



Caring for  
your world.

Your  
relocation  
guide to  
Greece



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Memb No: A091



TELEPHONE:	Country code (30) + Area code
STANDARD TIME:	GMT +2 Hours
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	220v AC, 50Hz
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Tetanus recommended
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Jan 1, 6, Mar 18, 25, May 1, 3, 6, Jun 24, Aug 15, Oct 28, Dec 25, 26
OFFICE HOURS:	08.00-14.00 Monday – Friday
BANK HOURS:	08.00-14.00 Monday – Friday
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	199 – Fire 100 – Police 166 – Ambulance 112 – Single emergency number (calls answered in Greek, English and French)
BRITISH EMBASSY:	Embassy Consulate 1 Ploutarachou Street 106-75 Athens Tel: 0210 7272 600 Fax: (0030) 210 7272 743 Web: <a href="http://ukingreece.fco.gov.uk/en/">http://ukingreece.fco.gov.uk/en/</a>
GREEK EMBASSY IN LONDON:	1a Holland Park London W11 3TP Tel: 020 7229 3850 Fax: 02072 297 221 Web: <a href="http://greece.embassyhomepage.com/">http://greece.embassyhomepage.com/</a>
VISA SECTION:	Tel: 02072 216 467

## **Customs**

**Greece is part of the EU and as such, no official documents are required to import personal effects and household goods if originating from another EU country. However, should you be from outside the EU the following applies.**

### **Household Goods**

All citizens moving to Greece from an EU Country

Documents required from Atlantic:

- T2L (original copy number 4) stamped by customs at origin unless this is done electronically
- Packing list
- Original bill of lading / Airway bill

Documents required from yourself:

- Authorisation form
- Declaration form
- Photocopy of valid passport

**Note:** authorisation and declaration forms need to be legalised by Greek authorities (i.e police station or K.E.P centre in Greece,) alternatively this can be done at any Greek Embassy / Consulate abroad.

Duty free entry.

In addition for shipment arriving to Port of Entry Heraklion / Crete – Greece we need also copy of rental / ownership of house contract verified by the local Greek tax office.

### **Citizens with non-EU nationality moving to Greece from a non-EU country**

Documents required from Atlantic:

- Packing list clearly stating all electrical appliances with brands, models and serial numbers
- Original bill of lading / Airway bill

Documents required from yourself:

- Authorisation form
- Declaration form
- Photocopy of passport
- Work / Residence permit
- Greek vat number and Tax office where registered

**Note:** authorisation and declaration forms need to be legalised by Greek authorities (i.e police station or K.E.P centre in Greece,) alternatively this can be done at any Greek Embassy / Consulate abroad.

Taxes and duties are payable.

Unless customer is working for a company who services a particular duty free status (i.e contract with Greek Government).

### **Citizens with an EU nationality moving to Greece from a non-EU country**

Documents required from Atlantic:

- Packing list
- Original bill of lading / Airway bill

If you are entitled to a “certificate of repatriation then you must apply for this at the Greek Embassy / Consulate at origin at least one month prior to shipment’s exportation. In this case we need the following:

- Original certificate of repatriation
- Original passports (old and new) of whoever is mentioned in the certificate of repatriation
- Proof that customer has been living in the country of origin for the last two continuous years (e.g last two years’ tax returns)
- Customer must have a Greek Vat number and name of tax office where registered in Greece
- Copy of work / residence permit or house purchase / rental contract

Duty free entry with certificate of repatriation.

Consignee must have lived abroad for over two years (continuously).

Consignee’s presence at customs is required. Otherwise customer must prepare authorisation and declaration forms with legalization of signature from Greek authorities.

It is advisable to contact your Greek agent as regulations and requirements can change without prior notice.

### **Diplomats moving to Greece from a Non EU country**

Documents required from Atlantic:

- Packing list
- Original bill of lading / Airway bill

Documents required from yourself:

- Franchise from Embassy
- Copy of Diplomatic passport / ID
- Letter from Embassy certifying diplomat’s commencement of employment

Temporary duty free entry.

Embassy Franchise basis.

### **Cars & Motorbikes**

Documents required from Atlantic:

- Original bill of lading / Airway bill
- Export customs document for car

Documents required from yourself:

- Original certificate of title for vehicle
- Original registration card

- Copy of driving license
- Greek or International Insurance
- Authorisation form
- Declaration form
- Photocopy of valid passport

**Note:** authorisation and declaration forms need to be legalised by Greek authorities (i.e. police station or K.E.P centre in Greece), alternatively this can be done at any Greek Embassy / Consulate abroad.

### Importation Options:

- Tourist Law:** Temporary customs clearance. Customer can drive vehicle in Greece with foreign plates for six months. After that period vehicle has to be re-exported or register in Greece and get Greek plates.
- Payment of taxes / duties:** When applicable the amount depends on vehicles cc, model, type etc.
- Certificate of repatriation:** Tax and duty free status.

Customer will pay for registration fees and any other local tax fee.

Regarding motorbikes, the chassis has to have at least seventeen digits.

Either car or motorbike has to be under the latest European manufacturing standards (i.e. EURO 5 certification) in order to get Greek plates.

It is recommended that you contact your destination agent to determine first of all if the vehicle can be registered into Greece and if so what the cost would be.

### Pets

Pets entering Greece require an import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Animal Health, before the shipment. Forms may be obtained from the Ministry through a sponsor and must be submitted with a copy of the pet's rabies vaccination record and a health certificate. Vaccination against rabies is required no less than one month and no more than six months before the travel date. There are additional vaccination requirements for dogs and cats less than 30 days old. A second health certificate dated 48 hours before the pet travels is also required. Pets may be subjected to a six month quarantine, although this is usually not required when importing the pet from a rabies free country. Pets must be manifested as cargo on an airway bill when transported by air.

### Wood Packaging Regulations

The European member states have adopted the International Standard of Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM). This regulation requires all wood packing materials to be treated for the transport of goods to the EU from other countries.

### Prohibited Items

- Guns
- Drugs
- Alcohol (more than 3 cartons of 12 bottles / cartons)
- Explosives
- Live Plants
- Stuffed animals
- Tobacco

### General Information on the Hellenic Republic (short name Greece)

#### Background

Greece achieved independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. During the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, it gradually added neighboring islands and territories, most with Greek-speaking populations. In World War II, Greece was first invaded by Italy (1940) and subsequently occupied by Germany (1941-44); fighting endured in a protracted civil war between supporters of the king and other anti-communist and communist rebels. Following the latter's defeat in 1949, Greece joined NATO in 1952. In 1967, a group of military officers seized power, establishing a military dictatorship that suspended many political liberties and forced the king to flee the country. In 1974 following the collapse of the dictatorship, democratic elections and a referendum created a parliamentary republic and abolished the monarchy. In 1981, Greece joined the EC (now the EU); it became the 12th member of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 2001. Greece has suffered a severe economic crisis since late 2009, due to nearly a decade of chronic overspending and structural rigidities. Since 2010, Greece has entered three bailout agreements with the European Commission, the European Central Bank (ECB), and the IMF. The Greek Government agreed to its current, \$96 billion bailout in July 2015, which will conclude in August 2018.

#### Geography

Greece is located in southeastern Europe on the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula. The Greek mainland is bounded on the north by Bulgaria, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, on the East by the Aegean Sea and Turkey, and on the west and south by the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas. The country consists of a large mainland, the Peloponnese Peninsula, connected to the mainland by the Isthmus of Corinth and more than 1,400 islands, including Crete, Rhodes, Corfu and the Dodecanese and Cycladic groups. Greece has more than 14,880 kilometers (9,300 miles) of coastline and a land boundary of 1,160 kilometers (726 miles).

About 80% of Greece is mountainous or hilly. Much of the country is dry and rocky, only 28% of the land is arable.

Greece maintains full diplomatic, political and economic relations with its south-central European neighbours. It provided a 250 man military contingent to IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia. Diplomatic relations with Bulgaria were restored in 1965 after a 24 year break when Bulgaria renounced its claim to Greek territory in Thrace and Macedonia. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Greece has had good relations with Russia and has opened embassies in a number of the former Soviet republics, which it sees as potentially important trading partners.

The capital of Greece is Athens, which was formally the ancient capital of Attica.

International disputes are Greece and Turkey continue discussions to resolve their complex maritime, air, territorial, and boundary disputes in the Aegean Sea; Greece rejects the use of the name Macedonia or Republic of Macedonia; the mass migration of unemployed Albanians still remains a problem for developed countries, chiefly Greece and Italy.

### **Climate**

The climate is Mediterranean. Summers are very hot, sometimes temperatures can rise to +35°C in Athens. Winters are generally temperate, although it is often very cold in the northern part of the country and temperatures can fall to freezing point in the later winter months.

### **Population**

It is estimated at 10.7 million.

### **Currency**

The currency used is the Euro.

- Notes: 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5 euros
- Coins: 2 & 1 euros then 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents

Most of the major credit cards are accepted by leading hotels and stores in Athens and other major centers.

### **Economy**

Greece has a capitalist economy with a public sector accounting for about 40% of GDP and with per capita GDP about two-thirds that of the leading euro-zone economies. Tourism provides 18% of GDP. Immigrants make up nearly one-fifth of the work force, mainly in agricultural and unskilled jobs. Greece is a major beneficiary of EU aid, equal to about 3.3% of annual GDP.

The Greek economy averaged growth of about 4% per year between 2003 and 2007, but the economy went into recession in 2009 as a result of the world financial crisis, tightening credit conditions, and Athens' failure to address a growing budget deficit. By 2013 the economy had contracted 26%, compared with the pre-crisis level of 2007. Greece met the EU's Growth and Stability Pact budget deficit criterion of no more than 3% of GDP in 2007-08, but violated it in 2009, with the deficit reaching 15% of GDP. Deteriorating public finances, inaccurate and misreported statistics, and consistent

underperformance on reforms prompted major credit rating agencies to downgrade Greece's international debt rating in late 2009 and led the country into a financial crisis. Under intense pressure from the EU and international market participants, the government accepted a bailout program that called on Athens to cut government spending, decrease tax evasion, overhaul the civil-service, health-care, and pension systems, and reform the labor and product markets. Austerity measures reduced the deficit to 3% in 2015. Successive Greek governments, however, failed to push through many of the most unpopular reforms in the face of widespread political opposition, including from the country's powerful labor unions and the general public.

In April 2010, a leading credit agency assigned Greek debt its lowest possible credit rating, and in May 2010, the International Monetary Fund and euro-zone governments provided Greece emergency short- and medium-term loans worth \$147 billion so that the country could make debt repayments to creditors. In exchange for the largest bailout ever assembled, the government announced combined spending cuts and tax increases totaling \$40 billion over three years, on top of the tough austerity measures already taken. Greece, however, struggled to meet the targets set by the EU and the IMF, especially after Eurostat - the EU's statistical office - revised upward Greece's deficit and debt numbers for 2009 and 2010. European leaders and the IMF agreed in October 2011 to provide Athens a second bailout package of \$169 billion. The second deal called for holders of Greek government bonds to write down a significant portion of their holdings to try to alleviate Greece's government debt burden. However, Greek banks, saddled with a significant portion of sovereign debt, were adversely affected by the write down and \$60 billion of the second bailout package was set aside to ensure the banking system was adequately capitalized. In exchange for the second bailout, Greece promised to step up efforts to increase tax collection, to reduce the size of government, and to rein in health spending. These austerity measures were designed to generate \$7.8 billion in savings during 2013-15, but in fact prolonged Greece's economic recession and depressed tax revenues.

In 2014, the Greek economy began to turn the corner on the recession. Greece achieved three significant milestones: balancing the budget - not including debt repayments; issuing government debt in financial markets for the first time since 2010; and generating 0.7% GDP growth — the first economic expansion since 2007.

Despite the nascent recovery, widespread discontent with austerity measures helped propel the far-left Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) party into government in national legislative elections in January 2015. Between January and July 2015, frustrations between the SYRIZA-led government and Greece's EU and IMF creditors over the implementation of bailout measures and disbursement of funds led the Greek government to run up significant arrears to suppliers and Greek banks to rely on emergency lending, and also called into question Greece's future in the euro zone. To stave off



a collapse of the banking system, Greece imposed capital controls in June 2015 shortly before rattling international financial markets by becoming the first developed nation to miss a loan payment to the IMF. Unable to reach an agreement with creditors, Prime Minister Alexis TSIPRAS held a nationwide referendum on 5 July on whether to accept the terms of Greece's bailout, campaigning for the ultimately successful "no" vote. The TSIPRAS government subsequently agreed, however, to a new \$96 billion bailout in order to avert Greece's exit from the monetary bloc. On 20 August, Greece signed its third bailout which allowed it to cover significant debt payments to its EU and IMF creditors and ensure the banking sector retained access to emergency liquidity. The TSIPRAS government — which retook office on 20 September after calling new elections in late August — successfully secured disbursement of two delayed tranches of bailout funds. Despite the economic turmoil, Greek GDP did not contract as sharply as feared, with official source estimates of a -0.2% contraction in 2015, boosted in part by a strong tourist season

## Education

The local education system is unsuitable for the children of expatriates because of overcrowding and a lack of buildings which has led to a shift system. There are several international schools in Greece that are suitable for the children of expatriates but early registration is essential as most have waiting lists.

## Religion

Greece is a Christian country and most of the people are members of the Greek Orthodox Church. The constitution recognises complete religious freedom and there are small communities of Jews, Protestants and Roman Catholics. Muslims are the largest minority group, mainly of Turkish decent, who will speak Turkish as their mother tongue. They are no longer discriminated against as in the past.

## Health

There is a reciprocal health agreement with the UK, but it is poorly implemented and it is an essential precaution to take out insurance. Refunds for medical treatment are theoretically available from the Greek Social Insurance Foundation on presentation of form E111. Local chemists can diagnose and supply a wide selection of drugs. There are often long waits for treatment at public hospitals. Hospital facilities on outlying islands are sometimes sparse, although many ambulances without adequate facilities have air ambulance backup.

Water quality varies from area to area, depending on the source, but in most regions is excellent. Bottled water is available and is advised for the first few weeks. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are considered safe to eat.

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required for any one over the age of one year old who come in from infected areas. Should you be visiting forested areas consider vaccination of tick-borne encephalitis.

There are no special health precautions, although all expatriates are strongly recommended to have tetanus vaccinations and to ensure that their protection against poliomyelitis is adequate.

## Language

Greek is the official language, which is spoken by 97% of the population. There are two forms of modern Greek: Demotiki the language commonly spoken and taught in schools and Katharevousa the formal language.

All street signs in Athens and major cities are in two languages, Greek and English, it is essential for expatriates to learn at least the symbols and sounds of the Greek alphabet. Some knowledge of Greek is greatly appreciated by the local population. French, English and German are spoken and understood by many people in the major towns and cities.

## Business Practices

Strict punctuality is not always observed in business although foreigners are expected to arrive on time. Prior appointments are not always necessary but it is courteous to telephone in advance. Visiting cards are essential. Business discussions often take place over lunch, which can last several hours. Dress tends to be informal except in the banking sectors where suits and ties are always worn.

Greeks prefer face to face meetings rather than telephone conversation and verbal is much preferred to written communication. They like to get to know the people they deal with since trust is very important; except to be asked personal questions about family and finance. Kyrie (Mr) or Kyria (Mrs) can be used whether with the first or the second name or on its own. Second names should always be used to begin with but first names are used very quickly after an acquaintance has been made.

## Social Customs, Business Practices and Modes of Address

The Greeks are a proud but friendly people. Whilst the pace of life in central Athens is similar to that in any other major capital city, elsewhere in the country life is taken in leisurely fashion. Foreign visitors are welcomed by the local population, although care should be taken with the degree of undress in Greek resorts. The older generations are conservative and religious. There is little discrimination against woman, who are well represented, in politics and business. Handshaking is the normal form of greeting – a firm handshake is preferable, although men who know each other well will embrace. Note that the finger and thumb circle gesture is obscene in Greece. Waving can be interpreted, as a gesture of aggression while a backward tilt of the head indicates 'no'.

Greek hospitality is very generous and it is considered impolite or even insulting, to refuse an invitation. If invited to a Greek home it is usual to take flowers or a cake. Expatriates are advised to avoid discussion of local politics and of Greece's relations with its neighbours, including Cyprus, the former Yugoslavian province of Macedonia and particularly Turkey.

## Utilities

The domestic electrical supply is 220 volts AC 50Hz. There are no standard electrical fittings and it is common to find both bayonet and screw lamp sockets in the same room. Wall plug sockets are either 2 or 3 pin plugs with round, flat or square prongs. Modern hotels have universal electric shaver points.

*Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date we cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.*