



Car rental in Athens: prices, airport and tips

By Floriane

If you're here, it's probably because you're planning a trip to Greece, and the same question comes up again and again: **which car comparison service should I choose to rent a car for a road trip to Greece?**

In this guide, we share everything you need to know to **rent a car in Athens without making a mistake**: where to book, when to book, how much a **car rental Athens** costs, what type of vehicle to choose, what you need to know about tolls, traffic in Athens and mistakes to avoid before hitting the road.

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Why rent a car for a road trip in Greece?

Obviously, you don't **need a car to visit Athens**. Although you can of course get around the capital, the center is dense, the streets are sometimes narrow, parking can quickly become a pain and, frankly, you'll enjoy the city much better on foot or by metro.

□ [Sweet Home Hotel](#): our recommendation for a hotel within walking distance of Athens and the Acropolis

On the other hand, if you want to explore mainland Greece, the [Renting a car at Athens airport](#) is almost essential, as the public transport network is not optimal. You can reach the coastal city of Nafplio by bus, then you'll have few options for reaching the archaeological sites of the Peloponnese.

From Athens, you have several **road trip** options:

- southwards to the Peloponnese, where the Corinth Canal is only 1 hour's drive away, then you can explore nearby sites such as **Mycenae, Mystra, Olympia, Epidaurus**, cities such as **Nafplio** or the fine sandy beaches.
- north to explore the must-see [archaeological site of Delphi](#), or the [monasteries of Meteora](#)

The car brings 4 things to the table:

- **more freedom** to get out of Athens without being tied to a fixed timetable,
- **simpler** to link several stages in a single day,
- **more comfort** if you're traveling with luggage, children or equipment for several days,
- **and more fun**, because in mainland Greece, there are many roads lined with

olive groves or running along the sides that just make you want to stop.

It also comes in very handy if you're planning a mixed trip: a few days in Athens, then several nights elsewhere. In this case, it's often advisable to **visit Athens first without a car**, and only collect the vehicle when you leave the capital. This is often the most logical solution, and also the most economical if you take into account parking and traffic in the city.

□ We spent 3 months in Greece during our [tour of southern Europe](#), and as is often the case, in our opinion, the car offers **real freedom**.

Greece is one of our favorite countries for a European road trip.

Where to rent a car in Athens

Rent a car at Athens airport

As is often the case, we advise you to look first at [Athens airport](#). This is generally where you'll find the widest range of services, the most comfortable schedules and the easiest availability, especially in high season.

If you land in Athens and can then quickly set off for [Delphi](#), the Peloponnese or another region, we think this is the simplest option. You pick up the car on arrival, leave the city and start your journey straight away, without having to go back through the city center.

Another advantage: at the airport, you'll find all types of vehicles more easily. Whether you're looking for a small car, a luggage wagon, a family SUV, an automatic gearbox or an electric car, Athens airport generally offers the widest choice.

Why rent directly from Athens airport?

- simpler restitution before the return flight,
- greater choice of vehicles,
- often longer hours,
- immediate care on arrival,
- and often attractive rates thanks to competition between agencies.

→ [View Athens airport car rentals](#)

Rent a car in central Athens

It can also be worthwhile **renting a car in the city center**, but only in a very specific case: if you plan to spend 2 or 3 days visiting Athens without a car, and then hit the road.

In this configuration, you avoid paying several days' rental unnecessarily, but above all you avoid having a car that sleeps while you visit the Acropolis, Plaka or the great museums. This is often the most logical strategy: **visit Athens without a car, then pick it up when you leave.**

What's the best car comparison service in Athens?

Our answer is exactly the same as for your other destinations: we don't believe there's a **universal "best rental company" in Athens**. Above all, there's a more or less attractive offer depending on your dates, your departure location, the type of

vehicle and the level of coverage you choose.

What really counts when booking is not just the name of the agency, but above all :

- the **final price**,
- the amount of the **deductible**,
- the **security deposit**,
- cancellation conditions,
- fuel policy,
- bank card conditions,
- and, above all, **recent advice** on care and return.

For our part, we always find it more convenient to use the [DiscoverCars](#) comparator to see all this information in one place. This allows you to quickly spot offers that seem interesting at first, but are much less so once you look at the deductible, deposit or insurance.

What we always look at first:

- **price with insurance**,
- **local agency reviews**,
- bank card conditions,
- and how **tolls** and ancillary costs are managed.

□ [Compare car rental rates in Athens](#)

How much does a car rental in Athens cost?

Car hire budgets in Athens vary greatly depending on the season. In fact, this is one of the big advantages of Athens over other major European capitals: outside the very high season, you can still find fairly attractive rates.

In practice, we can use these simple guidelines:

- **10 to €20 per day** for a small car out of season if booked early,
- **30 to €50 per day** in summer for a city car or compact car,
- more suitable for an auto box, SUV or family car.

As always, the longer you wait, the higher the price. And in Athens, the final budget isn't limited to the rental price: you also have to think about **tolls, fuel**, and sometimes **parking** if you keep the car in town.

Our advice remains the same: always compare the **overall cost**, not just the wholesale price.

□ For example, here is a simulation for 6 days in June for a small city car with the **Record** agency, at less than 11€ / day

Insurance: what you really need to check in Greece

As always with a [car rental](#), the least exciting part is often the most important. And in Athens, as elsewhere, this is often where you avoid unpleasant surprises.

Before booking, we strongly advise you to check :

- the **amount of the deductible**,
- the **security deposit** blocked on the card,
- coverage of **tires, windows, rims and rocker panels**,
- exclusions related to misuse of the vehicle,
- and procedures in the event of an accident or minor damage.

In Greece, the main roads are generally good, but as soon as you get close to old town centers, small villages or tourist site parking lots, you'll be glad you looked at the details of your contract. A small scratch on a bumper or a rubbed rim can quickly spoil the experience if the deductible is high.

Our advice remains the same as for your other destinations: **always compare the final price with a clear cover**, not just the lowest rate displayed at the start. Paying a little more at the time of booking can save a lot of stress at the counter, or worse, when returning the vehicle.

□ **Our advice**: take the [DiscoverCars full coverage](#). This represents an

additional cost at the time of booking, but it's often the best way to travel with peace of mind, especially on a road trip where you multiply the stages.

What type of car should I rent in Greece?

Small car, station wagon or SUV?

For Athens and mainland Greece, especially for driving on the small coastal roads of the Peloponnese, we find that a **compact car** is often the best choice. It's easier to park, more pleasant in the historic centers, more fuel-efficient and more than sufficient for a classic itinerary around Athens.

If you're traveling with the family, with several large suitcases or for a longer itinerary, a **station wagon** or **compact SUV** may be more comfortable, especially for the boot. But honestly, for the majority of trips to mainland Greece, **there's no need to think too big**.

Manual or automatic transmission?

Both are available, but **automatic gearboxes** are often more expensive and go faster. If you're so inclined, it's best to book early. If you're comfortable with a manual gearbox, you'll often have more choice and better prices.

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Driving in Greece: what you need to know

Driving in Greece is generally pleasant, especially once you leave the Athenian conurbation. The national network serves the country well, which is precisely why road trips here work so well.

In Athens

It's not Greece that's the hardest, it's **central Athens** and its dense traffic. Between the traffic, the scooters, the one-way streets, the parking and the traffic restrictions in certain areas, you quickly lose interest in having a car to visit the city.

If you have to drive in Athens, it's best to :

- avoid rush hours,
- plan your parking before you arrive,
- check the exact address of your accommodation,
- and don't improvise your parking at the last minute.

Outside Athens

As soon as you leave the capital, everything becomes easier. Journey times remain reasonable, the main roads are efficient, and you're soon back on the road again.

The road to Delphi becomes superb as you approach the site. In the Peloponnese, journeys from Athens are easy to organize. And for Meteora or Olympia, even if the distances are longer, the car is clearly the most flexible solution.

In Greece, the road is really part of the journey.

Rules of conduct in Greece

- We drive **on the right**.
- **Seatbelts** are mandatory.
- Speed limits must be respected, although they may vary depending on the road.
- Hand-held telephones are prohibited.
- It's always best to carry the mandatory equipment supplied with your car.

To put it plainly, driving in Greece is not particularly difficult, but you do need to be

careful when entering towns, villages and denser areas.

Tolls in Greece: what you need to know from Athens

As soon as you leave Athens and head for Delphi, the Peloponnese or the west of the country, you're bound to come across some, and their price is ridiculously low compared with other European countries:

Athens - Corinth toll: €4.60
Corinth - Mycenae toll: €2.95
Nauplia - Mystra toll: €8.55
Mystra - Olympia toll: €4.30
Athens → Delphi toll: €8.45
Delphi → Meteora toll: €10.65

Payment is made directly at the terminal at the freeway exit.

The daktylios in Athens: the point many forget

If there's one thing you need to know before renting a car in Athens, it's the **daktylios**, or traffic restrictions in central Athens. Depending on the time of year, traffic in certain areas of the center may be restricted according to license plate number or vehicle type.

To put it plainly, this reinforces our basic advice: **avoid renting a car to get around the center of Athens**. Take it when you leave for mainland Greece, and you'll save yourself a real logistical headache.

If you still need to drive in the center, be sure to ask your rental company and check the rules in force at the time of your stay.

Parking in Athens: the real point of vigilance

If there's one area of expense and stress that often comes as a surprise, it's **parking**. In Athens, parking can quickly become a pain, especially if your accommodation doesn't have a dedicated space.

If you are staying overnight in Athens, we strongly advise you to check before you even book the car:

- does your hotel have a parking lot?
- is this parking lot private?
- do I need to reserve a place in advance?
- can you collect the car later to avoid paying for several nights' parking unnecessarily?

For a stay of just a few days, it often makes much more sense to **visit Athens first without a car**, then to collect it on departure. It's the solution that's most consistent with the way the city works.

Mistakes to avoid when renting a car in Athens

- **Take the car on your first day**, even though you'll be staying in Athens for several nights.
- **Book at the last minute in summer**, especially if you want an auto box or a family car.
- **Choose a car that's too big** for historic centers and tight parking lots.
- **Forget tolls** in your overall budget.
- **Do not check the deductible.**
- **Ignore central traffic restrictions** if you need to drive in Athens.
- **Do not take photos of the inventory of fixtures** on departure.
- **Do not check the exact credit card** and security deposit **requirements**.

Checklist to be completed before collecting your rental car in Athens

Before you hit the road, we really recommend that you take two minutes to check these points before setting off with your [Athens rental car](#):

| Please check | ✓ / Notes |
|--|------------------|
| Driver's license, credit card, booking confirmation | |
| Name of main driver identical to that on bank card | |
| Exact amount of blocked security deposit | |
| Insurances included and excluded (tires, windows, rims, rocker panels) | |
| Fuel policy | |
| Unlimited or limited mileage | |
| Vehicle condition: photos/video taken before departure | |
| Useful on-board equipment: spare wheel and anti-puncture kit | |
| Toll operation and any administrative costs | |
| Useful tips if you need to get around central Athens | |
| Assistance number and procedure in the event of breakdown or collision | |
| Exact time and place of return | |

☐ [Compare car rental rates in Athens](#)

☐ Here are our hotel recommendations for your road trip in Greece:

- **In Athens:** [information and reservations for the Plaka Hotel](#) in the historic center next to the Acropolis.
- 10-minute walk from Olympia's archaeological ruins: [Europa Olympia Hotel](#)
- **In Nafplio :** [information and booking for the DownTown Hotel Nafplio](#), then on to Mycenae or Epidaurus without constantly packing your bags.
- [Alexiou Hotel](#) is a renovated hotel at the foot of **Meteora**, ideal for being the first to visit the monasteries.
- **In Delphi:** [Fedriades Delphi Hotel](#), for walking to the ruins.

Feel free to leave us a **note** or **5 stars** below, to let us know if you're planning this trip, and to ask any questions you may have: we'll be delighted to get back to you.

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0 avis (0/5)

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