



EYEWITNESS TRAVEL

TOP 10 ATHENS



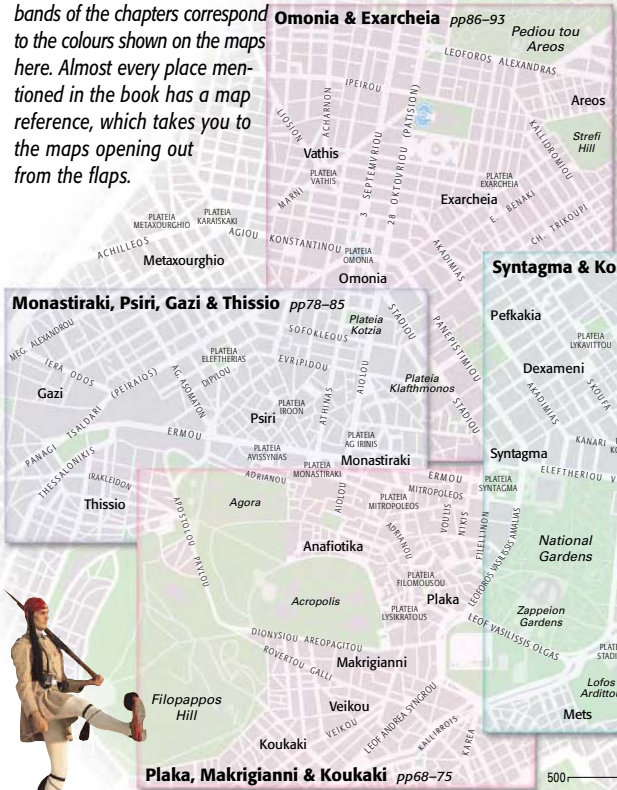
- 10 Essential Olympic venues
- 10 Unmissable museums & ancient sites
- 10 Best restaurants, tavernas & bars
- 10 Most irresistible places to shop
- 10 Greatest moments in Greek history
- 10 Most alluring nearby islands
- 10 Enthralling legends of Ancient Greece
- 10 Liveliest festivals & special events
- 10 Best hotels for every budget
- 10 Insider tips for every visitor

YOUR GUIDE TO THE 10 BEST OF EVERYTHING

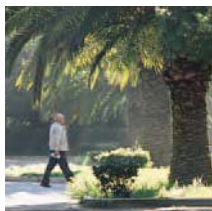


TOP 10 Athens Area by Area

This Top 10 Travel Guide to Athens divides the city into four areas: Plaka, Makrigianni and Koukaki; Monastiraki, Psiri, Gazi and Thissio; Omonia and Exarcheia; and Syntagma and Kolonaki. A further section looks at sights beyond Athens. Each area is colour coded; the colour bands of the chapters correspond to the colours shown on the maps here. Almost every place mentioned in the book has a map reference, which takes you to the maps opening out from the flaps.



Evzone soldier



Left Pediou tou Areos Centre Left Ancient Agora Centre Right Temple of Poseidon, Cape Sou



Parthenon



Monastery of Daphni



Modern Right Cafés, Thessio

Athens City



Larissa
Larissa

Peloponnisou
JOANNINON
KROPIAS

Metaxourghio
Metaxourghio
KODRATOU
ODYSSEOS
PLATEIA METAXOURCHIO

Gazi
Votanikos (open 2004)
EYMOLPIDON
VOUTADON

Kerameikos
ERMOU
BEMIER/ELIADES GALLERY
EPITACHALOU
ATTIKION
AMFIKTYONIS
VASILIS

Thissio
Thissio
Stoa of Zeus
Temple of Hephaestus
Odeon of Agrippa

Asyrmatos
Pnyx
Hill of the Nymphs
Agios Dimitrios

Ano Petralona
Dora Stratou Theatre
Prison of Socrates
Filopappos Monument

Filopappos Hill
Filopappos Monument

Vathis
Vathis
National Theatre
KONSTANTINOU
PLATEIA OMONIA

Omonia
Omonia
PLATEIA OMONIA

City Hall
City Hall
PLATEIA KOTZIA

Psiri
Psiri
Cine Psiri
First Synagogue
Athenaeum Maria Callas
Flea Market

Monastiraki
Monastiraki
Kapnikarèa
Mitropoli

Agora
Agora
Stoa of Attalos
Agora Museum
Roman Forum

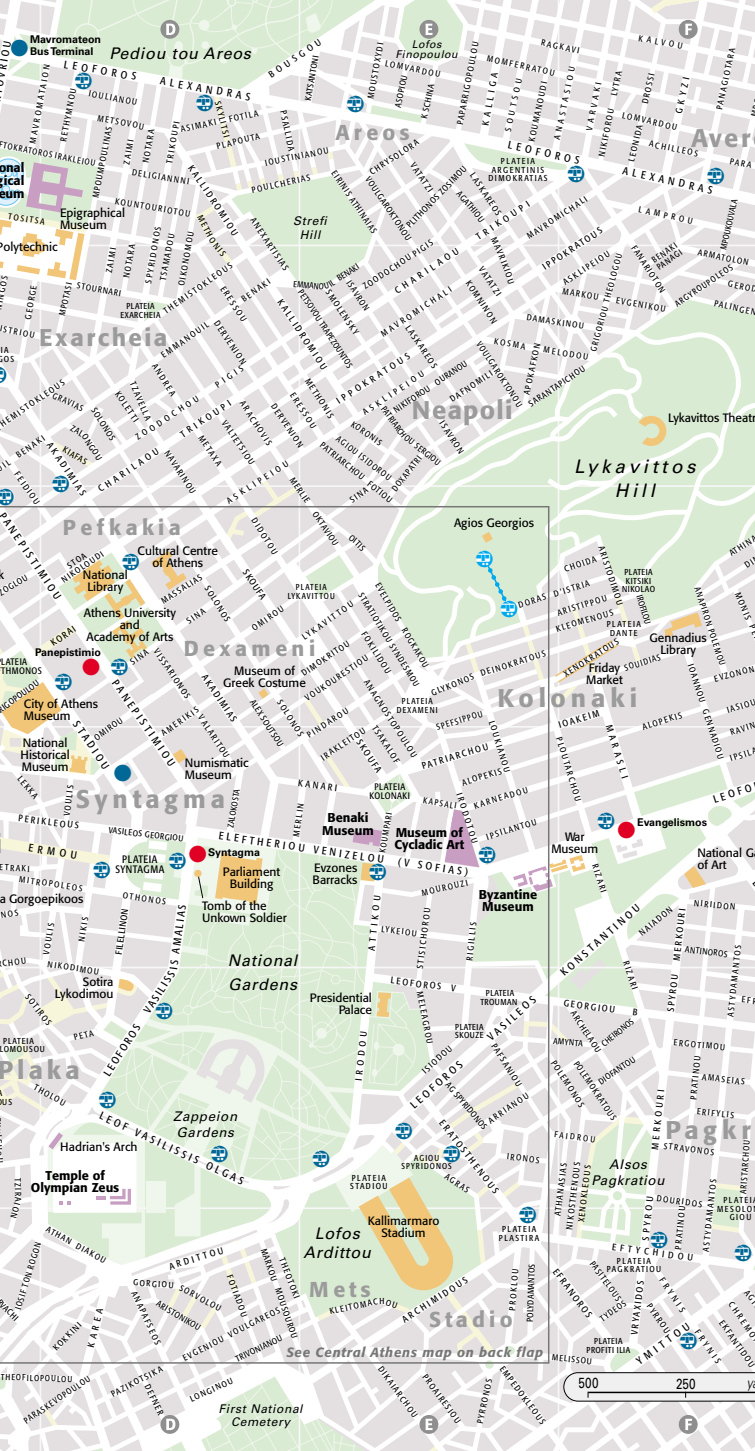
Aerides
Aerides
Tower of the Winds
Kanellopoulos Museum

Anafiotika
Anafiotika
Acropolis

Makrigianni
Makrigianni
New Acropolis Museum
Akropoli

Veikou
Veikou
Akropoli

Koukaki
Koukaki
Sygrou-Fix



Pedion tou Areos

Areos

Exarcheia

Neapoli

Lykavittos Hill

Pefkakia

Dexameni

Kolonaki

Syntagma

Plaka

Pagkratiou

Lofos Ardittou

Mets Stadio

See Central Athens map on back flap

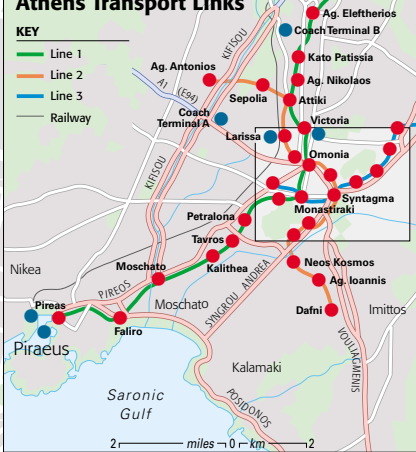


First National Cemetery

Athens Transport Links

KEY

- Line 1
- Line 2
- Line 3
- Railway



Alsos Eleftherias

Megaro Moussikis

Ilisia

Alsos Sygrou

Profitis Ilias

KEY

- Top 10 sight
- Other sight
- Train station
- Bus station
- Metro station
- Trolleybus stop
- Funicular
- Tourist information
- Railway line
- Pedestrian street

0 metres 250 500

DK EYEWITNESS TOP 10 TRAVEL GUIDES

ATHENS



CORAL DAVENPORT
JANE FOSTER





Left **Temple of Hephaestus, Agora** Centre **Glass bottle, Benaki Museum** Right **Kapnikarea**



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Within each Top 10 list in this book, no hierarchy of quality or popularity is implied. All 10 are, in the editor's opinion, of roughly equal merit.

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The information in this DK Eyewitness Top 10 Travel Guide is checked regularly.

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Left **Greek soldiers** Centre **Island of Aegina** Right **Souvlaki restaurants, Monastiraki**

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Left **Herodes Atticus Theatre** Right **View of the Peloponnese and Poros town**


Key to abbreviations

Adm admission charge payable **A/C** air conditioning





ATHENS' TOP 10

Acropolis
8–12

The Agora
12–15

National Archaeological
Museum
16–17

Museum of Cycladic Art
18–19

Roman Forum and
Tower of the Winds
20–21

Benaki Museum
22–23

Kerameikos
26–27

Byzantine Museum
28–29

Philopappos Hill
30–31

Temple of
Olympian Zeus
32–33

Top Ten of Everthing
34–65

ATHENS' TOP 10

TOP 10 Highlights of Athens

Athens is simultaneously known as the Classical, marble-pillared cradle of Western civilization and as a modern urban sprawl of concrete and traffic. Between the extremes lies a kaleidoscopic city, where the influences of East and West entwine in the markets, cafés and tavernas, built upon ancient ruins and rubbing shoulders with gold-leafed Byzantine churches.



Tower of the Winds detail

1 Acropolis

The crown jewel of Greece, if not all of Europe. Its temples are the most influential buildings in Western architecture. (See pp8–11.)



2 The Agora

Socrates, Aristotle and St Paul all held forth in the marketplace below the Acropolis. This was the heart of the ancient city. (See pp12–15.)

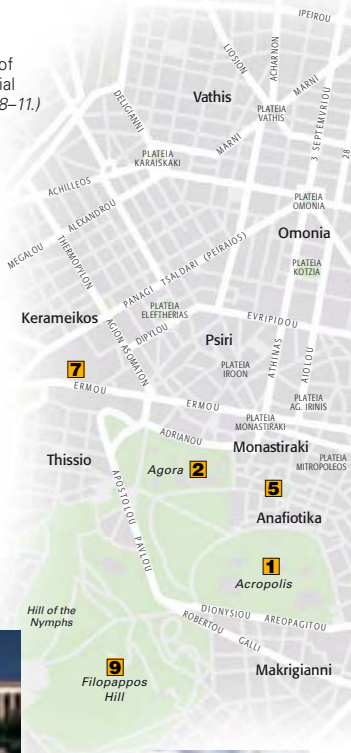


3 National Archaeological Museum

The greatest collection of finds from some of the world's greatest cultures is housed here (above). Exhibits include the gold treasure of Mycenae and the first sculptures to depict the complexity of the human form. (See pp16–17.)

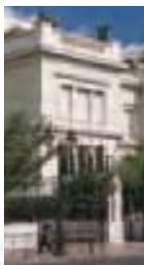
4 Museum of Cycladic Art

The world's largest collection of Cycladic art showcases a matriarchal island culture whose 5,000-year-old icons still inspire artists of the modern world. (See pp18–19.)



5 Roman Forum and Tower of the Winds

The Romans abandoned the ancient Agora and created this orderly new commercial centre. Its showpiece was the magnificent Tower of the Winds, which housed an ingenious water clock. (See pp20–21.)



6 Benaki Museum

A first-rate collection of Greek art from Neolithic to present times. It is housed in a beautifully renovated Neo-Classical mansion (*left*), with an intriguing history and famed rooftop view. (See pp22–23.)



7 Kerameikos

Classical Athens' cemetery gives a fascinating cross-section of life, and death, at the city's edge, with elaborate tombs (*above*), temples, sacred roads – and an ancient brothel. (See pp26–7.)



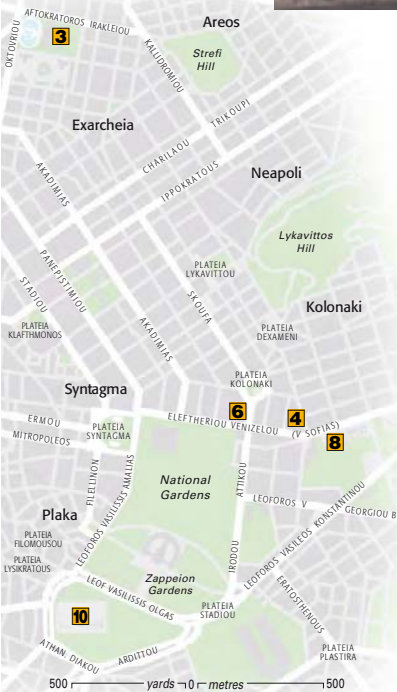
8 Byzantine Museum

The rich, complex history of the Byzantine Empire is told through the greatest of its works, from the intricacy of precious metalwork to the solemnity of the many icons. (See pp28–9.)



10 Temple of Olympian Zeus

Ancient Greece's most colossal temple (*above*) stands beside the monumental arch that divided Athens between Greek hero Theseus and formidable Roman emperor Hadrian. (See pp32–33.)



9 Filopappos Hill

A green-gladed respite in the city centre, with a wonderful view and a mix of monuments that encompass ancient (*left*), Byzantine and modern Greek culture. (See pp30–31.)





TOP 10 Acropolis

The temples on the "Sacred Rock" of Athens are considered the most important monuments in the Western world, for they have exerted more influence on our architecture than anything since. The great marble masterpieces were constructed during the late 5th-century BC reign of Perikles, the Golden Age of Athens. Most were temples built to honour Athena, the city's patron goddess. Still breathtaking for their proportion and scale, both human and majestic, the temples were adorned with magnificent, dramatic sculptures of the gods.



Acropolis from the rocky outcrop of Areopagos

🕒 Visit first thing in the morning or at sunset to avoid the energy-sapping midday heat and multitudinous tour groups.

🍷 The cantinas at the Acropolis are outrageously overpriced. Bring your own (large) bottle of water and a snack.

- Map J4
- 210 321 4172-2
- www.culture.gr
- Metro: Akropoli
- Apr–Sep: 8am–7:30pm daily; Oct–Mar: 8:30am–3pm daily
- Adm €12; students half price
- Admission price includes entry into Kerameikos, Theatre of Dionysus, Agora, Roman Forum and Temple of Olympian Zeus (valid for 4 days)

Top 10 Sights

- 1 Acropolis Rock
- 2 Propylaia
- 3 Temple of Athena Nike
- 4 Panathenaic Way
- 5 Parthenon
- 6 Erechtheion
- 7 Acropolis Museum
- 8 Panagia Chrysopliotissa
- 9 Herodes Atticus Theatre
- 10 Dionysus Theatre

Acropolis Rock

As the highest part of **1** the city, the rock is an ideal place for refuge, religion and royalty. The Acropolis Rock has been used continuously for these purposes since Neolithic times.



2 Propylaia

At the top of the rock, you are greeted by the Propylaia (above), the grand entrance through which all visitors passed to reach the summit temples.

3 Temple of Athena Nike ("Victory")

There has been a temple to a goddess of victory at this location since prehistoric times, as it protects and stands over the part of the rock most vulnerable to enemy attack.



4 Panathenaic Way

The route used in an ancient procession when a new tunic, or *peplos*, would have been offered to Athena, along with sacrifices.



5 Parthenon

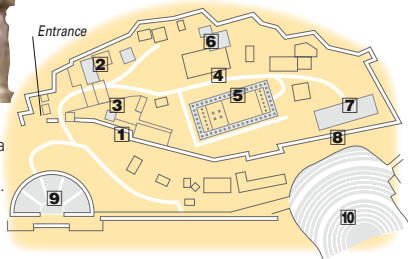
This was the epitome of ancient Greek Classical art, a magnificent "Temple to the Virgin", goddess Athena, who was represented inside by a giant gold and ivory sculpture.





6 Erechtheion

According to myth, Athena and Poseidon battled for patronage of Athens on this spot. The Erechtheion's design unites separate temples to each of the two gods.



7 Acropolis Museum

The current museum is to be superseded by the glittering New Acropolis Museum, opening in 2007 (see pp10–11), but for a while they will both be in operation.

8 Panagia Chrysopiliotissa

Originally dedicated to the god of wine and revelry, the cave was later turned into the church of the Virgin of the Golden Cave.

Herodes Atticus Theatre

A much later addition (right), built in 161 by its namesake. In summer it hosts the Athens Festival (see pp60–61).



10 Dionysus Theatre

This mosaic-tiled theatre was the site of Classical Greece's drama competitions, where the tragedies and comedies by the great playwrights (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides) were first performed. The theatre seated 15,000, and you can still see engraved front-row marble seats, reserved for priests of Dionysus.

The Acropolis in Later Times

In the 5th century AD, the Parthenon was used as a church. During the Ottoman occupation, it was used as a mosque, and the Erechtheion as a harem. The Ottomans also kept gunpowder in the Parthenon, which led to its near destruction when the Venetians shelled it during the siege of 1687 (see p31). The Parthenon suffered further damage in 1799 when Lord Elgin removed sculptures, taking them back to England. The current restoration will finish in 2006.



Left and Right **Sculptures from the ancient temples**

TOP 10 New Acropolis Museum

1 The Glass Floor

The museum is built directly over an early Christian settlement. Glass floors will allow visitors to look directly down into the site while surrounded by Classical and Archaic sculptures.

2 The Parthenon Marbles

The marbles will be displayed in the order in which they would have graced the Parthenon, with blank spaces significantly left for sculptures that remain in London.

3 The Calf-Bearer

This joyous Archaic sculpture shows a bearded man carrying a calf, to be offered as a sacrifice to Athena. The statue itself was a votive offering and dates to 570 BC.



The Calf-Bearer

4 The Peplos Kore

One of the most exquisite of the Archaic votive statues. Her gown, called a *peplos*, was painted with decorative colours. Traces of paint are still visible on her eyes, lips and curly hair.

5 Kore with Almond-Shaped Eyes

The most sumptuous of the votive *koroi* – her detailed drapery and fully formed body show real development in sculpture. Her dress was painted with detailed patterns, including a

border with the distinctive “Greek key” pattern.

6 Pediment of the Ancient Temple

Part of the pediment of an ancient temple to Athena, built before the Parthenon and later destroyed, shows Athena fighting against a Giant. It dates to 520 BC.

7 The Kritios Boy

This beautiful sculpture of a young male athlete marks the transition from Archaic to early Classical sculpture, with the introduction of a naturalistic pose. The Kritos Boy sculpture dates to 480 BC.

8 Relief of the “Mourning Athena”

This tiny relief shows the goddess Athena as a girl, without sword or shield and clad in an Attic *peplos*.

9 The Caryatids

The original statued pillars that supported the Erechtheion’s porch have been brought inside for protection. Their arms are broken now, but initially they held libation bowls.

10 Frieze on the Temple of Athena Nike

The small but dynamically sculpted frieze shows scenes of battle, with gods, Persians and Greeks all stepping into the fray.

