

Greece

By Tom Kirvan

WHERE MYTH MEETS THE MEDITERRANEAN

With its sun-drenched islands, ancient ruins, and storied past, Greece is a country where every stone seems to whisper history and every sunset feels divine. Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Greece offers a dazzling combination of natural beauty, cultural depth, and Mediterranean hospitality. Home to around 10.5 million people, this southeastern European gem is as timeless as it is vibrant.

Greece is located on the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula and is bordered by Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. With a coastline that stretches over 8,000 miles, the country is dotted with more than 6,000 islands, of which around 200 are inhabited. From olive-covered hills to turquoise coves, Greece's geography is both dramatic and diverse.

The capital city, Athens, is not only the beating heart of modern Greece but also one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities. Known as the cradle of Western civilization, Athens boasts a unique blend of classical grandeur and contemporary energy. Landmarks like the Acropolis, Parthenon, and Ancient Agora coexist with vibrant neighborhoods, trendy cafes, and a thriving arts scene.

The mythical home of the Greek gods, Mount Olympus, is the country's highest peak, rising to 9,573 feet. Located in northern Greece near the Aegean Sea, Olympus isn't just a geographic marvel – it's a sacred symbol in Greek mythology. Today, hikers and nature lovers can explore its scenic trails, alpine meadows, and cloud-shrouded summit, all protected within Mount Olympus National Park.

Greece's history is nothing short of epic. It is the birthplace of democracy, philosophy, theater, and the Olympic Games. Thinkers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle laid the foundations of Western thought in Athens. Greece was also part of Alexander the Great's empire, later becoming a significant region within the Roman and Byzantine empires, and eventually part of the Ottoman Empire until gaining independence in the 19th century.

Greek mythology – featuring gods like Zeus, Aphrodite, and Apollo – continues to inspire literature, art, and cinema around the world. Every ruin and temple tells a story, and each museum holds treasures from a civilization that shaped the modern world.



Fast Facts

- Capital: Athens
- Population: 10.5 million
- Economic engines: Shipping, agriculture, and tourism
- Highest point: Mount Olympus (9,573 feet)

Primerus Member: Bahas, Gramatidis & Partners

Bahas, Gramatidis & Partners, a full-service law firm located in Athens.

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Five Must-See Destinations

- **Santorini:** Possibly the most famous of the Greek islands, Santorini is a vision of whitewashed villages perched on cliffs above a caldera, with views of the sparkling Aegean. Known for its stunning sunsets, volcanic beaches, and charming towns like Oia and Fira, Santorini is ideal for romance, photography, and leisurely exploration.
- **Athens and the Acropolis:** No visit to Greece is complete without a stop in Athens. Towering above the city is the Acropolis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that includes the Parthenon, a masterpiece of ancient architecture. Nearby, visitors can stroll through the Plaka neighborhood, visit the Acropolis Museum, and feel thousands of years of history beneath their feet.
- **Delphi:** Once considered the center of the world by the ancient Greeks, Delphi is nestled on the slopes of Mount Parnassus. It was home to the famous Oracle of Apollo, where pilgrims came to seek divine guidance. The site includes a theater, a stadium, and the Temple of Apollo, all surrounded by spectacular mountain views.
- **Meteora:** One of the most surreal landscapes in Greece, Meteora features monasteries perched atop towering rock pillars. Originally built by monks in the 14th century for solitude and protection, six of the monasteries are still active and open to visitors. The combination of spiritual heritage and natural wonder makes Meteora a must-see locale.
- **Crete:** The largest of the Greek islands, Crete is a world unto itself. With stunning beaches, rugged mountains, and vibrant towns like Chania and Heraklion, it offers something for every traveler. Don't miss the Palace of Knossos, believed to be Europe's oldest city and the center of the ancient Minoan civilization.