

# GREECE

Greece is a country in southeastern Europe with thousands of islands throughout the Aegean and Ionian seas. Influential in ancient times, it is often called the cradle of Western civilization and the birthplace of democracy, Western philosophy, Western literature, political science, major scientific and mathematical principles, Western drama, and the Olympic Games. It is also known for its beaches. Athens, its capital and largest city, retains landmarks including the fifth century B.C. Acropolis citadel, home to the Parthenon temple. Located on the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula, Greece shares borders with Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. About 80% of Greece is mountainous, with Mount Olympus being the highest peak at 9,573 feet. The official language is Greek and the currency is the euro.

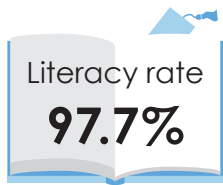


Population  
**10,761,523**



**50,949** MI<sup>2</sup>

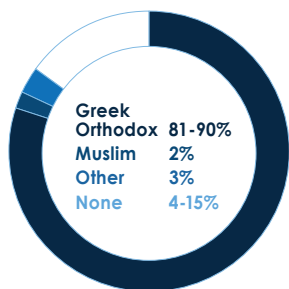
Slightly smaller than Alabama



## Ethnicities



## Religions



## FAMILY LIFE

A typical household in Greece consists of parents and an average of two children. Grandparents and other relatives sometimes live in the same home. It is common for both parents to work and share financial responsibility and equal authority, but mothers usually have more authority in making household decisions.

It is more common for women to do household chores, but in some families chores are shared by both men and women. Teenagers are usually responsible for cleaning their room and picking up after themselves. Chores like doing laundry and cleaning the kitchen or bathroom may not be expected of them. They will help with these chores if they are asked.

It is considered normal for family members to have time to themselves to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends, or to simply relax. Teenagers will often spend time alone in their rooms and expect privacy. Most parents are very involved in the lives of their children and monitor time spent on the computer and online activity. Making big decisions, such as choosing a career or attending university, are usually discussed as a family. Parents sometimes give teenagers a small weekly allowance since it is uncommon for teenagers to have part-time jobs. Parents tend to know their children's friends and monitor the time they come home at night.

It is common for families to eat together, especially on weekends. It is not common for teenagers to prepare meals, and most will make quick snacks if they are hungry.

Belongings are considered one's own. Children do share clothing but are expected to ask before using it. It is common to have pets which are treated as proper family members, and adopting them from shelters or individuals is common practice.

## FRIENDSHIP

Teenagers socialize in groups and one-on-one. Both are considered appropriate. It is perfectly acceptable for teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them one-on-one by going to places such as the cinema, coffee shops, malls, and concerts. Teenagers usually make friends through school and extracurricular activities, but some also have friendships with neighbors and relatives of the same age. The term "friend" is usually reserved for very close relationships, and would not be used to refer to someone whom they know only in passing as a friend.

## SCHOOL LIFE

High school students typically have 9-11 core subjects and several electives. Some classes meet daily while others meet 1-2 times per week, depending on the subject. Electives are usually chosen based on preparation for college entrance exams. Students are evaluated on daily homework, class participation, quizzes, and midterm and final exams. Tests are usually in the form of essay questions and sometimes include multiple choice questions or math/physics exercises.

In general, students are in the same group, stay in the same classroom, and follow core classes throughout their secondary school studies. They tend to form close bonds within their group, but they also mix with students from other classes, especially when taking electives. Students cannot study at different levels of difficulty.

Some high schools offer IT/computing, geology, Greek/European cultural studies, and arts as electives. Typical extracurricular activities include sports, theater groups, and choir. Students are often involved in these activities and form friendships there.

Teenagers usually do not dress up for school. They wear whatever is fashionable (jeans, shirts, hoodies and leggings) but are expected to dress in an appropriate way. High schools usually do not have dress codes but there are some schools which require students to wear uniforms. Teens usually take a packed lunch to school or buy lunch there.

Students are expected to be on time for their classes although it is common in everyday life outside of work and school to be 5-10 minutes late for appointments.

## FOOD

Contemporary Greek cuisine makes wide use of vegetables, olive oil, grains, fish, wine, and meat. Other important ingredients include olives, pasta, cheese, lemon juice, herbs, bread, and yogurt. Dining out is common and restaurants are affordable for both locals and tourists. It is very common for people to ask the restaurant to wrap up any uneaten food to take home for lunch the next day.

Vegetarianism is becoming more common, and there is a tendency towards healthy eating. Fad diets are not common, especially among teenagers, but food restrictions due to religious beliefs are understood.

Many Greeks will offer drink or food to their guests and will repeat their offer one or two times, but will not force food and drink on guests if they decline.

## RELIGION

Religious participation varies by family. Some will attend religious services every Sunday and others live a completely secular life. Most families attend church on Easter and for ceremonies like weddings and baptisms. Churches are not considered as community spaces, but there are some young Christians who are active in their communities and take part in youth activities.

Christmas is celebrated in a similar way to western countries. Easter is considered the biggest celebration, where people go to church the night before. Typically in villages and rural locations, they then gather on Easter day for a big meal traditionally featuring slow-roasted lamb.

## PERSONAL CARE

Teenagers wear the same clothes 2-3 times if they are clean. Many will change their shirts and blouses every day but may wear the same pair of jeans or pants more than once. Teenagers shower daily, or more often if they participate in sports or during the summer, and are expected to keep the bathroom clean after use. Most people have one towel in the bathroom that is used to dry off after a shower/bath and it may be used more than once before it is washed.



The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. FLEX provides competitively selected secondary school students from 21 countries in Europe and Eurasia with the opportunity to spend the academic year in the U.S. living with a volunteer host family and attending a host high school. Begun in 1993, FLEX now has over 27,000 alumni.