Athens is actually the "historical capital" of Europe, as it has been constantly inhabited since Neolithic Age. In the 5th Century BC (the "Golden Age of Pericles") - the culmination of Athens' long, fascinating history - the city's values and civilization acquired a universal significance. Over the years, a multitude of conquerors occupied Athens, and erected unique, splendid monuments - a rare historical palimpsest.

In 1834 Athens became the capital of the modern Greek state. The choice was based on the symbolic significance of Athens' classical history. During that period the city was constructed around the Acropolis walls.

Today, the greater urban complex of the Greek capital (including the suburbs and the neighbouring city of Piraeus) hosts 4 million people and it is the political, social, cultural, financial and commercial centre of Greece. The contemporary urban scenery of the sprawling city reflects its exciting history, its multi-cultural modern personality as well as the state of the art infrastructures and facilities. In Athens and the wider Attica area, you will find hotel accommodation of high standard, modern means of transportation (among them one of the most modern metro networks), a wide choice of opportunities for shopping, dining and nightlife, good service but above all the hospitality and warmth of its inhabitants.

In other words, Athens is an attractive modern metropolis with unrivalled charm that fascinates every visitor, during all seasons.
Walking through history

A large part of the town’s historical centre has been converted into a 3-kilometre pedestrian zone (the largest in Europe), leading to the major archaeological sites (“archaeological park”), reconstructing to a large degree the ancient landscape. Either on foot or by bike, the “Grand Promenade” is an unforgettable experience, a real journey through history...
Walking through history

The tour starts at the temple of Olympian Zeus (6th c. B.C.), one of the largest in antiquity and closely the Hadrian's Arch (131 A.D.), which forms the symbolic entrance to the city. From there, walking along Dionysiou Areopagitou Street you pass the ancient Theatre of Dionysus (5th c. B.C.) where most of the works by Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus and Aristophanes were performed, the ruins of the Asklepieion (5th c. B.C.) and the Stoa of Eumenes (2nd c. B.C.) and from there to the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, which was built in 161 A.D. and is nowadays the venue of the Athens Festival’s performances.

From there you climb up to the sacred rock of the Acropolis, the site of some of the most important masterpieces of worldwide architecture and art: the Propylaea, the temple of the Athene Nike and the Erechtheon - the most renowned of which is the Parthenon temple, built by Callicrates and Iktinos during the 5th c. B.C. and gloriously decorated by famous sculptor Phidias. Only 300m away from the sacred rock of the Acropolis stands the impressive new Acropolis Museum, which houses 4,000 priceless finds from the Acropolis monuments.

Coming down from the Acropolis you arrive at the Areos Pagos, the most ancient law court of the world. Opposite it is Philopappou Hill, with its beautiful cobbled little roads and the Roman monument by the same name on its top, while closeby is the Prini, where the citizens of ancient Athens used to assemble and exert their democratic rights.

Walking farther along the pedestrian road you arrive at the Ancient Agora, the commercial, political and religious centre of ancient Athens, with the Temple of Hephaestos considered to be the best-preserved temple of Greek antiquity. Nearby, you will find the Roman Agora with the famed “Tower of the Winds” (1st c. B.C.) and Hadrian’s Library (132 A.D.).

From there, via Ermou street, you arrive at the Kerameikos, the largest cemetery of the ancient city, with impressive tomb sculptures and stelae.
Eternally yours

However, our tour of enchanting Athens does not restrict itself only to these unique archaeological sites.

Plaka, the Athens’ oldest district, has been inhabited without interruption since antiquity. Walking through the narrow labyrinthine streets lined with houses and mansions from the time of the Turkish occupation and the neoclassical period (19th c.), you will encounter ancient monuments, scores of Byzantine churches and remnants of the Ottoman buildings (mosques, a Turkish bath, a Muslim Seminary, etc.). There are also some interesting museums, lots of picturesque tavernas, cafés, bars, as well as shops selling souvenirs and traditional Greek products.

Continuing from Plaka you arrive at Monastiraki, a characteristic area of “old” Athens, with narrow streets and small buildings where the city’s traditional bazaar (Flea Market) is held. Close to it is the Psiri area, a traditional neighbourhood which during the past few years has evolved into one of the most important “centres” of the town’s nightlife. However, the “heart” of the historical centre is the traditional commercial area, with more than 2,500 shops of all kinds, which spreads out over the streets surrounding the commercial Ermou street.

The western “border” of the area is Athinas street, where the foodstuff commerce is concentrated, reminding strongly of the Middle East. Here are situated, among others, the neoclassical mansions of the Town Hall, the Municipal Market (where meat, fish and vegetables are sold) and spacious Kotzia Square.

Within the boundary of Athens’ historical centre also are the picturesque neighbourhoods of Makryianni (where the new Acropolis Museum stands), Ano Pedaloria, Thisio, Kerameikos and Metaxourgeio, as well as the Gazi area, with the former Gas works, which now have been turned into a cultural centre of the Athens municipality (“Technopolis”).
Eternally yours

Syntagma and Omonia, the main central squares of the town, are linked by Stadikou Street and Panepistimio Avenue, along which some of the town’s most beautiful Neoclassical buildings have been erected. Dominating Syntagma Square is the Greek Parliament building and in front of it the Monument of the Unknown Soldier, guarded by the Evzones in traditional costume. From this square starts the beautiful National Garden (40 acres), south of which stands the impressive neoclassical Zappeion Mansion. From there you can continue towards the Presidential Mansion (1897) and thence to the Panathenaikon (Kallimarmaro) Stadium, where the first Olympic Games in modern history (1896) were held. From there, crossing the Metaxa area, the road leads you to the First Cemetery, the oldest one in Athens, basically an outdoor sculpture display with a wealth of wonderful monumental tombs.

From Omonia Square starts Patission street, a busy street with interesting buildings, amongst which are the Neoclassical mansions of the Polytechnic School and the National Archaeological Museum, which ranks among the leading museums in the world and hosts rare art treasures from the Neolithic era up to the Roman period. Close to the museum is the Exarchia area, a charming neighbourhood, traditional a meeting point and home to many students and artists. From Exarchia, crossing the Neapolis district, you can climb the verdant Lyceabbus Hill. From its top you have a view of the entire city, all the way to the sea. On the other side of the hill is the Kolonaki district, whose boundary is Vassilissis Sophias Avenue, one of the most grandiose streets of Athens with beautiful buildings and many museums (Cycladic Art, Benaki, Byzantine and Christian Museum, National Gallery etc.). In Kolonaki, one of the places to see and be seen, you will find many modern restaurants, boutiques and cafés, while it is worthwhile to take a stroll through the central streets with their art déco, art nouveau and interbellum buildings.
The southern suburbs of the city, located on the coast of the Saronic Gulf, offer many opportunities to take a walk along the seacoast, while you will also find many beautiful organised and free beaches, large shopping centers and nightclubs, during the summer. On the opposite direction, in the Maroussi suburb (north of the centre) are the facilities of the Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens, where the majority of the athletic events were held during the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, the first in the 21st century. Kifissia (north of Maroussi) is also worth a visit, with its beautiful villas and impressive mansions.

Moreover, you may visit, amongst others, the neighbouring town of Piraeus, Greece’s main port (which nowadays forms one big conglomerate with Athens), the Daphni Monastery (11 km west), one of the most significant Byzantine monuments of the country (12th c.) with unique mosaics; the Kaisariani Monastery (5 km east), which was founded in the 2nd century, the Cape Sounio (58 km south) with its astonishing view and the temple of Poseidon (5th c. B.C.), following a wonderful route along the coast, the area of the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) with the Tomb of Marathon, the archaeological sites of Eleusis (23 km west), of Amphiareion (46 km northeast), of Yveron (38 km east) and Rhamnous (close to Marathon), as well as the wonderful surrounding mountain messas of Parnitha, Penteli and Hymettos.

If you wish to leave the Attica region behind you, take a day trip to:

- The city of Nauplia - the first capital city of the modern Greek state with its charming old town full of post-Byzantine, medieval and neoclassical monuments.
- The archaeological site of Mycenae, which was the main centre of the Mycenaean world, and gave its name to a civilization that evolved between the 16th and 12th B.C. and the Mycenaean Tynacs.
- The Asklepieion and the ancient theatre of Epidaurus, the most famous and best preserved of all the ancient theatres in Greece, where during the summer months takes place a well-known ancient drama festival.
- The Ancient Olympic, the birthplace of the Olympic Games.
- The archaeological site of Delphi, the most famous oracle of ancient Greece which lies in an imposing landscape at the foot of Mount Parnassos.

And even more, being in Athens you have the opportunity to discover a whole "world"; the magical world of the Greek Archipelagos, from the ports of Piraeus, Rafina and Lavrio and the Athens International Airport there are daily ferries and planes to the islands of the Saronic (Saronikos) Gulf (Salamina, Aegina, Aigina, Hydra, Poros and Spetses), the Cyclades (Crete, the Dodecanese) and the islands of the Northeast Aegean (Lesvos, Leros, Agios Efstratos, Chios, Tinos, Paros, Naxos and Santorini).
Seize the day

Discovering the soul of a city is much more than a quick tour around its monuments and sightseeing. Athens in particular is a city that offers a great sum of choices, easily accessible and visitor friendly around the year. Ready for...

...shopping? Athens is the perfect place for shopping therapy! In the city centre and the suburbs you will find luxurious department stores and small intimate shops with all the brand-names of fashion, as well as many Greek products. Take a stroll in Ermou street, one of the best areas for shopping and the 2,500 shops in the traditional commercial area of the city selling a wide range of products, get around in Kolonaki area where you will find many shops selling expensive brands and high couture and feel the cosmopolitan air in Voulouremou street one of the hippest and trendiest in Europe with the prestigious designer boutiques and the world-renowned jewellery stores. Discover the "bohemian-chic" shops selling clothes, old records, books and hand-made jewellery in Exarchia area and the sensational Flea Market in Monastiraki, displaying great bargains on new and second hand goods.

...having fun with your children? Stroll around the National Garden where you will find a small pond with ducks, a small zoo, the Botanical Museum, a children's library and a playground. Visit the Children's Museum and the Museum of Greek Children's Art, both situated in Palaia, the "Planetarium" of the Eugenides Foundation, one of the biggest and better equipped digital planetariums in the world, the "Goulandris Natural History Museum" and it's "Gaia" Centre, the "Hellenic Cosmos" presenting the ancient greek history in a virtual reality theatre. Enjoy yourself in the "Alou Fun Park", the greatest amusement theme park in Athens, the thematic "Adventure Park" at Malakasa (40 km north from Athens), and the "Attica Zoological Park" (outside Athens), one of the largest zoos in the Balkans.

...a swim? One actually doesn't have to get on a ferry to the islands to enjoy swimming in the Aegean Sea. Athens has the unique privilege of offering a whole string of beaches along the Apollo Coast, only 20-80' from the city centre, accessible by car, public buses, tram or even your bike for a real sportive experience! Many of them are organized, offering changing cabins, self-service restaurants and water sport facilities. In the greater area of Attica (no more than 30 km from the city centre), you can find less crowded though equally nice and organized beaches.

...relaxing through golf? The Golf course, located in Glyfada, a seaside suburb of Athens, is an 18-hole Par-72 course. It is landscaped with mature trees and shrubbery and frequently hosts significant international events.

...reaching the top? Mount Hymettos, Penteli or Parnitha (located 30 km northwest and hosting one of Greece's National Parks) seem to be waiting for you. Attica mountains "ring" offer a whole network of trails through wonderful natural scenery, several mystic caves as well as ancient and Byzantine monuments. People who love horseback riding, mountain bike or rock climbing, will also be at their best here.
For a city so steeped in myth and history, Athens seems to be surprisingly modern. Although you can see Parthenon looming large from almost any corner, contemporary Athens seems to pay same attention on living for today –after-hours bars, Greek folk music stars and beach parties till dawn.

In Psyrri, the uprising district between Athinas and Ermou streets, you’ll find some of Athens’ newest and most popular restaurants, coffee shops, clubs and galleries. Nearby, two more districts are being revitalized: Kerameikos and Gazi, home of the Athens Municipal Cultural Center “Technopolis” (a former Gas Works) as well as of numerous trendy restaurants, coffee shops and clubs (featuring greek, ethnic, dance, lounge or rock music) and the impressive new Benaki Museum Building.

It is widely known that Greeks enjoy their nightlife and that they don’t think of dinner until at least 9 o’clock in the evening (even later during summertime). Around midnight, the party may move on to a club for music and dancing. You should probably try at least once to live the bouzoukia experience.

If you are fond of ancient drama, modern theatre or music (from classical to electro-dance and techno) it is more than certain that you will find a lot of choices year round. Athens maintains more than 180 active theatrical scenes, as well as various live music and dance stages. Every summer, the Hellenic Festival features famous Greek and foreign artists at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus and other venues. Several jazz, rock and pop stars make appearances at the outdoor amphitheater near the top of Lykavittos Hill during the summer. Rockwave festival, Athens Dance Festival and several more individual appearances in clubs, theatres and football grounds seem to form an interesting, joyful nightlife menu for people of all ages and lifestyle approaches.

Whatever you finally decide to do, there is one thing you may be definitely sure about: Athens is the ideal city to live not only a true experience, but also a real and pure temptation...
A short break in Thessaloniki can take you a long way...

Thessaloniki (520 km north of Athens) is the second largest town of Greece (with more than 1 million inhabitants), the capital of Macedonia district, and the most important centre of the area. Built near the sea (at the back of the Thermaikos Gulf), it is a modern metropolis bearing the marks of its stormy history and its cosmopolitan character, which give it a special beauty and charm.

It was established in 316 B.C. by Kassandros and named after his wife, Thessaloniki, half sister of Alexander the Great. It is here that the Apostle Paul first brought the message of Christianity (50 A.D.) and Demetrius, a Roman officer died in martyrdom (303 A.D.), thus becoming the holy patron of the city. The wealth and glory of Byzantium followed and after that there was a long succession of conquerors, until it became a part of the modern state of Greece in 1912.

Nowadays, is a city with large avenues and squares, neoclassical and art-deco buildings, stand side by side with modern dwellings and high standard hotels. And besides that, hosting an annual “International Trade Fair” (every September), the “Thessaloniki International Film Festival” and the international “Thessaloniki Book Fair”, theaters, cinemas, galleries, art-café, significant museums and concert halls, naturally boasts a flourishing cultural life that enlightens your spirit and smoothes your soul.

Steeped in history, the city is full of archaeological sites, the ancient forum (dated to the late 2nd or the early 3rd c. A.D.), the palace complex of Galerius Maximianus (4th c. A.D.), the thermae, the hippodrome, the temples and other monuments and movable finds, the famous Stoa of the Icôns, the Arch of Galerius (Kamara), built in 305 A.D. and the Rotunda, an early 4th c. building which later was converted into a Christian church.

And moreover, since it was also the second biggest city of the Byzantine Empire, Thessaloniki is actually an open-air Byzantine Museum.

In 1988 it was designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, because of the number and priceless value of its Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches and monuments spread all over in the city’s historical centre. Various aspects of life during that period are presented in the excellent Museum of Byzantine Culture, one of the best of its kind in the world.

Furthermore, you will find numerous surviving ruins and monuments from the Ottoman period, such as the White Tower (15th c.), the city’s symbol, many mosques and hamams and the Bazaar, which built in the late 15th c. and operated as a cloth market.
Relax & have fun all day long

Thessaloniki is a youthful metropolis with an intriguing multi-ethnic history and an arty counterculture, a lively modern place, bustling with life and movement. You may here enjoy a great lifestyle with all your senses.

Stroll along the Nikis Avenue on the waterfront with lots of cafes and bars and a magnificent view of the open sea or the “Nee Paralia” (New Eastern Seaside), the new “trend” of the city, with theme parks, lakes, cycling routes, playgrounds, tennis and basketball fields and tracks for skate-boards.

Drink your coffee in the impressive bar-arts Aristotelous Square, the “heart” of the city or in E lefthriɔs Square.

Reveal the city’s colorful history, walking along the narrow streets of Ano Poli (old town quarter), in which many notable examples of ottoman and traditional macedonian architecture still stand, and have a romantic dinner for two in a little tavern by the Byzantine walls and the Haptaπyrrion castle - you will never forget the view.

Smell the aroma of exotic spices in the traditional markets: the Modiano, which is housed in a rectangular building of 1922, with pedimented façade and glass roof; the Kapari or Vialiis market; Athonos Square and the “Louloudadika” (literally flower market).

Feel the shopping temperature rise, as you walk on the glamorous Mitropoleos Street, Tsiniaki Street and Ermou Street area or wander around the modern shopping centres of the city.

Be attracted by the University area with its youth meeting points, the International Trade Fair grounds, the Thessaloniki Concert Hall, the National Theater of Northern Greece stages and the Lazarist Monastery (1866), now used for cultural events.

Visit the splendid Archaeological Museum, the Folk and Ethnographic Museum, the State Museum of Contemporary Art, the Thessaloniki Cinema Museum, et al.

Go for a swim to the beaches near the city or to Halkidiki district, one of the most beautiful, popular and up-scaled tourist areas in Greece.

Pay tribute to the significant archaeological sites of Vergina, with the spectacular Royal Tombs of the ancient city Aigai and of Philippoi with its distinctive ancient theatre, as well as to Mount Athos, which “hosts” twenty amazing Byzantine monasteries in an unrivalled landscape.

And don’t forget to experience the unique taste and variety of the renowned all over Greece local cuisine: mezedes such as tzazosarmades, myrtopilafos, spicy peppers with cheese or stuffed squid as well as the deliciously sweet triçona and the traditional creamy bougatsa.
A city that never sleeps

Nightlife in Thessaloniki is exceptional and buzzing 24 hours a day. Inhabitants of Macedonia capital seem almost to live for that and enjoy every minute, from sunset till dawn.

One may begin with the "volta" (stroll) along the harbour from Aristotelous Square all the way beyond the White Tower and continue in one of the elegant restaurants, ouzeries and taverns spread around town. Later on, the party moves to the numerous clubs and bars, which stay open till late at night (actually, early in the morning). Those who prefer the bouzouki music can choose from a wide range of choices in the area near the Airport.

A lot of the city’s nightlife evolves around “Myles”, an old windmill that has been converted to a complex of clubs and restaurants. Ladadika district near the harbour - a former working class area, which has been developed into an area devoted to entertainment as well as the area near the University seem to be the places-to-be.

In few words, Thessaloniki is a cosmopolitan city you may never have enough of. So, just let its spirit entertain you...