Thessaloniki Travel Guide

Thessaloniki: Greece's Second City

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Things to do in Thessaloniki

Landmarks & Monuments

Iconic structures that define Thessaloniki's skyline and cultural heritage, from Ottoman-era landmarks to Paleochristian treasures



Must See

White Tower (Lefkos Pyrgos)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Thessaloniki's waterfront symbol: a 15th-century Ottoman tower that was once a fortress and prison. Inside, a museum on the **history of the city** runs from the ground floor up six storeys, and the top gives wide views over the Thermaic Gulf. Adult ticket €8 (2026); it closes mid-afternoon in winter.



Must See

Arch of Galerius

45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

A magnificent triumphal arch built around AD 300 to commemorate Roman emperor Galerius's victory over the Persians. Featuring intricate relief sculptures depicting military processions and sacrificial scenes, this **partially preserved monument** showcases exceptional Roman craftsmanship and provides insight into ancient provincial architecture.



Top Pick

Rotunda of St. George

1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Built by Galerius around AD 300, perhaps as a temple or his mausoleum, this perfectly circular structure was later converted into a church. The **massive dome** and intricate Byzantine mosaics are stunning examples of early Christian art. The building's acoustics and architectural proportions remain impressive even today.

Part of the UNESCO-listed Early Christian and Byzantine monuments of Thessaloniki.

Tips for Landmarks & Monuments

- Visit the White Tower at sunset for the best photography opportunities
- Combine the Arch of Galerius and Rotunda visit in a single walking tour
- Many monuments offer free entry; check opening hours before visiting
- Bring water and wear comfortable shoes for extensive walking

Ancient & Historical Sites

Explore Thessaloniki's profound historical legacy spanning Greek, Roman, and Byzantine periods with significant archaeological remains



Must See

Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

One of Greece's finest museums housing an **exceptional collection of Macedonian treasures** including rich Macedonian grave goods such as the Derveni finds, ancient Greek sculptures, Byzantine mosaics, and Hellenistic jewelry. The museum's modern exhibits and interactive displays provide comprehensive context for understanding ancient Macedonian civilization.

Adult ticket €10 (2026). The famous Vergina royal treasures moved to the museum at Vergina (Aigai) in 1998.



Top Pick

Roman Forum (Ancient Agora)

1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

The **Roman Forum** (Ancient Agora) of Thessaloniki: the sunken remains of the city's civic centre, with porticoes, a small theatre (odeon) and an underground cryptoporticus. Walkways around the edge give good views even if you don't go in.



Top Pick

Galerius Palace Complex

1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Extensive ruins of the lavish imperial palace of Roman Emperor Galerius, featuring hypocaust heating systems, marble floors, and intricate mosaics. The complex reveals the **grandeur of Roman provincial administration** and includes remains of administrative buildings, baths, and residential quarters spread across multiple levels.

Tips for Ancient & Historical Sites

- The Archaeological Museum and ancient sites are best visited in cooler morning hours
- Consider hiring a guide for deeper historical context and stories
- Many sites lack extensive shade; bring sunscreen and hats
- Some excavations are ongoing; certain areas may be cordoned off

Religious Sites

Discover magnificent Byzantine churches and ancient religious structures showcasing centuries of spiritual and artistic devotion



Must See

Church of Agios Demetrios

1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

One of the most important Byzantine churches in Greece, dedicated to St. Demetrius, the patron saint of Thessaloniki. The **extraordinary gold mosaics and marble columns** create an atmosphere of spiritual magnificence. The crypt houses the shrine of St. Demetrius and features remarkable frescos depicting early Christian martyrdom scenes.



Must See

Church of Agia Sophia

1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

A stunning Byzantine basilica featuring a massive dome and intricate mosaics depicting Christ and the Virgin Mary. The **soaring interior space and harmonious proportions** reflect sophisticated Byzantine architectural principles. The church underwent several transformations, serving as mosque during Ottoman rule before restoration to its original splendor.



Top Pick

Church of Acheiropoietos

45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Named 'made without hands,' this Early Christian basilica dates to the 5th century and features **beautiful Byzantine mosaics and intricate marble decorations**. The church's three aisles and original columns create an awe-inspiring atmosphere. The building showcases the evolution from Late Antique to Byzantine architectural styles.

Tips for Religious Sites

- Dress respectfully when entering churches; shoulders and knees should be covered
- Services are often held in early mornings and evenings; plan visits accordingly
- Photography may be restricted in some areas; ask permission before photographing
- Visit early morning or late afternoon for the best interior lighting and fewer crowds

Museums & Galleries

Immerse yourself in art and culture through diverse collections spanning ancient artifacts to contemporary works



Top Pick

Museum of Byzantine Culture

2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **Museum of Byzantine Culture** (the Byzantine and Christian Museum is in Athens) covers Byzantine Thessaloniki through icons, frescoes, mosaics, pottery and everyday objects, in a modern building next to the Archaeological Museum. Adult ticket €10 (2026).



Top Pick

MOMus Museum of Modern Art – Costakis Collection

1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Now part of **MOMus** (the Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki), the Museum of Modern Art is housed in the former *Lazariston Monastery* and holds Greek and international art, including works from the Costakis collection of the Russian avant-garde. Check current exhibitions before you go.



Notable

Museum of the Macedonian Struggle

1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Dedicated to the Macedonian Struggle of the early 20th century and the region's wider history, this museum houses weapons, photographs, documents, and personal artifacts. The **well-documented narrative spans centuries of regional history** and cultural identity. Exhibits provide context for understanding modern Greek nationalism and historical conflicts.

Tips for Museums & Galleries

- Many museums offer discounted rates for students and seniors with valid ID
- Consider purchasing a combined ticket if visiting multiple state museums
- Most museums have excellent gift shops with quality reproductions and books
- Audio guides are available in multiple languages at major museums

Squares & Streets

Experience the vibrant heart of Thessaloniki through its lively squares, charming streets, and public gathering places



Must See

Aristotelous Square

1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

The city's main square, opening onto the sea. It was laid out in Ernest Hébrard's plan after the great fire of 1917, with its curved, arcaded buildings completed over the following decades; a statue of Aristotle stands near its seaward end. It is the city's meeting point for coffee, rallies and celebrations.



Must See

Waterfront Promenade (Paralia)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

An extensive seafront boulevard stretching along the Thermaic Gulf, featuring walkways, gardens, cafés, and excellent views of the water. The **perfectly maintained promenade is ideal for evening strolls** and offers refreshing breezes. Street performers and local vendors add vibrant atmosphere, especially during summer months and weekends.



Top Pick

Modiano Market

1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The covered market hall opened in 1925 and, after renovation, now combines food stalls and eateries with **produce, meat and fish shops** under its glass roof, open from morning until late evening. The rawer, traditional **Kapani market** is a few minutes' walk away.

Tips for Squares & Streets

- Visit Aristotelous Square in early evening when locals gather for the traditional volta (evening stroll)
- The Kapani market is liveliest in the morning; Modiano stays open until late
- The waterfront promenade is perfect for sunset walks; bring comfortable shoes
- Street cafés offer excellent people-watching and are great for people-watching and socializing

Neighborhoods & Districts

Explore distinct neighborhoods, each with unique character, history, and local flavor



Must See

Upper Town (Ano Poli)

2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The hillside old town that survived the 1917 fire: steep lanes, Ottoman-era timber-framed houses, stretches of the Byzantine walls, the Heptapyrgion (Yedi Kule) fortress and the Vlatadon Monastery, with the best views over the city and gulf. Take a taxi or bus up and walk down.

Top Pick

Ladadika District

2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A restored historic quarter once the city's olive-oil trading and storage quarter, now transformed into a charming neighborhood of traditional tavernas, wine bars, galleries, and artisan shops. The **authentic restored buildings maintain original architectural features** while housing modern businesses. Evening atmosphere is particularly vibrant with live music and social gatherings.

Top Pick

Kalamaria District

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A seaside suburb south-east of the centre with a long waterfront, cafés and seafood tavernas, now reached by the metro's Kalamaria branch (opened 27 August 2026). For proper swimming beaches most locals head further out, to Perea or the Chalkidiki peninsula.

Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- Wear comfortable walking shoes in Ano Poli; streets are steep and winding
- Ladadika is best explored in the evening when restaurants open and atmosphere is lively
- Kalamaria has a waterfront, but for swimming beaches head farther out, such as Perea or Chalkidiki.; visit early to secure good spots
- Each neighborhood has distinct local character; allow time for unplanned discoveries

Parks & Gardens

Discover peaceful gardens and parks offering respite from urban hustle and natural beauty

Top Pick

New Waterfront (Nea Paralia) Gardens

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

The redesigned seafront east of the White Tower is a string of themed gardens along the promenade, with cycle paths, playgrounds and George Zongolopoulos's **Umbrellas** sculpture near the Makedonia Palace hotel; the promenade continues on towards the Concert Hall. Best for a sunset walk.

Notable

Seich Sou Forest

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A natural forest reserve on the slopes overlooking Thessaloniki, featuring hiking trails, scenic viewpoints, and peaceful woodland atmosphere. The **pine and oak trees provide cool shade and relief from summer heat**. Panoramic views from higher elevations showcase the city below and the Thermaic Gulf, especially stunning at sunset.

Tips for Parks & Gardens

- Parks are most pleasant in spring and fall; summer heat can be intense
- Seich Sou Forest is best visited in morning or late afternoon to avoid midday heat
- The waterfront park is excellent for cycling; bike rentals available nearby
- Bring water and sun protection; limited shade in many areas

Tours & Activities

Engage in guided experiences and activities that reveal the city's stories and culture

Must See Book Ahead

Walking Tour of Historic Center

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Professionally guided tours exploring major historical sites, architectural treasures, and cultural landmarks. Expert guides provide **detailed historical context and fascinating stories** about Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern periods. Tours typically include the White Tower, Arch of Galerius, major churches, and local neighborhoods with authentic experiences.

Top Pick Book Ahead

Byzantine Art Experience

3 hours Book Ahead

Curated tours focusing on Byzantine churches, mosaics, and religious art with expert art historians explaining iconography and historical significance. The experience includes **detailed examination of artistic techniques and spiritual symbolism**. Visits to major churches with detailed study of specific artworks enhance understanding and appreciation.

Top Pick Book Ahead

Food & Wine Tasting Experience

3-4 hours Book Ahead

Local cuisine exploration featuring traditional restaurants, market visits, and tastings of regional specialties including cheese, olives, wines, and seafood. **Knowledgeable guides share culinary traditions, recipes, and stories** connecting food to culture and history. Interactions with local producers and merchants provide authentic cultural immersion.

Tips for Tours & Activities

- Book tours in advance, especially during high season (May-September)
- Early morning tours offer better light for photography and fewer crowds
- Choose English-speaking guides; most major tour companies offer multilingual options
- Food tours should be booked with companies that support local restaurants

Day Trips & Excursions

Explore fascinating destinations within easy reach of Thessaloniki for extended adventures

Must See Book Ahead

Mount Athos Boat Cruise

Full day (boat cruise from Ouranoupoli) Book Ahead

Map

The monastic republic of Mount Athos has twenty monasteries on a mountainous peninsula about 2.5 hours' drive from Thessaloniki. **Most visitors see it from a boat cruise** from Ouranoupoli, which is open to everyone and keeps the required distance from the shore. Entering Athos is for men only, needs a permit (diamonitirion) with limited daily numbers booked well in advance; a one-day pilgrimage is possible, but most visitors stay overnight in a monastery.

Must See

Vergina Royal Tombs Excursion

6-7 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Visit the ancient Macedonian capital where the spectacular royal tombs of Philip II and Alexander the Great's family were discovered. The **museum displays golden artifacts, armor, and burial goods of extraordinary craftsmanship**. The site offers profound insights into Macedonian power, wealth, and funeral practices during antiquity's greatest empire.

Top Pick

Delphi Archaeological Site Tour

Very long day (about 4.5 hours each way); better overnight No Booking Needed

Map

Explore one of ancient Greece's most important sanctuaries perched on Mount Parnassus. The **magnificent ruins include the Temple of Apollo, Theater, and Stadium** where the Delphi Museum houses the famous Charioteer statue. The site's dramatic setting and historical significance as an oracle sanctuary make it profoundly meaningful and visually spectacular.

Delphi is roughly 4.5 hours' drive from Thessaloniki each way, so it works far better as an overnight trip or from Athens.

Tips for Day Trips & Excursions

- Mount Athos requires special permits and has gender restrictions; book with specialized tour operators
- Vergina and Delphi are best visited via organized tours or rental car with GPS
- Early departures maximize time at destinations and avoid afternoon heat
- Bring water, snacks, and sunscreen for full-day excursions

Food & Dining

Real, highly-rated Restaurants in Thessaloniki, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).

Iliopetra★★★★★ 4.9 (1,441)

1-2 hours

Map

Iliopetra is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.9★ from 1441 reviews. Located at Eschilou 5, Thessaloniki 546 34, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 2:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 2:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 2:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 2:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 2:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed

Pites tis Polis★★★★★ 4.9 (2,663)

1-2 hours

Map

Pites tis Polis is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.9★ from 2663 reviews. Located at Dim. Gounari 50, Thessaloniki 546 35, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 10:30 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Kanoula★★★★★ 4.8 (4,785)

1-2 hours

Map

Kanoula is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.8★ from 4785 reviews. Located at Taskou Papageorgiou 4, Thessaloniki 546 31, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM

Στάφυλος Γη★★★★★ 4.8 (2,279)

1-2 hours

Map

Στάφυλος Γη is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.8★ from 2279 reviews. Located at Apostolou Pavlou 24, Thessaloniki 546 34, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:30 PM – 1:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:30 PM – 1:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:30 PM – 1:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:30 PM – 1:00 AM
- Friday: 12:30 PM – 2:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:30 PM – 2:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:30 PM – 1:00 AM

Menu με...νου★★★★★ 4.8 (2,117)

1-2 hours

Map

Menu με...νου is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.8★ from 2117 reviews. Located at Αλεξάνδρου Παπαναστασίου, Δ 87, Thessaloniki 544 53, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 1:00 – 10:00 PM

Voukakrato★★★★★ 4.8 (1,145)

1-2 hours

Map

Voukakrato is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.8★ from 1145 reviews. Located at Kalapothaki 6, Thessaloniki 546 24, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Tuesday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Wednesday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Thursday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Friday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM

Argophageío★★★★★ 4.8 (1,133)

1-2 hours

Map

Argophageío is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.8★ from 1133 reviews. Located at Apellou 6, Thessaloniki 546 22, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 4:00 – 11:30 PM
- Tuesday: 4:00 – 11:30 PM
- Wednesday: 4:00 – 11:30 PM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 11:30 AM
- Friday: 4:00 PM – 11:30 AM
- Saturday: 2:30 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 1:30 AM – 5:30 PM

Taverna "O Thodoros"★★★★★ 4.8 (2,684)

1-2 hours

Map

Taverna "O Thodoros" is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.8★ from 2684 reviews. Located at Paparrigopoulou 15, Thessaloniki 546 30, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 6:00 PM

The Rouga★★★★★ 4.7 (10,209)

1-2 hours

Map

The Rouga is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.7★ from 10209 reviews. Located at Karipi 28, Thessaloniki 546 24, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Tuesday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Wednesday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Thursday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Friday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 1:00 – 11:30 PM

Grada nuevo★★★★★ 4.7 (1,771)

1-2 hours

Map

Grada nuevo is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.7★ from 1771 reviews. Located at Kalapothaki 14, Thessaloniki 546 24, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 1:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM

rOOTS★★★★★ 4.7 (2,806)

1-2 hours

Map

rOOTS is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.7★ from 2806 reviews. Located at Mpalanou 4, Thessaloniki 546 23, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 2:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 AM – 12:00 PM, 2:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 AM – 12:00 PM, 2:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 2:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 2:00 PM – 12:00 AM

Ouzerie Lola★★★★★ 4.7 (3,398)

1-2 hours

Map

Ouzerie Lola is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.7★ from 3398 reviews. Located at Agapinou 10, Thessaloniki 546 21, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:30 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:30 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:30 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:30 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 12:30 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 12:30 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 7:00 PM

Κιβωτός των Γεύσεων★★★★★ 4.7 (2,089)

1-2 hours

Map

Κιβωτός των Γεύσεων is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.7★ from 2089 reviews. Located at Patriarchou Ioakim 26, Thessaloniki 546 35, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: Closed

Olympos Naoussa★★★★★ 4.7 (782)

1-2 hours

Map

Olympos Naoussa is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.7★ from 782 reviews. Located at Leof. Nikis 5, Thessaloniki 546 24, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Tuesday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Wednesday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Thursday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Friday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 1:00 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 7:00 – 11:00 AM, 1:00 – 10:00 PM

Charoupi★★★★★ 4.6 (4,774)

1-2 hours

Map

Charoupi is a highly-rated restaurant in Thessaloniki, rated 4.6★ from 4774 reviews. Located at Doxis 4, Thessaloniki 546 25, Greece.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 1:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 1:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: Closed

Practical Information

Best Time to Visit Thessaloniki

Spring (April-May): Mild temperatures (15-25°C), blooming flowers, and Easter celebrations create an ideal visiting season. The city awakens after winter with outdoor activities and festivals.

Fall (September-October): Warm but not excessively hot (20-28°C), perfect for exploring on foot. The summer heat subsides, making sightseeing comfortable and pleasant.

Summer (June-August): Hot and dry (25-32°C) with occasional heatwaves. Beaches and waterfront areas are popular, but city exploration requires early morning or evening visits. Tourist season is peak with higher prices and crowds.

Winter (November-March): Cool and occasionally rainy (5-15°C), but fewer tourists and lower prices. Some outdoor attractions may have limited hours. Indoor museums and indoor markets are ideal activities.

Climate Summary: Mediterranean climate with hot summers and mild winters. July and August are the hottest months, and in August many locals leave the city for the beaches.

Getting Around Thessaloniki

Metro: The driverless metro opened in late 2024, running from the New Railway Station through the centre to Nea Elvetia; the Kalamaria branch opened on 27 August 2026. A single ticket costs €0.60 and a 24-hour ticket €2.50.

Buses: OASTH buses cover the rest of the city (there are no trams or trolleybuses). An urban bus ticket costs €0.60 and a 24-hour bus ticket €2.50; bus and metro tickets are separate, and day tickets are not valid on the airport lines.

Taxis: Plentiful and metered; taxi apps such as FREENOW work in the city.

Rental Cars: Useful for Vergina, Mount Olympus or Chalkidiki. Parking in the centre is difficult; use paid car parks.

Walking: The centre is flat and walkable along the waterfront; Ano Poli is steep, so take a bus or taxi up and walk down.

✈ Airport Transfer

Thessaloniki Makedonia Airport (SKG) to the centre:

- **Bus 01X (day) / 01N (night):** to the city centre and bus station, with its own airport fare; bus day tickets are not valid.
- **Taxi:** about 20-30 minutes depending on traffic.

Shopping in Thessaloniki

Traditional Markets: The Kapani market and the renovated Modiano Market offer fresh produce, spices, traditional foods, and local goods in vibrant, authentic settings. Kapani is busiest in the morning; Modiano is open until late. Perfect for sampling regional specialties and finding local products.

Designer & Brand Shopping: Tsimiski Street features international brands and upscale boutiques. Mitropoleos Street offers more accessible clothing and shoe stores. Both streets are pedestrian-friendly with excellent shopping infrastructure.

Souvenirs & Crafts: Traditional craft shops in the old town (Ano Poli) sell handmade ceramics, textiles, and artisan goods. Support local artisans by purchasing directly from their shops rather than commercial tourist retailers.

What to Buy: Greek olive oil (excellent quality and affordable), feta cheese, ouzo, Greek wine, Byzantine art reproductions, ceramics, worry beads, and traditional sweets (loukoumi, galaktoboureko). Spice markets offer saffron, sumac, and other Mediterranean seasonings.

Bargaining: Acceptable in traditional markets and when purchasing multiple items from artisan shops. Prices in large retail stores are fixed.

Opening Hours: Most shops open 9 AM-2 PM and 5 PM-8 PM; some remain open on Sundays. Markets busiest in early mornings; many close by 2 PM.

Annual Festivals & Events

Thessaloniki International Film Festival (November): One of southeast Europe's main film festivals, with screenings around the waterfront port warehouses and cinemas.

Thessaloniki Documentary Festival (March): The festival's spring sister event, dedicated to documentaries.

Dimitria (autumn): The city's cultural festival around the feast of its patron saint, St Demetrios, on 26 October.

Thessaloniki International Fair (September): Greece's biggest trade fair, with concerts and events.

Easter: The most important festival of the Orthodox year, with processions on Good Friday and midnight services on Holy Saturday; dates follow the Orthodox calendar.

Summer: Open-air cinemas run from June to September.

Sample Day Itineraries

Day 1 - Ancient Thessaloniki: Begin at the Archaeological Museum (2 hours) to understand the city's Macedonian heritage. Walk to the Arch of Galerius and explore the Galerius Palace complex (1.5 hours). Lunch at a traditional taverna. Visit the Rotunda of St. George (30 minutes) and climb the White Tower (1 hour; it closes mid-afternoon in winter). Evening stroll along the waterfront promenade.

Day 2 - Byzantine Beauty: Start at Church of Agios Demetrios (1.5 hours), viewing remarkable mosaics and the sacred crypt. Visit Church of Agia Sophia (1 hour) to admire Byzantine architecture. Explore the Ladadika district (2 hours) with its charming streets and traditional tavernas. Lunch at a local restaurant. Visit the Museum of Byzantine Culture (1.5 hours). Evening drink with views from a rooftop café.

Day 3 - Old Town Exploration: Navigate the narrow streets of Ano Poli (2 hours), enjoying panoramic city views and traditional architecture. Visit the Church of Acheiropoietos (45 minutes). Lunch at a traditional taverna. Explore the Modiano Market (1.5 hours). Visit the MOMus Museum of Modern Art (1.5 hours). Dinner in the Ladadika district with evening entertainment.

Day 4 - Culture & Nature: Take a short excursion to Seich Sou Forest (2-3 hours) for hiking and panoramic views. Return to the city for lunch. Visit the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle (1.5 hours). Take the metro to Kalamaria for its seafront (2-3 hours). Dinner with fresh seafood overlooking the sea.

Day 5 - Relaxation & Local Life: Morning at Aristotelous Square people-watching and enjoying coffee (1.5 hours). Stroll the waterfront Paralia (2 hours). Lunch at the Modiano Market sampling local specialties. Afternoon at a local beach or in a

neighborhood taverna. Evening walking tour of illuminated city monuments. Final dinner at a traditional Greek restaurant.

Best Photography Locations

White Tower at Sunset (around 9 pm in June, 5 pm in December): The iconic tower's reflection in the sea creates magical golden-hour photography. Position yourself on the promenade for unobstructed views. The pale stone glows in warm light, with the city skyline behind creating stunning composition.

Aristotelous Square (Best: Early morning 7-8 AM or evening 6-8 PM): The arcaded buildings and the statue of Aristotle provide excellent framing opportunities. Low-angle sun creates dramatic shadows and highlights architectural details. The square is less crowded in early morning, ideal for clean compositions.

Ano Poli Viewpoint (Best: Late afternoon, 4-6 PM): The winding streets and old timber-framed houses create picturesque Mediterranean scenes. Position yourself at higher elevations for panoramic city views below. Golden evening light transforms the old town into a photographer's paradise with warm amber tones.

Arch of Galerius (Best: Morning 8-9 AM or late afternoon 5-6 PM): Side-lit conditions reveal sculptural details and architectural nuances. The surrounding park provides green vegetation framing the ancient monument. Avoid midday direct light that creates harsh shadows.

Waterfront Promenade (Best: around sunset): Extended golden-hour light creates silhouettes and reflections. Capture the sea, sky, and city lights as evening descends. The diverse subjects include ships, street life, and architectural reflections.

Ladadika Streets (Best: Evening 6-8 PM): Street lamps, traditional balconies, and cozy tavernas create atmospheric scenes. The winding streets offer compositional depth with layered architectural elements. Street-level perspective captures authentic local life and vibrant evening atmosphere.

Electricity & Power Standards

Voltage: Greece uses 230 volts AC at 50 Hz frequency, standard throughout continental Europe.

Plug Types: Greece uses European Type C (two round pins) and Type F (two round pins with earth) sockets. These plugs are standard in most continental European countries.

Adapters & Converters: Visitors from the UK, USA, Australia, and countries using different standards must bring universal travel adapters. Most 3-4 star hotels provide adapters on request. Many electronics are dual-voltage (check device specifications); only single-voltage devices require converters, which are bulky and expensive.

USB Charging: Modern hotels and many cafés increasingly offer USB charging ports. Portable power banks are convenient for day-long sightseeing and are available for purchase at electronics shops and supermarkets.

Important Notes: European plugs differ from UK, US, and other countries. Bring adapters before arrival as they're expensive to purchase in Greece. Check your devices' voltage compatibility before packing to avoid electrical issues or damage.

Food & Dining Guide

Must-Try Dishes: Moussaka (layered eggplant and meat sauce with béchamel), **Souvlaki** (grilled meat skewers), **Spanakopita** (spinach and feta pie), **Saganaki** (fried cheese), **Grilled Octopus**, **Gemista** (vegetables stuffed with rice and herbs), **Pastitsio** (Greek pasta bake), **Bougatsa** (filo pie with custard, cheese or mince, a Thessaloniki breakfast), and **Trigona Panoramatos** (cream-filled filo cones).

Seafood Specialties: Thessaloniki's coastal location ensures excellent fresh seafood. **Garides Saganaki** (shrimp baked in tomato sauce with feta), **Htapodi Sti Skhara** (grilled octopus), **Psari Sti Skhara** (grilled fish), and **Mussels Saganaki** are exceptional. Waterfront and Kalamaria restaurants offer the best selections.

Local Wines: Greek wines pair beautifully with Mediterranean cuisine. Try northern Greek wines such as Xinomavro (red, from Naoussa and Amyntaio) and Malagousia (white). Wine bars and tavernas offer tastings and knowledgeable recommendations.

Dining Customs: Greeks dine late; dinner typically begins at 9-10 PM. Many restaurants serve lunch too, from about 1 pm. Tipping 5-10% is customary for good service, though not mandatory. Greeks enjoy leisurely meals with family and friends.

Budget Guide: Inexpensive taverna meal: €8-12. Mid-range restaurant: €15-25. Fine dining: €30+. Coffee at street café: €1.50-3. Greek salad with feta: €4-6. Souvlaki: €3-5.

Cooking Classes: Local cooks offer classes teaching traditional Greek cuisine, providing cultural insights and hands-on culinary experience.

Tourist Passes

Bus and metro tickets

Bus and metro tickets are separate products. Metro: €0.60 single, €2.50 for 24 hours. Buses (OASTH): €0.60 urban single, €0.80 suburban, €2.50 for 24 hours; the airport lines (01X / 01N) have their own €2 fare (2026).

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Free churches

Working churches such as **Agios Demetrios** and **Agia Sophia** are free to enter; dress modestly and avoid visiting during services.