



## Hop on, Hop off: A Tram Ride Through Athens

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Ticked off everything on your Athens to see list and still have some days left? Take a tram ride from Syntagma Square to the beach and explore all that lies in between.

While the tram may not be your immediate go-to form of transport when you're eager to hit one of Athens' gorgeous beaches, it can be a great option for when you're ready to step off the beaten track and start exploring parts of the city you probably wouldn't otherwise see. Hop on at Syntagma Square (or elsewhere along the tracks), leave downtown behind and check out low key, non-touristy neighbourhoods so as to get a glimpse into the everyday life of the average Athenian. You'll end up at the Athenian Riviera sooner rather than later. Here's where we think things get interesting.

This is an itinerary for the Syntagma - Voula route (lines T6 and T7.) Take the T6 line that leaves from Syntagma and get off at end station Pikrodafni. To continue to Voula you need to switch to line T7 Piraeus - Asklepieio Voulas.





- **Stops:** Syntagma to Leoforos Vouliagmenis

## Syntagma and environs

### Downtown Athens

If this is where you are starting your journey, you've probably already seen the Athenian landmarks that stand between these stops. The Greek Parliament where you can watch the changing of the **Evzones guards**, the **National Garden**, the **Temple of Olympian Zeus**, **Hadrian's Arch**, and **Zappeion Megaron**. If you haven't, definitely stick around a little longer. Otherwise, sit back and people-watch outside the tram window.

- **Stops:** Fix to Baknana

## Neos Kosmos

Neos Kosmos, which translates to "New World", is a densely populated neighbourhood which in recent years has undergone a transformation with trendy restaurants and bars rapidly sprouting here and there whilst bringing new life to the area. If you're feeling artsy and haven't had the chance to visit the **National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST)**, hop off at **Fix station** for a Greek take on art affairs of the 20th century onwards, before the tracks take you into the depths of the neighbourhood.

When you're feeling peckish but have souvlaki overload, head to Tomas for the juiciest kebab (Baknana stop). This no-nonsense place has been around since 1987 and its Armenian owner knows better than most how to make a juicy ground beef and lamb skewer.

A 5-minute walk from the same stop will bring you to **La Bella Napoli**, where Milan-born Marco Zenaboni serves what is arguably the most authentic Italian pizza you'll find in Athens. If you find yourself in Neos Kosmos during the evening, make a reservation (emphasis on booking in advance) at the area's **hottest modern Greek taverna FITA (Kasomouli stop)**. Or if it's a drink and finger food you're after, **Grasshoppers** is just a few metres down the road from FITA. Simplicity is an art form at this new hotspot, and is present both in the décor, excellently made classical cocktails, or the good old gin tonic served here in a frozen glass.





- **Stops:** Aigaiou to Agia Paraskevi

## Nea Smyrni

From the new world the tram takes you to New Smyrni, a neighbourhood that was established by the refugees that arrived in 1922 after the Smyrna catastrophe. Today, the neighbourhood is lively, commercial and new modern constructions are slowly replacing older apartment buildings. Hop off at **Agia Fotini stop** and let the kids loose at the central square which is lined with cafeterias, eateries, fountains and a 15-metre-high commemorative obelisk. If there was ever a time to enjoy a casual freddo coffee as a true Greek, this would be it. Need something more substantial? Head to **Pop Up** (same stop) for brunch and a milkshake for the kids; they also serve some mean cocktails-to-go.

**If digging through record stores** is an essential part of your travels, then don't leave Nea Smyrni without a visit to one of Athens' oldest record stores, **Record House** on Omirou Street. This half-a-century-old independent shop stocks across many genres, deals in both new and used records and always offers some great deals at its basement.





## ● **Stops:** Edem to Kentro Istioploias

### Middle Riviera

And just like that, you're at the seaside. While this first part of the riviera coast is not optimal for swimming, it's amazing to think that just 30 minutes ago you were in the heart of the city and now you're viewing the Aegean Sea.

**Edem is the perfect stop** to get off and stroll up and down the promenade, especially during sunset. Right below the stop, lies **Edem taverna**. Here, it's all about location, for it's one of the very few eateries on the coast that has tables on the beach, and an unobstructed view of the water. **The food is traditional Greek** with a strong focus on anything that comes from the sea. That said, the vegetarian options available are as ample as they are at any Greek taverna.

From here, walk towards **Pikrodafni station** (to the left as you face the sea) to see the docked boats at the Alimos Marina and visit the **American World War II cemetery (Phaleron War Cemetery)** across the street (make sure to check visiting hours.)

From **Pikrodafni**, take the **Piraeus-Asklipio Voulas** line and enjoy the coastal views as the tram zooms along. Hop off at **Zephyros stop** for a relaxing break at **Nalu**, a very popular beach venue that offers everything from coffee and snacks to pasta, fish and cocktails. Grab a table on the wooden deck and enjoy the sea view or move to the sunbed section and linger until nighttime when live music gigs take over.

Further down the route, between Elliniko and Agio Kosma stops, the view is not as appealing - for now. **The Ellinikon**, Europe's largest coastal park, is being built upon the grounds of the former Ellinikon Airport and is soon to feature vast parks, malls, luxury residences, skyscrapers and a casino. Definitely a chance for a 'before' photo.





● **Stops:** Platia Katraki to Kolymvritirio

## Glyfada

This seaside suburb is all about fun and leisure. The tram cuts through its central commercial street (Grigoriou Lambraki), so hop off and take a look around. With chain stores like **Zara** and **H&M** but also a multitude of boutiques featuring Greek designers, this place is a fashion paradise. If shopping is not what you're here for, there's plenty more to do in Glyfada. If you're travelling with young ones, **Oliver Family House** is great for families. Kids can play in one of the two secure areas (indoor and outdoor) leaving parents to enjoy a relaxed coffee and the whole family can also have brunch or lunch there (kid's menu available). If you're kid-free, check out **Pere Ubu**, an all-day bar restaurant that serves upscale comfort food with a touch of soul and great cocktails.





● **Last stop:** Asklipieio Voulas

## Voula

Less than a decade ago, this long stretch of sand and glimmering clean water was anything but glam. What used to be a local family beach, crowded and loud in August, with tanned winter swimmers all year round, and the spot for the annual beach racket tournament now boasts thick-cushioned wooden sunbeds and white beach bars, while the sound of tennis balls against wooden rackets is replaced by music. If hip is your scene, it's worth the €7-8.5 entrance fee to **Athines by the Sea**. The beach beds range from €20-40 per set, depending on whether it's a weekend, and compared to the prices you will pay for the same further down the coast, it's quite a good value for money.