

There is much to see and do in Greece but it cant all be done in tour buses or on foot. Sometimes biting the bullet and driving in Greece will really make your visit even more special. But are you up to it?

Public transport in some parts of Greece is very good but in many places it is non-existent. So if you want to really explore an island or a region, or embark on an epic Greece road trip them you will need a hire car. This will allow you to travel at your own pace, explore hidden and often deserted coves and crannies and avoid tour buses and crowds.



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# **The information you will need to successfully drive in Greece**

Many people say Greek drivers are some of the worst in the world and are overwhelmed with the thought of driving whilst on vacation. To be honest they really aren't as bad as in many places we have visited and the roads and infrastructure are generally quite good. Driving in Greece is easier than in many places and more challenging than others.

The traffic in Greece is nothing like the craziness of Asia, and Greek drivers do not have the hotheaded temperament of the Sicilians nor the unbridled recklessness of the Arabs. But, they can be impatient and they can take rules as 'guidelines', so come prepared with an open mind and a calm disposition and you should be fine.

## **Driving on the Right Side of the Road**

One of the major differences for many people visiting Greece is that you have to drive on the right side of the road.

Whilst this can be quite disconcerting initially most people seem to adapt fairly quickly. Just be extra careful when entering a road from a carpark or driveway and if unsure perhaps wait to follow another car. The same goes for crossing the street as a pedestrian too. We've seen a lot of close calls on foot!

Further to this, it can also be important to learn about additional rules such as those that say overtaking and changing lanes on junctions is forbidden in Greece, or that the middle lane on a highway with three lanes is meant for passing.

We first saw this in action in Crete and couldn't quite believe it but after a while you'll be wondering how to get the same law enacted at home!

## **Speed Limits to Consider**

The speed limits in Greece also differ from many other parts of the world, but fortunately, they aren't that difficult to remember and are usually well signed.

In cities, you have to drive at a steady pace with a speed of up to 50 km/h, while country roads will actually allow you to drive at speeds of 110 km/h. If you're thinking of hitting the freeway, the speed limit in Greece is usually restricted to 120 km/h.

## Safety and Seatbelts in Greece

There are very strict rules about the use of seat belts, which is mandatory for everyone who drives or sits in a vehicle where seat belts are provided. If you are traveling with a child who is 3 to 11 years of age or up to 135 cm tall, they must be in a proper child restraint which you can rent from Hire Car agencies. Child seats are also mandatory for kids who are younger than 5, and only kids and teens older than the age of 10 can travel in the front seat of a vehicle.

The Greek authorities also have very little tolerance for drunk driving, and anyone with more than 0.05% blood alcohol will have to face the full consequences of the law in Greece. Also, in the interest of increased safety, the use of mobile phones while driving is banned in Greece.

Finally, there are many other lesser known but no less significant rules related to safety that you have to know about and follow. For example, you're not allowed to use the full beam of your headlights while driving in a city or village, and you're not allowed to overtake at bottlenecks, pedestrian crossings, bends or in areas where there is poor visibility.

It is worth pointing out that things are not policed as heavily in Greece as in some countries, especially in remote areas. You may see many people breaking these rules and think that you can too but you need to consider how much luck is on your side and the consequences that may occur especially in the event of an insurance claim. Better to be safe than sorry, right!?

## International Drivers License in Greece

Being caught without a driver's license in Greece is a very serious offense, so make sure you bring your international driver's license. **UK drivers and residents of EU nations can drive in Greece using their license from home** however everyone else will need an International Drivers License.

**\* EDIT: As at November 2021 people from the US, Canada and Australia no longer**

## **require an IDP.**

You may hear many people say that they've rented cars many times in Greece without an International permit but the law changed in 2018 and officially it is required for people from many countries and few car rental agencies will rent without one. Even if they don't ask to see your permit - this does sometimes still happen - your insurance will be void if you don't have one.

An International Drivers Permit ( IDP) does not mean you can drive in every country in the world, just the ones that recognize it such as Greece. It will also only cover you to drive the equivalent size and type of vehicle that you do at home - i.e if you drive a car at home it doesn't mean you will be covered to drive a motorcycle etc...In many countries you can obtain an [IDP online](#), usually within a week or so;

[South Africa](#)

[Singapore](#)

[Japan](#)

[other countries](#)

## **Toll Roads and Other Essential Information**

### **Tolls roads in Greece**

There are two major toll roads in Greece that you need to be aware of. One of them goes from Athens to Thessaloniki and the other from Athens to Peloponnesus. Tolls are collected at both manned and automated booths and can occur several in a single stretch of road so it pays to have a decent collection of small change or notes on you.

### **Parking offences**

Also, be careful of fines. Police officers can fine you for anything from parking too close

to a fire hydrant (yes, you need to keep a distance of at least 3 meters!) to using your car horn unnecessarily. However, fines cannot be collected on the spot. Instead, you will have to pay them at a Public Treasury office yourself within a period of 10 days.

### **Parking fines**

Finally, speaking of parking, there are a lot of rules to keep in mind, and they can get tricky since the streets in large cities like Athens can get extremely crowded. Make sure you don't park within 5 meters of a junction or within a distance of 15 meters of a bus stop or other public transport stop, although you will see many, MANY cars doing exactly this and likely getting away with it.

If you do get a fine you can pay them at the local post office. Many people with car rentals just allow the car rental agency to pass on any fines and often nothing happens.

## **Should You Rent a Car in Greece?**

Now that you know the rules of the road in Greece, it's important to also know what the best means of transport is.

Although visiting Greece from another country in Europe can warrant bringing your own car, you'll find you can actually move around a lot more conveniently by renting a car in each city you visit, especially if your vacation takes you to some of Greece's numerous islands. We often hire multiple cars in a single holiday but sometimes only just for a single day at each destination.

Renting a car in Greece is affordable and convenient, and there is a wide range of vehicles to choose from - from small cars for convenient city & island driving, to large SUVs for touring the countryside.

Also, you'll find that Greek car rental agencies have some of the most modern vehicles and amenities in Europe, providing the most hi-tech and safest solutions for passenger safety as well as the most efficient, eco-friendly systems for reducing the amount of fuel you need to use.

## Car rental tips for Greece

1. On the islands and in Athens hire the smallest car you can.
2. Travel with small suitcases to enable this.
3. Many car rental agencies will allow you to prepurchase fuel which is often a good deal and worth looking at.
4. Due to the narrow streets and overhanging trees, shrubs and rocks, it is not unusual to find cars badly scratched and even dented. Be sure to take photos of any of the damage before you take possession and ensure the agency has taken note too.
5. A lot of people think they can hire a car to take island hopping with them but most fleet owners do not allow this or charge a hefty one-way fee to have the car returned. Insurance can be an issue to as can breakdowns. You are best to hire a different car on each island.

## Affordable and Dependable Car Rentals

Whether you go on a trip on an island or you're just in Greece to visit Athens or some of the local historical landmarks, renting a car can be extremely helpful as long as you stick to services backed up by the [Greek Association of Car Rental Tourism Companies \(STEEAE\)](#).

STEEAE supports more than 2,000 different companies on Greek soil, which rent a total of more than 165 thousand vehicles. The Association also supports only the use of reliable, modern and eco-friendly vehicles that are 100% safe and can provide you with the practical benefits and the comfort of driving through the country while feeling like you're using your very own vehicle.

We recommend booking your car through [RentalCars.com](#), a subsidiary of Booking.com

Safe driving and enjoy your trip!

### FURTHER READING

[Greece road trips - explore the 'real' Greece by car](#)

## [A road trip in Crete](#)

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# DRIVING IN GREECE



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[GREECE TRAVEL SECRETS.COM](http://GREECE TRAVEL SECRETS.COM)

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road in Greece. The road curves through a lush, green landscape with dense vegetation and rocky terrain. A small dark car is visible on the road, driving away from the viewer. The lighting suggests late afternoon or early morning, with long shadows cast across the road. The text 'DRIVING IN GREECE' is overlaid in large, white, serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

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