



The Ultimate Guide to Luxury Athens

Looking to live the high life? From Michelin-starred restaurants to tailor-made tours, here are the Athens experiences you can't miss.

Athens has a wealth of exclusive experiences to offer high rollers. Five star hotels, gourmet restaurants, swanky spas, tailor-made tours and designer shopping are a click or a phone call away. Whether you're staying on the dreamy Athenian Riviera or in a boutique hotel in historic Plaka, here's how you can get a taste of luxury in Athens.



EXCLUSIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN ATHENS

Hooked on classics but not so much on crowds? Elite operators offer bespoke tours of the **must-see monuments in Athens**. How about a tour of the **Acropolis** or **Acropolis Museum** with an archaeologist by your side? Big Olive, Discover Greek Culture, Be a Greek, and Alternative Athens can tailor all kinds of exclusive cultural experiences in the Greek capital.

Fancy reliving an ancient Greek symposium—a wine-fuelled meeting of minds? The well-connected travel experts at Original Senses can arrange a gourmet supper, attended by local opinion leaders in your chosen field. Archaeology and art lovers can enjoy a **Heritage Dinner** with the owner of a 19th century townhouse on Europe’s oldest street, organised by Discover Greek Culture.

Want to dive deep beneath the surface of Athens’ red-hot **contemporary art scene**? Arthens will set you up on a private gallery tour with up-and-coming Athenian artists, or take you on a behind-the-scenes tour of influential art spaces.

Athens has no shortage of iconic arts venues. But blockbuster shows—especially at the summer Athens and Epidaurus Festival—sell out fast. Luxury Concierge Greece can secure you VIP tickets for a rock icon like Bryan Ferry at the open-air **Odeon of Herodes Atticus**; an operatic debut at the **Greek National Opera**, or a hot ticket like William Forsythe or Marina Abramovic at the **Onassis Stegi**.

The view from the outside of the Museum of Cycladic Art

Courtesy: Museum of Cycladic Art



GOURMET TASTES IN ATHENS

From **Michelin-starred restaurants** to Mediterranean fusion, the Athens gastronomy scene is blazing. Outfits like Luxury Concierge Greece can make reservations at the hottest tables in Athens or organize private dining at atmospheric landmarks like the Acropolis Museum or Byzantine Museum. Original Senses can set you up with a private cooking class with Michelin-starred Lefteris Lazarou (or perhaps a romantic meal at his **Varoulko Seaside restaurant**, outside regular opening hours).

For high end seaside dining, celebrity hotspot **Ithaki**, overlooking **Astir Beach**, is a winning bet (try the lobster tortellini or monkfish meuniere). For a Mykonos vibe, head to **Krabo beach**, a luxe beach club set on a small sandy cove. The rock shrimp mini-burgers are legendary. Not feeling the seaside? Linger over an elevated (quite literally) lunch or dinner of refined Greek dishes like orzo with shrimp and ouzo at **Sense**, the elegant rooftop restaurant at **AthensWas** hotel. The best seats in the house are on the small terrace, right beneath the Acropolis.

For more dinners with dash, Michelin-starred **Hytra** inside the Onassis Stegi delights with its avant garde take on Greek gastronomy, or savour haute cuisine at mood-lit **Spondi**, which has two Michelin stars. Explore Athens' new passion for pan-Asian flavours. Baby-faced chef Antonis Drakoularakos conjures miraculous sushi at compact **Sushimou** (you'll need to book at least two weeks in advance). Ditto for **Nolan**, the pioneer of the city's Greek-Asian fusion scene. Or tuck into Korean lamb chops with kimchee in a lavish rooftop setting at Athens' outpost of London's **E&O** (at the Marriott Hotel).

Krabo beach club brings the Mykonos vibes

Courtesy: Krabo



DESIGNER SHOPPING IN ATHENS

Whether you're in the market for clothing, accessories, sophisticated souvenirs, artwork, statement jewellery or edible delicacies, you'll find plenty of locally-made treasures in Athens.

Athenians pretty much invented shopping malls when they built the **Agora** in the 6th century BC. Today, big spenders stake out the **Kolonaki** neighbourhood for their shopping fix. Pedestrianised **Voukourestiou**—the Bond Street of Athens—is a pantheon of designer labels (Hermès, Dior, Prada, Louis Vuitton, Ralph Lauren, Bulgari and Cartier). If you're looking for a one-stop shop for luxury fashion brands, check out **Attica Department Store**, which offers a VIP personal shopping service. Or jump in a taxi and flex the plastic on aspirational brands at the Dubai-esque **Golden Hall** shopping mall.

For a heads-up on the labels to watch in the Greek fashion scene, hit up the Kolonaki branch of **i-D Concept Store**, which carries local designers like Angelos Bratis (for draped dresses), Sophie Deloudi (for sculptural swimwear) and Grecian Chick (for supple leather bags and sandals). Pick up a pair of winged sandals or metallic slides from **Ancient Greek Sandals** first flagship store, or invest in embroidered blouses made with finest Greek silk from the new **Zeus & Dione** boutique. **Fine jewellery** has been in fashion in Athens for centuries. From household names like Lalaounis and Zolotas to modern celebrity favourites Yannis Sergakis, Nikos Koulis, and Lito, you'll find statement pieces to bling up any outfit.

Window shopping on
Voukourestiou street

Photo: Manos Chatzikonstantis



LUXURY ATHENS BY NIGHT

Million-dollar Acropolis views are on show at the rooftop bars crowning some of the city's finest hotels (such as **GB Roof Garden**, Hilton's **Galaxy Bar** and **The Ziller's Roof Garden**). Looking for something more discreet? Both the **King George** and **Perianth Hotel** have **penthouse suites with knockout Parthenon views**, perfect for private parties and dinners.

Outdoor cinemas are a quintessential Athenian summer experience. Take movie night to another level with a private screening at **Cine Aegli**, the city's oldest open-air cinema. Watch the action while you enjoy a memorable Mediterranean meal served at your seat.

On the same peninsula as Greece's first Four Seasons hotel, **Matsuhisa Athens** serves Nobu's signature sushi in a sublime seaside setting. Nowhere lays on the glitz of the Athens Riviera quite like **Island Club Restaurant**. Between May and September, this waterfront club is where Greek pop stars, high-rollers and visiting celebrities (think Meryl Streep and Valentino) come for dinner and dancing. There's a villa for rent if you really want to make a night of it.

Enjoy the Athens Riviera views
from Matsuhisa Athens

Courtesy: Matsuhisa Athens



EXPLORE THE ATHENS RIVIERA—BY LAND, SEA OR AIR

The **Athens Riviera** is an essential stop on a luxury Athens city break. Bespoke travel specialists such as **Alternative Athens** can whisk you off to Cape Sounion in a chauffeured limo for a sunset date with **Poseidon's mighty temple**, accompanied by an archaeologist.

Admire the Athens coastline from the deck of your luxury catamaran on a private half-day or full-day cruise with **Sailing Athens**, while you swim or snorkel in clear blue waters along the way. For those with a week to spare, **Milos at Sea**—a new venture from the world-famous seafood restaurant—will take you on culinary odyssey aboard a 113 foot yacht. Dine on freshly caught fish, enjoy a cooking lesson and wine and cheese tastings, and work off all the delicious meals paddle boarding or kayaking.

Get a different perspective on the Athens Riviera on a helicopter tour with **Athens Heli Tours**. The epic landmarks and glittering beaches look even more spectacular from the sky.

Sunset (and a full moon) at the Temple of Poseidon

Photo: Manos Chatzikonstantis

FIVE-STAR PAMPERING IN ATHENS

Indulge in the ultimate luxury of downtime. Treat yourself to a spa experience at the **GB Spa**, inside the landmark Grand Bretagne Hotel, have a facial in the soothing, sea-view spa at the **Four Seasons Hotel**. Another beautiful spot to unwind is at the **Divani Apollon SPA & Thalassotherapy Centre**, with 16 water jets to soothe away any pre-holiday stress.

For five-star sunbathing on the Riviera, head to **Vouliagmeni Lake**, which is warm enough to swim in year-round. Check into the VIP area at the water's edge (and why not throw in a massage in a private cabana?). At the VIP strip of **Astir Beach**, waiter service, designer shopping and fine dining beckon. Or hit up the **Margi Hotel** in Vouliagmeni, home to the sexiest swimming pool in Athens. (You can pay by the day, if you're not a guest).

Craving an adrenaline rush? How about a water-skiing or wakeboarding session at Four Seasons Astir Palace or **Grand Resort Lagonissi**? Both have excellent water-sports clubs. Downtown, **Holmes Place** can match you up with a personal trainer who will put you through your paces in the gym, at your hotel, or even at the **Panathenaic Stadium**, birthplace of the modern Olympics.

The seaside spa at the Four Seasons

Courtesy: Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel

Day 2

Lunch

