CULTURE, TRADITION, DIETARY HABITS

Religious composition

The Greek Constitution recognizes Eastern Orthodoxy as the "prevailing" faith of the country, while guaranteeing freedom of religious belief for all.

The Greek government, safeguarding the **freedom of religion**, does not keep statistics on religious groups and censuses do not ask for religious affiliation.

Article 13 (Constitution in force, https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/001-156%20aggliko.pdf)

1. Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual's religious beliefs.

2. All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of the law. The practice of rites of worship is not allowed to offend public order or the good usages. Proselytism is prohibited.

3. The ministers of all known religions shall be subject to the same supervision by the State and to the same obligations towards it as those of the prevailing religion.

4. No person shall be exempt from discharging his obligations to the State or may refuse to comply with the laws by reason of his religious convictions.

5. No oath shall be imposed or administered except as specified by law and in the form determined by law.

Folk traditions – customs

In Greece, tradition is still alive.

Traditional weddings that start with dressing the bride and bouncing a baby boy on the nuptial bed; the bride escorted to the church by musicians; the especially complex wedding rituals of Lefkas; the heart- wrenching Maniot dirges, the musical accompaniment on the journey to the other world.

Clean (Ash) Monday, equivalent to Ash Wednesday, ushers in the 40-day fasting period with meatless picnics and a sky full of colourful kites.

May Day usually involves making **flower wreaths** before sunrise, then burning them on Midsummer Eve.

Saints' Day Celebrations, Saints' Days are celebrated in rural chapels and town churches all year round. Usually preceded by a mass on the eve of the local or **patron saint's name day**, the festival (panigyri)– features free food, drink, **traditional music** and dancing with the congregation into the wee hours. On the Ionian islands of Corfu, Kefalonia and Zante, the patron saints Spyridon, Gerasimos and Dionysios are honoured processions accompanied by marching bands.

The **celebrations on August 15** in honour of the Virgin, attract thousands of worshipers. Especially popular are those at the cathedral of Tinos, Ekatondapyliani on Paros and Hozoviotissa on Amorgos.

Christmas in Greece

Christmas (Xristougenna), the Feast of the Nativity of Jesus is one of the most joyful days of the Greek Orthodox Church. Traditionally, the Christmas holiday period in Greece lasts 12 days, until January 6, which marks the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Theophany (Epiphany). There are many customs associated with the Christmas holidays, some of which are relatively recent, “imported” from other parts of the world (like eating turkey on Christmas day and decorating the Christmas tree). In the past, Greeks decorated small Christmas boats in honour of St. Nicholas and today, they are increasingly choosing to decorate boats, instead of trees, reviving this age-old Christmas tradition.
• "Kalanda" or Carols

The singing of Christmas carols (or kalanda) is a custom preserved in its entirety to this day. On Christmas and New Year Eve, children go from house to house in groups singing the carols, accompanied usually by the sounds of the musical instrument "triangle," but also by guitars, accordions, lyres and harmonicas. Until some time ago, children were rewarded with pastries but nowadays they are usually given money.

• Christmas Elves

Greece’s hobgoblins are called "kallikántzari”, friendly but troublesome little creatures which look like elves. Kallikantzari live deep down inside the earth and come to surface only during the 12-day period from Christmas until Epiphany. While on the earth’s surface, they love to hide in houses, slipping down chimneys and frightening people. Throughout Greece, there are various customs and rituals performed to keep hobgoblins away. Kallikantzari disappear on the day of Epiphany when all waters are blessed, and they return to the earth’s core.

• Sweets & Treats

Traditional culinary delights symbolize good luck in the New Year and adorn the white-clothed tables. "Melomakarona" (honey cookies) and "kourabiedes" (sugar cookies with almonds) are the most characteristic and they characterize the beginning of Christmas festivity. Another traditional custom that dates back to the Byzantine times is the slicing of Vassilopita (St.Basil’s pie or New Year’s Cake). The person who finds the hidden coin in his slice of the cake is considered to be lucky for the rest of the year.

Easter in Greece

- **The Feast of all Feasts**

Considered the most important holiday on Greek calendar and one of the richest in folklore, the celebration of Orthodox Easter (Pascha) is unique throughout Greece. From Crete to Macedonia, Easter customs become a herald of the spirit’s and nature’s rebirth, while Easter celebrations constitute a vivid aspect of the folk culture, rich in meaning and symbolism.

Easter is a moveable holiday. Its celebration falls on the first Sunday after the full moon of the spring equinox. All over Greece, a plethora of customs and traditions are observed during the week prior to Easter, the Holy Week. The preparations for the celebration of the Resurrection start on Holy Thursday. On that day, housewives traditionally prepare special cakes named tsourekia, biscuits and red color eggs. The use of egg is a symbol of rebirth while the red color stands for the blood of Christ. In the past, in many households, people used to place the first red egg on the icon stand of the house in order to cast out evil spirits.

Friday is the most sacred day of the Holy Week, the day of the culmination of the passion of Christ with the deposition from the cross and Christ's burial. Because it is a day of mourning, housewives avoid doing housework. Women and children go to church to decorate the Epitaph (Bier of Christ) with flowers, while in the evening the Epitaph procession takes place. On Saturday morning, preparations start for the festive dinner and a special soup is cooked called "maghiritsa".

Shortly before midnight, people gather in church holding white candles which they light with the "Holy Light" distributed by the priest. When the latter chants "Christ is risen" (Christos Anesti), people exchange wishes and the so-called "Kiss of Love". With the "Holy Light" of the candles they make three times the sign of the cross on the door post over the front door of their houses for good luck. Then they all gather around the table, they crack red eggs and wish one another Christos Anesti. On Sunday morning, mainly in Greek countryside, lamb is prepared on the spit and people eat and dance usually until late at night.

- **Easter Banquet**

Easter is by far the holiest of Greek holidays, but it is also the most joyous, a celebration of spring, of rebirth in its literal as well as figurative sense. As Greeks leave the cities in droves to spend Easter in the countryside, food is central to all festivities.

The Easter table is a reflection of tradition combined with the seasonality of Greek cuisine. The ingredients, the seasonings, and the dishes might differ from place to place, there is always one rule surely followed: nothing must be wasted. The most typical dishes are whole lambs on a spit, slowly roasting; red-dyed eggs; braided sweet breads (tsoureki); Easter soup (magiritsa) and grilled tripe roll (kokoretsi).

- **Apokries: The Greek Carnival**

Greece's Carnival season known as "Apokries" is mainly a period of masquerading, but also eating, drinking and dancing. Traditionally, it begins ten weeks before Greek Orthodox Easter and culminates on the weekend before "Clean Monday," (Ash Monday) the first day of Lent. "Apokria", literally means "goodbye" to the period of meat-eating, or abstinence from meat (Apo-kreo, meaning away from meat).

Carnival officially begins on a Saturday evening with the "opening of the Triodion," the Lenten Triodion, as it is called - which a liturgical book of the Orthodox Church that contains hymns with three odes and begins to be chanted on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee through Holy Saturday.

The following week is a fast-free week until Meatfare Sunday which is the last day before Easter for eating meat. On Thursday of this week which is known as Tsiknopempti- Charred, Smoky or Barbeque Thursday- because of the smell of the grilled meat in the air, family and friends gather in taverns or homes to eat large quantities of charred meat and celebrate, just ten days before the beginning of Lent.

The last Sunday of the Carnival period is known as Cheesefare Sunday or Tyrofagos as only dairy products can be consumed on this day. Cheesefare Sunday is the final day of pre-Lent, as the Monday following -known as Clean or Ash Monday- marks the beginning of Great Lent. During the weekend preceding Clean Monday, carnival celebrations around Greece culminate with vigorous parades, masquerade parties, reviving many traditional customs in different parts of the country, and proving that carnival in Greece is closely related to the cultural heritage of each region.

Clean (or Ash) Monday is a public holiday in Greece which marks the end of the carnival festive season and the start of Lent or the period of fasting until Easter. Weather permiting, people spend Clean Monday outdoors, organizing picnics while children fly kites. Since it marks the beginning of the fasting period special food is eaten on this day. Eating red meat, poultry, fish or dairy products is not permitted. However, a host of other dishes and delicacies is available: lagana (a special unleavened bread eaten only on this day), taramasalata (a fish roe spread), dolmadakia (vine leaves stuffed with rice), grilled octopus, gigantes plaki (oven-baked broad beans), seafood salads and shellfish as well as a special semolina pudding known as halvas are just some of them.

• Patras: The King of Greek Carnivals

The port city of Patras hosts the biggest carnival in Greece, and one of the biggest in Europe. The "king" of Greek carnivals begins in January with an announcement by the town crier, and reaches its peak in the last weekend of carnival. Patras carnival features a variety of events: balls, parades, street theatre, and much more. The carnival reaches its apogee on the last weekend of Triodion: Saturday evening brings the walking parade (with participants taking the streets holding torches), while the phantasmagorical floral, artistic, and satirical floats parade on Sunday, with the Carnival King and Queen in all their splendor. But Patras carnival is mostly the thousands carnival-goers of all ages, participating spontaneously to the events taking place everywhere in the city -homes, bars, streets - turning the whole city into a gigantic party.

• Xanthi: The Folk Carnival

The Thracian city of Xanthi hosts one of the most popular carnivals in the country. Xanthi carnival started in 1966 as an urban event but has incorporated many traditional elements, based on the city's multicultural character that renders it the most folklore of urban carnivals. The highlight is the Folk Parade on Saturday before Ash Monday: bringing together cultural associations from all over Greece, the troupes go singing and dancing through the neighborhoods of the picturesque Old Town and merge in an all-night Balkan folk music fiesta in the main square. Cheesefare Sunday leads to the custom of Burning the tzaros, a human effigy placed on top of a pile of brushwood.

• The "Old Men" of Skyros

The carnival in the Aegean island of Skyros comes alive with the sounds of clanging goat bells. These are worn around the waists of the island men who take part in the carnival playing the role of geros (old man), a figure dressed in a hooded black cape and hanging goat skin. The "old men" run through the streets individually or in groups, singing, dancing and making as much noise as possible, while locals and guests must always toast, drink and dance with the "old men".

• “Flour War” in Galaxidi

In Fokida Prefecture, the town of Galaxidi is one of Greece’s top destinations especially during carnival season. The picturesque small town impresses visitors with its tranquil charm and its rich maritime heritage, notably the old captains’ mansions, the so-called kapetanospita. During Carnival, the town revives the unique custom of "alevromoutzouromata" dating back to the heyday of the town’s merchant fleet, as a fun event for departing sailors at the end of the Carnival. On Clean Monday, Galaxidi is transformed into a battlefield as hundreds of people pelt mercilessly one another with large quantities of flour and dance around the fires – the most daring even jump over them!

Ethnic Diversity and Tradition in Greece

Vlachs, Cretans, Epirots, Macedonians, Aegean and Ionian islanders, Greeks from the Pontus (Caucasus), Asia Minor and Egypt, Pomaks, Thracians, Tsakones, Sarakatsans, Maniots, Arvanites (of Albanian descent), the roots of modern Greece run deep, can be traced back centuries and reach many corners of the earth. They all make a fascinating mosaic of tribes, some nomadic, some indigenous, some from former ancient colonies, who eventually settled in Greece.

Each part of Greece has its own characteristic customs, traditions, manners, holidays, cuisine and local products, art, costumes, architecture, dances, songs, idioms and dialects.

Did you know?

- In Greece, people celebrate the “name day” of the saint that bears their name rather than their own birthday.
- There are over 4000 traditional dances that come from all regions of Greece. There are also Pan-Hellenic dances, which have been adopted throughout the Greek world.
- In Greece, people celebrate the name day of the saint that bears their name.

Dietary habits

Greek Cuisine is the term to describe the traditional food ethics of the Greeks. At 320 B.C. the first cookery book was written by ancient Greek, Orchestrate, who is considered as the father of gastronomy.

Although Greek cuisine is a Mediterranean cuisine, there are some flavourings that are used more often than other Mediterranean cosines such as oregano, mint, garlic, onion, dill and bay leaves.

Greeks typically have 3 meals a day. Traditionally the largest meal of the day was lunch, but many habits have changed due to Greeks adapting a westernized way of living.

Proino-Breakfast
Not the most popular meal of the day, traditionally, Greeks ate a small and simple breakfast, such as herbal tea with bread or paximadi (dried bread). Coffee was more of a luxury item, but when it was available it was consumed alone or also with bread. Another simple breakfast consisted of soft-boiled eggs with bread. Farmers who needed a breakfast to sustain them consumed trahana, a type of grain/pasta made with milk.

Today breakfast is much more westernized and Greeks may eat cereal with milk, bread with jam or honey, yogurt with honey. Many Greeks just have coffee and grab something on their way to work or school such as a cheese pie, spinach pie, the popular sesame bagel-style "koulouri" or even a croissant.

Kolatsio-Mid morning snack

Since most Greeks don't really eat a huge breakfast they usually get hungry around 11 am, their preferred snack is again a savory pie such cheese pie "tyropita" or spinach pie "spanakopita" or a ham and cheese grilled sandwich.

Mesimeriano-Lunch
In the '60s, '70s and '80s before the 9 to 5 workday came into force all Greek families ate their main meal of the day at home between 1.30pm and 2.30pm, when schools were out , shops closed and dad was home. Today however this type of meal will be consumed at work and only children will eat at home. Traditionally this meal consisted of a vegetable stew/casserole with cheese, bread, salad, and wine; for the more affluent, meat may have been on the menu. Farmers would consume anything they could carry with them, which was basically bread or paximadi with cheese, olives or tomatoes, or fruit. Today Greeks still may eat a traditional vegetable casserole for lunch, but in most cases pasta grilled meat, and sandwiches are also on the menu.

Afternoon coffee

In the old days, Greeks could take a nice nap after the mesimeriano and when they woke up which was around 5 in the afternoon they would drink a Greek coffee with a spoon sweet or some other small dessert or cookie as an accompaniment. Today, not many people have the time to take a nap, but the coffee habit still remains.

Vradino-Dinner
Greeks eat late. If you go to a restaurant before 9 pm, most likely it will be empty. Most Greeks will eat dinner around 9 to 10 pm. If they have had a substantial lunch then they will eat something lighter for dinner such as fruit with yogurt, a sandwich, salad or a small amount of

leftovers from lunch. If they haven't really eaten a good meal for lunch they may have a full meal or order pizza, souvlaki, hamburgers or even Chinese. Younger generations usually eat their main meal at this time. It's also the time Greeks go out with friends.

Greek Gastronomy

Greece enjoys a huge variety of agricultural products. Olives and olive oil, cheeses, wines, mastic and saffron are but a few of the products that have won international acclaim as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and received important distinctions for their quality and particularly delectable characteristics.

Greece ranks among the first in the EU, regarding the list of agricultural products registered as protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI) or Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) products, with approximately 94 entries. These products are olive oils, table olives, cheese, honey, fruits, vegetables, cereals, bread, pastry, fish and related products, other products of animal origin, gums and natural resins, essential oils and other products.

The Greek Mediterranean Diet is one of the healthiest diets. It is characterized by a nutritional model that has remained constant over time and space, consisting mainly of olive oil, cereals, fresh or dried fruit and vegetables, a moderate amount of fish, dairy and meat, as well as a variety of condiments and spices, all accompanied by wine or infusions.

According to research carried out in the last 50 years in parts of the Mediterranean, including Crete and southern Italy, the Mediterranean diet model is responsible for the longevity of its inhabitants and the absence of heart diseases or diseases of the digestive system.

However, the Greek Mediterranean diet is not merely a diet, but rather a way of life: it constitutes a set of skills, knowledge and practices, promoting social interaction, since communal meals are the cornerstone of social customs and festive events.

Since November 2010, the Mediterranean Diet has been recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece along with Italy, Spain and Morocco, thus reinforcing it not only as a fundamental part of these countries' history and background, but also as a great contribution to the world.

Did you know?

- The word diet comes from the Greek dieta, a word meaning way of life.
- The traditional Mediterranean diet delivers as much as 40% of total daily calories from fat, yet the associated incidence of cardiovascular diseases is significantly decreased.
- Mediterranean diet increases the amount of "Omega-3 fatty acids," a substance the rest of the developed societies do not get enough of.
- The people of Crete Island are among the longest living in the world. Researchers have linked their longevity to various factors among which, their daily diet.

Famous Products

In a recent initiative, called quality farm products' basket, already known in Europe, Greek regions have launched promotion campaigns at both domestic and international level, aiming at advertising their quality products and mainly those characterized as PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication).

The basket, hallmark of regional food's excellence, includes products of animal and plant origin such as cereals, pome fruits, stone fruits, legumes, wine, herbs - medicinal plants, fodder plants, products made with goat milk, as well as meat, mushrooms, fish, traditional products and others.

Olive Oil

Greek olive oil is the basis of the Mediterranean Diet. As the main ingredient of every recipe found in Greek traditional cuisine, olive oil plays a dominant role in Greek nutritional habits. Greek olive oil is known worldwide for its purity, exceptional taste and high nutritional value.

Olive oil can be mainly classified as Extra Virgin, Virgin, or Pure, depending on the way it is produced, its chemistry and its flavour. Greece produces more than 430,000 tons of olive oil annually, and more than 75% of that is Extra virgin olive oil, which is considered the best type. Greece is the third largest olive-oil producing country in the world, after Spain and Italy.

Did you know?

- There are approximately 120,000,000 olive trees in Greece.
- Greece is the world's third largest producer of edible olives and olive oil, with a 16% share of the international olive oil market.
- Some olive trees planted in the 13th century are still producing olives.
- According to Greek mythology, Athena and Poseidon agreed that whoever gave the city the best gift would become its patron. Though Poseidon gave the gift of water, Athena's gift of an olive tree was deemed by the other gods to be more valuable.
- Olive oil has been regarded as the "beauty oil". The body's cells incorporate the valuable fatty acids from the oil, making arteries more supple and skin more lustrous.

Wine

Greek vineyards are among the world's oldest and have produced wines for thousands of years. Thanks to its geographical location in the temperate Mediterranean region, Greece is endowed with favourable climatic conditions for vine growing.

Greek wines, like many agricultural products in Greece, carry a long history and a heritage which comprises unique viticultural practices and a treasure of local grape varieties. This combined with the contribution of keen producers who apply modern, human-scale wine production, make Greek wines different and unique.

The great number of grape varieties native to Greece, Assyrtiko, Moschofilero, Agiorgitiko, Xinomavro and hundreds of other lesser known varieties, offer seasoned wine lovers a

glorious terrain for exploring the diversity and singularity of Greek wines.

Almost all Greek wineries participate regularly both in wine competitions and other eminent wine-tasting meetings from which numerous award winning Greek wines have emerged, placing Greek wine in a coveted position in the international wine scene.

Did you know?

- Greece, the renowned birthplace of Dionysus, the god of wine, has arguably one of the longest wine histories in the world. Wine is being produced in Greece for more than 4,000 years.

Cheese

Greece produces some of the finest cheeses in the world, for every type of cooking and every occasion. Apart from the best known feta, many other varieties, equally protected under the PDO provisions, are worth tasting.

Greek cheeses like the hard, salty kefalotiri and graviera, the sweet manouri, the fresh mizithra or the smoked metsovone, are all produced with the most traditional and qualitative way. All these Greek cheeses are exported throughout the International market making Greece and important exporter.

Greek cheeses have great nutritional value and they are rich in elements that are essential for the development of the human organism. They are used in many recipes, in baked goods, casseroles, appetizers, mezedes, with fruit or simply as table cheeses.

Did you know?

- The first recorded cheese maker ever is the one-eyed giant Cyclop, as mentioned in Homer's Odyssey.
- The annual per capita consumption of cheese in Greece is about 25 kilos, more than in France or Italy, who are also famous European cheese lovers.

Mastic

The mastic of Chios island (Mastiha Chiou) is characterized as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) product, exported from Chios all over the world. It is a natural, aromatic resin, produced from the mastic trees that grow exclusively on the Aegean island of Chios. It is used as a natural chewing gum, but most importantly, it is used in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and even in the culinary world. Due to its various qualities and unusual taste, mastic is used to produce a large range of other products such as sweets, jams, ice-creams, chocolates, chewing gums, tooth paste, candies, bakery products, beverages, tea, coffee, dairy products, pasta, sauces, liquors, ouzo and wine.

Did you know?

- Although mastic trees grow in many Mediterranean countries, they produce little or no mastic, except for those of south Chios. Therefore, Chios Island is the only place in the world where mastic is produced. This is probably because of the volcanic composition of the soil and the climate.

- The abundant therapeutic properties of mastic had been already noted by the father of medicine, Hippocrates, while its use as the first natural chewing gum and as a cooking spice has also been documented from antiquity.

Saffron

The Greek red saffron (Krokos Kozanis) is PDO protected and placed among the most precious and valuable spices inherited by ancient civilizations, due to its aromatic, colour, pharmaceutical and aphrodisiac properties. The northern Greek prefecture of Kozani is one of just four regions in the world where saffron is grown, and the Greek variety is considered of supreme quality, a distinction worthy of the attribute 'flower of the Mediterranean cuisine'. Collecting, sorting and processing are done without any help from technology. Approximately 50,000 stigmas are needed to produce just 100 g of red saffron.

Greece is the world's largest producer of organic saffron and Kozani saffron had been one of only fifteen European agricultural products featured in a campaign to promote quality European farm products outside the European Union. Italy, Spain, the United States, and Australia are some of the main markets for Krokos Kozani.

Did you know?

- Frescoes in the palaces of Knossos (1600 B.C.) clearly depict a young girl gathering crocus flowers. Fragmentary wall-paintings at the archaeological site of Akrotiri, on Santorini Island depict saffron gatherers who offer their crocus-stamens to a seated lady, perhaps a goddess. Moreover, in his writings, Homer calls dawn, a crocus veil.

Fishery and Aquaculture

Greece is a country with a large tradition in quality fishery. With a 4,000-kilometre coastline around the mainland, plus a further 11,000 kilometres around the Greek islands, Greece offers excellent conditions for fishery operations: the waters around Greece are home to approximately 250 marine creatures.

Although modern technology has changed fishing industry worldwide, the majority of Greek coastal fishermen still fish with the traditional methods and fishery fans around the globe include Greek Fishery within their choices and honour them with their preference. The Greek sea fishery lands around 130,000-160,000 tonnes of fish and seafood every year. About 90% of this is caught in the Aegean Sea. Some of the most common species are sardine, anchovy, sea bream (tsipoura), sea bass (lavraki) and Mediterranean mussels.

The Greek sea is also the source of many delicacies like avgotaraho, a traditional fish roe delicacy, protected under PDO and considered by many as Greece's answer to caviar. Smoked trout, smoked eel and a host of other preserved fish are among the country's most prized local delicacies, as well as a growing part of food exports market.

Furthermore, aquaculture provides a significant contribution to primary sector production in Greece. Sea aquaculture, in particular, is constantly increasing its share of contribution to the country's economy. Greece ranks first in terms of production among European Union and Mediterranean countries with commercial aquaculture finfish species and sea aquaculture ranks second in Greek exports' food & beverages category. Moreover, it is estimated that over 80% of the Greek production is exported, mainly to Italy, Spain and France, while, lately demand is also growing in Central and Northern Europe.

Did you know?

- Greek fishery is considered a ‘Med champ’. Fish, is the second largest agricultural export after olive oil, and sometimes, comes first. The country exports almost 85% of its products and for some species Greece accounts for nearly half of global production.

Public holidays

It is important to know that in addition to these special public holidays, Greek law indicates that every Sunday (Κυριακή – Kiriaki) of the year is also considered to be a public holiday. Here is a look at the holidays:

- **New Year's Day –** January 1st – Πρωτοχρονιά – Protohronia
- **Epiphany –** January 6th – Θεοφάνεια – Theophania
- **Clean** (Ash) **Monday –** Varies Yearly – Καθαρά Δευτέρα – Kathara Theftera
- **Independence Day & Annunciation to the Theotokos –** March 25th – Εικοστή Πέμπτη Μαρτίου – Ikosi Pemti Martiou & Ευαγγελισμός της Θεοτόκου - Evaggelismós tís Theotókou
- **Good (Holy) Friday –** Varies Yearly – Μεγάλη Παρασκευή – Megali Paraskevi
- **Easter (Easter Sunday)–** Varies Yearly – Κυριακή του Πάσχα – Kiriaki Tou Pascha
- **Easter Monday –** Varies Yearly – Δευτέρα του Πάσχα – Theftera Tou Pascha
- **Labor Day (May Day) –** May 1st – Εργατική Πρωτομαγιά – Ergatiki Protomagia
- **Pentecost –** Varies Yearly – Πεντηκοστή – Pentikosti
- **Dormition of the Virgin Mary –** August 15th – Κοίμηση της Θεοτόκου – Kimisi tis Theotokou
- **Ochi Day –** October 28th – Το Όχι or Ημέρα του Όχι – To ochi or Imera tou Ochi
- **Christmas Day –** December 25th – Χριστούγεννα – Christougenna
- **Glorifying Mother of God** - December 26th - Σύναξις Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου Μαρίας - Sínaxis Iperagías Theotókou Marías

Please note that in addition to the aforementioned official public holidays, there are also holidays that vary locally, related to **patron saint** of the city – town, such as St Dimitrios who is the patron saint of Thessaloniki and is celebrated on the 26th of October, St Andreas who is the patron saint of Patra and is celebrated on the 30th of November etc.

With regards to **school calendar**, please be advised by the school administration as in this case there are also additional holidays in place only for students.