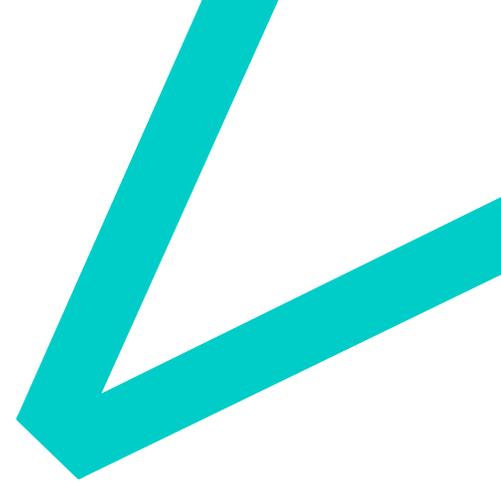




ATLANTIS DESTINATION GUIDE

Athens, Greece

Welcome!



Athens, Greece

ATLANTIS, SUMMER 2019

We are excited to welcome you to Greece for this summer's Atlantis program! The whole Atlantis Team looks forward to working with you as you discover your new home. We trust that your time in Athens will make a significant impact on your journey toward a potential career in medicine.

This program will give you an opportunity to see healthcare through a new perspective and observe how medicine is practiced in a foreign country and culture. We want you to take full advantage of this opportunity to grow and develop a deeper understanding of international healthcare.

This is not designed to be a luxury vacation—this is a challenging and exciting step in your professional development. What you get out of this experience will depend on what you put into it; the more you can prepare and be proactive, the more you will accomplish and learn.

In this guide, you will find specific details on how to prepare for your Atlantis program, and more details will be provided to you as your departure date approaches. We look forward to meeting you and are excited to accompany you on this adventure!

Sincerely,

Jon-Pal Gagnum
Atlantis Regional Director - Greece

Athens



Get to Know Your Host City

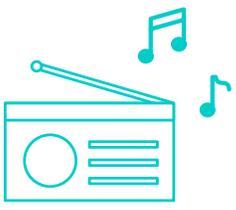
As the largest city in Greece, Athens has long served as a cultural beacon both for Europe and the whole world. With a long historical arc beginning in the Neolithic age, its streets have seen both the rise and fall of one of the most powerful and expansive empires to ever exist. Despite a tumultuous history, many of its spectacular monuments still stand as a testament to ancient times, and its people are as warm and welcoming as ever.



Fun ways to prepare for Greece:

1.

PLAY SOME GREEK MUSIC!



Listening to music and learning to distinguish between words in the lyrics is a great way to start tuning your ear to a new language--and learning some new cultural icons in the process!

2.

LEARN TO COUNT IN GREEK



Learn to count to twenty in Greek, and count up or down whenever you use the stairs.



3 Different Hospital Partners

We partner with a number of large, public hospitals in Athens. These include The Attikon General Hospital, Attica General Hospital (KAT), and Gennimatas General Hospital. While they range slightly in size and location, each are excellently equipped with highly trained and friendly medical and administrative staff to give you a shadowing experience that Hippocrates (the Greek father of medicine) would be proud of.



Interacting with your host doctor

As in U.S. hospitals, you can expect to encounter a range of personalities and engagement levels among the doctors you'll be shadowing in your host hospital. While some doctors are very engaging and enjoy explaining procedures to those observing, other doctors may be very focused on their patients and may not talk very much at all. We encourage our students to remain respectful and appreciative of their work, while remaining open to asking investigative questions when appropriate. You are the detective in an amazing opportunity to explore and probe the depths of an entirely new healthcare system—what insights will you take away?



Navigating the Language Barrier

Though many people in your hospital may know some English, Greek will be the primary language spoken in the hospital departments. Being surrounded by a new language can certainly be a challenging part of visiting a new country, but we've found that such a situation also creates a unique opportunity for personal growth and increased cultural competence. To prepare to enter this new language environment and get the most from your time in the hospital, we suggest doing your best to become proficient in common words and phrases before your departure—you'll be amazed at how practicing just 10 minutes a day can add up over time! We suggest starting your practice through a website or app like Duolingo, and adding other modes of learning depending on what works best for you. If this seems daunting, rest assured! Most of our students do not have prior experience in the language of their host country, and there is still a wealth of information and experiences waiting for you regardless of language proficiency.



Minding the Time

As a newcomer and guest in your host hospital, being on time to shadow each day has extra importance; doing so ensures that your host doctor is able to attend to their patients to the best of their ability. You are required to arrive at your daily meeting point at least 15 minutes prior to the start time in your assigned department. This being said, the perception and treatment of time in your host country may be different from your own. Though we may typically be used to people arriving on time in our own culture, waits and delays may be more common in the culture of your host country, especially within the hospital environment where unexpected events and patient situations impact scheduling on a daily basis. If this does occur, we would encourage you to embrace it as part of the cultural immersion experience, but still feel free to inquire about the expected timing of events. It can also be common for departments to experience slower days as part of "ebb and flow" of hospital life. This can provide an opportunity for noting any insights about what you've been experiencing and a chance to focus on the more "constant" elements of the hospital — elements that have an immense impact on the patient experience (e.g. hospital design and administrative strategy).

More fun ways to prepare for

Greece:

3.

WATCH MOVIES IN GREEK



Even with the English subtitles on, you are sure to pick up words here and there that may help you in conversation. While generally Greece has a high level of English fluency, it is always helpful to pick up a few words.

4.

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH GREEK WORDS



Familiarize yourself with the Greek words for basic anatomy, directions, and food. Have a friend or family member quiz you.

Weekly Schedule



Monday - Thursday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Shadowing
- 5 hours per day
 - Switch specialties every week
 - Typically 2 students per department
 - Free time
- 6PM** Group Meal (Monday & Wednesday only)



Friday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Cultural Excursion
- Weekly group outing
 - Organized by your Site Manager
 - For example, hiking or visiting a nearby city



Saturday- Sunday

- 8AM** Light Breakfast
- 9AM** Free time

ACTUAL PROGRAM SCHEDULES MAY VARY (E.G. ADJUSTMENTS FOR HOSPITAL AVAILABILITY AND LOCAL HOLIDAYS).



Cuisine

Ah, Greek food! Land of gyros, olives, and feta cheese, Athens is a hotspot for great Greek dishes made with the freshest local ingredients. Unlike some European countries, Greece has a seriously unique food culture that is hard to replicate elsewhere.

You can expect a lot of fresh vegetables, meat, fish, cheeses, and olive oils--also known as the quintessential Mediterranean diet. The best part is that, unless you're eating copious amounts of gyro (which you might) you generally won't feel guilty after a light Greek meal.

Greece is known as a particularly frugal country due to various waves of recession in it's history, so you can expect great things done with simple ingredients, and sold for a low price.

Here are a couple more tips to help you acclimate to a new cuisine:

- Greek food isn't a style that you will find often in the U.S.! Be open to expanding your palate to more traditional flavors.
- Espresso is much stronger than American coffee, both in terms of caffeine content and acidity. Your body may protest overindulgence.
- If you order water, you will likely have to pay for it.
- If you have any allergies or food sensitivities, always ask if a food or drink may contain a potential allergen, and bring emergency allergy medication, just in case.
- Make sure to stay on top of your food allergies if you have any. Americans are very aware of these things on menus, but Greek restaurants may not be. Be sure to ask!



Packing Guide

We recognize that each of our Students has different packing preferences, but here's a list to get you started!

MUST-HAVE ITEMS:

- Your wallet, with ~\$150 worth of your host country's currency
- Outfits to wear while shadowing (business casual)
- Outfits to wear while discovering your host city (casual)
- Shoes to wear while shadowing (closed-toed, semi-professional, comfortable)
- Shoes to wear while discovering your host city (comfortable)
- A copy of your iNext insurance information
- A piece of paper with emergency info (Site Manager's number, housing address, and the Atlantis emergency number)

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS:

- Plane ticket(s)
- Your passport and a copy
- Your ID (and a copy), and student ID
- A small notebook for shadowing
- Seasonal clothing
- Pajamas and Toiletries
- Copy of iNext insurance information
- Phone and charger
- Plug adaptor and voltage convertor
- Emergency cold medication
- Water bottle, backpack, hat
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, and swimsuit
- Enough prescription medication for the length of your stay



Excursions

Our program excursions are specially planned to offer a deeper look into your host culture, and we highly encourage participation for both the educational benefit and the pure enjoyment of exploring a new place with others who share your interests in travel and medicine. However, if your travel plans conflict with the events your Site Manager has planned, we ask that you notify your Site Manager several days in advance so that they're able to plan the excursion accordingly.

Excursions range from historical tours to culinary and cultural explorations. Your Site Manager will inform you of the different excursions they have planned during your program orientation.



Safety

Though a program abroad is an exciting opportunity to have fun and discover a new part of the world, it's important to be especially mindful of safety given your unfamiliarity with the surrounding environment.

Pickpocketing is much more common in Europe than in the United States. We advise keeping an eye on your belongings and using across-the-body bags with zippers to protect against pickpockets. Make sure you know Greece's emergency phone number (112), and always travel in groups. There are many beggars in Athens, but you need not feel intimidated by them; simply be cautious.

A Few More Tips

THE GREEK CULTURE SHOCK SURVIVAL GUIDE:

- Air conditioning is less common in Greece. Your room might not have one, or (in the event that it does) it might run warmer than your typical American unit.
- There is (almost) always room for one more person on the bus/metro. Personal space? What personal space.
- Americans are culturally loud; try to speak and laugh quietly.
- You may have to pay to use the restroom. Keep some euros on hand—and tissues.
- It is fairly common for the Greeks (transportation operators, nurses, etc) to go on strike. If you find yourself stranded in another city, contact your Site Manager.
- You don't have to pay 10 euro for a flimsy umbrella! It is acceptable to haggle with street and market vendors. Don't try it with shopkeepers, though. (Check with your Site Manager for more tips on this.)
- You don't have to tip your waiter, taxi driver, etc!



Currency

The currency in Greece is the euro. Euros generally have a higher exchange rate than US dollars (one euro is equal to more than one US dollar), but we encourage checking the exchange rate before your departure to become familiar with what you might expect to pay for meals and other items.

Unlike the US, Greece is a “cash-based” country, which means that paying by credit or debit card might not always be an option. We recommend bringing the equivalent of 150 USD, already converted into euros. Your Site Manager will show you where you can find the nearest ATM to your housing, so that you’re able to continue withdrawing money during your stay.



Communication

While on your program, you'll primarily be communicating with your Site Managers and the other students in your group through WhatsApp, an international communication app that allows you text and call for free using wifi. If you use WhatsApp outside of wifi, standard charges may apply. You can download WhatsApp for free through the App Store.

For all other communication you will be provided with an international SIM card or simple phone when you arrive at your program site, to use during the duration of your program. We **HIGHLY** recommend looking into purchasing an international data plan for the couple of days before and after your program, so that you'll have a way to use data while you're traveling to and from your site. International plans can be purchased on a day-today basis from most cellphone companies.

A Few More Tips (Cont.)

THE GREEK CULTURE SHOCK SURVIVAL GUIDE:

- Dress conservatively, especially if you want to visit churches; they have dress codes! (Shoulders must be covered, no shorts or short skirts, etc.)
- You will walk A LOT. Be prepared to quadruple your average steps on American soil. And bring durable, comfortable shoes—the cobblestones are unforgiving.
- You don't go to the “bar” to get beer; bars are where you go to get coffee and pastries. Long, leisurely meals are a way of life in Greece (none of this flipping tables business)! If you want your bill in a hurry, you may have to ask for it.
- The Greek are friendly and humble people. Greece has an interesting history involving a rise-fall-rise pattern of trade and tourism. While the islands and Athens generally generate a lot of tourism, there are still a lot of locals living in these areas who will treat you well. Make sure to respect their cities in return!
- There is an “art” to everything, even crossing the street. Let the environment (ancient buildings, historical spaces, and cultural attitudes) inspire you to carry yourself and to live with dignity.

As you prepare to embark on your Atlantis program, we highly encourage spending some time researching your host city. We're incredibly excited to help you prepare for this time of exploration, adventure, and growth in one of Greece's cultural treasures.

**“Travel and change of place impart
new vigour to the mind...”**

—SENECA

atlantis

4301 N Fairfax Dr. #701
Arlington, VA 22203
[Updated March 2019](#)

Copyright ©2018 St. Mary's Institute for Educational Excellence, Inc.
All rights reserved. Do not distribute or copy without express written permission.

