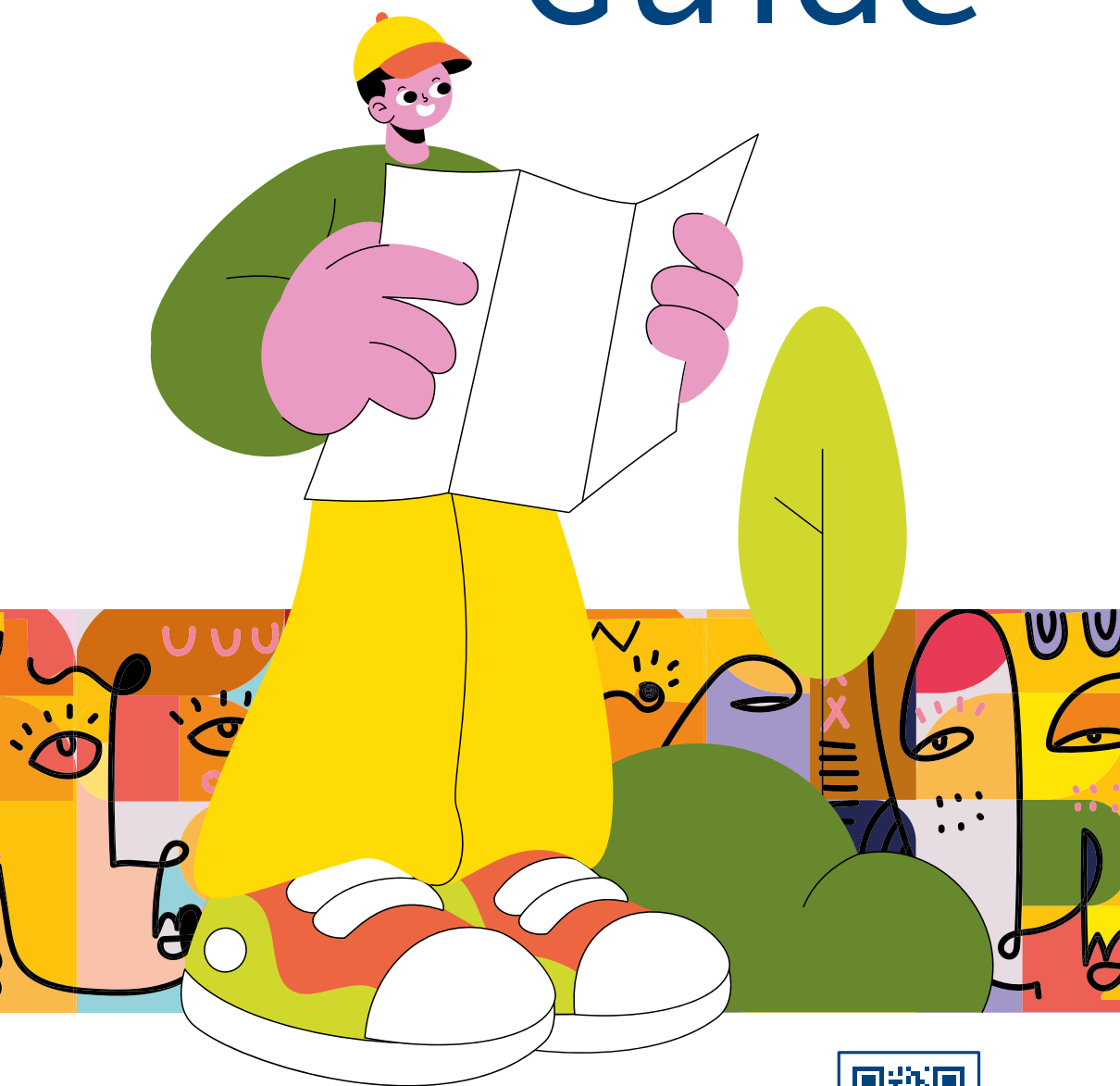




National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens



Medical Degree
English Program
Survival Guide



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Why Athens

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*Athens is loud and
fiercely alive.*

*It is not just a city where you study; it
is a city that teaches you how to live.*

The City That Never Sleeps: Athens provides arguably one of the most vibrant and affordable student life experiences in Europe.

A Living Museum: In Athens, you don't just read about history; you walk through it every single day on your way to the university.

Every Neighborhood is a Different World: Athens is a collection of distinct neighborhoods, each with its own unique subculture, reachable within minutes by public transport

High Quality of Life, Low Cost of Living: Compared to expensive European capitals Athens is considered budget friendly. Especially, older neighborhoods try to keep a more traditional and simpler way of everyday life.



Why NKUA



A degree from NKUA carries serious weight globally. When you graduate, you are holding an academic credential backed by nearly two centuries of academic legacy.

Old-School Prestige, Global Impact: Founded in 1837, NKUA isn't just some random university; it is the oldest higher educational institution in the Eastern Mediterranean. It consistently ranks as the top university in Greece and among the best in the world.

A Massive Student Network: With over 60,000 active students, NKUA is basically a city within a city. You will never have to worry about feeling isolated, the international student network here is vibrant and highly active.



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Why the Medical Degree

A 6-year MD with a Passport to the World:

This is a premium, fully accredited 6-year Medical Degree taught entirely in English, specifically engineered for international students who want to register and practice anywhere across Europe and beyond. The Program also offers Greek language lessons to support students during their clinical training and facilitate their cultural integration into Greek society.

Raw, High-Volume Clinical Experience: NKUA's Medical Program embeds you directly into some of the biggest, busiest public hospitals in the Balkans. You will get hands on clinical experience in 16 University Hospitals that handle a staggering volume and variety of complex, real-world cases daily. You will get unmatched, challenging, hands-on clinical exposure which leads to a sharp medical intuition, diagnostic confidence, and a sense of psychological resilience.



Transport



Navigating the Greek Capital:

Public Transport (Center, Airport, Port)

Navigating Athens might look intimidating at first glance, but the transit system is actually a student's best friend. It's highly interconnected, easy to figure out, and budget friendly.

The City Center Grid: The Athens Metro is modern, clean, and efficient. Lines 1 (**Green**), 2 (**Red**), and 3 (**Blue**) intersect at major hubs like Syntagma and Monastiraki, meaning you can get across the city center in minutes without dealing with traffic jams.

The Student Pass: Do not buy single tickets. As a student with your Greek student ID (**Paso**), you get a massive discount on the **Ath.ena Card**. For around €15 a month, you get unlimited rides on the Metro, buses, and trams. It is hands-down the cheapest urban lifeline you will find in Europe.

As a medical student, you will frequently move between academic hubs and clinical sites. **Bus line 031** (Goudi-Attikon Hospital) directly connects the core medical facilities with Attikon University Hospital on a fixed timetable. For the rest of the 16 university hospitals, public transport guarantees fast and safe movement through the key campus and clinical locations.

The Airport Route: Getting to Athens International Airport (ATH) for a weekend trip or a cheap European getaway is completely foolproof.



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- ◆ **By Train:** Metro Line 3 (the Blue Line) runs straight from city center student hubs (like Syntagma, Monastiraki, and Panormou) directly into the airport terminal every 36 minutes.
- ◆ **By Bus:** The **X95 Express Bus** runs 24/7/365 from Syntagma Square directly to the airport departures gate. It runs all night, and guarantees you won't get stranded.

Piraeus Port (Your Direct Escape Hatch to the Islands)

In most global capitals, getting to a massive maritime port involves a complicated multi-hour journey. In Athens, the main port, Piraeus, is literally hooked right into the downtown metro grid. You can pack a backpack, hop on Metro Line 3 (Blue) or Line 1 (Green) from Monastiraki, and step off the train right in front of the ferry docks in under 20 minutes. No transfers, no stress.



APPS



Citymapper



moovit

freenow (Greek Taxi)

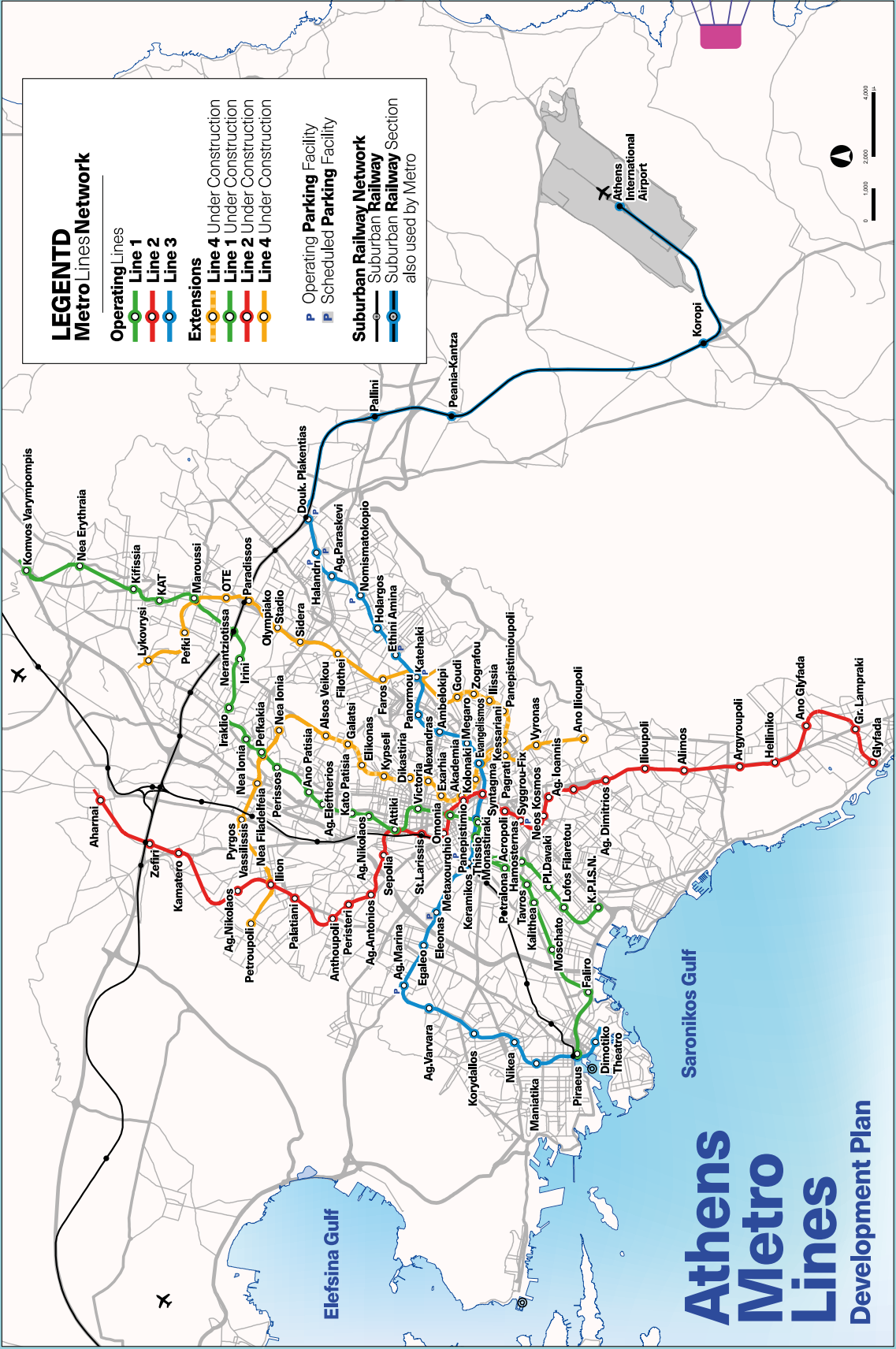
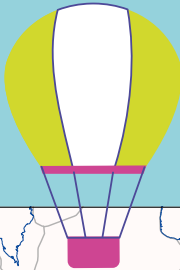
Uber

ATH.ENA CARD
ATHENATICKET



(public transport)





Budget



The Morning Fuel & Breakfast

Greeks treat coffee not as a quick caffeine shot, but as a drawn-out, high-priority social ritual. Master the coffee culture, and you master your morning budget.

- ◆ **The Iced Coffee Obsession (€2.00 – €3.00):** Rain or shine, summer or winter, Athens runs on cold coffee. Your default orders will be the *Freddo Espresso* (iced blended espresso) or *Freddo Cappuccino* (iced espresso topped with cold, creamy milk foam) or Frappe (instant iced coffee).
- ◆ **The Bakery Breakfast Hack (€1.50 – €3.00):** Skip the expensive avocado-toast brunch spots. The real fuel of Athens lies in its local, family-run bakeries (*fournos*).
 - For a cheap, incredibly filling breakfast, walk in and ask for a *tyropita* (traditional Greek cheese pie with flaky phyllo dough), a *spanakopita* (spinach pie), or a *koulouri Thessalonikis* (a simple, circular toasted bread ring covered in sesame seeds).

Groceries, Laiki, and the Super Market

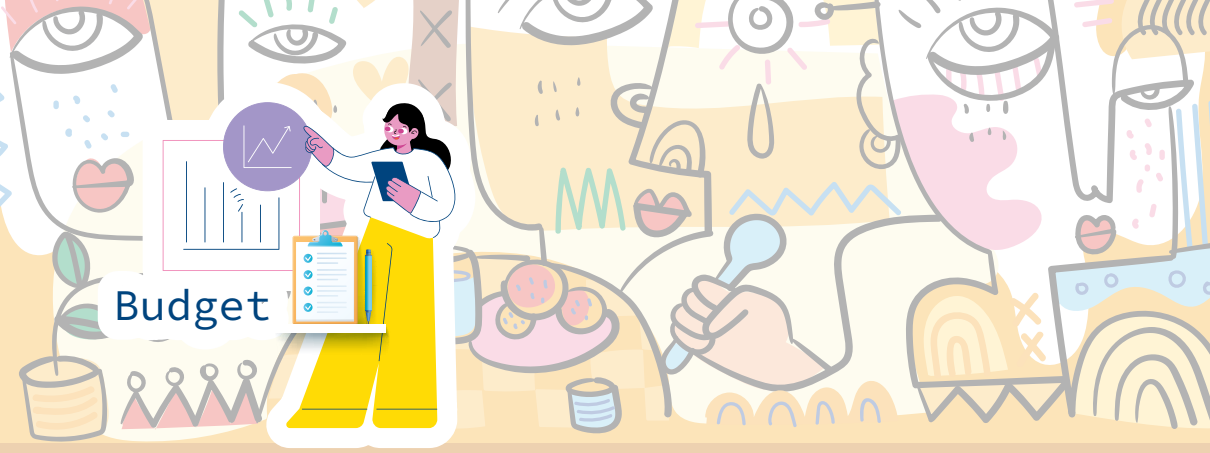
Your grocery budget in Athens depends entirely on *where* you buy. You can stick exclusively to big corporate supermarket chains, but if you adapt to local habits, you'll eat like royalty on pennies.

- ◆ **The Ultimate Greek Hack: The *Laiki* Agora:** Once a week, every single residential neighborhood in Athens blocks off its streets for the *Laiki*—the traditional open-air farmer's market. This is where local farmers sell produce directly to the public. It is local, organic, and ridiculously cheap.



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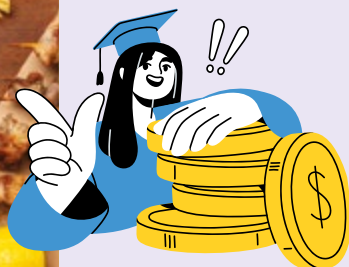




Lunch & Dinner

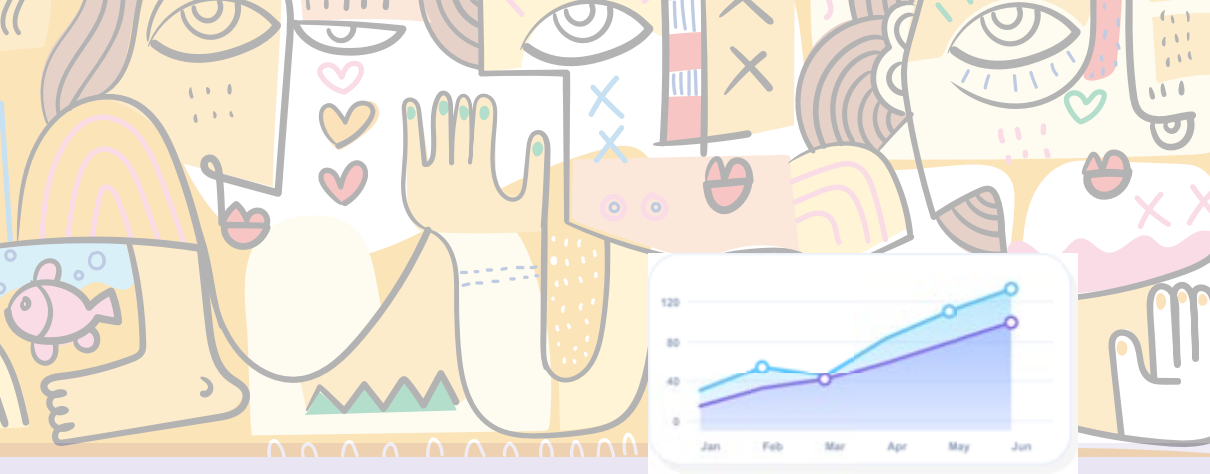
Food is culture in Greece, and communal eating is non-negotiable. Luckily, Athens caters perfectly to the student needs.

- ◆ **The University Refectory:** As a student of the Medical Degree English Program, upon your registration you are entitled to **two meals per day** at the campus restaurant for a total cost of 3 euros, available seven days a week.
- ◆ **The Souvlaki Safety Net:** The *pita-gyros* or *pita-souvlaki* is the absolute backbone of Athenian student survival. It is a warm pita wrap stuffed with shaved meat (pork or chicken) or vegetarian options (halloumi cheese, mushrooms, or falafel), loaded with tomatoes, onions, tzatziki, and thick-cut fries. One wrap is a dense, high-protein meal. Two wraps will leave you fully incapacitated for the night.



- ◆ **The Communal Taverna Night:** The Greek way when eating out with friends, is to sit down at a traditional *taverna* or *mezedopoleio* and order a mountain of *mezedes* (sharing plates) for the center of the table. Share, enjoy and split the bill equally at the end.





Culture and Nightlife



Athens' social scene is vibrant, raw, artistic, and heavily tailored to open-air gatherings. A massive chunk of Athenian cultural life happens entirely on the streets and public squares (*plateias*). Students spend time on the steps of Mavili Square, Varnava Square, Plaka, or the rocky heights of Lycabettus Hill with the entire glowing city is sprawling beneath them.

◆ **Tip:** Keep an eye out for international student events or local student gatherings held at open spaces or alternative

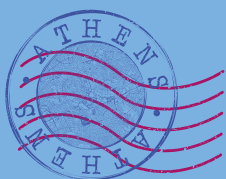
hubs plus a countless number of cultural events throughout the most vibrant parts of the city.



Monastiraki

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Exploring Athens

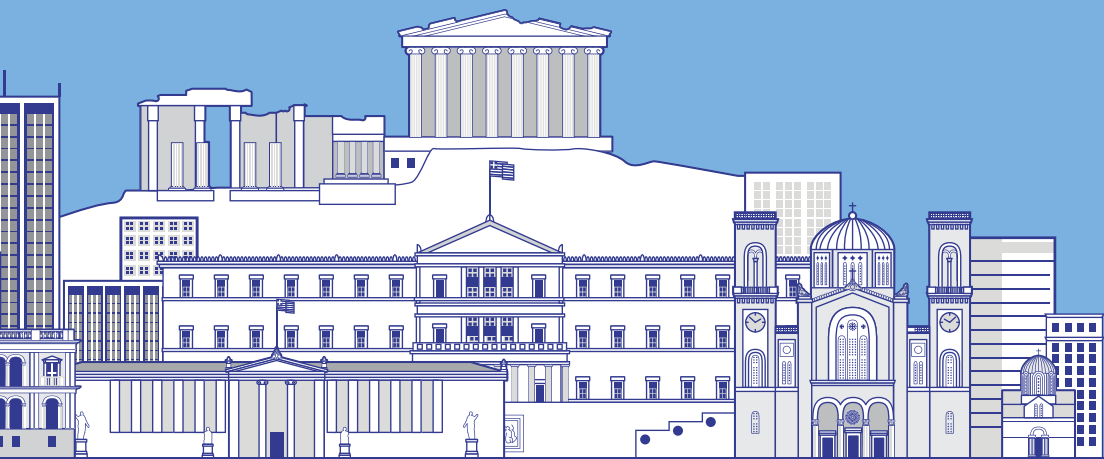
For a student, the real city is charted by getting lost in its fiercely distinct neighborhoods, hiking up its hidden urban hills, and taking advantage of transport shortcuts that lead straight to the beach.

Neighborhood Hopping: Athens is not a uniform city; it's a collection of urban villages, each with a totally different subculture. Neighborhoods such as: **Exarcheia:** The gritty, historic, anarcho-artistic heart of Athens. Go here for incredible street art, radical bookstores, and alternative cafes. **Koukaki, Kerameikos & Pangrati:** The hip, cozy student hotspots packed with pedestrian alleys, indie bookshops, and endless sidewalk tables. **Plaka, Thiseio & Anafiotika:** Located right under the Acropolis. Anafiotika is a tiny scenic cluster of whitewashed houses built by builders from the island of Anafi—walking through it feels exactly like being on a Cycladic island, right in the middle of the concrete jungle.



The Urban Peaks & Sunsets: Athens is surrounded by hills that offer breathtaking 360-degree views of the city stretching all the way to the Aegean Sea. They are the ultimate spots for an evening hangout. **Lycabettus Hill or Philopappou Hill** provide a perfect low-key afternoon walk or a casual picnic with friends. Hike up the pine-tree paths for a spectacular sunset view, or sit on the ancient rocks, and watch the Acropolis light up at night.





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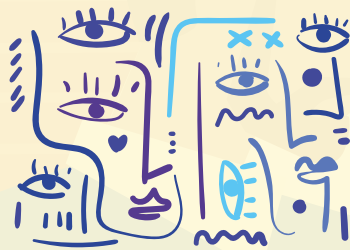


The Coastal Escape – The Athens Riviera: When the city heat gets intense, you don't need an expensive ferry ticket to touch the sea. Hop on the **Tram (Line 6 or 7)** from Syntagma Square or Take the **Metro Line 2 to Elliniko** and catch a local bus heading south. Within 30 to 45 minutes, you will be cruising along the Saronic Gulf. While some luxury beach bars charge massive entry fees, there are plenty of *free, public beaches* (like in **Glyfada, Voula, or Kavouri**) where you can drop your towel, swim, and hang out until late at night using nothing but your standard student monthly transit pass.

The Flea Markets & Thrift Culture: If you want to spend a Sunday morning exploring, head straight to the **Monastiraki Flea Market** and the antique stalls of **Thiseio**. It's a chaotic mix of old vinyl records, vintage Greek militaria, retro books, secondhand and thrift shops and bizarre antiques.



Cultural Integration



Cultural Integration:

How to Decode, Converse, and Survive Like a True Athenian

Greek culture is highly expressive, relationship-driven, and relentlessly social. If you try to navigate it with an uptight, transactional mindset, you will struggle. Keep a positive attitude, read between the lines, and talk with your hands, you will thrive.



Loud, Passionate, and Animated



- ◆ **Volume Level:** Greeks speak loudly. It isn't anger; it's pure enthusiasm. Silence or whispering in a social setting is often misinterpreted as sadness or boredom.
- ◆ **Eye Contact is Non-Negotiable:** When you talk to someone, look them straight in the eye. Eye contact builds immediate trust. If you look away or stare at your phone, it is considered dismissive or untrustworthy.
- ◆ **The Body Language Dictionary:** You need to learn the basic silent cues immediately to avoid confusion.
 - **The "No":** A slight upward nod of the head, often accompanied by a clicking sound of the tongue ("ts"), means "No."
 - **The "Yes":** A slight tilt of the head downwards means "Yes".
 - **The "What do you want?":** Fingers bunched together pointing upward, shaken slightly, means "What are you talking about?" or "What do you want?"



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Philotimo: The Unwritten Social Code

There is a uniquely Greek word that cannot be translated into English: ***Philotimo*** (literally: “love of honor”). It is an internal compass of hospitality, generosity, and doing the right thing for your community

◆ **How it affects you:** If a local bakery owner finds out you are an international student, they might slip an extra cheese pie into your bag for free. If you get lost, an elderly Athenian might literally walk three blocks out of their way to show you the right metro entrance.



◆ **How to return it:** Never take *philotimo* for granted. Be polite, say *Efcharisto* (Thank you), smile back, and remember that relationships in Athens are always personal, never transactional. Treat the kiosk owner, the baker, and the bus driver like human beings, and they will protect you like family.

Cultural Integration

Bureaucracy

This is a very useful reality check for your survival guide. At some point, you will have to deal with public services, tax offices, or public administration. The secret to dealing with Greek bureaucracy is **patience and kindness**. Smile, explain your situation humbly as an international student, ask for their help politely, and bring a massive dose of patience. A warm demeanor works ten times faster than a complaint.



The Street and Square Social Safety Net

One of the most comforting aspects of integrating into Athens is how inherently safe the city feels socially.

- ◆ Because life happens entirely in public view, families, students, and seniors sit out in the squares and sidewalk cafes until 1:00 AM, there is an organic community surveillance.
- ◆ You are rarely alone on a dark street. If you ever feel uncomfortable or lost, simply walk into the nearest open café, bakery, or *periptero* (kiosk). The people working there are your immediate safety net.





Greek Weather

The Greek Weather: 300 Days of Sunshine (and How to Survive Them)

The Athenian climate is one of the city's biggest selling points, but do not mistake it for a perpetual tropical holiday. Managing the intense Mediterranean heat and the sudden winter drops is a core part of your daily urban survival.

- ◆ **The 300-Days-of-Sunshine Rule:** It is not an exaggeration—Athens averages over 300 days of sunny skies per year. This means your mood gets an immediate upgrade, your laundry dries in two hours on the balcony, and your social life stays outdoors almost year-round
- ◆ **The Iced Coffee Transition:** The weather directly dictates local habits. The exact week in mid-spring when the temperature crosses 20°C, the entire student population collectively switches from hot filter coffee to the legendary *Freddo Espresso*.
- ◆ **The Summer Scorcher (June to August):** Summer in Athens is intense, with temperatures frequently hitting 38°C to 40°C. The city turns into a concrete heat-trap.
 - Do not walk around the city center between 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Do what the locals do: close your shutters, turn on the A/C or fan, take a siesta, and wait for the sun to drop before heading out. Always carry a water bottle; public water in Athens is completely safe and tap-drinkable.
- ◆ **The Short but Gritty Winter (December to February):** International students often make the mistake of packing only shorts and T-shirts. Athenian winters are short, but they can be surprisingly cold, damp, and windy, with temperatures dropping to 3°C–10°C.
 - Because older Athenian apartment buildings have poor insulation and central heating is often turned off to save money, your apartment might feel colder than the street. Bring a heavy jacket, a couple of thick hoodies, and proper rain gear for those sudden winter downpours.
- ◆ **The Sweet Spots (Spring & Autumn):** March to May and September to November are the absolute best times to explore. The weather hovers around a perfect 22°C–26°C. These are the prime months for rooftop student parties, open-air cinemas, and park/outdoor evenings.



Safety in Athens: Athens is often perceived as chaotic, and its gritty look—covered in street art and graffiti—can sometimes give international students a false impression. The reality? **Athens is one of the safest capitals in Europe**, especially when it comes to violent crime. However, like any major metropolitan hub, it has its own set of rules you need to play by.

The Neighborhood Safety Map: Most student neighborhoods are completely safe to walk through even at night because of the lively vibrant culture.

- ◆ Areas like **Pagratí, Koukaki, Zografou, Ilisia, and Kypseli** are deeply residential and secure.
- ◆ **Exarcheia**, while famous for its radical and revolutionary nature, is generally safe for students; just avoid the central square if you see a political demonstration brewing.
- ◆ The areas requiring a bit more alertness, especially late at night, are the dark alleys directly surrounding **Omonoia, Victoria, Metaxourgeio and the Athens Central Railway Station**.

As a medical student in Athens you need to know how the Greek public healthcare system operates on any given day. University hospitals in Athens don't all run full 24/7 emergency rooms simultaneously; instead, they operate on a rotating daily duty schedule. On any given night, only a designated group of university hospitals (like *Laiko*, *Evangelismos*, or *Attikon*) are on active emergency duty for specific specialties. If you or a fellow student suffers an acute emergency or need urgent medical attention, going to the nearest hospital blindly might land you in front of locked ER doors or a skeletal night staff that will just redirect you. **Bookmark the official duty rotations on the Ministry of Health or call 166.** Knowing which heavy-duty university clinic is actively receiving emergencies each night will save you critical time, expensive taxi rides, and unnecessary stress when seconds count. Plus in case of emergency always be advised to inform your Administration Staff.

Emergency Lifelines to Save Now: Hopefully, you will never need them, but keep these free European emergency numbers saved in your phone from day one:

- ◆ **112: General European Emergency Number** (Works everywhere, speaks English)
- ◆ **100: Hellenic Police** (*Astynomia*)
- ◆ **166: National Ambulance Service** (*EKAV*)
- ◆ **199: Fire Brigade** (*Pyrosvestiki*)





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POLIS PRINT

“Choice,
not chance,
determines
your **destiny**”
— Aristotle



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