

How to visit Mycenae, Nafplio and Epidaurus from Athens?



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By Floriane

Would you like to discover the north-eastern Peloponnese, but don't know which towns or sites to choose? Mycenae, Nafplio and Epidaurus form one of the most beautiful summaries of mainland Greece, combining history, scenery and the good life.

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For our part, we spent three months in Greece during our [tour of Southern Europe](#), and loved discovering the region. Mycenae is clearly a must-see, Epidaurus is impressively well-preserved, and Nafplio remains our favorite Peloponnesian city. We even spent almost a week there. In this article, we tell you how to explore these 3 sites from Athens.

How to get there from Athens

From Athens, you have 3 options for organizing this discovery of the northeastern Peloponnese:

Organized excursions

If you don't want to drive and want to simplify logistics completely, opt for an [organized tour from Athens](#).

Departing from the center of Athens, you'll visit all 3 sites - Mycenae, Nafplio and Epidaurus - without worrying about timetables, giving you a real overview of this part of the Peloponnese.

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By public transport

Public transport is possible, but requires a little more organization. KTEL buses easily connect Athens to Nafplio, with a journey time of around 2 hours 10 minutes. For Mycenae, aim for Fichti, then head for the site. Epidaurus is the most demanding part if you want to combine several visits in a single day.

By car

[Car rental in Athens](#) is still the best solution if you want to sleep in Nafplio, stop whenever you like and add other places to your itinerary. Driving times from Athens to the various sites of the Peloponnese are reasonable.

We recommend this option if you like to travel at your own pace, take photo breaks and keep your schedule flexible.

□ [Or complete guide to renting a car for your road trip in Greece](#)

Mycenae, a major visit to the Peloponnese

Mycenae, a [UNESCO World Heritage](#) site, is not just a great archaeological site. It's also one of the most charged places in the Greek imagination.

In Homer's stories (**the Iliad** and **the Odyssey**), the citadel is associated with King Agamemnon, the great figure of the Trojan War. But myth aside, Mycenae is above all one of the most powerful centers of the Mycenaean world, a civilization that dominated part of the eastern Mediterranean during the Bronze Age and played an essential role in the development of later Greek culture.

From the moment you arrive, the site will impress you with its commanding position, its Cyclopean walls and the famous **Lioness Gate**, which remains one of the strongest symbols of pre-classical Greece. The visit really does give you the feeling of stepping back in time, long before classical Athens and the temples we most often associate with the country. It's this historical depth, as much as the monumentality of the remains, that makes Mycenae so striking.

Lieu can be discovered in 3 complementary stages:

- **The Archaeological Museum:** to put the visit in context, and to learn more about the organization of the Mycenaean world, its everyday objects, its funerary practices and the importance of the first written traces of Mycenaean Greek, known as Linear B.
- **The main site of ancient Mycenae:** it's here that you'll discover the Lioness Gate, the ramparts, the citadel and the royal tombs, with the strong impression of entering a place that's both historic and legendary.
- **The Treasury of Atreus:** this funerary monument is one of the highlights of the visit. Its monumental architecture and excellent state of preservation make it an indispensable complement to the rest of the site.

Practical information for visiting Mycenae

To prepare for your visit in the best possible conditions, bear in mind that the whole area can be explored on foot, with a few sloping sections.

- **Parking:** parking lot by the museum entrance
- **Visit:** approx. 1h30 to 2h for the site, the museum and Atrée's Treasure
- **Price:** combined ticket for archaeological site + museum + Treasury of Atreus,

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20 euros full price, 10 euros concessions

- **Distances** : 1h30 from Athens and 25 minutes from Nafplio

Nafplio, our favorite Peloponnesian city

Nafplio is the kind of city where you sometimes come for a simple stopover and end up wanting to stay for several days. And that's exactly what happened to us. Between the cobbled streets, the little cafés, the lively squares, the ever-present sea and the fortresses that dominate the city. We loved the city's lively, gentle atmosphere, particularly pleasant at the end of the day.

If you have a little more time, don't limit yourself to the old town. We also recommend you visit Arvanitia beach, sometimes called Paralia Arvanitias, just off the coastal promenade. It's a great place to walk along the water's edge, take a break with a sea view or simply enjoy the local atmosphere. And even in the middle of winter, the atmosphere remains surprisingly lively: we saw people bathing here in January, proof of the mild climate that Nafplio often enjoys.

- climb up to the **Palamidi fortress** for a view of the whole bay and port of Nafplio (*about 45 minutes to reach the fortress from the center of Nafplio - pleasant walk - entrance fee: €20*)
- strolling through the **old town** without a precise itinerary
- walk to the **crystal-clear beach of Arvanitia** and follow the coastline

In terms of good addresses, we have tried out several places that we recommend:

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- Taking a coffee break, we stopped off at **Klepsidra Nafplio**.
- For fish, we really liked **Zournal**.
- And for a generous Greek tavern in a friendly atmosphere, note also **Aiolos Tavern - Αίολος ταβέρνα**

Honestly, if you're wavering between a simple stopover and a real stopover, we'd advise you to spend at least one night here. It's also an excellent base from which to explore the Peloponnese.

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Epidaurus, an exceptionally well-preserved ancient theater

Epidaurus is one of the best-preserved ancient sites in Greece, and its acoustics are incredible: we advise you to come early to test it out.

The **theater of Epidaurus** is famous for its proportions, acoustics and remarkable state of preservation.

The visit is also worthwhile for the sanctuary as a whole, not just for the theatrical stands and the equally well-preserved stadium. Although the rest of the site is less well preserved, and you'll need a bit of imagination to recreate it (as you did for [Olympia](#)), we loved strolling around this bucolic setting.

□ Epidaurus lies 30 minutes east of Nafplio. *Admission €20 – free under 25.*

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Where to stay for an easy-going getaway?

If you choose to leave Athens early, sleeping in a central area the night before makes things much simpler.

- In Athens: **Plaka Hotel**, in the historic center. It's conveniently located so you can visit Athens on foot, easily reach the metro and leave without complication the next morning.

□ [Information and booking for the **Plaka Hotel**](#)

- In Nafplio: **DownTown Hotel Nafplio**, in the heart of the old town. It's a great place to enjoy the evening ambience, go out for dinner on foot and then head off to Mycenae or Epidaurus without constantly packing your bags.

□ [Information and booking for **DownTown Hotel Nafplio**](#)

Map of places to see in the Peloponnese

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If you want to explore another ancient site in Greece, don't miss the [archaeological site of Delphi](#).

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