ATHENS

SITE-SPECIFIC GUIDE



ACADEMIC STUDIES ABROAD

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Pre-Departure

Please see our Pre-Departure Guide for All Programs for additional important pre-departure information!

Please add the important numbers to your phone

ASA Office in Boston, MA Academic Studies Abroad 1329 Highland Avenue - Suite 1 Needham, MA 02492 Tel: 617-327-9388 24-hour Emergency Cell: 857-366-6821 Email: hello@academicstudies.com Web: www.academicstudies.com	**ASA Site Director in Athens:** **Eugenia Karamani** **Cell Phone: + TDB** **Email: eukaramani7@gmail.com**
U.S. Consulate **Address:** 91 Vasilisis Sophias Ave 10160 Athens, Greece **Phone Number:** 30-210-721-2951 (Emergency After Hours: +30 21 0729 4444 or +30 210729 4301 If you are dialing from the U.S. please call 1-888-407-4747 https://gr.usombassy.gov/	**Emergency** **Ambulance:** 166 **Fire:** 199 **Police:** 100 **Poison Control:** +30 210 779 3777

In an emergency, please contact your ASA Site Director immediately.

It is of utmost importance that you notify your Site Director of any problems, issues, or concerns that you encounter while you're abroad.

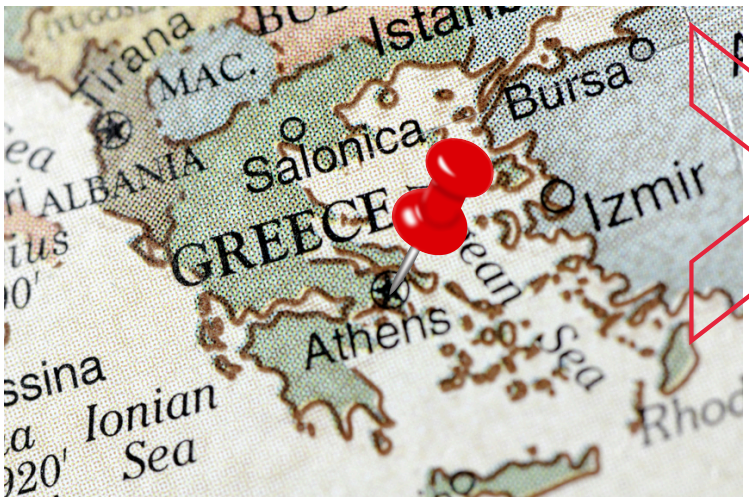
011 = International Dialing Code

30 = Greece Country Code

International Dialing Instructions



- To call from the U.S. to Greece, dial 011-30+ the local telephone number. For example, if the phone number is listed as (+30) 335 714 6082, you would dial 011 30 335 714 6082.
- To call the U.S. from Greece, dial 001 + area code and number.
- To call a Greek number within Greece, leave off the int'l code and country code (e.g. 335 714 6082).



Passport and Entry

All students must have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond the day you plan to return to the U.S.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A U.S. PASSPORT, PLEASE NOTIFY ASA IMMEDIATELY!

Non-U.S. citizens may have a different visa process than described below, that requires steps to be taken in the U.S. or your home country before you arrive in Greece.

What should I do if I lose my passport?

Contact the local police, the U.S. Embassy, and your Site Director immediately.

Having a photocopy (digital or paper) of your passport on hand will make it MUCH easier to have it replaced.

STEP MANDATORY: YOU MUST ENROLL IN STEP

STEP registration is MANDATORY to complete before departure. This free service, offered by the US Department of State, enables the DOS to quickly contact US citizens abroad during emergencies, such as natural disaster, civil unrest, or a family emergency. By registering, you also get real time updates about safety, security, health, and weather in country. Click this link to complete your STEP registration before departure: https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step

ETA: For visiting & transiting through England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland

WHO: For Unites States (US) passport holders, the ETA is required for anyone traveling through the UK for study, visit, or transit through (layover), via any method of transportation (e.g. plane, train, boat). If you are traveling on a non-US passport, first check to see if you can apply for an ETA here. If your country is not yet approved for the ETA, notify your ASA Program Manager immediately (617-327-9388) for next steps.

WHAT: The Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) is a permission to travel for those who do not currently need to obtain a visa or do not have a United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) immigration status. The ETA is valid for two (2) years from date of issue, or until passport expires, whichever is sooner. It is valid for multiple journeys and must be valid for the entirety of your stay. It cannot be extended.

The ETA is digitally linked to your passport. There is no physical component. While you are not required to show a paper copy, we highly recommend saving a screenshot and/or printing your ETA approval email and adding it to your acceptance documents for your records. You are required to send a copy of your ETA approval email to your ASA Program Manager. To see how to apply, read on.

HOW: Students apply for the ETA electronically via the UK ETA app

Application Steps:

1. Watch the short "Getting Started: Applying for the UK ETA" video.
2. Gather information for the ETA application (contact information, physical valid U.S. passport in hand, recent photo or headshot, method of payment). Your flight itinerary is not required to apply.
3. Follow the instructions on the app or the UK GOV website. We recommend applying and getting approval at least 1 week prior to arrival in the UK.
4. Once received, SAVE your UK ETA approval email as a pdf or jpeg. Be sure that it is legible and email a copy to your ASA Program Manager. This is a critical step, as we must ensure you are complying with immigration requirements.

EES: Europe's Biometric Entry/Exit System

Overview of EES:

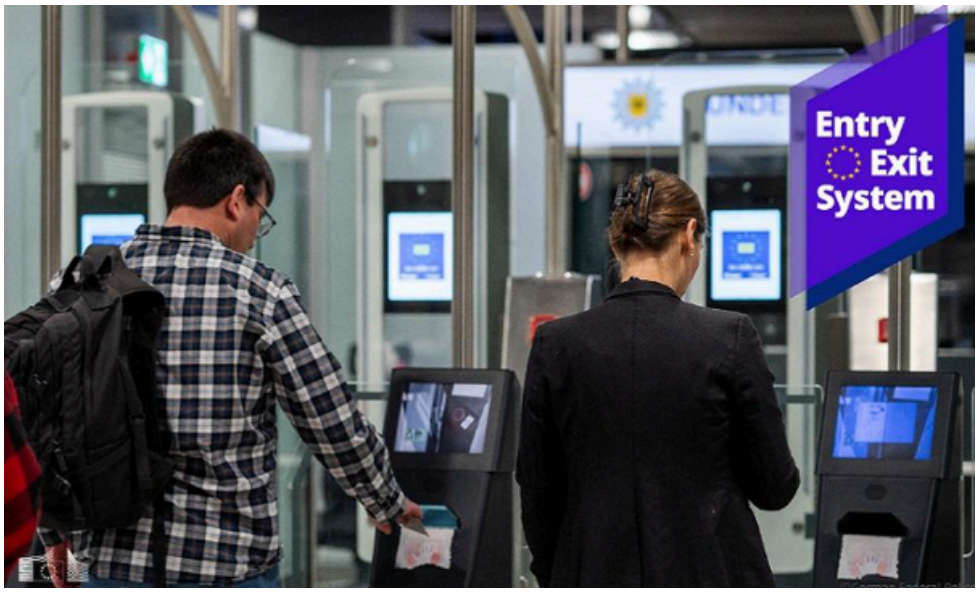
- **Purpose:** EES is a digital system that tracks border crossings for non-EU nationals by collecting passport scans, facial photos, and fingerprints, replacing traditional passport stamps. This system replaces passport stamps with biometrics (fingerprints).
- **Cost:** The system is free; travelers should avoid any services or apps that charge fees.
- **Registration:** Initial registration occurs upon the first entry, after which the registration remains valid for up to 3 years. Subsequent entries utilize "EES READY" lanes for faster processing.

Who Must Use EES:

- US and other non-EU nationals who do not possess a long-stay visa, including those on programs lasting under 90 days.
- Travelers entering or moving through these countries before their long-stay visa or residence permit begins, or after it expires.
- Students arriving in The Netherlands who have not yet been issued their residence permit.
- Note: Travelers must monitor their travel dates to avoid exceeding the 90-day limit, as overstaying may lead to fines, deportation, or future travel bans.

EES Guidance:

- Please review the EES Guidance document that ASA has put together.
- If you have any questions, contact your Program Manager before departure.



Budgeting for Study Abroad

The **EURO (€)** became the official currency of Italy on January 1, 1999. Bills come in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500. Coins come in denominations of €2, €1, 50 cents, 20 cents, 10 cents, 5 cents, 2 cents and 1 cent.

Exchange rates fluctuate, so check http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi for today's exchange rate.

How much money should I bring?

US$150-200 per week of your stay*

*Please note that these are general guidelines based on what past students have reported spending. Some students spend less and others more. The above figures do not allow for traveling every weekend, eating out a lot, or shopping every day. * = Accounted for in weekly money recommendations above.*

What expenses should I budget for?

Please note: *Housing, medical insurance, and all other ASA services are not included during the break between semesters or terms.*

1. Meals * Each apartment has a fully equipped kitchen.
2. Books and materials for your classes Most course books are e-books and are free of charge, though some courses may require a textbook (total est. $150)
3. Course Fees None, included in program fee
4. Local transportation $20-$40 per week
5. Cell phone $25 per month
6. Spending money / Personal expenses Entertainment, shopping, souvenirs, dining out, travel, haircuts, toothpaste, etc. This is accounted for in our weekly money recommendation.
7. Meals on excursions (Accounted for in weekly recommendation above)
8. Transportation back to the airport at the end of the program Budget US$40
9. Have at least $1,000 in savings for emergencies

Resources for Saving Money

- International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
  - The ISIC card is the only internationally accepted student identity card which provides student status verification, thousands of discounts worldwide and access to the global student community. Check website for country specific information.
- Lonely Planet Travel Books
  - Discover the world through the eyes of Lonely Planet's network of global travel writers with their curated selection of guidebooks designed to help you plan unforgettable experiences. Go with a plan. Come back with a story.

Arrival

What should I do when I get off the plane at Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos, Airport code: ATH

01 Passport Control/Immigration

After you de-plane, you will go through Passport Control (also called Immigration) and Customs.

HELPFUL TIPS

Address for delivery of delayed luggage:

DEREE- The American College of Greece
C/o (Your Name)
Study Abroad Office
6 Gravias Street
15342 Aghia Paraskevi
Athens, Greece
Phone: +30 210 600 9800 Ext 1028

02 Baggage Claim

After Passport Control and Customs, follow signs to baggage claim. Delayed baggage must be reported to your airline's lost luggage counter before exiting the baggage claim area. After claiming your bags, exit into the airport lobby and look for an ASA or ACG sign or a sign with your name on it. Staff cannot meet you at Baggage Claim.

03 Meet ASA Staff

Once you've found an ASA staff member or driver, we'll take you to your program housing.

If my flight is delayed, will you still pick me up at the airport?

If a student's flight is delayed, they should plan to take a taxi from the airport to their accommodations. If ASA is able to provide airport pickup despite the delay, staff will contact the student that day to confirm those arrangements.

Academics

The American College of Greece
Aghia Paraskevi Campus
Directions to Campus

HELPFUL TIPS

Link to campus map

Link to campus website



Orientation

All Orientation Meetings are mandatory. Failure to attend could result in disciplinary action. This includes ASA and host institution orientation/programming.



Academic Calendar

A detailed Calendar of Events, including orientation and excursion dates & locations, will be emailed to you about 2 weeks before your program starts. Calendar is subject to change. Click here to view the general Academic Calendar for your upcoming program (which includes dates of any breaks).



Academic Honesty Policy

During orientation, students are required to sign an agreement regarding academic honesty and rules of behavior.

Academics

Academic Policies

ACG's most up-to-date academic policies can be found at this link:https://www.acg.edu/academics/undergraduate/

Add/Drop Procedure & Final Registration

Students are permitted to change a course within the first two days of teaching. Beyond this period, students may withdraw from a course within the first two weeks of teaching whilst retaining the right to re-enroll in the said course in the future. Changes after this deadline will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Students shall not be permitted to withdraw from a course and then subsequently re-enroll in a course after the submission or completion of the first summative assessment for the course or courses concerned. Students are not permitted to withdraw from a course for any reason following the end of semester/term/session.

Course Fees (for mandatory Field Learning Activities & Materials)

Certain courses require students to pay Course Fees to cover the costs of mandatory academic field trips (called Field Learning Activities), consumable materials, supplies, and specialized equipment. In addition, students enrolled in culinary programs must purchase or rent a professional "uniform kit" in order to participate in the program. THESE COSTS ARE NOT INCLUDED WITH TUITION. ASA gives students a list of Course Fees along with their class schedule, well in advance of departure. You can find a list of Course Fees on ASA's website.

Attendance Policy & Absences

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance and performance in class are closely correlated. Lack of attendance means that a student has not achieved the desired learning experience that course requires. For purposes of mitigating circumstances, such as illness or other serious matters, the College allows students to miss up to 20% of class time. This applies to all courses. For certain courses instructors could take absences into account and lower a student's grade based on the marking criteria and learning outcomes of the course. Absence from a class does not exempt a student from completing the work for that class. Students who have exceeded the 20% threshold of absences for serious mitigating circumstances will be referred by the instructor to the Registrar's Office. The registrar will in turn inform the Committee on Academic Standards and Policies (CASP) which, in the light of any evidence of extenuating circumstances supplied by the student, will decide whether the student must withdraw from the course and/or receive an F grade.

The only health-related mitigating circumstance acceptable for excusing absences beyond the maximum is hospitalization. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences they have in each of their courses or modules.

Grading System & Guide and US equivalents

You must check with your home institution to ensure you understand:

- The minimum grade you need to earn to receive transfer credit. Typically you need to earn a C or C+, but this can vary by institution. Check with your home institution to ensure you understand their requirements!
- Will your grades impact your GPA? Every institution handles this differently! Some institutions transfer in study abroad grades and it impacts your gpa. Some transfer in the grades and it doesn't impact your gpa. Others transfer in study abroad grades as pass/fail. Be sure you understand how your institution handles this.

You must check with your host institution or ASA Site Director upon arrival to ensure you understand:

- The deadline to change or drop classes. Classes dropped after your host institution's add/drop deadline willappear on your final transcript with a failing grade.
- What is your host institution's attendance policy? Absences from class will affect your grade and can result in a failing grade. Many institutions only allow a couple of absences a semester and only for valid reasons such as medical. Travel or family/friend visit is NOT ever an excused absence.

Academics

Grading System & Guide and US equivalents

It is NOT permitted to audit a course or take it pass, fail or incomplete.

A 4	A- 3.7	B+ 3.5	B 3	B- 2.7
C+ 2.5	C 2	C- 1.7	D 1	F 0

For each course, students must obtain a minimum of Grade C (40%) in each summative assessment to achieve a pass and obtain the credit for that course. Inbound study abroad non-degree students in validated courses will have to pass all course assessments in order to pass a course. When an inbound study abroad non-degree student fails an assessment but the overall calculated grade is a passing one, the Registrar's Office will contact the student and verify whether they able to take the resit for the failed assessment. If the student confirms in writing that they cannot take the resit but have a passing final calculated grade, the student's final grade in the course will be the minimum passing mark (grade C). This policy will apply only to students who have not missed any of the required course assessments.

Assessment Deadlines

Students must submit work by the deadlines set in the course outline. Where coursework is submitted late and there are no accepted extenuating circumstances it will be penalized in line with the following tariff:

Fall and Spring Semesters: Submission within 6 calendar days: a 10% reduction of the awarded grade for each calendar day late down to the 40 UK points (C grade). Submission that is more than 6 calendar days late: submission refused, grade F.

Summer Sessions: Submission within 2 calendar days: a 10% reduction of the awarded grade for each calendar day late down to the 40 UK points (C grade). Submission that is more than 2 calendar days late: submission refused, grade F.

Buying Books

Students will find the required course textbook or e-book list on the ACG website (http://www.acg.edu/academics/textbooks) in advance of each semester/session.

This practice makes the book acquisition process more efficient and less expensive. Students are free to choose how they will purchase their textbooks and are expected to acquire them prior to the start of classes. To avoid delays with some on-line providers, it is recommended that you place your order a minimum of one month or three weeks in advance. Examples of on-line textbook providers: www.public.gr, www.amazon.de

Note: Please note that buying books from providers outside the EU (to us, UK etc), might incur extra custom charges and delays in shipping.

Housing

What Housing Is Available?

Shared Apartments

Shared Apartments are fully furnished and include shared kitchens, bathrooms, and on-site laundry. Rooms are double occupancy, with a limited number of single rooms with private bathrooms available for an additional fee for students with a documented medical need, subject to availability.

Apartments also feature access to a fitness area, BBQ area, outdoor space, and indoor lounge. Meals are not included, but each apartment has a fully equipped shared kitchen for preparing meals.

Most apartments house 4–8 students and are shared with same-gender roommates.

All-gender apartments are available upon request for members of the LGBTQ+ community or for religious reasons.

Maintenance

Students are responsible for:

- Cleaning - students will be responsible for cleaning their bedrooms and shared common areas (kitchen, bathroom, etc.)
- Laundry - laundry facilities are on site
- Taking out trash - instructions will be given on site during orientation

National Quiet Hours

Greece has nationally recognized quiet hours that apply throughout the country.

The hours change depending on the season:
Summer (April 1 - September 30): 15:00-17:30 (3:00-5:30 p.m.) 23:00-07:00 (11:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.)
Winter (October 1 – March 31): 15:30–17:30 (3:30–5:30 p.m.) 22:00–07:30 (10:00 p.m.–7:30 a.m.)

During these hours, activities that create excessive noise are generally prohibited, including:

- Loud music, televisions, or speakers
- Playing musical instruments
- Shouting, parties, or noisy gatherings
- Construction or repair work that creates significant noise
- Unnecessary use of sirens or other loud sound devices

There are limited exceptions for emergencies or certain authorized public works.
Violations can lead to police intervention and, in serious cases, criminal penalties under Greek law.

Everyday Life

Drug & Alcohol Policy

Drug use and alcohol abuse AT ANY TIME, ANYWHERE WHILE THE PROGRAM IS IN SESSION is strictly prohibited and may lead to you being removed from your housing and/or the program.

Being drunk is considered abuse of alcohol.

Conduct

All students must abide by the ASA Code of Conduct. Violating the ASA Code of Conduct may lead to expulsion from your housing and/or from the ASA program. Any student removed from housing will be responsible for finding his/her own housing and will not receive a refund.

Guests in Housing

Guests of ACG Housing residents may visit ACG housing apartments and Residence Complexes between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.

No visitors may enter or remain in the any ACG Housing between 11:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

The Visitation Policy is applicable to all ACG Housing areas (apartments, common use areas or building entrances). No overnight guests are allowed.

Visitors must always be accompanied by their host while in the ACG Housing.

Residents not complying with the Visitation Policy will be held responsible for damages and ACGHousing Regulations violations attributed to their guests. Violating the ACG Housing Regulations or the ACG Student Code of Conduct will result in sanctions that may lead to removal from ACG Housing.

ACG expects that residents comply with the Greek law. In addition to imposing disciplinary sanctions, the College may refer residents for prosecution for conduct prohibited in accordance with the Greek law, such as discrimination; assault; harassment; sexual violence/assault/harassment; theft; possession and/or use of weapons or explosives; possession, sale, purchase, use or distribution of illegal substances.

Keys

Apartment keys are assigned to students upon checking into their apartment. Keys are not to be duplicated. Individuals are urged to exercise caution in safeguarding their keys. Residents must not hand over the keys to any person other than a member of Residential Services staff. Individuals who lose a key or return a key that is damaged will be charged for the replacement.

Residents are reminded to:
- Not loan keys to anyone for any reason.
- Not mark keys with room number or any other identifiable markings.
- Never leave keys unattended.

If residents accidentally lock themselves out of their room, they should contact the RA or call one of the staff members.

Everyday Life

Local Transportation

Metro

Three metropolitan rail lines and one suburban railway operate in Athens.
The Green Line is a regular train, whereas the Red and Blue Line are underground trains (metro/subway).
The Green Line runs all week from 05:00-00:30.
The Red and Blue Lines run Sun-Th 05:30 to midnight and Fri-Sat 05:30-01:00
The Metro station closest to ACG campus is Aghia Paraskevi (on the Blue line); Nomismatokopelo is also relatively close to campus and more easily accessible by bus.

Bus

There are two types of buses in Athens: Blue buses and electric trolley buses (which are purple/yellow). Blue buses run daily approximately from 05:00-00:00 and trolley buses run daily approximately from 05:00-23:00.For more information on public bus transportation, visit www.oasa.gr or download "OASA telematics" app.

Tram

There are three tram lines, all of which travel along and/or end up at one of Attica's many beaches. Two tram li
begin in the center of Athens (Syntagma Square) and head south to the sea, whereas the third line travels wes
along the shoreline. These lines are ideal for visits to the seaside or the beach:
Line 3: SEF (SEF is the Peace & Friendship Stadium in Faliro) - Asklipio Voulas
Line 4: Syntagma Square - SEF
Line 5: Syntagma Square - Asklipio Voulas
Trams run approximately from 05:30 to 01:30
For more information, timetables, tickets, etc. visit www.stasy.gr/en

Taxi

Finding a taxi in Athens is usually an easy task; as long as the taxi sign on top of the cab is lit, you can just flag it down, get in and give the driver your destination. The minimum tariff for taxi transportation is €4.00; between midnight and 05:00am, prices are doubled. We strongly recommend you download apps for taxis because it is safer and more convenient. You can use local Greek apps like FreeNow, Uber, and Taxi Plan. Some but not all cabs accept credit/debit cards, so you should have cash handy.

Everyday Life

Local Transportation To/From Airport

When using public transportation to reach the airport, ticket prices are as follows (Fall2026 prices):

Metro: €10 (for more information please visit: www.oasa.gr/en)

Buses: €6 (from Aghia Paraskevi take X95 express bus)

Suburban Railway: prices vary depending on station of departure. There is a suburban railway train departing for the airport approximately every 30 minutes.

Regional Travel
National Buses (KTEL): www.ktelattikis.gr

National Railways Organization: www.hellenictrain.gr/en

Piraeus Port Information: www.olp.gr/en

Rafina Port Information: www.rafinaport.gr

Bluestar Ferries: www.bluestarferries.com/en

Hellenic Seaways: www.hellenicseaways.gr/en

Minoan Lines: www.minoan.gr/en

Anek Lines: https://www.anek.gr/en-gb/

Athens International Airport: www.aia.gr

Olympic Air: www.olympicair.com

Aegean Airlines: en.aegeanair.com

Important Notice: If you are planning to travel outside Greece, be sure to check with the Office of International Student Services before booking your tickets to ensure your travel and residence status permit re-entry and exit from Greece.

Everyday Life

Grocery Shopping

Local Small Retail Store Hours:
M&W: 9:00-15:00
T, Th, & F: 9:00-14:00 and 17:30-21:00
Sat: 9:00-15:00
Sun: CLOSED

Supermarket Hours:
M-F: 9:00-21:00
Sat: 9:00-20:00
Sun: CLOSED

Pharmacy Hours

Bimi Pharmacy (Evergetou Giavasi 5)
Farmakeio Kostis Koutsis (Agiou Ioannou 40)
M&W: 8:00-14:00
T, Th, & F: 8:00-14:00 and 17:00-20:00
Sat & Sun: Most are closed but some are always open for emergencies. You can find the ones open on any given weekend or night posted at the entrance of all pharmacies, or by asking one of the ACG Resident Assistants.

Religious Services

Greek Orthodox

Aghia Paraskevi Church. Located on Aghia Paraskevi Square
Metropolitan Cathedral of the Annunciation, Mitropoleos Street,
Open daily: 07:00–19:00, Sunday Mass at 06:30 (in Greek)

Roman Catholic

St. Dionysius Roman Catholic Cathedral, 24 Panepistimiou Street,
Daily Mass at 07:00, Sundays: 07:00–10:00 (Greek); 19:00 (English)

St. Paul's Catholic Church, 4 Kokkinaki Street, Kifissia (very close to the subway terminal),
Masses held on Sundays at 11:30 and Wednesdays at 07:00

Everyday Life

Religious Services

Muslim

- Mosque of Athens, Iera Odos 114, Votanikos, Athens

https://www.mosqueofathens.gov.gr/?lang=en

Protestant Non-Denominational

- St. Andrew's International Protestant Church, Sunday services take place at two locations:

at 09:00 in St. Catherine's British School, 77 Leoforos Sofokli Venizelou, Lykovrissi; and
at 11:45, 66 Sina, Downtown Athens

- Glyfada Christian Center, a full Gospel church, 117 Saki Karagiorga Street, Ano Glyfada,

Sunday Mass at 10:00 and Wednesday at 19:00

Russian Orthodox

- Church of the Savior Lykodimos, 21 Philhellinon Street, Amalias Avenue. This is the largest medieval period building in Athens, Greece, dating from the eleventh century

Anglican

- St. Paul's Church, 27 Filellinon Street, Athens; www.anglicanchurchathens.gr

Baptist

- Bible Baptist Church (Entrance to the American Community School),

Services: Wednesdays at 19:00 (Bible Study) & Sundays at 11:30

- Grace Baptist Church, 27 Sliman Sophias, Ampelokipi,

Mass at Sundays 11:00 and Wednesdays at 18:00

Pentecostal

- Hellenic International Christian Fellowship, 18 Pan. Tsaldari Street, Kifissia,

Sunday Service: 11:00–14:00

Jewish

- Beth Shalom Synagogue, 8 Melidoni Street, Thission, Friday 07:30, Saturday 08:30 & 19:30

(Please make sure that you have with you your passport or identity card with you)

Other Churches

- Church of Christ, 10 Evrou Street, Ambelokipi (close to the US Embassy),

English Services: Sunday 18:00–19:30

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 15 Meandrou (Ilisia), 1st floor,

Services every Sunday at 10:00 and 13:00 in Greek with English translation

Everyday Life

Weather

Months	Temperature
Jan - March	50-64° F
April - May	64-89° F
June - Sept	77-92° F
Oct - Dec	50-75° F

Everyday Life: Culture

Tipping Culture

Dining Out
Restaurants/Cafes : Restaurants are generally open between noon and midnight for take-out. If you are planning on dining out, keep in mind that the dinner rush starts at around 21:00, so some restaurants may not fire up their kitchen until after 19:00.

Cafe hours vary, but those on Anhiou Iannou Street are typically open from 9:00 to past midnight.

Tipping: Tipping is appreciated but not expected. In restaurants, leave 5–10% for good service or simply round up the bill. For cafés, bars, and taxis, rounding up or leaving €1–2 is common. Cash tips are preferred, even if you pay by card.

How to Dress

As a student in Athens, you'll fit in best with clothing that's neat, practical, and understated. Students in Athens generally dress more "smart casual" than many U.S. college students, though styles vary by campus.

Here's what you'll commonly see:

Tops: T-shirts, polos, fitted sweaters, button-downs, and simple blouses. Graphic tees are fine but are generally less common than plain or minimalist designs.
Bottoms: Jeans, chinos, tailored shorts (in summer), skirts, and casual trousers. Athletic shorts are usually reserved for the gym or beach.
Shoes: White sneakers, leather sneakers, loafers, ankle boots, sandals, or clean running shoes. Comfortable footwear is important because Athens has many hills, uneven sidewalks, and marble streets.
Outerwear: In autumn and winter, light jackets, denim jackets, trench coats, or wool coats are common

For the seasons:

Summer (June–September): It can exceed 35°C (95°F), so lightweight cotton or linen clothing is ideal. Sunglasses and sunscreen are useful.

Winter (December–February): Temperatures are often 5–15°C (41–59°F). Layers work well because buildings may be warmer or cooler than expected.

A few cultural tips:

Beachwear (swimsuits, shirtless attire, flip-flops) is generally appropriate only at the beach or pool.

Many Athenians prefer neutral colors like black, white, navy, beige, and gray, though brighter colors are common in summer.

If you plan to visit churches or monasteries, wear clothing that covers your shoulders and knees out of respect. Overall, the key is looking put together without being overly formal. Clean sneakers, well-fitting jeans or trousers, and a simple top will help you blend in comfortably both on campus and around the city.

Everyday Life: Culture

How to Stand In Line/Queue

Queuing in Athens is similar to many European cities, but there are a few local customs that can help you avoid confusion.

Look for a queue first. At supermarkets, pharmacies, museums, banks, and transit ticket offices, people generally line up and wait their turn.

Take a number if there's a ticket machine. Many bakeries, butcher shops, government offices, banks, and some pharmacies use a numbered ticket system rather than a physical line. If you see a dispenser by the entrance, take a ticket and watch the display for your number.

Ask if you're unsure who's last. Often, the last person will answer, and you simply stand behind them.

Stay alert. Queues can be a little less rigid than in some countries. People may stand loosely rather than in a perfectly straight line, especially at cafés, kiosks, or busy bus stops.

Boarding buses and the metro. People usually allow passengers to exit before boarding, although during rush hour boarding can be more competitive. Having your ticket or transit card ready helps keep things moving.
At cafés and bars. Table service is the norm, so you usually don't queue to order unless it's a takeaway counter.

Greetings

- Say "Yásas" when meeting someone or in formal situations.
- "Yá sou" is used with friends, classmates, or people your own age.
- A handshake is common for first meetings. Friends often greet each other with a hug or a kiss on each cheek.

Eye Contact

- Maintaining natural eye contact during conversation is considered polite and shows you're paying attention.
- Looking away constantly can come across as disinterest.

Personal Space

- Greeks often stand a bit closer during conversations than people from some other countries.
- It's normal for friends to touch an arm or shoulder while talking.

Everyday Life: Culture

Hospitality

- Hospitality ("filoxenía") is an important cultural value.
- If someone offers you coffee, water, or a snack, accepting—even if it's just a little—is generally appreciated.
- If invited to someone's home, bringing a small gift such as pastries, chocolates, or flowers is a thoughtful gesture.

Dining Etiquette

- Wait until everyone has been served before starting a meal.
- Meals are often social and unhurried.
- Splitting the bill is becoming more common among younger people, but sometimes one person insists on paying.

Respect

- Be polite to older adults and address professors and staff respectfully until invited to be more informal.
- Saying "Parakaló" ("please" or "you're welcome") and "Efcharistó" ("thank you") goes a long way.

Conversation Style

- Greeks are often expressive, using hand gestures and animated speech.
- Talking over one another occasionally in lively conversations doesn't necessarily mean people are angry.
- It's common to ask personal questions (such as where you're from or what you're studying) as a way of getting to know you.

Punctuality

- For classes, appointments, and professional meetings, being on time is expected.
- Social gatherings may start a little later than the stated time, especially among friends.

Dress

- People often take pride in their appearance. Casual is fine for university, but clean, well-fitting clothes are common.
- Swimwear is generally appropriate only at beaches and pools.

Churches and Religious Sites

- When visiting churches or monasteries, wear clothing that covers your shoulders and knees.
- Speak quietly and avoid taking photos where prohibited.

Everyday Life: Culture

Gestures to Know

- Avoid showing your open palm directly toward someone's face with fingers spread (called the moutza). It is traditionally considered an insulting gesture.
- Nodding and head movements can differ from what you're used to. If you're unsure, listen to the person's words rather than relying only on gestures.

Student Tip

If you're attending classes in Athens, greeting professors and classmates, waiting your turn, using "please" and "thank you," and showing interest in Greek culture are usually enough to leave a positive impression. Most Greeks appreciate visitors who make an effort to learn a few words of Greek, even if their pronunciation isn't perfect.

Alcohol Culture

Alcohol is a normal part of social life in Greece, but the cultural emphasis is generally on enjoying drinks with food and conversation rather than drinking to get intoxicated.
Here are some things to know:

Drinking Is Social

- People often meet at cafés, tavernas, bars, or restaurants and spend several hours talking.
- Drinks are commonly accompanied by meze (small shared dishes), especially in the evening.
- It's common to sip one or two drinks over a long conversation.

Popular Drinks

Some of the most common alcoholic beverages include:

- Ouzo – an anise-flavored spirit traditionally served with water or ice and often paired with seafood.
- Tsipouro – a grape-based spirit, sometimes flavored with anise.
- Retsina – a distinctive white or rosé wine flavored with pine resin.
- Greek wines from many regions, as well as beer, are also widely available.

University Student Life

- University students do go to bars, clubs, and parties, especially on weekends.
- Drinking games and rapid binge drinking are generally less central to student culture than at many U.S. colleges, although they do occur in some groups.
- Many students begin the evening at a café or restaurant before going out.

Everyday Life: Culture

Legal Age

- The legal minimum age to purchase and consume alcohol in Greece is **18**.
- You may be asked to show identification, especially if you look younger.

Tipping

- Tipping is appreciated but modest. If you're having drinks at a bar, rounding up the bill or leaving about 5–10% for good service is common.

Public Drinking

- Drinking in public is not broadly prohibited nationwide, but being visibly intoxicated or causing a disturbance can lead to problems.
- Local rules may apply in certain areas or at specific events.

Cultural Etiquette

- If someone offers a toast, making eye contact and saying "Yamas!" —meaning "To our health!"—is common.
- Drinking slowly and enjoying the company is generally viewed more positively than drinking to excess.
- If you don't drink alcohol, it's perfectly acceptable to decline politely. Many people will simply offer a soft drink, juice, or coffee instead.

If you're studying abroad in Athens, you'll likely find that nights out often begin later than in many countries, with people meeting around 9–10 p.m. and staying out well past midnight, especially on weekends. Pace yourself, stay with friends, and use licensed taxis or public transportation when heading home.

Everyday Life: Culture

How can I meet locals?

Meeting locals in Athens is often easier when you become a regular in places and activities rather than focusing only on nightlife. Many Athenians are friendly and curious about international students, especially if you make an effort to learn a few Greek phrases.

Here are some of the best ways to meet people:

Through Your University

- Join student clubs, sports teams, music groups, or volunteer organizations.
- Attend campus events, cultural nights, and guest lectures.
- If you're studying at the American College of Greece, participate in Residence Life activities and student organizations—they're designed to help students connect.

Learn Some Greek

Even knowing a few phrases can make a big difference:

- Γεια σου (Yia sou) – Hi
- Τι κάνεις; (Ti kánis?) – How are you?
- Ευχαριστώ (Efcharistó) – Thank you
- Παρακαλώ (Parakaló) – Please / You're welcome

Many Athenians speak English, but they often appreciate the effort to use a little Greek.

Become a Regular

Visit the same:

- Coffee shop
- Bakery
- Gym
- Neighborhood restaurant

Seeing the same staff and customers regularly often leads to casual conversations over time.

Everyday Life: Culture

Join Activities

Look for:

- Language exchange meetups
- Hiking groups
- Running clubs
- Dance classes (such as salsa or traditional Greek dance)
- Photography or art workshops
- Volunteer opportunities

Shared activities make conversation feel more natural

Explore Neighborhoods

Areas with lots of students and young professionals include:

- Pangrati
- Koukaki
- Exarchia
- Kolonaki

These neighborhoods have cafés, bookstores, and parks where people often socialize.

Accept Invitations

If classmates invite you for coffee, dinner, or a day trip, saying yes is one of the quickest ways to build friendships. Greeks often enjoy introducing friends to one another, so your social circle can grow quickly.

Conversation Tips

People often enjoy talking about:

- Travel
- Food
- Sports
- Music
- Your experiences in Greece
- Your studies

It's usually best to avoid assuming everyone shares the same political views, and if sensitive topics come up, approach them with curiosity rather than certainty.

Everyday Life: Culture

Be Patient

Friendships in Greece often develop through repeated interactions. Seeing the same people each week at class, a café, or a club tends to lead to stronger connections than trying to meet lots of new people all at once.
As an international student, you may find that locals are interested in your background and happy to recommend favorite restaurants, beaches, or weekend destinations. Showing genuine interest in Greek culture and everyday life often opens the door to meaningful conversations and friendships.

National Holidays

Greece observes several national public holidays throughout the year. On these days, government offices, banks, schools, and many businesses are closed, while tourist attractions and restaurants may have reduced hours.

Holidays to Experience as a Student

If you're studying in Greece, these are especially memorable:

- **Orthodox Easter** for candlelight services, traditional foods, and family celebrations.
- **Greek Independence Day (March 25)** for patriotic parades and cultural events.
- **Ohi Day (October 28)** for nationwide commemorations and school parades.
- **Clean Monday** for picnics, kite flying, and the start of Lent.
- **Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15)** if you're in Greece during the summer, when many towns host religious festivals and celebrations.

Keep in mind that during major holidays—especially Orthodox Easter and August 15—transportation and accommodations can become very busy as many people travel. Planning ahead is a good idea if you expect to travel during those periods.

Everyday Life: Culture

The Main National Holiday Dates:

Date	Holiday	What It's For
January 1	New Year's Day	Celebrates the beginning of the new year
January 6	Epiphany	A major Christian feast, marked by the Blessing of the Waters ceremony.
Variable (February/March)	Clean Monday	Marks the start of Great Lent in the Orthodox Church. Families often fly kites and enjoy meat-free meals.
March 25	Greek Independence Day	Commemorates the start of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. Military and school parades are held nationwide.
Variable (March/April)	Good Friday	A solemn day during Orthodox Holy Week.

Everyday Life: Culture

Date	Holiday	What It's For
Variable (March/April)	Orthodox Easter Sunday	The most important religious holiday in Greece, celebrated with church services and family gatherings.
Variable (March/April)	Orthodox Easter Monday	A public holiday following Easter Sunday.
Variable (February/March)	Clean Monday	Marks the start of Great Lent in the Orthodox Church. Families often fly kites and enjoy meat-free meals.
May 1	Labour Day	Honors workers and labor movements.
Variable (May/June)	Holy Spirit Monday	Observed by many businesses, schools, and public-sector organizations.

Everyday Life: Culture

Date	Holiday	What It's For
August 15	Dormition of the Theotokos	One of Greece's biggest religious holidays, celebrating the Virgin Mary. Many people travel to their hometowns or islands.
October 28	Ohi Day	Commemorates Greece's rejection of an ultimatum in 1940 during World War II. Military and student parades take place.
December 25	Christmas Day	Celebrates Christmas
December 26	Synaxis of the Mother of God	A public holiday following Christmas.

Staying In Touch

Cell Phones

For information about cell phones abroad, please see:
ASA PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Time Difference

The following are the number of hours BEHIND Greece each region is:

Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
9 hours	8 hours	7 hours	6 hours

So, if it is 6pm in Greece, then it is 12 noon Eastern, 11am Central, and 9am Pacific.

For date and time around the world, to help schedule meetings, sunrise and sunset, use the Time and Date website.

Computers & Internet

Should I bring a laptop? YES. You will have free wireless Internet access on campus and in your program housing.

HELPFUL TIPS

For information about using a plug adapter with your laptop,
see PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE FOR ALL PROGRAMS