

Underground in the Athens Metro

Hellenic History in the Athens Metro

The subway isn't where I normally hang out, but underground in the Athens metro is one exception to the rule. Not only does the Athens metro rapid-transit system serve commuters, but anyone who appreciates Hellenic history too.

When I entered the subway, I had no idea it came with free entrance to a world of Hellenic History in the Athens Metro of all places. I thought I'd just need to head over to the [Acropolis Museum](#) for that.



Once you go underground in the Athens metro, even before you validate your ticket, you'll find exhibitions of ancient artifacts or replicas. The displays are at many metro stations including *Monastiraki* and *Syntagma*. As a tourist, these are two of the lines you are most likely to use, so keep your eyes open as you enter and depart from those stations.



Fiv

e of the Athens Metro stops are located in the city center near the Acropolis, so naturally even before excavation on the metro lines began, archeologists anticipated they'd find an array of artifacts. And wow did they! Excavations leading up to the building of the Athens Metro revealed material from the Neolithic period up to the modern era. Finds included aqueducts and wells, metal workshops, oil lamps, sanctuaries, kilns, and more.

What makes the Athens Metro so special?

Well, aside from the artifacts, it's the cleanest subway I've seen in my life. It is utterly spotless. You don't see litter or graffiti (unlike the rest of Athens), so your eyes are drawn towards the Hellenic History in the Athens Metro or the

lines you'll need to catch to reach your destination.

It's safe too. I didn't see any riffraff hanging around and felt comfortable as security guards in groups of two patrol the stations to ensure the Athens Metro is safe for all.

In addition, it's a convenient and affordable way to get in and around Athens. At the time I was in Athens, a 5-day ticket for all modes was only 10 EUR (12.40 USD). For those traveling from the airport, the return Metro ticket for the airport was 14 EUR (17.30 USD).



We stayed in Athens over five days, so I had to map out the most affordable way to travel ahead of time. Coincidentally, the day we were scheduled to take the metro to Athens Sparta airport there was a three-hour metro strike. We hailed a taxi to the airport and paid the flat rate (35 EUR/44 USD). I was so happy for the strike, because that means we have to return to Athens to validate our unused metro tickets. ☐

The Athens Metro Lines

Spread throughout the city and beyond, there are 3 lines each of which has artifacts for you to see:

Line 1 (Green line): Kifisia – Piraeus

Monastiraki – Meaning ‘small monastery’ is where you depart to be wowed. On sacred grounds, before your eyes, you see the Acropolis and Hadrian’s Library, and 15th C Byzantine church of the Pantanassa.

Line 2 (Red line): Anthoupoli – Eliniko

Syntagma – The square of Syntagma is a great starting point to walk towards the monuments of Athens. It’s crazy busy, so go off to the side, pull out your map and get your bearings straight.

Line 3 (Blue line): Airport – Plakentias – Aghia Marina

Evangelismos – Close to the Hilton Athens, Museum of War, the Byzantine museum, the National Art gallery, and the Kolonaki shopping area.

Once you locate the [Athens Metro](#) archaeological finds, don’t forget to validate! Ticket holders in violation can expect hefty fines equal to 60 times the price of the 70-min flat fare ticket). Ouch!

The Athens underground is a museum of its own kind. For a mere 1,20 EUR you can visit the subway and learn about Hellenic History in the Athens Metro as well as get around the city comfortably and cost-effectively.

Breakfast at the Acropolis Museum

I've enjoyed an early morning breakfast in some of the world's most beautiful places, from a hot-air balloon-ride above the North African mountains to a table on the Grand Canal in Venice. So far, nothing is as surreal as sitting in the Acropolis Museum with a view of the Acropolis in near reach.



Views from the Acropolis Museum restaurant

Located in the historic area of *Makryianni*, the museum stands only 300 meters (980 feet) southeast of the Parthenon so you get a sense of interconnection from the important archaeological sites. From the Dionysios Areopagitou

pedestrian street, you look down toward the museum as if to prepare you to enter an excavation site—which in fact you do. As you approach the entrance beneath your feet thousands of years of history are revealed under the glass walkways.

When we arrived at 7:50 a.m. there were only two gentlemen and a large group of excited Greek school children waiting to enter. We walked past the kids, towards security; the gentleman greeted us with a hearty *Kalimera* (hello in Greek). All week I had experienced the immense Greek hospitality, but at 8:00 in the morning was thoroughly impressed with his cheerful mood.

I had wondered if the building designed by architect Bernard Tschumi with Greek architect Michael Photiadis had retained its opening day glory after Greece's unfortunate financial crisis. Fortunately the museum is still as striking and elegant as the day it opened in 2009. The sheer size (25,000 square meters) might be intimidating, but the use of glass, marble, and natural light provide an airy feeling as you explore the extensive range of artifacts.

Our museum visit was too short, so consider planning more time to view some of the world's most treasured artifacts. As I walked through the exhibitions there were museum archaeologists and artists re-creating artifacts on-hand to answer questions as well as hosts, but I was so mesmerized by the collections I didn't get a chance to do so.



Breakfast at Acropolis Museum restaurant

Next stop was breakfast at the [Acropolis Museum restaurant](#) where shades of gray and black provide a simple yet refined color scheme. As we were the first to enter the restaurant, we had the choice of sitting inside or outside under the shaded terrace. At any table you'll see picture-perfect views of the Parthenon and historic hills of Athens.

The Acropolis Museum breakfast card has an adequate choice of Greek breakfast items all of which proudly use Greek products. I ordered the three-egg omelet filled with cheese from Crete and homemade bread. Both of which were delicious and affordable as museum prices go.

Aside from the cheesy omelet, the best part of breakfast at the Acropolis Museum was most definitely the views from the exhibit floors and the restaurant. They are simply incredible especially. Now I can add the [Acropolis Museum](#) to some of the world's most beautiful places to enjoy breakfast.

Who needs breakfast at Tiffany's when you can have breakfast at the Acropolis Museum!