SAS CITY PORTRAITS

Athens

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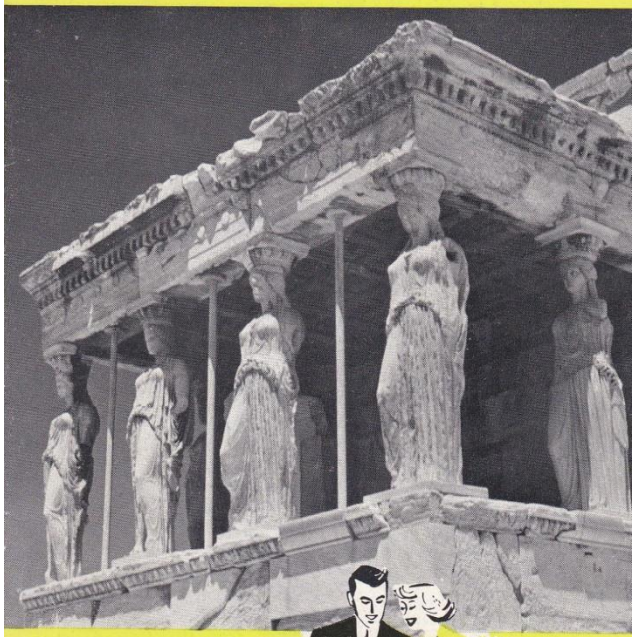

The unforgettable Parthenon

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Key to the Map:

1. Acropolis
2. The National Garden
3. The Byzantine Museum
4. The Benaki Museum
5. The Lycabettus Hill
6. The Archaeological Museum

SAS Ticket Office and Air Terminal: 16 Venizelou Street (corner Amerikis Str.) Tel.: 32 211, 24 817/8/9.

T Tourist Information Office: 8 Venizelou Street, Tel.: 20 361

Open daily 8:00 AM — 1:30 PM and 5:00 — 7:30 PM. (Sundays only in the morning).

One Hour's Walk Around Athens

Starting from the SAS office at 16 Venizelou Street (University Street), follow Venizelou Street to the left, turning again left at Leoforos Vassilissis Sofias. Pass the flower shops (under the Parliament Building) and the National Garden. Turn right at Hirodhou Attikou Street, in a fashionable residential area. On the left, you will see the Royal Palace, guarded by the strikingly uniformed Evzones. At the far end of the street stands the stadium and the reproduction of the statue the "Discus Thrower". Turn right along Vassilissis Olgas Avenue as far as Hadrian's Arch. Here, on the right, you will see the Zappeion Exhibition Hall and, on your left, the Temple of Zeus. Turn right again into Amalias Avenue, walking until you reach Constitution Square on your left. At this point, the Parliament Building and the Monument of the Unknown Soldier will be on your right. Cross Constitution Square diagonally and walk along Stadiou Street, lined with smart shops, to Klathmonos Square. Turn right into Korai Street. At the far end, you will face (across Venizelou Street) three imposing bunildings; the National Library, the University and the Academy. A right turn into Venizelou Street will bring you back to the SAS office.

Your First Hour in Athens

Hellenicon Airport is really where Africa, Asia and Europe meet. When coming from the Far East or Africa, the health officer will want you to produce vaccination papers. Passport and customs inspection are promptly arranged, and the forms provided on board the SAS plane help speed up the official business.

You may leave baggage in transit at the airport, if you don't need all your suitcases while visiting in Athens. Otherwise, just point out your belongings to the porter and helpful arms will get them to bus or taxi. Before leaving the airport, you may wish to exchange some money in the Customs' Hall. One U.S. dollar equals DRA (drachmas) 30.00; one £ Sterling DRA 84.00; one Swiss Franc DRA 6.84. There are 100 lepta to one drachma. The favorable exchange rates make Greece one of the less expensive countries of Europe. Bus transportation to Athens is provided with the compliments of the airline; taxi will cost about DRA 80.00 to Athens. The SAS office is conveniently located in the center of the city. A member of the SAS staff will be happy to assist you so that your stay in the Greek Capital will be one of the highlights of your journey.

If you are flying on from Athens by SAS, one of the first things to do after your arrival is to reconfirm your onward reservation by informing SAS of the reservation you hold and your intention to use the space previously reserved for you.

If your plans change please, let the SAS office know as quickly as possible; it will help you to get a different reservation, and it will enable others to use the space which you have cancelled.

ATHENS

As your SAS plane lands at Athens, you may look forward to meeting four thousand years of history, standing at the cradle of civilization, viewing the birthplace of the Gods and the cornerstone of our Western civilization.

Local history glories in the names of Plato, Socrates and Sophocles; sightseeing brings you face to face with the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Acropolis, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus.

It was King Theseus who united the smaller states of the peninsula of Attica and designated Athens, the City of Athena, the Goddess and Protectress, capital shortly before 1100 BC. During those days the Acropolis cliff was big enough to house the original city, but little by little, the lower town (modern Athens) developed. The brightest glory was reached in the 5th century BC, after victory over the Persians at Marathon (490 BC), Salamis (480 BC) and Plataea (479 BC). When your guide talks about the Golden Age of Pericles he is referring to that time.

It was then that Athens gave birth to its great philosophers, artists and writers whose works of art turned Greece into a fantastic art exhibition. The Peloponnesian War (431—404 BC) was drawing to its end when Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes wrote their great works and when the Erechtheion and the Temple of Niki were built. The impressive ruins can still be seen on the Acropolis to-day. Indeed, Athens was the foremost city of the ancient world, clearly the most civilized society that had yet existed.

Alexander the Great expanded Athens' and Hellas' influence deep into Asia. Until 529 AD, when the Byzantine Emperor Justinian closed its philisophical schools, Athens was the intellectual center of the world. During the Byzantine period Athens was growing and this is still seen from the many beautiful churches of Athens and its surroundings (Dafni, etc.). The Turks captured Athens in 1456.

To-day, Athens is the modern Greek capital — cosmopolitan, a socially leading center in the Mediterranean area, the home of one and a half million proud people.

Hotels

There are a number of good hotels in Athens. The de luxe houses are the Grande Bretagne, an international name, King George on Constitution Square, Athénée Palace, Acropole Palace and the National. Rates for a single room with bath range from DRA 150—200. Some hotels belonging to the first-class category are the Xenias-Melathron, Athinon, City Palace, Cairo City, Cosmopolite and Carlton, on the sea-shore on your way from the airport, charging about DRA 70 to 80 including taxes and service. A charge of 10 % is levied in all but de luxe hotels for less than three nights' stay.

Note: 220 Volt current in Athens, sometimes 110 Volt in the country.

Restaurants

The leading hotels maintain very good restaurants, frequently with French cuisine. A meal here may cost about DRA 50—70. Among the best restaurants are Zonars, Floca, Pantheon (in the National Hotel) and Averoff, opposite Athénée Palace Hotel. Costis is also considered very good. A four course meal averages DRA 40—50. Smaller restaurants, such as Kypros, Petrograd, Tsita, Carussos, Corfu and Gerofinikas serve cold dishes and beer and are quite inexpensive. YWCA (11 Amerikis Str.) has established self-service at very low prices.

By all means try the specialties of the country: *Dolmadakia* (stuffed vine leaves), *Souvlakia* (meat on small spits), *Moussaka* (layers of eggplant, minced meat, white flour, milk sauce). Greeks love snipe, quail and woodcock. Grilled chicken and pigeons are favorites.

Being so close to the sea, a great variety of excellent fresh sea food is available, including octopus (if you happen to like it), lobster, crab, shrimp, oysters and all sorts of fish. Greek cooks prefer fine olive oil to butter. You will notice the great variety of fruit — and the taste does justice to the looks.

Greek wines are considered very good, particularly *Mavrodaphni, Samos, Restina,* and the special national wine *Kokinelli.* You may of course obtain your favorite "international" beverages, but be prepared to pay the price for this in indulgence.

Feel free to drink the water everywhere in Athens, but boiled water is safer in the country.

Entertainment and Night Life

Athens is a very cosmopolitan and active city at night. The open air performances at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, near the Acropolis, are major attractions during the summer months. The State Symphony Orchestra plays every Monday night between June and October, and the annual Athens Festival (ancient drama, music and dance) is held here from August to September. "Epidavros Festival" (ancient drama and Attic comedy) takes place at Epidavros from June to July.

After the theater, you might like to visit one of the many night clubs with floor shows. Among them — Argentina, Asteria, Lido-Mocambo and Chez Lapin. Many of the night clubs maintain branches at the summer beaches of Kalamaki and Kastella.

For authentic Greek atmosphere, and to see the Athenians enjoy themselves in their leisure hours, by all means visit one of the many "tavernas", such as the Epta Adelphia (Seven Brothers), Xynos, Palaia Athina at Plaka, the old part of Athens with gaslamps (by taxi from Constitution Square for about DRA 10), the Sarandidis (38 Itahakis Street) or perhaps Mostrou Spilia (Roukounas); your hotel porter will be able to tell you how to get there. In some tavernas you may hear the popular Bouzoukia music, a strange mixture of Oriental, Greek and Spanish music.

Excursions from Athens

The Island of Crete, reached by air or ship, is held to be the birthplace of Zeus. The remains of the Minoan time — 1000 BC — are particularly interesting.

Delphi is about 100 miles northwest of Athens, on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, 2000 feet high. Here the Oracle of Pytheia, and the Temples of Apollo and Athena can be visited. Go there by car or motorcoach.

Epidavros, about 110 miles (177 km) southwest of Athens, was a health resort in ancient times. Of particular interest are the Temple of Asklipeios, Theater and Museum. En route you can see Mycenae and ancient Corinth.

Olympia, known to the whole world for the Olympic Games, is scenically located some 200 miles west of Athens. A modern train or bus will take you there. See the Temple of Zeus, and the museum where Hermes of Praxiteles is exhibited.

Rhodes, the "Island of Roses and Sunshine", is one of the Dodecanese islands with a medieval walled fortress, City of Knights of St. John, ancient temples and ruins of the Hellenic, Roman and Byzantine periods.

Closer excursion and sightseeing points, easily reached by bus are Marathon, Sounion, Daphni and Eleusis — all rich in ancient historical monuments and surrounded by beautiful country. Ask your hotel porter or SAS-Athens about transportation facilities.

Sights

The morning and afternoon motorcoach tours are strongly recommended. The tours depart from Constitution Square (between the hotels Grande Bretagne and King George) and also from the Athénée Palace Hotel; tickets are available at all travel agencies. In the morning the itinerary includes the Royal Palace, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Arch of Hadrian, the Benaki Museum, the Archaeological Museum and Byzantine Churches. In the afternoon, after a mid-day siesta, the Lysicratus Monument, the Herodes Atticus Odeon, Acropolis, Areios Pagos, Socrates' Prison, Theseion, the Tower of the Winds and the Ancient Agora. Here are some of the sights not to be missed. Numbers correspond to the map.

1) *The Acropolis* (511 ft — 156 m). On this sacred hill are seen the most famous archaeological sights of the world: the huge and crowning Parthenon temple of 448 — 437 BC, built by the architects Ictinos and Callicratis, in the honor of Athena Parthenos (Athena the Virgin), the Erechtheion with a porch supported by the Caryatides, the small Niki Temple (the Temple of the Wingless Victory) and the Acropolis Museum containing a collection of sculpture found on the site. Other interesting monuments around the Acropolis are: the Theatre of Dionysos and, nearby, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, both located on the southern slope of the hill. To the west is the Pnyx, in ancient times platform for the orators. The Areios Pagos, west of the Acropolis, was once the seat of the highest tribunal. Paul the Apostle, addressed the Athenians from here. Somewhat lower, and northwest of the Acropolis is the Temple of Hephaistos, honoring the God of fire and metal, usually called the Theseum. The Kerameikos was the cemetry of ancient times while the Agora represented the center of life. The Tower of the Winds, an octagonal building with reliefs representing the main winds is nearby still being carried out by the American School of Classical Studies. Finds are collected in the restored Stoa (Gallery) of Attalus. Southeast of the Acropolis: the Lysicrates Monument, Hadrian's Arch and the Temple of Zeus, the rebuilt Stadium, site of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

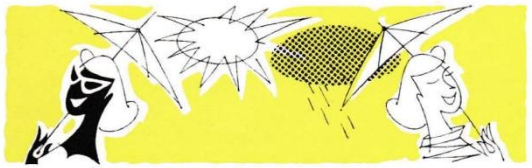
2) *The National Garden,* with the Parliament (formerly Royal Palace), the modern Zappeion Exhibition Hall and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

3) *The Byzantine Museum* (22 Vassilissis Sofias Avenue, open 8:30 AM — 2:00 PM, closed Saturdays and holidays), contains important collections of Byzantine religious art, sculptures, paintings and mosaics.

4) *The Benaki Museum* (1 Koumbari Street, open 9:00 AM — 2:00 PM, closed Tuesdays and holidays), exhibits handicraft from the Byzantine period to present days, works of original art and a unique collection of regional costumes from various parts of Greece.

5) *The Lycabettus Hill,* 908 feet (276 m), affords a good view of the city.

6) *The Archaeological Museum* (1 Tositsa and Bouboulinas Street, open 8:30 AM — 2:00 PM, closed Mondays, holidays) specializes in collections of beautiful vases of the archaic and classic periods, masterpieces of ancient Greek sculptures and historic Mycenaean treasures.



Climate and Clothing

Athens is, indeed, blessed with a wonderful climate and a generous share of bright, crisp, sunny days. Spring and autumn are ideal for visiting Greece, the climate being mild and temperate. The summer months are hot, but nights are always reasonably cool. Even in the winter months the average temperature is seldom below 48° F. (9° C.). A woolen cardigan and an overcoat may come in handy between November and March. Formal dress is rarely necessary.

Dry cleaning and laundry facilities are ample, although expect to wait about a week for delivery.

Shopping

You will like browsing around in the shops on Constitution Square, Stadium Street, Ermou Street, Pandrossou Street, Argentine Republic Street and Philhellinon Street. Antiquities are sold at Martinos, Zarakovitis, Adam, Vitalis — all on Pandrossou Street. The Queen's Fund, Knossos, Diacosmitiki, Ergochiro, Nikoloudi and Ergani Athina, around Constitution Square, sell popular art goods. The picturesque costume of the Royal Guard is frequently used for small dolls, very popular as souvenirs. The shops are open from 8:30 AM until 1:00 PM; then after a mid-day siesta stay open until 8:00 PM ex-

cept Wednesday afternoon. You will no doubt buy the colorful embroideries, hand woven silk, linen and cotton fabrics from Crete, Soufli and Kastoria; earthenware and black pottery from Rhodos; all sorts of hand made silverware and carved handwork. Another desirable purchase is the local sweet wine or some of the Greek liquors.

Tipping

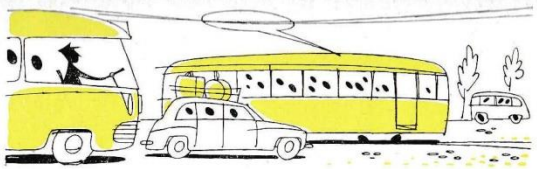
It is customary to add a 15 % tip at restaurants and to your hotel bill. If the tip is not included, about 10% to 15 % extra is in order. Leave about DRA 2 for the busboy. DRA 10 is an ample tip for your luggage. Cab drivers get about 5—10 % tip.

Public Holidays

Greece is blessed with many holidays, happily observed by shops, banks and offices: New Year's Day; January 6th, — Baptism of Christ; "Clean Monday"; First fasting day, 40 days before Easter; March 25th — Independence Day; a long Easter Holiday; Ascension Day — 40 days after Easter; June 29th — King Paul's nameday; Holy Trinity Day — 50 days after Easter; August 15th and September 14th — Religious Holidays; October 28th — National Holiday; December 25th — Christmas; December 26th — Boxing Day.

Easter is the most important religious event in Greece, and impressive ceremonies of the Greek Orthodox Church are held during Holy Week. On Easter Sunday, the people eat roast lamb cooked on spits out-of-doors, and red-dyed hard boiled eggs.

On the National holidays, March 25th and October 28th, important military parades are received by the Royal Family. Every Sunday at 11:00 AM the changing of the guards at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier offers a colorful spectacle to the visitor.



Transportation

Public transportation consists of trams, trolley buses, taxis. Taxi fares are reasonable, charging about DRA 4.50 per kilometer.

For that car of your "own" and for auto excursions outside Athens, see the SAS Car Hire Service. The rates for car hire are DRA 2.80 per kilometer for an average size car.

Sports

Greeks of to-day are as keen on sports as were their forefathers who originated the Olympic Games. Atheletic events, particularly football games, are major national affairs. Football matches are held every Sunday at Panathinaikon Football Stadium. There are a number of clubs to which SAS will be happy to introduce our passengers, such as the Club Hippique at Halandri (horseback riding), the Lawn Tennis Club and the golf course at Varibobi, some 30 miles north of Athens.

With clear and warm water around all Hellenic Islands, it is no wonder that water sports are extremely popular. There are beautiful sand beaches close to Athens at Phaleron, Kalamaki, Alimos and Glyfada. The Hellenic Royal Yachting Club at the port of Tourkolimano and the Aquatic Sports Club of Vouliagmeni will be pleased to accommodate you.

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