranean Style Food. Serves souvlaki, souvlakia, pastitsio, pasta, seafood and much more. • Indoor air conditioned seating and outdoor garden style seating with amazing views of the Acropolis. • Tea services available; All major credit cards accepted; Free Wi-Fi internet access.

G

Olive Tree - Greek Handmade Olive Wood Products. • Located at 67 Adrianou Street. • For Greek style Solid Bowls, salad servers, spatulas, cutting boards, mortars and pestles, wine holders, unique olive pickers and more. • Decorative Olive Tree: Handmade salinets, curls, mirrors, jewelry boxes, crosses, picture frames, carved boxes and other artistic items. • Olive wood backgrounds, chess boards, dominoes and various toys. • Olive Wood and Olive Oil: Jewelry all made with olive wood beads and other materials, very old family recipes, natural olive oil soaps mixed with herbs and plants of the gymnasion area. • Handmade olive oil soap or olive wood initial necklace with with any purchase.

H

The Loom - Located at 94 Adrianou Street. • Rugs from Greece and around the World. Traditional and contemporary designs from the Greek loom to fine rugs. • Special Mediterranean Rug Collection: Minimal base colors with Byzantine symbolism, exclusive to The Loom only. • Tapets, wall hangings, special orders and pilloes in many designs. • Superb Customer Service: Native English speakers, mini rug demonstrations, rug appraisals, worldwide shipping and excellent Greek hospitality. • Family owned and operated; Friendly staff stays willing to help • Jewelry: 18K gold, impeccable workmanship. Greek Key and Byzantine styles. • Watches: Official retailer for Cartier, Vacheron Constantin, Omega, TWC, Jaeger LeCoultre, Baume & Mercier, Longines, Duklet, Rado.

I

Adonis Watches and Fine Jewellery - Located at 68 Adrianoú Street, Plaka; 5 Minutes from Minimataro Motor Station. • Greek style café and restaurant located in the main Plaka Square. • Plate Pikes Agro; Searing breakfast, lunch and dinner. • Great place for daytime coffee. • Traditional Mediterranean Style Food. Serves souvlaki, souvlakia, pastitsio, pasta, seafood and much more. • Indoor air conditioned seating and outdoor garden style seating with amazing views of the Acropolis. • Tea services available; All major credit cards accepted; Free Wi-Fi internet access.

J

Kondylis Jewellery - Located at 79 Mitropoleos Street, Near by the Constitution Station Square. • Fine Jewelry: 18K and 22K hand crafted golds with precious and semiprecious stones. Extensive selection of museum reproductions. • Designer with Many Unique Collections: Including colorful enamel, black platinum and Ceylon pearls. • Greek American owners; Tax-free; Service-oriented. • Tea service available; Enter the Trials and try to win a beautiful piece of jewelry.

K

Adonis Watches and Fine Jewellery - Special Jewellery for Spe- cial People. • Located at 71 Adrianou Street in the Plaka Area. • Watch: Official Dealer of Patek Philippe and many more. • Jewelry: 14K, 18K, 22K yellow and white gold Byzantine museum pieces; Precious and colored stones. • Specializes in exquisite Greek and classic jewelry; Choose from their own production of excellent quality in modern and classic designs at inappreciable prices. • 50 years of history and a great reputation and experience; All purchases come with official guarantee certificates; Tax-free; Open daily.

L

Eféria Steak Restaurant - Greek Steak Restaurant. • Located at 35 Kytounion Street, Plaka; Just 2 Minutes from Acropolis Museum • Serving Lunch and Dinner: Traditional Greek style food • Fresh fish, kebabs, souvlaki, moussaka • Mdren Garden Style Seating; Great place for a coffee break • Taxi services available; All major credit cards accepted

M

Panorama Art Gallery - Located at 70 Adrianou Street. • Fine art, antiques and museum copies. • Established in 1975 in Athens, galleries reproducing high quality Greek art using the best raw materials. • Panodo- hlo’s Architects: Featuring modern contemporary fine art, special ceramic, bronze statues and more. Excellent after-sale service; Worldwide door-to-door delivery.

N

Ithaki Barbeque Restaurant - Located at 46 Mitropoleos Street across the Acropolis of Athens • Traditional Greek style restaurant serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Open from 9:00 am to 1:00 am. • Famous Gyros (beef, pork and chicken), variety of charcoal, breaded, grilled souvlakia, souvlaki, BBQ ribs, beef and chicken kebabs, • Greek Specialities: Mousaka, Linti Kleftiko, Bief Stoikia, stuffed tomatoes and peppers, Kontomaraki, Eddallo and more • Awarded by Greek National Tourism Organization.

Places of Interest

The Acropolis and Surrounding Area

1. Acropolis, one of the great wonders of the world, actually consists of four ancient buildings; the Parthenon, Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Propylaea. The acropolis was built during the age of the Greeks Golden Age in the 5th century BC. Throughout history, it has served as a military fortress and religious center. The entrance is on the southeast side at Steinsos Antiquous Avenue. It is a 5 minute walk from where to sit nicely can be purchased. The Acropolis Museum is located on the Acropolis and contains sculptures found in the Acropolis. Antiquous is the ancient supreme court from which St Paul addressed the Athenians in 54 AD, and converted Senator Dionysius who became the first bishop of Athens.

2. Ancient Agora was the administrative center and marketplace of Ath- ens from the 6th century BC to the 6th century AD. This archaeological site contains three remarkable constructions: the Temple of Hephaestus, the best preserved classical temple in Greece; the Odeum of Dionysus the concert hall; and Thess of Attica, a multipurpose building now housing the Agora Museum. Pros, also located in the Ancient Agora, was the meeting place of the general assembly during the Golden Age. A quarter of 5,000 citizens was necessary to take a vote. It now serves as the location of the Sound and Light show as well as an excellent photo opportunity of the Acropolis.

3. Plaka is the oldest area of the city located on the north slope of the Acropolis. You can walk the narrow cobblestone streets with viewing statues and old mansions, or take a rest in one of the numerous tavernas. There are also a number of tourist shops as well as a few antique wine tasting. The Tower of the Winds, located in the Plaka area, is one of the most well preserved monuments in Athens, it was built in the 1st century BC and used as a water clock, sun dial, and weather vane. Each of the eight sides of the snow is a relief depicting the wind that blows from that direction.

4. Panathenian Stadium was constructed in 1896 for the first modern Olympic.

5. The National Gardens are open from Sunrise to Sunset and are located adjacent to Syntagma Square. This delightful garden is a retreat from the noise and bustle of the city.

6. Dionysos and Odeon Theaters, located just below the Acropolis Hill. Dionysos Odeon was built in the 3rd century BC. Antiquous and Asouolus and could hold up to 17,000 spectators. The Odeum of Harlis Ari- cles amphitheater was built in the 2nd century AD. It has been reconstructed and is used during the summer to host Festival performances.

7. Hadrian’s Arch was built by the Roman ruler in the 2nd century. The architectural remains are seen from the outside are well preserved.

8. The Parliament Building near Syntagma Square has a changing of the guard every hour on the hour. The guards friendly demeanor is as delightful as their attire. Preparatory uniforms, short pleated skirts (fashions), and mid-cut, mid-tailed uniforms. This is the location of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

9. Along the impressive street of Skafidion you will find the Athens Uni- versity, National Library and Hellenic Academy.

Other sights in Athens

Monastiraki Square is the core of the market area and a great place to be for souvenirs. The flea market is located next to the Monastiraki metro station just off Monastiraki Square. The hot time is usually from Sunday morn-

National Archaeological Museum at 44 Patronas St, is one of the largest and best museums of ancient artifacts in the world. It contains archaeological finds from all of Greece, from prehistoric times through the Byzantine pe- riod. Descriptions are found in Greek, English, French, and German.

Little Metropolis, dating back to the 12th century, is one of the most char- ming churches in Athens. Above the entrance you will find reliques of fortunes and interesting displays of coins. Beautiful fountains on the outer area are covered with relics dating from the Classical to Byzantine periods.

Mr. Lycabettus, the highest hill in Athens, offers an excellent panoramic view of the city from all sides. The ascent, at 912 feet, can be reached by foot, car or funicular which operates from the Kolonos side of the hill. On the top you will find a tiny 19th century chapel of St George as well as a restaurant.

Benaki Museum contains ancient Greek and Byzantine art, icons, costumes, and textiles; as well as relics from the War of Independence. Descriptions are in Greek and French.