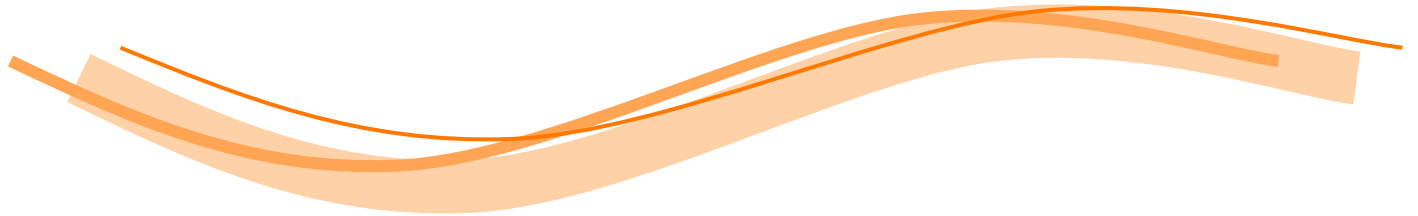




GREECE & TRANSAT HOLIDAYS





<p>GREECE</p>	<p>Greece is a place like nowhere else on Earth! Home to epic stories, ancient wonders, idyllic islands and two seas - this is a shining land of purest white and brilliant blue with whitewashed stonework set against an aquamarine sea.</p> <p>Discover a land of philosophers, lovers, legends and warriors. Imagine islands lying resplendent in sparkling blue waters. Savour delectable cuisine and robust wines. And delight in the openhearted people whose zest for life echoes the traditions that are the very soul of Greece. Experience the past, in the present, and surrender yourself to the wonders and charm of this magnificent country.</p> <p>Escape to powder-soft beaches and cypress groves or explore temples lined with Doric columns....Greece offers sun-bleached tourism amid the ancient ruins – so it’s a dream destination for leisure travellers and heritage tourists alike.</p> <p>Discover the glorious destination of Greece with Transat Holidays. Leaders in holiday packages to Europe, Transat have decades of experience creating memorable vacations in Greece. There is no better Tour Operator for value and depth of product options.</p> <p>Ask your Travel Agent for a Transat Holidays Europe brochure - or visit www.transatholidays.com</p> <p>See the Travel Show Pinterest board for Greece at http://pinterest.com/TravelShow/greece</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>Located in southeastern Europe, Greece occupies the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula and a series of small, paradisiacal islands.</p>
<p>Geography</p>	<p>Greece is a land of sea and mountains. Over a fifth of the Greek landmass is islands, numbering several thousand if you count every floating crag - and nowhere in Greece will you find yourself more than 96 km from the sea. It should come as no surprise that the sea has shaped the Greek imagination, as well as its history.</p> <p>Mainland Greece is a great vertebrate, with the Pindos range reaching from north to south, and continuing, like a tail, through the Peloponnese. The highest of its peaks is Mount Olympus, the seat of the gods, nearly 3,000m (10,000 ft.) above sea level. Eighty percent of the Greek mainland is mountainous, which you will rapidly discover whether you make your way on foot or on wheels.</p>
<p>Name</p>	<p>The origins of the name of Greece are lost in time but many believe that</p>

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	it may derive from an entomology meaning 'old people'. Interestingly, the Greeks themselves do not use the word!
Population	Around 11 million, including 5 million in Athens.
Language	Language is usually not a problem for English speakers in Greece, as so much of the population has lived abroad, where English is the primary language. Young people learn it in school, from Anglo-American-dominated pop culture, and in special classes meant to prepare them for the contemporary world of business. Many television programs are also broadcast in their original languages, and American prime-time soaps are very popular, nearly inescapable. Even advertisements have an increasingly high English content. Don't let all this keep you from trying to pick up at least a few words of Greek; your effort will be rewarded by your hosts, who realize how difficult their language is for foreigners and will patiently help you improve your pronunciation and usage.
Currency	The local currency is the Euro (€). €1.00 is approx. \$1.40 CAD as at June 2015. Exchange desks can be found in your hotel. Banks and exchange offices are located throughout Athens. Bank hours are Monday to Thursday, 8:00 am to 2:30 pm, Friday, 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, Saturday and Sunday closed. Branches of the National Bank in Athens can be found at Syntagma Square and Omonia Square. They are opened from Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 6:30 pm and Saturdays, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. ATM's can be found throughout Athens
Tipping	Tipping is discretionary, but customary! Aboard ship: To cover the entire ship's staff € 6 per day from each person accommodated in the cabin is recommended Excursion guides/drivers: It is customary to offer a small token and we recommend about € 4 per person/day or so to cover both. Restaurants: 10 to 15% will be added to your bill but may not make its way to the wait staff, so you might wish to leave another 5 to 10% in cash on the table.
Government	Greece is a Parliamentary Democracy.
Documentation	Passports are required. Canadian travellers' passports should be valid for at least three months upon entering Greece.
Time zone	Greece is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. In reference to North American time zones, it's 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time
Health	The public drinking water in Greece is safe to drink, although it can be slightly brackish in some locales near the sea. For that reason, many people prefer the bottled water commonly available at restaurants, hotels, cafes, food stores, and kiosks
Safety tips	Crimes against tourists are not a significant concern in Greece. Athens

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	is probably the safest capital in Europe. Pocket-picking and purse-snatching may be slightly on the rise, especially in heavily touristed areas, but breaking into cars remains rare. Tourists, however, are conspicuous and much more likely to carry valuables, so take normal precautions.
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CLIMATE	
General climate	Greece has a generally mild climate, though in the mountainous northern interior the winters are rather harsh and summers brief. Southern Greece enjoys a relatively mild winter, with temperatures averaging around 13°-16°C in Athens. Summers are generally hot and dry, with daytime temperatures rising to 30°-35°C, usually cooled by prevailing north winds (meltemi), especially on the islands, which often cool appreciably in the evenings. And at some point in most summers, usually July, the temperature will rise to over 38°C.
Today's weather	28 C and sunny (27 th June 2015)
Best time to visit	The best time to visit is late April to mid-June, when the wildflowers are in bloom and before summer arrives in force with hordes of tourists, higher prices and high temperatures. The September and first half of October periods are quiet and still warm too.

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	11 hours with Air Transat – see Transat planning section which follows this destination section below. Piraeus and the Venizelos International Airport are now linked by the Metro (www.ametro.gr). Trains run each way once an hour from 5am to 1am, take 50 minutes, and cost 8€.(2015)
Cities - Athens	Birthplace of democracy, capital of Greece, Megalopolis... The cradle of western civilization, Athens is a bustling city that attracts visitors with, among other things, its legendary classical temples; its museums displaying timeless works of art; the flower-filled balconies and Mediterranean streets of the Plaka district; and its crowded, lively taverns. The political, economic and cultural heart of Greece, Athens is located in the southern region of the country. Founded deep in a valley, 7 km from the port of Piraeus, the city developed around the omnipresent hill of Acropolis. The modern city of Athens surrounds the Acropolis . On a rocky outcrop stands the magnificent Ionic temple of Athena Nike, while the Parthenon prominently occupies the highest part of the plateau. The incarnation of Greek genius, the largest ancient Doric temple was dedicated to Athena Parthenos ('virgin') and built by architects Ictinos and Callicrates between 447 and 438 BC. On the north side, on the very

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	<p>site where the goddess defied Poseidon in their conflict over ownership of the city, is the Erechtheion, of Ionic style, famous for its portico of the Caryatids.</p> <p>Of the several theatres of Ancient Athens, the Dionysus still remains. Located south of the Acropolis, this is where the words of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes once resounded. To the west, the restored Theatre of Herodes Atticus (a Roman theatre from the year 161) still presents concerts and shows. East of the Plaka, near the National Garden, visitors can admire the 15 remaining columns of the Olympeion, a monumental temple dedicated to Zeus.</p> <p>The Plaka district, built under Turkish occupation, is the most popular and lively in Athens. Along its sinewy streets, Byzantine churches, taverns, bistro terraces, small, white houses and souvenir shops stand side by side. Farther north, the Plaka leads to Syntagma Square, the largest in the capital.</p> <p>In Greece, the aperitif is taken around 8 or 9 p.m., so in Athens, it is not rare to see people walking into restaurants around 10 p.m. Highly convivial, its regional cuisine is rich in products of the land. Elegant, expensive restaurants are found in the city's western section, towards Kifissia, while in the Plaka, taverns provide both cuisine and folklore. Everywhere in Athens, you will find many cafés that still have an old-fashioned look, as well as bars and nightclubs that attract all types of individuals: young and old, artists and business people.</p> <p>Folklore-lovers shouldn't miss the Philopappos Theatre, between May and September. Another must-see from June to September is the Athens festival.</p> <p>Athens's National Gardens, which had been spruced up and re-planted with thousands of new trees and shrubs before the 2004 Olympics, had a thousand more trees planted.</p> <p>The Athens Sightseeing Public Bus, line 400, is a great way to explore the city's landmarks. Running from June to September, this hop-on/hop-off bus, begins and ends its 90-minute ride in front of the National Archaeological Museum. Tickets are 5€ and valid for 24 hours.</p>
Distances	Thessaloniki is 516 km north of Athens; Pylos is 317 km south of Athens
Ferries	<p>Ferries are the most common, cheapest, and generally most "authentic" way to visit the islands, though the slow roll of a ferry can be authentically stomach-churning. A wide variety of vessels sail Greek waters - some huge, sleek, and new, with comfortable TV lounges, discos, and good restaurants; some old and ill-kept, but pleasant enough if you stay on deck.</p> <p>The Flying Dolphin hydrofoils also serve all the major islands.</p>

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	<p>Undoubtedly faster, they cost almost twice as much as regular ferries, and their schedules can be interrupted by weather conditions.</p>
Trains	<p>Greece's railway system covers some 2,500 kilometers, but many of the lines were originally laid down around the turn of the century, which means that train travel can be slow and a bit meandering. Though it is wise to ask how many hours your train trip will last, keep in mind there is a charm to overnight trains and first-class sleeping compartments. Some lines, especially the Athens-Thessaloniki run, have been revamped for express trains, and travel time between Greece's two major cities can be as little as 6 hours. It is a good idea to buy tickets for express trains a few days in advance, however, as these trains are new, comfortable, and very popular.</p> <p>Both the Larissa train station (for trains heading north or abroad) and the Peloponese station (for trains heading south) are located at 31 Theodorou Deliyianni St., near the Larissis metro station.</p>
Car Rental	<p>There are many rental cars, and almost as much variation in prices. Many cars have a standard shift; if you must have an automatic, make sure in advance that one is available. You are strongly advised to make your reservation before leaving home and well in advance. Always ask if the quoted price includes insurance; many credit cards make the collision-damage waiver unnecessary, but you will find that most rental agencies automatically include this in their rates. You can sometimes save by booking at home before you leave; this is especially advisable in summer. If you are shopping around, let the agents see the number of competitors' brochures you're carrying.</p> <p>Most companies require that the renter be at least 21 years old (25 for some car models). An occasional company won't rent to anyone older than 70 or 75. Definitely inquire beforehand!</p> <p>You must possess a valid International Driver's License.</p>
Buses	<p>Public buses are inexpensive but often overcrowded. Local bus lines vary from place to place, but on most islands the bus stop is in a central location with a posted schedule. Destinations are usually displayed on the front of the bus, but you might have to ask. The conductor will collect your fare after departure.</p> <p>Note that in Athens and other large cities, a bus ticket must be purchased before and validated after boarding. Kiosks usually offer bus tickets as well as schedules. Tickets cost about 0.5€ .</p>
Taxis	<p>Taxi fares begin at approx. 1 euro, and all cabs have meters; taxis also have charts in Greek and English on their dashboard, explaining the charges you can expect to incur for baggage, the airport surcharge (only coming from the airport), rates between midnight and 05.00 in the morning (charged at a faster meter rate), holiday surcharges, etc. Rates within all major cities are non-negotiable. Tipping is neither expected</p>

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	<p>nor practiced, though is customary to round off the fare. Getting a cab in Athens on the street is a matter of flagging it down and calling out the area or street you are going to. It is rare to get a cab to yourself during rush-hour, so expect other people to be in the cab or to pick up others heading in the same direction after you are already in. You will still pay the normal fare.</p>
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<p>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</p>	<p>Greece now offers a full spectrum of accommodations ranging from the extravagant to the basic. Within a given locale, of course, not all options are available, but most travellers will find something that appeals to them.</p> <p>One of my personal favourite hotels is in Greece: White Rocks Hotel & Bungalows (Kefalonia, Ionian Islands; tel. 26710/28-332). For those who appreciate understated elegance, a shady retreat from all that sunshine, a private beach, and quiet but attentive service, this hotel, located a few kilometers outside Argostoli, can be paradise.</p>
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<p>TARGET GROUPS</p>	
<p>Kids</p>	<p>The stunning beaches on the mainland and islands are wonderful for children. It is very easy for kids to meet local children as well in Greece, even if they don't a word in common. And even the most blasé of kids will be impressed with the antiquity and the sites of the ancient temples and ruins of Greece.</p>
<p>Teens</p>	<p>There are plenty of opportunities for water sports at most of the Greek resorts and the nightlife can be exciting even for jaded Canadian teenagers!</p>
<p>Romance</p>	<p>Santorini Caldera (in the Cyclades island group): As you approach Santorini by ferry, the whitewashed cliff-top villages of Ia and Fira resemble at first a new dusting of mountain snow. Then the ferry enters the caldera, the cliff walls rise steeply on either side, and you're suddenly enclosed in a fantastic bowl whose sides are formed of red, yellow, and ocher rock and whose surface is the shimmering blue Aegean.</p> <p>Some 3,600 years ago, the center of the island was blown away in a colossal volcanic eruption, leaving behind a roughly circular depression in the sea floor and the crescent-shaped sliver of rock known as Santorini. The best places to view the caldera are the walking path between Fira and Ia, and the cliff-top streets in either of the two towns.</p>
<p>Zoomers</p>	<p>Cruising the Greek Islands has to be one of the gentlest, scenic, historical and accessible vacations for Seniors who want to carry on traveling without sacrificing any of the wonders that travel continues to bring.</p>

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<p>UNIQUES</p>	<p>The Acropolis is one of a handful of places in the world that is so well known, you may be anxious when you finally get here. Will it be as beautiful as its photographs? Will it be, ever so slightly, a disappointment? Rest assured: The Acropolis does not disappoint. What you want here is time - time to watch the Parthenon's columns appear first beige, then golden, then rose, then stark white in changing light; time to stand on the Belvedere and take in the view over Athens and listen to the muted conversations floating up from the Plaka; time to think of all those who have been here before you...</p>
<p>Surprising</p>	<p>Night of the Full Moon: On the night of the full moon in August, the city of Athens opens up its monuments and archaeological sites to the public for free. Moonlit classical concerts and other events under the stars make for an enchanting midnight stroll through the ancient sites.</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>The history of Greece is simply too immense to even attempt a précis here – it is in many ways the history of the emergence of European culture. But don't let this immensity prevent you from delving into the incredible historical mosaic of ancient Greek civilisations, Roman empire, Byzantine empire, Ottoman Rule and eventual independence again. For a concise summary, try the Greek National Tourist Office website at: http://www.gnto.gr/portal/site/eot/menuitem.7f0d4e449429307c12596610451000a0/?vgnnextoid=9fb0912381f17210VgnVCM100000460014acRCRD&lang_chosen=en</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>Frommer's Greece – best guide book to the region Homer's the Iliad and the Odyssey – the first travel books...ever! Nikos Kazantzakis - Zorba The Greek Lawrence Durrell's books on Greece Louis de Berniere – Captain Corelli's Mandolin set in Kefalonia James Chatto: The Greek for Love – A Memoir of Corfu – see my review of this book at www.chrisrobsontravelshow.ca/Planning/ChrisBookPicks.aspx#7</p>
<p>UNESCO World Heritage Sites</p>	<p>Greece is well-endowed with UNESCO recognized sites; the following 17 are classified by UNESCO's catalogue as Monuments of World Cultural Heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agio Oros - Mount Athos (Monastic Community) - Athens (Acropolis) - Bassae (Temple of Apollo Epicurius) - Vergina - Aigai - Delphi (archaeological site) - Delos (archaeological site) - Epidavros (archaeological site) - Early Christian and Byzantine Thessaloniki

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meteora Monastery Complex - Mystras (Medieval Site) - Monasteries Daphni (Attica), Hosios Loukas (Boiotia), and Nea Moni of Chios - Archaeological sites of Mycenae and Tiryns - Olympia (archaeological site) - Patmos Historic Centre (Chora) with the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian and the Cave of the Apocalypse - Medieval City of Rhodes - Samos Pythagoreio and Heraion - Old Town Corfu - Thessalonika – Byzantine Monuments
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>Crete; Mykonos; Delos; Santorini; Patmos; Rhodes; Symi; The Acropolis; Athens National Archaeology Museum; Delphi; Epidaurus; Monemvassia; Mount Athos; Hydra; Meteora monasteries</p>
Ancient Wonders	<p>Two of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World were located in Greece:</p> <p>Statue of Zeus at Olympia: 435 BC (Statue) This statue occupied the whole width of the aisle of the temple that was built to house it, and was 12 meters (40 feet) tall. It was destroyed in the 5th-6th centuries AD by fire.</p> <p>Colossus of Rhodes: Built in 292-280 BC, this was a giant statue of the Greek god Helios, god of the sun, c. 35 m (110 ft) tall that stood astride over the harbor entrance at Rhodes. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 226 BC.</p>
Must Sees	<p>The Acropolis (Athens): No matter how many photographs you've seen, nothing can prepare you for watching the light turn the marble of the buildings, still standing after thousands of years, from honey to rose to deep red to stark white. If the crowds get you down, remember how crowded the Acropolis was during religious festivals in antiquity.</p> <p>Nemea (Peloponnese): This gem of a site has it all: a beautifully</p>

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restored stadium, a handsome museum, and picnic tables with a view of the romantic Doric temple with its three long-standing columns - and several newly restored and re-erected ones. If you're lucky, you may see Nemea's archaeologists at work lovingly reconstructing and re-erecting more columns from the temple's north facade in their ambitious restoration project.

Olympia (Peloponnese) & Delphi (Central Greece): Try to visit both Olympia, where the Olympic Games began, and Delphi, home of the Delphic Oracle. That's the only way you'll be able to decide whether you think Olympia, with its massive temples and shady groves of trees, or Delphi, perched on mountain slopes overlooking olive trees and the sea, is the most beautiful ancient site in Greece.

Palace of Knossos (Crete): A seemingly unending maze of rooms and levels and stairways and corridors and frescoed walls - the Minoan Palace of Knossos. It can be packed at peak hours, but it still exerts its power if you enter into the spirit of the labyrinth, where King Minos ruled over the richest and most powerful of Minoan cities and, according to legend, his daughter Ariadne helped Theseus kill the Minotaur and escape.

Delos (Cyclades): This tiny isle just 3.2km offshore of Mykonos, was considered by the ancient Greeks to be both the geographical and spiritual center of the Cyclades; many considered this the holiest sanctuary in all Greece. The extensive remains here testify to the island's former splendour. From Mount Kinthos (really just a hill, but the island's highest point), you can see many of the Cyclades most days and the whole archipelago on a very clear day. The 3 hours allotted by excursion boats from Mykonos or Tinos are hardly sufficient to explore this vast archaeological treasure.

Vergina (Northern Greece): In the brilliantly designed museum here, you can peek into what may have been the tomb of Alexander the Great's father, Philip of Macedon; nearby there are more than 300 burial mounds that stretch for kilometers across the Macedonian plain.

Messene (Peloponnese): This sprawling 4th century B.C. site has the best-preserved ancient fortification walls in Greece, an enormous Sanctuary of Asklepios and a stadium - and views of almost all Messene and Laconia from the summit of Mount Ithomi.

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SPORTS ACTIVITIES	
Golf	There are relatively few golf courses in Greece, although several more are in the planning stages. Those now in existence are in Glifada (along the coast outside Athens), Halkidiki, Corfu, Crete (Elounda), and Rhodes.
Fishing	Opportunities for fishing abound. Contact Amateur Anglers and Maritime Sports Club, Akti Moutsopoulou, 18537 Piraeus (tel. 210/451-5731).
Horse riding	You can go horse-back riding in Greece at a fair number of places. Near Athens you'll find the Athletic Riding Club of Ekali (tel. 210/813-5576) and the Hellenic Riding Club in Maroussi (tel. 210/681-2506). Call for directions and reservations. Good facilities are also located near Thessaloniki and on the islands of Corfu, Crete, Rhodes, and Skiathos, with smaller stables elsewhere (inquire at local travel agencies).
Hiking	<p>Greece offers endless opportunities for hiking, trekking, and walking. Greeks themselves are now showing interest in walking for pleasure, and there are a number of well-mapped and even signed walking routes.</p> <p>The Gorge of Samaria in Crete is rightly famous as Europe's longest and deepest gorge which may be hiked 16 km from the mountains to the sea.</p> <p>Greece now has a broad network of trails with a total length of approximately 3,500 km. The major part of this network is extensions to the European Long Distance Walking Paths, E4, E6 and categories O (3,000 km), while another 500 km of smaller walking paths have also been created.</p>
Cycling	<p>More and more tourists are travelling in Greece by bicycle. For information, contact the Hellenic Cycling Association, National Velodrome, 15123 Marousi-Athens (tel. 210/689-3403).</p> <p>Trekking Hellas, 7 Filellinon, 10557 Athens (www.trekking.gr), can also assist you in arranging mountain-biking trips. But Greece is not the place to learn how to tour on a bicycle. Greek drivers have little experience in accommodating bicyclists, road shoulders in Greece are often nonexistent and even at best are not generous, and roads are not especially well maintained.</p> <p>Moped rentals are not recommended in Greece – too many vacationers get injured every year in Greece to make this a risk worth taking.</p>
Sailing	Greece is the ideal place for a surreal escape to the endless blue. By sailboat or motorized craft, inflatable or even by boat – the choices are endless. Deserted beaches that cannot be reached by land are in abundance. Dozens of companies rent out recreational boats. Known for their professionalism and large experience, they are a guarantee for

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	safe, economical and unforgettable holidays for the group or family who decide to try this one-of-a-kind and memorable experience. More information regarding yacht charters is provided by the Hellenic Professional Yacht Owner Association at http://www.epest.gr/index.php
Diving	Scuba diving is restricted throughout most of Greece because of potential harm to sunken antiquities and the environment. That said, many locales now allow diving under supervision by accredited schools. On the mainland, these may be found along the coast of Attica, off the Peloponnese peninsula, and off Halkidiki and a few other places in the north. There is also limited diving off the islands of Corfu, Crete, Hydra, Kalimnos, Kefalonia, Mykonos, Paros, Rhodes, Santorini, Skiathos, and Zakinthos.

CULTURE	
Arts	One of the great pleasures of visiting Athens is browsing in its small art galleries, getting a sense of the contemporary Greek art scene, and possibly buying something to take home. Stop in at an opening, if you see a notice - most are free to the public. For listings, pick up complimentary copies of the quarterlies Art and the City and The Athens Contemporary Art Map (both in Greek and English); both are available in hotels and galleries.
Music	Greece has a long and distinguished - and beautiful - musical tradition that will repay those with inquisitive musical tastes. Each region - indeed, many an island - has its own variation of traditional folk music.
Films	Of the many films made in and about Greece, all more or less readily available on video or DVD. The films of Michael Cacoyannis - from his Euripides trilogy, including Trojan Women and Iphigenia, to his famed Zorba the Greek - are essential viewing. So too is Costa-Gavras's Z, a gripping political thriller inspired by the assassination of Grigorios Lambrakis in 1963. The film version of Nicholas Gage's Eleni manages to be nearly as disturbing as the book. There's also Never on Sunday and Captain Corelli's Mandolin - which was filmed on the island of Kefalonia. Finally, for a good laugh and to enjoy the Greek scenery, Jacqueline Bisset and Irene Papas team up to confront High Season on the island of Rhodes. The even sillier Summer Lovers (1982) is set on Santorini. And don't forget, 007 has "done" Greece (For Your Eyes Only), as did Gregory Peck in The Guns of Navarone .
Museums	If you can only visit one museum during your trip to Athens, it should be the National Archaeological Museum , founded in 1874. Located in the northern part of town in a beautiful neoclassical building, it showcases impressive collections of marble, bronze and ceramic works, as well as treasures of all kinds. North of the National Garden are the Benaki Museum, the Goulandris Museum of Cycladic Art and,

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	<p>farther east, the Byzantine Museum, whose collection of icons is one of the most stunning in the world.</p> <p>Athens's New Museums: In the last few years, a number of new and wonderful museums have opened in Athens.</p> <p>The most impressive is Benaki Museum of Islamic Art. The stunning collection, housed in a 19th-century town house, displays Islamic art (ceramics, carpets, woodcarvings, and other objects) that date from the 14th century to the present. Labels are in Greek and English. (At Agio Asomaton and Dipylou, Psirri; tel. 210/367-1000; www.benaki.gr ; admission 6€; Mon, Wed, and Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 9am-midnight, Thurs and Sun 9am-3pm; Metro: Monastiraki.)</p> <p>A block away, The Museum of Traditional Pottery has a wide-ranging display of traditional and contemporary Greek pottery, labeled in Greek and English. (At 4-6 Melidoni, Kerameikos; tel. 210/331-8491; Mon, Thurs, and Fri 9am-3pm, Wed 9am-8pm, Sat 10am-3pm, Sun 10am-4pm, Tues 9am-3pm; small cafe.)</p> <p>In nearby Plaka, Frissiras Museum has innovative and excellent special exhibits as well as a permanent collection of 20th-century and later European art, with labels in English. (At 3-7 Moni Asteriou; tel. 210/323-4678; Wed-Thurs 11am-7pm, Fri-Sun 11am-5pm; small cafe; Metro: Akropolis.)</p> <p>The New Acropolis Museum is set to open gradually. The Parthenon Gallery features strikingly empty spots – an eloquent plea to the British Museum for the return of the Parthenon Marbles.</p>										
Festivals	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Hellenic Festival</td> <td>Mid June to mid September</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Epidaurus</td> <td>July to August (every weekend)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Philippi & Thassos</td> <td>July to August</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thessaloniki: Dimitria</td> <td>October</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wine Festivals</td> <td>During harvest</td> </tr> </table>	Hellenic Festival	Mid June to mid September	Epidaurus	July to August (every weekend)	Philippi & Thassos	July to August	Thessaloniki: Dimitria	October	Wine Festivals	During harvest
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Wine Festivals	During harvest										

ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	<p>Here are just three of the countless gorgeous beaches in Greece...</p> <p>Paradise (Mykonos, Cyclades): Paradise is the quintessential party beach, known for wild revelry that continues through the night. An extensive complex built on the beach includes a bar, taverna, changing rooms, and souvenir shops. This is a place to see and be seen, a place to show off muscles laboriously acquired during the long winter months.</p> <p>Lalaria Beach (Skiathos, Sporades): This gleaming, white-pebble beach boasts vivid aquamarine water and white limestone cliffs with natural arches cut into them by the elements. Lalaria is not nearly as</p>

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	<p>popular nor as accessible as Skiathos's famous Koukounaries, which is one of the reasons it's still gorgeous and pristine.</p> <p>Megalo Seitani (Samos, Northeastern Aegean): Megalo Seitani and its neighbor, Micro Seitani, are situated on the mountainous and remote northwest coast of Samos. There aren't any roads to this part of the island, so the only ways to reach the beaches are by a short boat ride or a rather long (and beautiful) hike. You won't regret taking the trouble, since both beaches are superb: Micro Seitani's crescent of pebbles in a rocky cove, and Megalo Seitani's expanse of pristine sand.</p>
<p>Islands</p>	<p>The islands are the main characteristic of Greece's landscape and an integral part of the country's culture and tradition. Greece includes 6,000 islands and islets scattered in the Aegean and Ionian Seas, of which 227 islands are inhabited. Just some suggestions from so many possibilities:</p> <p>Hydra (Saronic Gulf Islands): Old-timers keep waiting for Hydra, with its handsome stone mansions overlooking a picture-postcard harbor, to be "spoiled." After all, even before Mykonos and Santorini, Hydra was one of the first Greek islands to be "discovered." So far, so good: donkeys still outnumber motorcycles, and the day-trippers who blitz the appealing harborside shops leave at twilight. That means you can almost always find the table you want at one of Hydra's pleasant small restaurants.</p> <p>Crete: Whether for its rugged mountains or its countless beaches, its ancient remains or its ultramodern hotels, its layered history or its intense people, Crete cannot be denied. It is not just a distinctive Greek island -- it is a world unto itself.</p> <p>Santorini (Cyclades): This is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular islands in the world. The streets of Fira and Ia are carved into the face of a high cliff, overlooking the circular caldera left by an ancient volcanic eruption and now filled with the deep blue waters of the Aegean. The site of Akrotiri offers a unique glimpse into life in a Minoan city, frozen in time by the eruption 3,600 years ago. Add to this the Fira nightlife scene, and you'll see why this is one of the most popular (and overcrowded) summer vacation spots in the Aegean.</p> <p>Siros (Cyclades): This tiny island has it all: a vivacious, cosmopolitan capital town; thriving beach resorts; and a starkly beautiful region of farming communities, archaeological remains, and remote beaches to the north. Siros is also one of the centers of rembetika, a form of Greek</p>

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	<p>traditional music with roots in Asia Minor; the Fragosiriani, a classic known throughout Greece, was composed by the Siriot Markos Vamvakaris, and you're sure to hear its simple and infectious rhythms many times during your stay here.</p> <p>Rhodes (Dodecanese): The island of Rhodes has everything a visitor could want - dazzling ancient and medieval ruins, great food, spectacular beaches, and the hottest nightlife outside of Athens - the one drawback being that everyone knows it.</p> <p>Skyros (Sporades): Winding roads and remote beaches, one main town and a few minor villages, some ancient legends and 20th-century tales: Skyros's charms remain perhaps the most elusive of the four Northern Sporades. But though the island remains a bit difficult to access and still not overstocked with touristy amenities, Skyros also offers both a living local culture and some natural wildness.</p> <p>Corfu (Ionian Islands): Lush vegetation, some still undeveloped interior and unspoiled coast, ancient sites and a 19th-century presence, a dash of Italy and a dose of the cosmopolitan, Corfu is a Greek island like no other. Tourism may be rampant, but Corfu's attractions have survived worse.</p> <p>Hios (Northeastern Aegean): You'd think that an island with such gorgeous beaches, exquisite medieval towns, and remarkable scenery wouldn't remain a secret for long. Despite the qualities that attract a small group of devotees year after year, Hios remains surprisingly quiet. If you like the idea of getting away from the tour buses, being alone on a beach to rival any in the Cyclades, and exploring towns that preserve the contours of medieval life, Hios is for you. Another benefit: the local hospitality hasn't worn thin here, as it has on many of the more heavily toured islands.</p> <p>Sifnos (Cyclades): Sifnos is a green island of ravines, mountaintops, and pristine beaches. Despite its small size (a hardy walker can explore the entire island on foot), Sifnos has numerous attractive small towns which can be used as bases for your explorations. Apollonia, in the central hills, offers elegant small-town civility, with the added benefit of being the hub of an excellent public transportation system. Kastro, on its seaside rock, is the medieval locus of the island, while Platis Yialos is a quiet beach resort.</p>
<p>Castles/Forts</p>	<p>Old fortresses dot the Greek landscape from all periods of Greece's turbulent history, particularly from the days of the Crusades and the</p>

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	Ottoman Empire. Crete and Rhodes are particularly rich in wonderful castle ruins to explore.
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>The Plaka in Athens has pretty much cornered the market on souvenir shops, with T-shirts, reproductions of antiquities (including obscene playing cards, drink coasters, bottle openers, and more), fishermen's sweaters, and jewelry (often not real gold) - enough souvenirs to encircle the globe.</p> <p>There are lots of mass-produced so-called "crafts" for sale in Athens, which is why it's good to know which shops offer quality work. The Center of Hellenic Tradition, 3 Mitropoleos and 36 Pandrossou in the Plaka (tel. 210/321-3023), is a wonderful place for quality traditional Greek art, including icons, pottery, woodcarvings, embroideries, and prints. Best of all, you can take a break from shopping and look at the Acropolis while you have coffee and a snack at the cafe here. While you are on and around Mitropoleos, named after Athens's Metropolitan cathedral, keep an eye out for the shops where craftspeople still turn out decent reproductions of icons for the faithful.</p>
Markets	<p>In Athens, the Central Market (fish, meat, vegetables, and more) on Athinas is open Monday through Saturday from about 8am to 6pm. You may not want to take advantage of all of the bargain prices, but this is a great place to buy Greek spices, herbs, cheeses, and sweets - and to see how Athens is fed.</p> <p>Every Friday from about 8am until 2pm, Xenokratous in Kolonaki turns into a street market selling flowers, fruits, and vegetables. This is a very different scene from the rowdy turmoil of the Central Market, although it's lively enough. Kolonaki matrons come here with their Filipino servants, who lug their purchases home while the ladies head off for shopping and light lunches (perhaps at fashionable To Kafenio). Every neighborhood has a weekly market; if you want to take in a number of them, ask at your hotel.</p> <p>Monastiraki (Athens) has a famous flea market, which is especially lively on Sunday. Although there's a vast amount of ticky-tacky stuff for sale here, you can uncover real finds, including retro clothes and old copper. Many Athenians furnishing new homes head here to pick up old treasures.</p>
Nightlife	<p>Greeks enjoy their nightlife so much that they take an afternoon nap to rest up for it. The evening often begins with a leisurely volta (stroll); you'll see this in most neighborhoods, including the main drags through</p>

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	the Plaka and Kolonaki Square. Most Greeks don't think of dinner until at least 9pm in winter, 10pm in summer. Around midnight, the party may move on to a club for music and dancing.
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CUISINE	
Food	The best known appetizers are taramosalata, a delicious fish roe spread, tzatziki (yogurt with cucumber and garlic) and melitzanosalata (eggplant and garlic dip). Seafood is very popular here and fish can be chosen personally and will be gladly trotted out for inspection. The most popular meat courses include lamb (arnaki), suckling pig (gourounopoulo) and souvlaki, meat kebabs grilled on a skewer. For those with sweet teeth, dessert shops feature pastries, cookies, ice creams, chocolate and sticky buns of flaky filo pastry filled with honey and nuts and known as baklava and kataifi.
Wine/Spirits	Greece, the renowned birthplace of Dionysos , the god of wine, has the longest wine production and consumption history in the world, as well as the richest heritage. Greek wine has been produced for more than 4,000 years. Wine culture – the consumption of wine as a social event and its sophisticated appreciation was developed for the first time by the Ancient Greeks. There is clear evidence that in Ancient Athens it was known that the shape of the cup affected the taste of wine. Today Greece plays a major role in the international wine culture and industry. Through better understanding of the physiology of the vine, matching site and grape variety and attention to detail, Greek wine producers have realized the potential of further developing and improving local viticulture. Dozens of vineyards and wineries now allow visitors to wander through the magic world of the grapevines and the wine, learn the traditional and modern methods of wine-making and to taste select Greek wines, together with traditional tastes. Ouzo, a spirit with a licorice flavour, is the traditional aperitif and the rugged Retsina is an acquired taste!
Restaurants	Some favourites from our friends at Frommer's Guides: Daphne's (Athens; tel. 210/322-7971): As well as Pompeiiian-style wall frescoes and one of the nicest gardens in Athens, Daphne's offers consistently delicious food. It makes you wonder why other Greek restaurants can't make supposedly simple dishes like eggplant salad or yogurt with quince taste this distinctive. Added to all this are strolling musicians - and the owners and staff are so delightful that you hate to leave, even when you can't eat another prawn with toasted almonds.

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	<p>Vlassis (Athens; tel. 210/646-3060): This small restaurant with a very loyal following (ranging from prominent ambassadors to struggling artists) serves traditional (paradisiako) Greek cooking at its very best. A tempting choice if you have only one night in Athens - but be sure to make a reservation.</p> <p>Varoulko (Athens; tel. 210/522-8400; www.varoulko.gr): In its new Athens location, with a menu that adds tasty meat dishes to its signature seafood, Varoulko continues to win plaudits. Everything here is so good that many Athenians believe chef/owner Lefteris Lazarou serves not only the finest seafood in Athens, but some of the best food in all of Greece.</p> <p>Nykterida (Chania, Crete; tel. 28210/64-215): Not to say that the location may influence your taste buds here, but the spectacular views from this restaurant high above Chania and Soudha Bay can definitely make you feel as if you're eating a meal like few others in Greece.</p> <p>Selene (Santorini, Cyclades; tel. 22860/22-249): The best restaurant on an island with lots of good places to eat, Selene is one of the finest restaurants in all Greece. The reason: Owners George and Evelyn Hatzyiannakis constantly experiment with local produce to turn out their own innovative versions of traditional dishes. Inside, the dining room is elegant, while the terrace has a wonderful view over the caldera.</p> <p>Petrino (Kos, Dodecanese; tel. 22420/27-251): When royalty come to Kos, this is where they dine. Housed in an exquisitely restored, two-story, century-old stone (petrino) private residence, this is hands-down the most elegant taverna in Kos, with cuisine to match. This is what Greek home cooking would be if your mother were part divine.</p> <p>Venetian Well (Corfu, Ionian Islands; tel. 26610/44-761): A bit severe in its setting at the edge of a small enclosed square in Corfu town, with no attempt at the picturesque, this restaurant gets by on its more esoteric, international, and delicate menu. It's for those seeking a break from the standard Greek scene.</p>
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MORE INFO	
Brochure	Transat Holidays Europe Collection 2015-2016 brochure – 194 pages of ideas for vacations in Europe: pick this up at your local travel agent.

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Websites	www.transatholidays.com for Canada's top operator to Greece http://www.visitgreece.gr for the Greek National Tourist Office
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PERSONAL EXPERIENCES – MY PERSONAL TOP 10 GREEK ISLANDS	<p>Kefalonia: When I dream of Greece (which I do often!), it is the Ionian island of Kefalonia that appears to me. Hauntingly beautiful, uncommercialized, quintessentially Greek yet decidedly other-wordly, if you've seen the film 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin', you have seen Kefalonia. I have happy memories of taking my young son down to the idyllic beach of Myrtos for an afternoon of pure joy...</p> <p>Corfu: Corfu lies off the west coast of Mainland Greece in the Ionian Islands and it has always appealed to travellers - and for good reason. The landscape is glorious, Corfu Town is historically cosmopolitan and the coastline is necklaced with coves and beaches. Just avoid the one or two over-developed package vacation centres and you will love the laid-back vibe. My favourite spots are the ridiculously pretty Paleokastritsa and Mouse Island.</p> <p>Ithaka: The second smallest Ionian island after Paxos, this former Mycenaean kingdom has been inhabited for four thousand years and is identified with Homer's Ithaca, the home of Odysseus, whose delayed return to the island is one of the elements of the Odyssey's plot. Vathy's harbour is one of the largest in the world, but nowadays only about 3,000 people live on this quietest of Ionian islands.</p> <p>Crete: The largest of all the Greek Islands (260 kms east to west), Crete provides history from the Early Minoan around 2,500 BC to the German invasion of WWII. It has mountains rising to over 8,000 feet, a spectacular coastline, Europe's deepest gorge (Samaria Gorge) and its best-kept secret: the The Lasithi Plateau, a fertile plain ringed by mountains at an average altitude of 2,760 ft. and famous for its white-sailed windmills that used to number over 10,000.</p> <p>Kos: I was on the very first charter flight to this island from the UK many years ago. Then, it was an undiscovered backwater. Now it is a vibrant and very busy mainstream tourism destination, but the charm of its small villages and the magic of its ancient sites remains intact. This focal point of the Dodecanese Island grouping is celebrated as the birthplace of Western medicine: here Hippocrates founded the first medical school in the 5th century BC at the Aslepeion.</p>
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Rhodes: The largest island of the Dodecanese has it all: breathtaking beaches, history in every stone and an island culture all of its own. The Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, once stood astride the Harbour of Rhodes Town whose Old Town is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Go to Lindos, for the perfect combination of beach, picturesque white-and-blue village, all topped by a Doric Acropolis with a Knights of St. John medieval fortress for good measure!

Thassos: If you want a get-away-from-it-all island off the main tourist track: this is it. Thassos lies in the northern Aegean Sea, close to the coast of Thrace and is reached by ferry from Kavala on the mainland. This is real Greece with no fancy hotels or upmarket restaurants. Wander around the meandering streets of the villages or hire a bike as I did and circle the island, eventually coming to rest in the centre of the island in the ancient village of Theologos.

Symi: There are no sprawling resorts here, just a few simple accommodations in tiny local hotels and apartment sprinkled amidst the lovely pastel-coloured mansions that rise above the harbour town of Yialos. Known as 'The Jewel of the Dodecanes', this tiny island is mesmeric. I stayed in one of the old mansions on the hill and lost myself in the maze of pathways and trails and soaked up the heady atmosphere of this whole other world.

Aegina: Aegina is only 30 kms southwest of Athen's port of Piraeus and the regular hydrofoil service whisks you her in no time. When you arrive, go straight to the pine covered hillside 12 kms east of Aegina Town. Here is the most beautiful temple in all of Greece to my mind: the Doric Temple of Aphaia. Stunning in its perfection and its hilltop location and bathed in the liquid light of the Greek islands and almost lost in time...

Hydra: This island is the closest one to Athens where you can truly get away from the crowds and immerse yourself in the Greek experience. Picturesque waterfront mansions give way to steep cobbled streets that rise up into the hills. Hire one of the ubiquitous donkeys and just go where you fancy takes you. Relax: you're on Greek time...

Also: see my Greece **Pinterest** board for photos of all these at <http://pinterest.com/TravelShow/greece>

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**TRANSAT
HOLIDAYS
TO GREECE IN 2015**

Transat Holidays carries more Canadians to Greece than any other vacation company in Canada with the experience of 26 years of Greece programs. They offer 20 packages and 20 islands/destinations in Greece & Turkey.

Travellers are met and greeted by a Transat Holidays Representative at Athens Airport on arrival. **Tour Greece**, the local Transat representatives in Greece, is a part of the Transat Family.

Transat Holidays offer a huge range of vacation options:

Cruises are 3, 4, and 7 days and can be combined with land stays. You can visit Turkey too.

Coach Tour: The Classical Coach Tour is a four day tour of Meteora, Delphi, Olympia, Epidaurus, Mycenae and the Corinth canal available as part of longer Greece itineraries

A La Carte Accommodation: hotel stays are from \$32 per person per night to over \$350 (2015)

Seaside Packages including accommodation, meals and transfers at Kinetta Beach Resort and Spa near Athens from \$1339 (2015)

Customized itineraries – ask your travel agent to contact Transat Holidays for all kinds of options.

Flights are Wednesdays and Sundays from Toronto and Montreal on wide-bodied Airbus 330's. For honeymooners: the Sunday departures are perfect!

Flexibility in Europe

Transat Holidays also accommodates those of you who prefer complete flexibility when travelling. Travel elements such as flights, accommodation, car rental, train passes, excursions and more can be booked separately.

For further details on Transat Holidays' selection of Europe travel products and packages, pick up their Transat Europe Collection 2015-2016 brochure at your travel agent or visit www.transatholidays.com

Here are some of Transat's specific Greek vacation packages:

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	<p>Excursions in Athens and the Islands Pre-book your Greek excursions and not only save on the price but ensure availability. Athens excursions available are:</p> <p>- Athens and the Acropolis See the Panathenaic Stadium en route to the Acropolis, where you'll visit the Museum, the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion and the Parthenon. Next, tour the city centre and view the Memorial to the Unknown Soldier, the House of Parliament, the Presidential Palace, the National Library and Omonia and Syntagma (Constitution) Square.</p> <p>-Delphi Enjoy a scenic drive to Delphi via the picturesque mountain village of Arachova before arriving at the legendary Castalian Springs. From here, walk a few minutes to the archaeological site of Delphi, where you will visit the Temple Of Apollo, the ruins of the Senate of the Delphi Oracle and the Delphi Museum.</p> <p>- Cape Sounion Drive along the beautiful coastal road past the wonderful beaches of Glyfada, Vouliagmeni and Varkiza to the southernmost point of Attica, Cape Sounion. Here, the white marble pillars of the Temple of Poseidon stand atop a cliff rising from the sea. You'll enjoy a walk along the rocky promontory of Sounion before dinner at a seaside taverna and your return to Athens.</p> <p>A la Carte Holidays Create your own Greek Holiday Transat Holidays offers a selection of nightly hotel rates, car rentals, train passes Hotels available in Athens (a total of 8 in 2015), Paros, Mykonos, Santorini, Crete, Rhodes, Naxos, and Ios.</p>
<p>Transat's Greece Vacations in 2015</p>	<p>Don't let the country's current economic troubles fool you. The Greek government may have put a number of austerity measures into place, but as the mythological god Dionysus would have it, the good times haven't ended for the Hellenic Republic – at least for visiting tourists. In fact, this is a great time to visit the country, with some of the lowest prices for accommodations and attractions in recent years now available. That means that vacationers can explore the cradle of Western civilization for prices befitting mere mortals, not Greek gods!</p>
<p>New for 2015</p>	<p>Go as you Please island hopping. This allows vacationers to pick their holiday duration, island and hotels</p>

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	with star ratings of 3 or 4 stars.
Transat Destinations in Greece 2015	Athens Mainland Greece Paros Mykonos Santorini Crete Rhodes Naxos Ios
Transat Greek Island Cruise Itineraries 2015	Aegean Splendour Aegean Horizons Apollo Treasures Fabled Places Alpha Beta Gamma Eta Kappa Lambda Omega Sigma Zeta Epsilon Panoramic Islands & Legends Minos Magic Mykonian Gem Olympian Voyage
Flights with Air Transat in 2015	Air Transat flies Toronto and Montreal to Athens direct Sundays and Wednesdays. Check out www.airtransat.ca for full details.

TRANSAT HOLIDAYS 2015	Transat Holidays offers two direct flights per week from Toronto and Montreal to Athens with memorable itineraries and combinations of Greek Island Cruises, Coach Tours, Island Hopping, Athens City Stays, à la carte accommodation and Seaside Packages. Or create a customized itinerary – all at unbeatable prices! Ask your Travel Agent for a Transat Holidays Europe brochure - or visit www.transatholidays.com
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<p>Transat Europe Flights 2015</p>	<p>Transat has an impressive range of flights from Toronto/Montreal this summer:</p> <p>Czech Republic Prague – One flight per week</p> <p>France Paris – six/seven flights a week Marseille – one/four flights per week Montreal also features: Bordeaux, Lyon, Nantes, Nice, Toulouse</p> <p>Greece Athens – Two flights per week</p> <p>Ireland Dublin – Up to three flights per week</p> <p>Italy Rome – Six/five flights per week Venice – Two flights per week Lamezia – One flight per week from Toronto</p> <p>Netherlands Amsterdam – Four flights per week from Toronto</p> <p>Portugal Lisbon – Three flights per week Porto – Two/one flights per week</p> <p>Spain Barcelona – Three/four flights per week Madrid – One flight per week</p> <p>Switzerland Basel-Mulhouse – One flight per week from Montreal</p> <p>United Kingdom London – Daily flights from Toronto, two flights per week from Montreal Birmingham – One flight per week from Toronto Glasgow – Five flights per week from Toronto Manchester – Five flights per week from Toronto</p> <p>NEW! Hungary Budapest – One flight per week</p>
<p>Transat Background</p>	<p>For over 25 years, Transat Holidays has been offering a large selection of vacation options in Europe, Florida and the south, as well as cruises. In addition to more than 200 south hotels available in the form of all-inclusive packages, Transat also offers a wide range of flights, packages, tours and à la carte products in some 30 European destinations. Their packages are flexible and tailored to stays of varying lengths. Their employees aim to exceed vacationers' expectations in order to maintain their position as a market leader here in Canada. They see their role as turning holiday dreams into reality: making the vacation experience of their guests one of the most memorable ever.</p>

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<p>Current Brochures</p>	<p>Transat Holidays Europe Collection 2015-2016 brochures are available at your local travel agent and cover vacations throughout the key European destinations. Features Sunday and Wednesday flights from Toronto to Athens, cruises, coach tours, twin centre vacations, island hopping, city hopping, excursions, Athens and seaside hotel vacations Flights are on Air Transat and flight time is around 11.5 hrs.</p>
<p>Products</p>	<p>Packages, Cruises, Hotels, Flights, Tours, Car Rentals & Train Travel. With a choice of over 300 hotels located in more than 50 destinations and a complete line of itineraries offered in partnership with the most prestigious cruise lines, all products offered by Transat Holidays are subject to a rigorous standard review.</p>
<p>Air Transat Upgrades</p>	<p>Air Transat have introduced an upgraded Economy Class meal service on sun destination flights. As part of its ongoing efforts to provide clients with the best possible service, Air Transat has improved its onboard service. Passengers flying south will now be welcomed onboard with a glass of champagne, while early morning passengers will be greeted with a mimosa. The meal service has also been improved. The airline will now offer passengers a more complete meal tray, including a choice of two hot meals, a complimentary glass of wine and dessert.</p>
<p>Awards</p>	<p>Air Transat was recognized as the Best Charter Airline for the sixth consecutive year at the Agents' Choice Awards, which represents the largest sampling of travel agents in Canada. The airline also received the Family Friendly Airline Award, which acknowledges carriers that provide additional services and extra comfort to children and their parents.</p>
<p>Best Leisure Airline</p>	<p>Air Transat was named North America's Best Leisure Airline at the Skytrax annual World Airline Awards, held at the 2014 Farnborough International Airshow, near London in the UK. Distinctions were based on a survey measuring the satisfaction of more than 19 million customers. Conducted over a 10-month period, this survey included over 200 airlines that were rated on 38 different aspects of the passenger experience. The study analyzed customer satisfaction for the Airline Passenger Experience, from check-in to boarding, onboard seat comfort, cabin cleanliness, food and beverages, onboard entertainment, and service of staff. In the past five years, Air Transat has gained other recognitions as a result of its numerous environmental initiatives. In 2011, the Company ranked first worldwide in the Atmosfair Airline Index environmental performance indicator, in the long-haul category. Air Transat also obtained the Platinum LEED-EB (existing building) certification for its headquarters, located within the Montreal–Trudeau airport site.</p>

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	<p>Air Transat was recognized as the Best Charter Airline for the fifth consecutive year at the Agents' Choice Awards, which represents the largest sampling of travel agents in Canada. The airline also received the Family Friendly Airline Award, which acknowledges carriers that provide additional services and extra comfort to children & parents.</p>
<p>Air Transat Kids Club</p>	<p>To ensure that your family vacations are fun and unforgettable from beginning to end, Air Transat has created Kids Club so that young passengers can really enjoy themselves while onboard an Air Transat flight. It is designed to make air travel a fun experience for young travellers (and for their parents!). Even before the doors of the plane are closed following boarding, every child receives a small bag containing all sorts of surprises and games. The more fun they have, the easier the flight. Furthermore, children who are members of Air Transat Kids Club enjoy certain exclusive privileges.</p> <p>Members of the Air Transat Kids Club will enjoy several benefits that the whole family can share. You can check in at a special "Air Transat Kids Club Members" counter. Thanks to these special counters located in major Canadian airports where Air Transat flies, checking-in is quicker than before. At check-in, special tags will be placed on your baggage; as a result, your baggage gets priority treatment.</p>
<p>Transat Club Class</p>	<p>Enjoy exclusive privileges such as complimentary seat selection, wider, more comfortable leather seats, a choice of gourmet meals and fine wines, priority check-in, baggage service and boarding.</p> <p>Club Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Club attendants • Attentive, personalized service • Exclusive, spacious Club cabin <p>Drinks & Snacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome cocktails • Complimentary non-alcoholic drinks, snacks and bar service <p>Club Privileges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased baggage allowance • 40 kg checked/15 kg carry-on • Exclusive, rapid check-in counter in most airports • Priority boarding • Practical travel items (on Europe flights) • Free headsets • Canadian newspapers <p>Comfort & Refinement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider, more comfortable leather seats • More leg room • Complimentary Seat Selection: call 1-877-872-6728 • Choice of gourmet meals

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of wine and more
Option Plus	<p>This Economy class option includes many priority privileges and services including priority check-in, priority baggage handling, an extra 10kg baggage allowance and even champagne. Here's what you get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance seat selection on roundtrip flights • Priority check-in at a dedicated counter • Priority baggage handling • Priority boarding • Complete Air Transat travel kit on flights to European destinations • Snacks from the On Board Bistro selection • Alcoholic beverages during drinks service 200ml bottle of champagne (Sun and Europe) • Supplementary baggage allowance up to 10 kg per flight segment • Wine or beer with the meal • Headsets <p>The cost is \$79-\$119 for southbound destinations and \$99-\$209 for European destinations</p>
Option Flex	<p>Life doesn't always go exactly according to plan. When you book your dream vacation, you want to make sure you enjoy the ultimate level of flexibility should something unexpected happen. Option Flex with Transat gives you just that. Option Flex lets you:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change your departure date, destination or hotel, up to 3 hours before departure - transfer your vacation package to a friend or family member, up to 7 days before departure - cancel your trip and get a full refund - and you won't be charged any additional fuel or currency surcharges once you've booked. <p>Benefit from these advantages for only \$49 + taxes at time of booking (as at June 2015).</p>
Transat and Sustainable Tourism	<p>Transat recognizes the prime importance of the environment, host communities, cultural diversity, and their relationships with their employees, customers and partners. Transat is firmly committed to the responsible development of the tourism industry, and has adopted the following definition of sustainable tourism:</p> <p>"Sustainable tourism entails respect for nature, as well as for host communities and their values; it combines positive socio-economic benefits for local populations with an enriching experience for travellers."</p> <p>The issue of the environment, as far as Transat's own facilities are concerned, is a clear and basic target. Their environment committees have implemented concrete initiatives with regard to recycling,</p>

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	<p>conservation of resources, the disposal of obsolete electronic equipment, and raising employee awareness.</p> <p>Air Transat has begun developing an environmental management system that could lead to an ISO 14001 certification in the future. To find out more, consult the Transat and the Environment sections at their website: http://www.airtransat.ca/en/Info/the-environment-its-everyones-business.aspx?ExitID=69&ContentType=voyageur</p> <p>Eco-responsible certified hotels</p> <p>Transat urges its hotelier partners to excel in social and environmental responsibility, and formally recognizes the efforts of accommodations that commit to certification in this area. Certified establishments must maintain performance levels to continue using such labels. The indicators used vary depending on the certification scheme, but many certification organizations have begun aligning their benchmarks with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.</p> <p>To help you make an informed choice when you take your next vacation, Transat list six certifications for hotels and beaches. You can also find certified hotels by searching by destination.</p> <p>Certifications for hotels: Biosphere Responsible Tourism; Green Globe; Green Key; ISO 14001; Travelife Certification for beaches: Blue Flag</p>
<p>Gift Certificates</p>	<p>With Transat gift certificates you can offer the beauty, excitement, and wonders of the world: the South with its heavenly beaches and endless sunshine, or just a rental car.</p> <p>Travel gift certificates are always appreciated, and they are appropriate for all occasions, whether for a wedding, anniversary, graduation, or simply to show you care.</p> <p>Transat gift certificates are valid on all Air Transat, Nolitours, or Transat Holidays products in our brochures. They can be redeemed at a travel agent's office at the time of reservation.</p> <p>You can order gift certificates at: 1-800-322-6649.</p>
<p>Social Media</p>	<p>Website: www.transatholidays.com</p> <p>Europe e-brochures: http://www.transatholidays.com/en/Europe/Electronic-Europe-brochures?ID=1672&type=gamme&tmpl=GEN</p> <p>Connect with Transat on facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AirTransatCanada</p> <p>Follow Transat on Twitter: https://www.twitter.com/AirTransat</p> <p>See Transat on You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/user/AirTransatEng</p>

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Groups	Group rates are available – as few as 16 adults make up a group. Talk to your travel agent to check the current details of Transat's group deals.
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