



The Ultimate Guide to Family-Friendly Athens

Parents, rejoice: there are plenty of family-friendly restaurants and activities to enjoy on your Athens vacation.

Scaling the Acropolis with a stroller and a hot, grumpy child may not be top of your bucket list, but don't let that discourage you from a family trip to Athens. You'll find plenty to keep your kids occupied in Athens, no matter how old they are. Looking for baby-friendly activities? You can't go wrong with making sandcastles on the beach, and many restaurants around the city cater to families with little ones. Older kids will stay occupied (and happy) too - options range from the Acropolis Museum to the perfect ice cream stops. Read on for the rest of our child-friendly picks.

Play



Take the tots to one of the city's nearby beaches

Photo:
Manos Chatzikonstantis

BABIES AND TODDLERS

If there's a toddler in your tribe, you can't go wrong with the seaside (as long as you bring plenty of sunscreen). At **Flisvos Marina** in **Faliro**, kids can run wild at **Volta fun park**. Let them bounce on trampolines, climb on a large toy ship, or ride Baby Karts, while you keep an eye on them from an outdoor café.

Further along the coast, let the kids loose on one of the sandy beaches that line the **Athens Riviera**. Sandy **Yabanaki** in Varkiza is a family favourite, thanks to the cafes that deliver straight to your sunbed and child-friendly restaurants right on the waterfront. If your kids are nappers, rent a cabana for the day and come back out for an afternoon swim.

▶ **Top tip for parents:** All beaches get very busy on weekends in the summer months. Head out early to avoid the crowds and to make sure the little ones get to play in the water before the sun is too strong.

OLDER KIDS

The **Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre** (SNFCC) is your go-to address for free outdoor family activities. From kayaking and ice skating to kids' yoga and cooling water jets, this place is heaven for active kids.

You can't come to Athens without going to the beach, whatever time of year you visit. For a Greek island vibe, head to **Vouliagmeni**, Athens' answer to the Hamptons. The kids can play on the sandy shores and swim in the lagoon-like sea. In summer, they'll stay glued to the aqua inflatables for hours.

▶ **Top tip for parents:** There's a **free shuttle bus** from Syntagma Square to the SNFCC, a must-see for all ages.

Learn

BABIES AND TODDLERS

The **National Archaeological Museum** is full of statues that are much more engaging to the young eye than two-dimensional paintings. If that gets old, head over to the **Hellenic Children's Museum** where tots can choose from activities like construction toys, mini-kitchens or water play. If your child loves to draw, try the **Museum of Greek Children's Art** in Plaka, where they can check out their peers' pictures and create some masterpieces of their own.

Top tip for parents: There's a lovely courtyard café at the National Archaeological Museum where you can have a coffee while the kids check out the statues and water lilies.

OLDER KIDS

A family visit to the **Acropolis Museum** is guaranteed to please all ages. Pick up a Family Backpack packed with child-friendly information and interactive games.

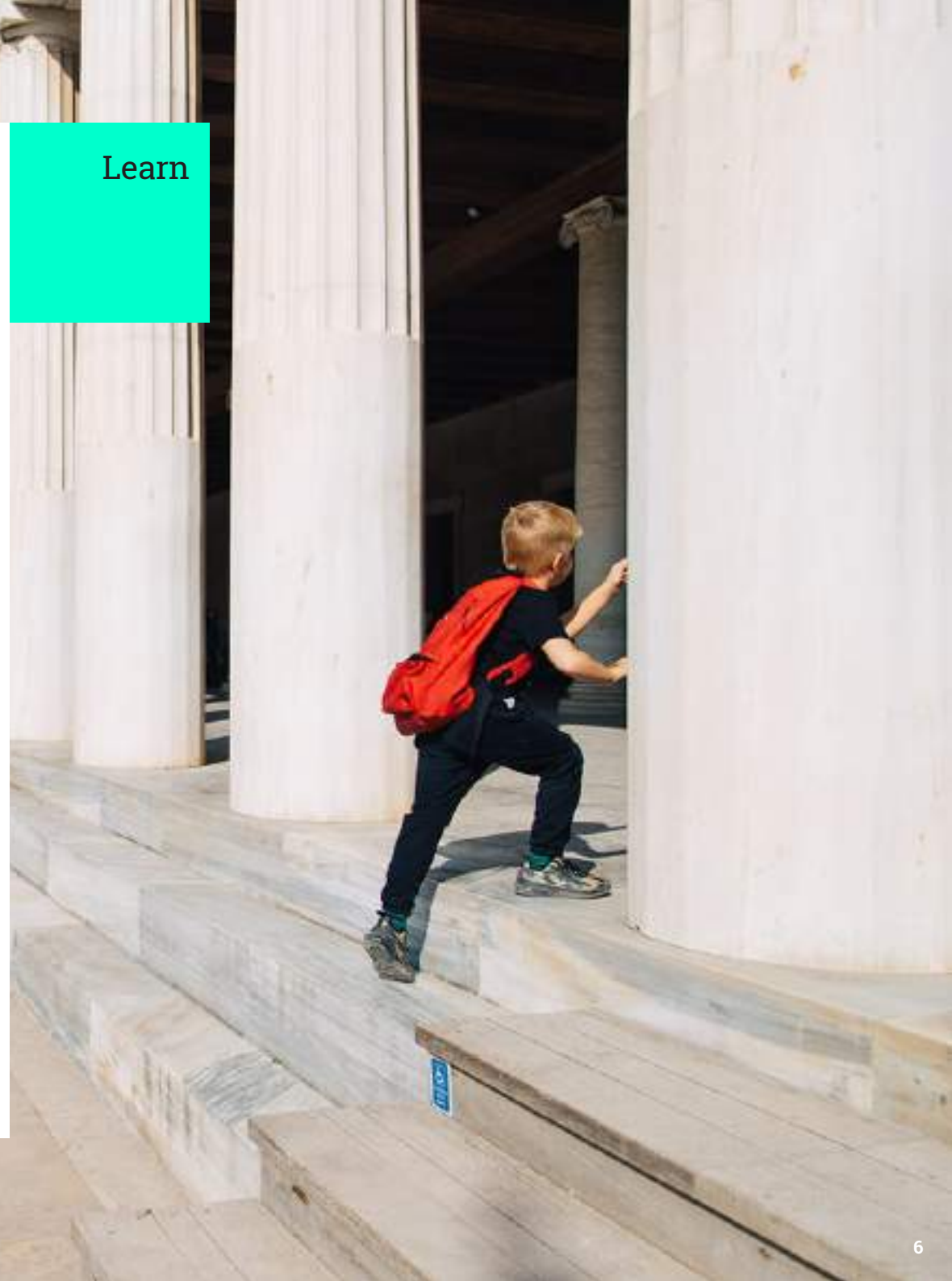
Book a family-friendly tour of the Ancient Agora and immerse them in Athenian history through mythology and creative play.

Done with ruins? Learn about the universe or watch a cartoon or movie about planet Earth or outer space at the digital **Eugenides Planetarium** on a massive 360-degree screen.

Top tip for parents: The Planetarium's screenings are in Greek, but if you plug in your own earphones, you'll hear everything in English.

Take the family on a kid-friendly tour of the Ancient Agora

Photo: Thomas Gravanis



Unwind

BABIES AND TODDLERS

Kids love to ride on the miniature Happy Train from Syntagma Square to Plaka and back. Give tired little feet a rest while you rattle past landmarks like the **Temple of Olympian Zeus** and **Panathenaic Stadium**.

Pack a picnic and find a shady spot in the **National Garden** or adjacent **Zappeion Park**. There's plenty to keep kids entertained here: a decent playground, a small zoo, and a trampoline and sports fields at **Fokianos Sports Park**.

For a picturesque stroll—with a high probability of spotting vendors roasting chestnuts and corn on the cob, or performance artists posing as Spartans—head for **Dionysiou Areopagitou**, one of Athens' loveliest promenades, right beneath the Acropolis.

Top tip for parents: Pop your tired toddler in their stroller. Dionysiou Areopagitou's artful paving lays the perfect path for a nap.

OLDER KIDS

Pick up books about Greek mythology from the gift shop at the **Museum of Cycladic Art** or the **Acropolis Museum**. Both have excellent **cafés**, too. There's also a secret café on the rooftop of Public, overlooking the Parliament and National Garden; downstairs, you'll find a great selection of children's toys and books in various languages. Grab your cameras and head to the **Museum of Illusions** for the funniest selfie spot in the city. Kids of all ages will love the rotating room and "head on a plate". There are also optical illusions, puzzles and other mind-boggling paraphernalia to pick up from the store on your way out.

Prefer to stay seated? Take the **Lycabettus Cable Car** for the thrill of the ride and the magnificent view across Athens from the top of the hill. Kids will love racing back down through the forested trails on foot.

Top tip for parents: Get a day-pass for the tram and hop on and off at your leisure, exploring the scenic coastline from Palio Faliro to Voula.



Take the cable car to the top of Lycabettus Hill. \$49+ (-6)

Photo: Orestis Seferoglou

\$9 (8/77&49+ (-6)

BABIES AND TODDLERS

Ever heard the one about the child that didn't like doughnuts? Nope, neither have we. Treat your kids to the doughnut's irresistible Athenian cousin, **loukoumades**—deep fried dough balls drenched in honey.

For a healthier indulgence, **Chillbox** serves three flavours of frozen Greek yoghurt. There are tons of less healthy toppings that the kids will find hard to resist, from gummy bears to Smarties.

Fairy tales are real at **Little Kook** on Pittaki street, a Psirri alleyway festooned with colourful lanterns. Children will be mesmerised by the extravagant décor that changes according to the season (the displays for Halloween and Christmas are especially fantastical). Get your coffee fix while the kids enjoy a fluffy slice of cake.

▶ **Top tip for parents:** Most **museum cafes** in Athens have kid's menus. There's space to run around too in the gardens of the Byzantine and Christian Museum, the Numismatic Museum and the Basil and Elise Goulandris Museum.

OLDER KIDS

A tyropita (cheese pie) and chocolate milk has been the staple breakfast for generations of young Greeks. Head to a downtown **bakery** to see what all the fuss is about. (**Lykavitos Bakery**, close to the cable car stop, does a delicious range of home-made pies.)

For lunch on the go, indulge in the quintessential Athenian street food, souvlaki ("meat on a stick", in kid speak). You're spoiled for choice for quality souvlaki joints in Athens.

When it's time for a treat, go for the big chill at **Le Greche**. Many swear it has the city's best ice cream. Go for classic pistachio or seasonal sorbets like melon and peach.

▶ **Top tip for parents:** While the kids munch their souvlaki kalamaki (meat on a skewer), you go for the real deal, souvlaki me pita: pork or chicken wrapped in grilled pita bread, stuffed with tzatziki, tomatoes, and onions.

You can never go wrong with a souvlaki

Photo: Eleni Veziri

Loukoumades are an all-time family favourite

Photo: Thomas Gravanis



Eat