



Eat Athens: The 24-Hour Budget Itinerary

Spend a day eating your way through Athens from morning until, well, morning, without breaking the bank. Here's how to snack your way through the day at the city's most affordable places.

In Athens, you could spend all day (and night) eating and still only taste a small portion of the great food this city has to offer. If you're only in the city for 24 hours, or if you just want to pack in as much authentic Greek food in one day as possible, here are the budget-friendly places we'd recommend to taste a wide range of our favourite Greek foods.



Breakfast

The **Mama Psomi** in Koukaki opens bright and early, but head there at your leisure to pick up **freshly baked pies and croissants**. This bakery sits right at the foot of **Philopappou Hill**, so if you want to stretch your legs a bit, bring your coffee and a fresh tiropita (cheese pie) on a relaxed walk up the hill so you can watch the city wake up.

If you'd rather sit down for your first meal of the day, head to **Bel Ray** nearby. It's a popular café and restaurant in the neighbourhood within walking distance of most historic sites downtown. The menu features croque monsieur and scrambled eggs; get a table outside and people-watch while you enjoy your breakfast.

The **Morning Bar** just up the street is the latest addition to Koukaki's cool coffee scene. Go for just-baked cookies, cakes and sourdough with Vietnamese filter coffee, served in a sunny, Scandi-style corner shop.

Bel Ray, where hipsters meet for brunch in Koukaki

Photo: Amalia Kovaïou



Lunch

If you've spent the morning checking out **Athens' great historical sites**, you'll probably find yourself quite hungry around lunchtime (in Greece, lunch starts a little later; restaurants will start getting busy at around 2 pm). Start your day of eating at **Brizolakia tou Teli**, not far from the Omonia metro stop. The menu is very limited: they specialise in brizolakia, or thin sliced pork chops. You order them by the portion here, so get a couple and make sure to order extra fried potatoes (and kargioliki, a hot mess of grilled feta, tomatoes and spicy peppers) to go with them.

Once you've enjoyed your lunch, you may need to walk off that meat, and perhaps search for something sweet. Meander through **Monastiraki and Psirri**, and then head north to Omonia to **Loukoumades Ktistakis**, an old-school **Greek fried doughnut shop** that will almost certainly satisfy any sweet tooth.

On a quiet backstreet nearby, **Feyrouz** is a chic corner café where the syrupy sweets come with a secret family twist: buckwheat baklava, kunefe with heather honey, pear and cardamom ravani.

You won't regret some midday loukoumades

Photo: Thomas Gravanis



Dinner

Whether you decided to sleep off those doughnuts or work them off on a wander through **Plaka** or **Exarchia**, dinner time is here. Just behind City Hall on Platia Theatrou, **Klimataria** is a classic Greek taverna with barrels of wine in the indoor seating area. The home-style food will give you a taste of some of **Greece's most classic recipes**, from gemista (stuffed tomatoes and peppers) to slow-cooked lamb. But it's not just the food to look forward to here. The **live Greek music** is also a great reason to go. Bands set up on a stage in front of the wine barrels and play well into the night. Diners often get up and dance.

Klimataria is the kind of classic Greek taverna you shouldn't miss

Photo: Amalia Kovaïou



After-dinner snack

After you dance your way through dinner, you'll be ready for a night on the town. The Keramikos-Metaxourgio neighbourhood nearby is a great area for both cheap drinks and cheap snacks. Athenians like to accompany their ouzo, beer, or cocktails with nibbles. **Kafeneio Louis** is an informal local hang-out with inexpensive beers and sharing plates, like beetroot and potato salads, cheese, and sausage. But this place is also known for its jazz music. It's small, so it gets crowded quickly, but that's all part of the atmosphere there.

Equally small and cosy, **To Laini** is a Cretan bar and restaurant just a five-minute walk away. Everything sticks with the Cretan theme: from the music (which is often live) to the alcohol. Make sure to try some tsipouro, or raki, a strong, clear spirit that Cretans love, made from leftovers in the winemaking process. Since raki is best paired with seafood, order the mussels and a traditional Cretan dakos salad, made of hard rusks topped with grated tomato, soft goat's cheese, and plenty of olive oil. Give the juices some time to soak into the rusk; it'll make it easier to bite.

Cretan meze at To Laini in Keramikos

Photo: Eleni Veziri

Post-midnight
hangover helper

If you need a booze sponge, **Ipiros Tavern** is the place to go. It's situated right in the Central Market, so during the day you can watch the vendors outside, but at night it becomes slightly eerie and quiet. It's usually **open 24 hours**, so you'll see the widest range of clientele there, from blue-collar workers and market employees in the early morning to tourists in the afternoon to tipsy locals late at night. You can get all kinds of hearty casseroles and soups, but there's one dish you definitely shouldn't miss, especially at this time of night. Ipiros is one of the last tavernas in the city serving patsas, or tripe soup—traditionally a good move after a night of drinking.

Not sure you can handle the tripe? Get some souvlaki instead. Elvis Souvlaki has two outposts, one in Pangrati and one in Keramikos, and they're both open until 3 am.



Souvlakia on the grill at Elvis

Photo: Georgios Makkas



Brunch

When you're ready to start your day, you'll want to begin with brunch. **Latraac** is one of Athens' best—and most interesting—**brunch spots**. It's a cafe, bar, and a **skate bowl** when the weather is good. It serves breakfast all day, so no matter what time you jump out of bed, there will be hot breakfast sandwiches waiting for you, but they're not your standard egg and cheese. The menu highlights apaki, a Cretan cured pork, and syglino, smoked pork from Mani, as well as haloumi and kaseri cheeses. Or skip the sandwich and get a stack of pancakes.

If you're not heading to brunch on a weekend, we'd recommend **Spiti Mas**. The name means "our house," and the decor reflects this: if you want, you can even have breakfast in bed.

Lovely lighting at Latraac

Courtesy: Latraac