

We first meet our new friends at [Omonoia Square](#) !

Omonoia Square "Concord Square", often simply referred to as *Omónia* is a central square in Athens. It marks the northern corner of the downtown area defined by the city plans of the 19th century, and is one of the city's principal traffic hubs. It is served by Omonoia train station.

Omonoia Square is one of the oldest squares in the city of Athens and an important shopping centre. It is located at the center of the city at the intersection of six main streets: Panepistimiou, Stadiou Athinas, Peiraios, Agiou Konstadinou and 3rd Septemvriou.

The Square was constructed in 1846 and its original name was "Plateia Anaktoron" (Palace Square) because (according to the initial urban plan of Athens proposed by the architects Stamatis Kleanthis and Eduard Schaubert) the area was intended to be used for the construction of the palace. Later the square was renamed "Othonos Square" in honor King Otto. In 1862 it took its final name, "Omonoia Square" because it was where the leaders of the opposing political factions gave the oath of peace (omonía) to stop hostilities.

After the 19th century, Omonoia Square was a center where people met and social life thrived as it was the railway's starting point and was also surrounded by numerous hotels.

From 1925 to 1930 the underground railway between Piraeus and Athens was built requiring further redesign of the Square. Omonoia Square became circular and marble bars are put at the entrances of the underground railway station. The Square started to resemble European prototypes and acquired an important commercial role.

The 50s were a period of modernization for Athens and consequently for many public spaces. In 1954, in the underground area of Omonoia Square banks, shops and a post office were built. The square was redesigned although in the end without the placement of the sculpture. The fountains of Omonia became a famous city landmark and the Square itself was depicted many times in Greek movies of the period.

After its transformation in 2003 the square lost some of its former value and prestige, but nevertheless continues to represent a multicultural place and point of communication, as a transportation hub for thousands throughout the day. Two of its most recognizable buildings are the old neoclassical hotels of the area the "Bagkeion" and "Megas Alexandros", located side by side on either side of Athena's street. The Pentakiklon ('Five-ring' sculpture) has its own story placed in the square in 2001 it functioned fully during the Christmas of 2008, when water ran in the sculpture for the first time, transforming the circles into motion.



Then we wander around [Athena's Street](#)

Athena's Street is one of the main streets in the heart of the City of Athens, who joins Monastiraki with Kotzia Square and Athens City Hall.

It is named after Athena, the goddess of wisdom. The street runs from Ermou Street north to Omonoia Square through the Psiri neighborhood.

Famous buildings include the Athens City Hall on the west side and office towers northward. The Modern Agora is east of Athena's Street. Shops and residential buildings lie to the south with neo-classical buildings. In the middle of Athena's street is the Varvakeios municipal market, the oldest market in Athens. The rest of the architecture except for the city hall and square are modernistic. The old times Athens was surrounding with buildings like that but they were pull down to built new blocks of flats.

The town hall is located in the central square of Athens surrounded by interesting for their architecture buildings.

Pericles was an Ancient Greek statesman, orator and strategist of the 5th century BC. He was leader of the democratic and has offer a lot of things to Greece.

The oldest currency of Europe. For centuries, the **drachma** was one of the currencies of the monetary system of the ancient Greek world.

1 Δραχμή = 0,293 λεπτά

Varvakios Market has a history of about 150 years. It is created thanks to the national benefactor John Varvakis.

John Varvakis was born on Psara in 1747. His family name was Leontidis, which replaced it with Varvakis. Varvakis was his nickname from the bird Varvakis, a rare eagle that lives only in Psara and its characteristic is that has big eyes. Vardakis worked on trade and shipping. He is known for caviar trade. There is also a film "God loves Caviar", directed by John Smaragdis, dedicated to the life of John Varvakis. John Varvakis actively help the Greeks during the Greek Revolution, especially his home island of Psara. After the destruction of the island by the Turkish Fleet, he returned to Greece himself in 1824 to aid the refugees, and died on Zakynthos on January 10, 1825. Varvakis desired to promote education for the New Greek state, and in his will he left 1 million rubles for the building of a high school, which was named Varvakeio in his honor. Varvakis also financed the building of Athens' closed market, the *Varvakios Agora*. On August 1884, there was a fire at *Varvakios Agora* and the shacks of the oldest market were destroyed. The New Market was completed and delivered to the city in 1886 and was renovated in the years 1979-1996. Needless to say that the statue of the goddess Athena was found there. It is believed that Athena Varvakeion is faithful to copy out of gold and ivory Athena Parthenon, carved in Roman wars.



At 1870, Psiri had turned into one of the most dangerous areas of Athens because of the famous "koutsavakides". They were several guys who lived underground. They had a unique fashion. Twisted mustache, jacket worn only by a single sleeve, red belt. The koutsavakides robbed and sometimes murdered merchants, creating great fear to passers. They liked getting in trouble, so they used to leave their belt on the ground and whoever steps on it, they fight with him. The effect of koutsavakides ended in December 1893, when the Police Chief of Athens-Piraeus Dimitrios Bairaktaris captures them.

Monastiraki

- **Eridanos** River has its source in the foothills of the Lykabettos, through the Agora of ancient Athens in Greece to the archaeological site of the Kerameikos, where its bed is still visible. In this area lives a population of Greek Tortoise. Its course has been for the most part covered since ancient times, and was only visible outside the ancient walls in the district of Kerameikos.

The river was rediscovered during the excavations for the Athens Metro subway in the late 1990s, and its waters caused considerable technical problems at times.

As of April 2007, the stream of the river, as it flows through Monastiraki Square, has been excavated. It had been covered with a brickwork tunnel since classical times, and the brickwork had been repaired at least twice, in the imperial Roman and early Byzantine eras. The brick tunnel now forms part of a small open-air museum at Monastiraki Square, next to the Metro station, and the waters of the Eridanos are from inside the tunnel.

- Monastiraki district of Athens is around Monastiraki Square, which extends to the south of Ermou, the height of the Cathedral Square to Square Theseus. Adjoining districts of Psiri, Plaka and Theseus. The name comes from the old church of the Assumption Athens, located on the square, and was formerly a dependency monastery namely, the Monastery Karea on Hymettus (Monastiraki means "small monastery"). In Monastiraki Square stands the old Tzistarakis Mosque, which now houses the Annex Folk Art Museum

- The church

In the square is the former Catholic Church. During the Frankish Nicholas Bonefatsi was the owner of monastery. During the period of Turkish rule referred to as a dependency of the monastery Karea on Hymettus. In later years became a parish church, which is dedicated to the Assumption.

- The mosque was built by Turkish voivode Tzistarakis in 1759 with materials reclaimed from old buildings. For the stucco walls, blew the 17th column of the Temple of Olympian Zeus. (The old Athenians believed that under each column of the temple was trapped one curse, something that was confirmed by the famine broke out in the city. According to the same legend, the temple of Zeus so loudly lamented the destruction of the column, which that night no one slept in Athens. Calm down only with the murder of voivode.)

Now it is a museum.

Keramikos

- **Keramikos** is located to the northwest of the Acropolis, which includes an extensive area both within and outside the ancient city walls, on both sides of the Dipylon Gate and by the banks of the Eridanos River (which we might see afterwards).
- The area took its name from the city square of the Kerameis which in turn derived its name from the word κέραμος (*kéramos*, "pottery clay", from which the English word "ceramic" is derived).
- It was the potters' quarter of the city. Although the riverside area of Kerameikos flooded constantly and did not favor the habitation. So, it began to be used as landfill, and gradually became the most important cemetery of ancient Athens. The first cemetery of the Peloponnesian War, actually.
- The craftsmen settled in the area of Kerameikos thanks to suitable soil for making pottery clay surrounding the tiny river Eridanos. The river flows today in the archaeological site, had disappeared for centuries, buried in landfills 8-9 m to say the current level of Ermou Street. Remained buried until 1960 and revealed by the excavations. We might see a part of Eridanos at the metro's stop, Monastiraki.
- Ceramic Gates - Sacred Gate - Dipylon "pottery" named the city's official entries at this point. These gates divided the area into inner and outer Kerameikos, where there were graves. From the Sacred Gate began the Sacred Highway leading to the Sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis. From the Dipylon started the procession headed towards the Acropolis during the Great Panathenaic.
- The Dipylon was the largest gateway in the ancient world. The enormity served strategic, defensive and religious purposes. Outside the Dipylon began the Tuileries route and had square form, because here were ceremonies (gatherings, sacrifices, struggles) in honor of the dead who were buried in the neighboring state signal.

Gazi

- Gazi is a district of Athens, which is located southwest of the intersection of the Sacred Way with Piraeus Street. It owes its name to the neighboring facilities of gas.
- The gas factory was founded in 1857. Around 1910, brothels of Athens were settled here, which resulted to be called at that time the area and brothels "throttle" or "Gazohori". With the name "gkazochoritis" was called a regular frequenter of these houses, while "gkazochoritissa" every prostitute who worked there.
- Around the gas factory began gradually built in the mid 20th century, low houses with few rooms and large courtyards harboring large families of Athens. It was a deprived area, while typical street was the way dip. Nevertheless, it showed high crime. Residents, assured jobber, mainly engaged in the printing of names on wooden crates. In 1967, due to the difficult socio-economic conditions prevailing in Northern Greece, Muslim families went to Athens and settled in Gazi, seeking work in gas plant. Relations with the old inhabitants were rather formal. Over the years, the area gradually opened numerous garages, bodyshops, fanartzidika and spare parts shops, crammed next to each other in the narrow streets of the area.

The distance in the relationship of residents attempting the Greek state to limit in 1996 when, in collaboration with the University of Athens marked the 87th

elementary school in Gazi "intercultural". 70% of pupils are Muslim Greek nationality, 20% Greek Orthodox and 10% of children from Albania and Romania.

In the early 21st century in this region seek the gay community area of Athens to develop links. Music clubs operating on the Sacred Way attract nightlights and small old houses with courtyards and brothels regenerated and converted into cafes and bars. Soon open restaurants and small clubs and the area begins to know a vibrant night life. And because of the prohibitive prices for dwelling in the suburbs and expensive neighborhoods of Athens, many are looking for cheap house in the area to ensure their personal space, something that helps and renovations of old apartments and intense reconstruction.

But now the whole area is full spatial regeneration and sometimes gkazochoiritisses prostitutes have moved north of the Sacred Way, closer to Omonia Square. Gazi connected with Thisseio through pedestrianization of Ermou, construction of parks and open spaces, while station point in its development was the power station Kerameikos, which gave impetus to the intensification of night entertainment and upgrading its quality. Plus, a meeting point for the youth groups of the Athenians and bustling on a Saturday night. The new annex of the Benaki Museum contributes to the enhancement of the region, hosting exhibitions and cultural events, and the New National Theatre National Theatre brings classical and alternative performances. Point is the trademark of Athens Technopolis currently operating as a versatile cultural center.