

Ways around Paros!

By bus:

The best and safest way to get around Paros is by bus. There are very good & frequent bus connections all around the island and they are cheap (example: fare between Parikia and Naoussa is 90 Eurocents) and usually very punctual.

Bus fares are collected by a boy working on the bus, or by the bus driver himself during the low season. You pay on the bus, not when you enter it. The main bus stations in Parikia and Naoussa are open most of the day and provide you with free photocopies of the timetable. There are new timetables approximately once every week or 10 days, as there are busses added to the schedule until the high season, when the busses run very frequently and even all through the night.

Even during the low season there are busses approx. every hour between Parikia and Naoussa, the island's most important towns, until about midnight.

Note: Busses also stop for you in the middle of nowhere, so if you see one and want to hop on it, just wave! If you are on it and want to get off somewhere, just give the bus driver a sign!

Motorcycles and Mopeds:

One of the most popular means of getting around the island(s) is motorbikes and mopeds. They are fairly cheap (from ~ 10 Euro & upwards per day, depending on model and season) and have a great advantage: you can go wherever you like. As the roads on Paros are all pretty good compared to other islands, Paros might be ideal for using this form of transportation. It's also convenient if you like to discover the last corners where the bus won't get you, or you want to go to a remote beach that is not close enough to the bus stop.

However, there are a few important points you should consider:

- ▶ Only drive if you have a licence! Even if motorbike rentals don't ask for your licence! If they don't and the police pick you up or you have an accident, you will be in trouble.
- ▶ Always wear a helmet! Motorbike hirers must be able to provide you with helmets. Unfortunately **there are many accidents throughout the season** and it's expensive if the police stops you. **Police controls are frequent.**
- ▶ The roads are tricky - hilly and slippery! Beware of sharp, unexpected corners.
- ▶ Watch out for other "**crazy drivers**" - not only Greeks! The most dangerous drivers are the inexperienced ones, many riding a moped or motorcycle for the first time!
- ▶ Take care that your bike is in order before you take off! Some get only minimal **maintenance** - check the breaks before you take off!
- ▶ Don't take the cheapest bike you can find, but make sure the motorcycle

rental offers **service** and keeps the bikes in shape. Some offer good prices but charge extra fees if you get stranded somewhere and need to be picked up.

- ▶ Make sure you always have your papers with you (police controls!), including the contract with the motorcycle hirer's telephone number!
- ▶ **Fuel:** Usually you return the bike with the same amount of fuel that you got it with. If the tank was empty, you can return it empty. Reconfirm with the hirer before you depart.
- ▶ **BEWARE:** If you have an accident or damage the vehicle in any way, you will be held responsible - check beforehand for insurance coverage! If you don't understand the fineprint in the contract, ask!

Cars:

Renting a car is also an way to go around the island. You can find all kinds of models, from a small Fiat Panda to a Jeep Vitara! Of course this is more expensive than a motorbike (prices range from 18 Euro & upwards per day, depending on model and season), but the advantages are that the car will carry more people than a motorbike and you can share the fare, plus **it is safer!**

Just be sure not to forget these points:

- ▶ Only drive if you **have a licence!** Even if car rentals don't ask for your licence! If they don't and the police pick you up or you have an accident, you will be in *big* trouble. (Tip: If you forgot your licence at home, you can have it faxed to you and you will be able to get a car!)
- ▶ The roads are tricky - hilly and slippery! Beware of sharp, unexpected corners. Wear your seat belt!
- ▶ Watch out for other "**crazy drivers**" - not only Greeks! The most dangerous drivers are the inexperienced ones, many riding a moped or motorcycle for the first time, or not used to driving on the right side of the road!
- ▶ Take care that your car is in order before you take off! Some get only minimal **maintenance** - check the breaks, water level & oil before you take off!
- ▶ Don't necessarily take the cheapest car you can find, if you do make sure the car rental offers **service** and keeps the cars in shape. Some offer good prices but charge extra fees if you get stranded somewhere and need to be picked up.
- ▶ Make sure you always have your papers with you (police controls!), including the contract with the car rental's telephone number!
- ▶ **Fuel:** Usually you return the car with the same amount of fuel that you got it with. If the tank was empty, you can return it empty. Reconfirm with the hirer before you depart.

- ▶ BEWARE: If you have an accident or damage the vehicle in any way, you will be held responsible - check beforehand for insurance coverage! If you don't understand the fineprint in the contract, ask!

By bicycle:

For people who are very fit (steep hills!!!) it is a nice and ecological way to travel around the island, and the roads on Paros are fairly good. You can rent bikes for little money (around 7 Euro per day).

But I'd just like to mention a few things. First, all the tips I've given you for cars and motorbikes apply, **PLUS**:

- ▶ The roads are not only tricky and steep, but also narrow, and it can be dangerous due to cars and motorbikes overtaking you at high speed. When you are cycling, be sure to ride behind one another, **not next to each other!** I encounter many dangerous situations with groups of cyclists in the middle of the road!
- ▶ Beware of the heat (sunstroke)! Take enough water with you!

Walking:

Certainly a beautiful way to discover the island, slowly and peacefully. Very enjoyable during the low season, when it isn't so hot, especially in the spring, when there are flowers everywhere! Discover the nature, unusual plants, herbs, hidden monasteries, old windmills, a lighthouse ... things that you are not likely to find from a main road.

Where to walk? There is one famous and beautiful walking route: The "Byzantine Trail" (from the town Lefkes down to the valley). A good idea is to choose a route connecting two towns that are not too far away from each other (unless you are very fit ;-)!), and just start walking. Be sure to take a map with you! In case you get lost or tired, try to find the next main road and wait for the bus or hitch a ride (see next chapter).

Hitchhiking:

We do not recommend it, as everyone knows it **can** be dangerous, but it is very common around the islands. Many islanders will stop willingly and give you a ride to wherever you want. You might experience nice things, being invited to a farm and offered fresh goat milk or something like that. I myself often pick up people I recognise as tourists. Since I spend a lot of time driving back and forth, I enjoy a little chat once in a while, and I have met some nice people that way.

Note: Don't stick your thumb out, as it could be considered as an insult, just wave or hold your arm out! **Never do it if you are a single female!**

Boat taxi:

A very common means of transportation on the Greek Islands are little boat taxis (former fishing boats!) that usually take you to the various beaches. Nice, traditional and cheap way to get somewhere. (Prices are like the busses'!) Not to be recommended on a windy day if you get seasick easily! Otherwise very safe.

Taxi:

Taxis in Greece are government controlled and fairly cheap, so don't hesitate to hop on a taxi, it might save you some hassle like waiting for a bus. But don't forget: taxi-drivers all over the world are tricky at times!

Here some tips for successful taxi driving:

- ▶ Don't stick your thumb out, as it could be considered as an insult, just wave!
- ▶ Make sure the taxi-driver has his metre on.
- ▶ **Don't agree on arranging prices**, unless you are going very far and *really* think the price is reasonable!
- ▶ Don't worry if the taxi-driver takes more people in on the way. It is common in Greece - however, if it is done the right way, **the fare is to be shared!**
- ▶ Wear your seat belt, even if he doesn't tell you to or maybe, tells you *not* to! He might even protest against you putting it on, considering it a personal insult on his driving skills ;-). Don't worry, what's more important - your life or his ego? (He probably won't be wearing it himself, and legally he doesn't have to, either.)
- ▶ Taxi drivers usually don't mind smoking, as they most likely smoke themselves!
- ▶ Sometimes people have problems finding a taxi from Piraeus to the airport, as the taxi-drivers, for some reason, don't like going there. Either take the bus (goes regularly directly to the airport and is much cheaper), or be tricky, just open the door and sit in the taxi, then tell the driver where you want to go. If you are desperate (maybe in a rush!), look for a policeman to help you!
- ▶ During the high season, a taxi is the most difficult thing to find on the islands, so if you need one, make sure you organize it in time.

A few useful tips if you are passing through Athens

For many people, Athens is all one big city. Actually, Athens and Piraeus are cities in the great municipality of Attiki. If you want to go to the port, you go to **Piraeus**, which is on the west coast of Attiki, or **Rafina**, which is another, smaller port on the east coast. Don't be afraid of finding your destination, taxi drivers just need to know which island you are going to and they will take you to the right dock!

Airport "Eleftherios Venizelos":

The "new" airport opened in March 2001. It is in **Spata**, which is about 30 km northeast of Athens. The airport offers many services like car hire, money exchange, international press, souvenirs (last minute!) and snack bar. There is a good bus connection (frequent and cheap!) to Piraeus. For more information on the **airport** & how to get to and from it, check this Website: www.athensairport-2001.gr

Piraeus:

If you arrive in Athens Airport and want to travel to one of the islands, take the bus or taxi to Piraeus (it will take about 60 minutes if there is not too much traffic), which is where you will find most of the boats to the islands. If you have a lot of luggage, I recommend taking a taxi. Taxi drivers just need to know which island you are going to and they will take you to the right dock!

Rafina:

Second most important port with connections to many islands, although now closer to the new airport in Spata.

Overnight in Athens: Finding a hotel in Athens that is good, comfortable and fairly cheap is not easy. We would recommend staying

- in **Plaka** in the centre of Athens so you can visit some of the most important monuments such as the Acropolis on foot;
- in **Glyfada** if you'd like to be between the airport and the centre AND near the beach, and
- in **Piraeus** if you want to be close to the port.

Tip:

Many of the boats to the islands leave very early in the morning. It is a good idea sticking to the information in travel guides if you need to stay in Athens upon arrival in Greece. On your way back ask on the islands, wherever you're staying they will surely be able to recommend a good place and possibly even make a reservation for you.

Metro:

There are new very modern subway lines that will comfortably take you through the centre of Athens and connect you with Piraeus. From **Omonia Square** or **Syntagma** you can even walk directly to the **Acropolis**.

How do I best get to Paros?

The most common way to get to Paros is to fly to **Athens, Santorini or Mykonos** & then continue your trip with a ferry. This takes between approx 4 hours with the slowest boat from Athens up to 40 mins with the fastest boat from Mykonos. That's the time range you need to calculate.

It is very important to know when you need to land in order to catch a ferry to Paros on the same day, otherwise you need to stay somewhere overnight.

Here's a rough guideline:

For traveling from Athens, you need to land in Athens up to 14.00 hrs to catch the usually last ferry per day to Paros around 17.00 hrs. Calculate around 1 1/2 hrs for the bus trip from the airport to the port of Piraeus. (It's the bus "X96" that goes every 20 mins from the airport and costs around 5 Euros per ticket - no need for the taxi-hassle!) Sometimes there are also boats from Rafina, too, but you'd need to check the boat schedule for that first.

For Santorini, it's best if you land by 11.00 hrs, then you'll be sure to get a ferry or speedboat the same day; sometimes there is also a ferry around 18.00 hrs from Santorini, but not every day.

Mykonos is a bit tricky, as there are daily boats but unless it is high season only very early in the morning (around 10.00 hrs), so usually there is no way around staying overnight on Mykonos. There is no ground rule here either, so you'd have to check the ferry schedule there, too.

You can also fly from Athens to Paros with one of the small Olympic Air planes (=up to 38 passengers), which fly approx. 3x a day.

However, for this you have to apply to the travel agency where you book your flight or www.olympicair.com, and beware that it is not easy to get seats. The flight takes approx. 35 minutes.



Otherwise of course, if you are island hopping, you can get to Paros from almost all other islands, even places like Crete or Samos, and if there is not a direct boat, you get a connection from another island.

>>> Please check our page "[Traveling with ferries](#)" for more details and how to find boat schedules!

Should I book the ferry in advance?

That depends on several factors but usually I recommend not to, unless you want to be sure to get one certain ferry during high season or around holidays like Easter when there is a rush on everything.

Otherwise, it depends on the weather, which is an important point to consider during the low season when the weather can still be pretty unreliable; it's also important to know that the schedules are often subject to last-minute changes or cancellations, which can leave you stranded with a ticket that is difficult to change or waiting for "your" boat that is a day or so late when you could have taken any other boat before that.

So generally we think it is sensible to wait for weather forecasts during the low season months and that it is usually the best idea to check the Internet before your trip (see www.gtp.gr) to get a rough idea of the schedule and then book your ticket when you arrive in Piraeus or Rafina.

Do I need a travel guide (and are they always right)?

If you have read this website, no ;-)! But honestly, it depends on how detailed you want your information. There are plenty of travel guides with a lot of great information, but it's not necessary to stick to them like they are a bible. Things change quickly and the information may not be up to date, it may be incomplete and the writer probably doesn't know everything.

We have experienced people insisting on things that were written in a book that simply were not right. And beside the few hotels the travel guides mention, the islands offer many more just as good or even better places. Just open your eyes and look around yourselves, discover things without the book. (There are people who don't walk one step without their travel guide!)

Some travel guides we recommend:

"Let's Go Greece"

&

The "Lonely Planet" Greek Islands

Where can I get medical treatment in an emergency?

If it is a serious case, call an ambulance or the hospital. Ask a local for help if you don't know what to do. There is a public hospital in Parikia where you will be treated for free, but if possible take your ID and any health-insurance certificate you have with you.

If it is not an emergency, it may be enough to go to a pharmacy. The pharmacists are highly trained and can help you in many cases.

Dining in Paros

The island of Paros is part of the Cyclades group, 185 kilometres south-east of Piraeus. A popular European holiday destination, it measures only 16 kilometres at its widest point. With the clear blue Aegean waters on all sides, fish is not surprisingly a very popular choice when it comes to dining out. The Greeks are renowned for their culinary generosity and as with all Greek holiday hotspots there is a taverna on almost every corner. Because of the many restaurants to choose from on Paros it's best to select wisely. Don't be afraid to ask a local or a holiday maker already sporting a tan. Many Greek eateries serve a similar menu, so your decision could be made on variety, entertainment or location. As a guide try and look for somewhere that looks clean and tidy and if there's a large crowd (especially Greek) waiting to be served then the chances are it's good food.

Greek portions tend to be generous so once you find your way sharing a starter is probably a good idea. The average cost of a meal for two would be 10-20 Euros, depending on how many courses and what wine you chose to drink. Eating abroad is always a challenge when it comes to reading the menu, but when in Greece do as the Greeks do and simply ask the waiter. There could even be some restaurant special lurking in the kitchen served on request only.

As with all Mediterranean destinations the local fruit and veg are delicious, just make sure you are buying Greek produce and not something that's travelled miles before it reaches your plate.

The wine list is pretty extensive, Paros wines are really excellent you must try them.

What is "Paros Life"?

It is a monthly newspaper published by and for the (big) foreign community and others in Paros. It only costs 1 Euro and is sold in a few stores and travel agencies. It has a lot of information that might be interesting and useful to you, like news about the island, restaurant ads and telephone numbers. Also good information on the animal help situation!

Purchase, subscribe and contact Paros Life or read it online here:

[Paros Life](#)

Some useful links for you & link exchange

Activities on Paros/ Antiparos

Sailing cruises & yacht charter with Catamarans Pahi 53 and more	>	www.archipelclub.com
Daily sailing tours & more	>	www.paros-sailing.com
Sea discovery programmes with snorkeling and diving for kids, teens, families and schools	>	www.octopuseatrips.com
Scuba diving courses focusing on marine biology and archaeology	>	www.aegeandivingcollege.com
Pounda Beach	>	www.pundabeach.gr

Greece & Paros Links

Ferry schedules, booking online	>	www.gtp.gr
Paros Life	>	www.paroslife.com
Athens Airport	>	www.athensairport-2001.gr
More about Paros	>	http://www.greeka.com/cyclades/paros