**Athens Free Time Suggestions**

**National Archaeological Museum** *(Metro Omonia. 44 Patission St; Open Mon 12:30-7pm and Tues-Sun 8am-7pm, Check winter openings with your Tour Director)*

[www.namuseum.gr/wellcome-en.html](http://www.namuseum.gr/wellcome-en.html)

This vast and hugely popular museum is home to many of the earliest known Greek sculptures dating from 2000 BC and includes the remarkable Cycladic figurines. The Mycenaean Collection includes gold masks, cups, dishes and jewelry excavated from the site of Mycenae in 1876; there are also wonderful burial masks and Vaphio cups. **Entrance fee applies.**

**New Acropolis Museum** *(Metro Acropolis; Tuesday to Sunday 8am-8pm, 10pm Fri, closed Monday)*

<http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en>

On Dionysiou Areopagitou Street, under the slopes of the Acropolis itself, this spectacular modern building houses the artifacts from the Sacred Rock. A walk through its galleries is a walk through history – between the masterpieces of the Archaic and Classical periods as well as the ancient neighborhoods of Athens. The Acropolis Museum has a café and restaurant with panoramic views of the Acropolis and a 700 square meter public terrace commanding a breathtaking view. **Entrance fee applies**.

**The Benaki Museum** *(Open 9am-5pm, Sat 9-3pm, closed Tuesday; late opening on Thursday until 10pm)*

[www.benaki.gr/index.asp?lang=en](http://www.benaki.gr/index.asp?lang=en)

Located on Vassilisis Sofias (between Kolonaki Square and the National Gardens) the Benaki lays out the history, art and culture of both ancient and modern Greece. A must for those of Greek origin, or anyone who wants a better understanding of the country which is modern Greece. Laid out chronologically, the museum tells the story from ancient times to the war of Independence in the 1820s. **Entrance fee applies.**

**Museum of Greek Popular Musical Instruments** *(Metro Monastiraki, 1-3 Diogenous Street; Open Tues & Thurs-Sun 10am-2pm; Wed 12-6pm; Monday closed)*

[www.athensmuseums.net/index.php?lang=en](http://www.athensmuseums.net/index.php?lang=en)

In the heart of the old town, this fun museum is housed in the historical Lassanis Mansion, built in 1842 close to the Roman Agora. Exhibits include traditional instruments such as tamborines, Cretan lyres, lutes, pottery drums and clarinets which are all on show. Enjoy the music that defines Greece! **Free**

**Museum of Greek Folk Art** *(Metro Syntagma or Acropolis, 17 Kydathinaion Street; Open Tues-Sun, 10am-2pm)*

<http://www.melt.gr/index.php?lang=en>

A surprisingly appealing, small museum with glittering embroideries and eclectic Greek costumes. Many of the embroidered, crocheted and woven exhibits were made by young Greek women as part of their dowries when the bride was obliged to arrive at the altar with a lifetime worth of linen, rugs and blankets. Occasionally, there are also children’s puppet shows. **Entrance fee applies.**

**National Gardens** *(Metro Syntagma, Amalias Avenue; open 24 hours daily)*

Wonderful places to relax in the center of the city, the National Gardens were formerly known as the Royal Gardens. The parks are open all day and filled with beautiful and rare flowers and bushes. There are also little duck ponds, peacocks, a variety of European trees, lots of palm trees brought in by the first Queen of Greece, Amalia, and plenty of nearby cafes for an ice-cream. Open air cinema (films in English) also happens here in summertime.

**Mount Likavitos (Lycabettus Hill) Cable Car.** *(Metro Evagelismos; open daily 9am-11:45pm)*

This exciting Swiss-built cable car operates every 20 minutes during the summer and offers a fantastic view of Athens from Mount Likavitos (277m), the highest point in the metropolis. Apart from the impressive urban panorama, there is a café and restaurant, the little whitewashed chapel of St. George, and plenty of walkways to explore. There is a charge for the cable car. You may also walk up the stairs to the top (stairs are open 24/7).

**Flea Market** *(Metro Monastiraki, Pandrosou Street; open daily)*

After wandering down the heaving Ermou Street with its international high street stores, the world’s oldest flea market at Monastiraki makes a welcome change. If you are looking for something Greek, then a wonderful gift could well be the traditional worry beads (komboloi).

**The Central Market** *(Metro Omonia or Monastiraki, Athinas Street; open Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm***)**

As with all city markets, this is a wonderful eye-opener into the local produce, some of which may not look so appetizing (you can watch locals bargain for sheep’s heads!). However, this is a great place to buy traditionally produced Greek spices, herbs, sweets and a variety of cheeses and honeys. If you are a fan of the local halva then you are in for a treat. If nothing else, a great place for people-watching.

**The Mall** *(Metro Neratziotissa, 35 Andrea Papandreou Street; open Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm and Sat, 9am-8pm)*

Built to coincide with the 2004 Olympic Games, this vast modern shopping mall is located right next to the metro station, just 20 minutes ride from the city center, and within sight of the impressive Olympic stadium.

Housed over three levels, there are 200 stores including an excellent variety of European high street fashion and some unique local boutiques. In addition to a bank, supermarket and 15 cinemas, there is a tempting food court offering fast food as well as both Greek and international cuisine.

**Psiri** *(Iroon Square)*

Psiri has become the place for young people to go in the evening. Full of small cafes, restaurants and bars with music everywhere, this is the neighborhood to be in after dark. The easiest way to enter Psiri is from one of the small roads between the Attalos Hotel and Monistiraki square on Athinas street. Walk in and make a right on Miaouli and head to Iroon square. If you are coming down Ermou, pass Monastiraki Square, turn right on Themidos (turns into Miaoulis) or Kariaskaki, and you will be led to Iroon Square.

**Haridimos Shadow Puppet Museum Theatre** *(9am-1pm & 5pm-9pm Tues- Sun, closed Sunday evening)*

<http://www.cityofathens.gr/en/haridimos-shadow-puppet-museum-theatre-0>

The museum hosts a vast collection of items that belonged to the Haridimos family, renowned shadow puppet masters. Over 1,000 exhibits are on display including figures made with leather, cardboard, gelatin and sets drawn on fabric, cloth-bound manuscripts, folk art paintings, and photographs dating from the early 20th century until today. If you are lucky enough to find Sotiris Haridimos on site when you arrive, you could be treated to your own private shadow puppet show!

**Lykavetos Hill**

Make your way up to the highest point over the city for some exceptional views, as well as a chance to escape the city heat. You can walk, but the fun way to get up is to take the funicular from Kolonaki. At the top there is an open-air theatre as well as cafes and souvenir stalls.

**Acropolis Ticket Museums**

Your ticket to the Acropolis is also valid for numerous other great museums in Athens. Among them are the remains of Hadrian’s library (on the north side of the Acropolis), the Museum of the Ancient Agora and the superb collection at the Archeological museum of Kerameikos. Ask your Tour Director for details on other sites accessible with this ticket.