

Greek London

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MORE INFO

For more information on London's diverse international communities go to visitlondon.com

TODAY

Around 85% of the capital's Greek community is made up of Greek-Cypriots with the remaining 15% coming directly from mainland Greece.

The influence of classical and ancient Greece on London can be felt everywhere. The city's grandiose architectural projects owe more to classical Greek architecture than to any other building movement. Look at the frontage of the British Museum on Great Russell Street (*Tottenham Court Road tube*) or take a tube to Bank and marvel at the classical structures of the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange and the Mansion House all clustered around the tube exit and all built at the height of Britain's financial boom in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

But there is, of course, a far more modern aspect to Greek London than a classical architectural legacy. Take a stroll up Green Lanes from Newington Green through Finsbury Park to Haringey and Wood Green beyond, and you'll pass a plethora of Greek-Cypriot grocers, cafés and takeaways. A little bit of Greece in London.



Greek Deli, Green Lanes



Greek Deli, Green Lanes

A DAY OUT IN GREEK LONDON

If you want to get a feel of the real Greek London, try this day out for starters.

11am Start off at **Aroma Patisserie** on Green Lanes in Palmer's Green (*Palmer's Green rail*), home to a large Greek-Cypriot community. Take time to explore the sights and smells of the area's many Greek grocery shops, cafés and restaurants.

12pm Head on down towards **Wood Green** on foot or by bus (329) and stop off at **Trinity Road** where you can visit the ornate **St Mary's Greek Orthodox Church** – a fine example of Greek architecture and design. A short distance from here, in **Myddelton Road** is **Vrisaki**, a traditional taverna which has all the charm of a Greek family kitchen. Try the homemade moussaka or klefiko.

2pm After lunch take the tube to **Tottenham Court Road** and head to **The British Museum** for a dose of Ancient Greek culture. The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities is home to one of the world's largest collections of Hellenic artefacts – housing over 100,000 in total. You'll also see the controversial, but nonetheless, breathtaking Parthenon treasures. From the Museum, head over Charing Cross Road into **Soho** for an afternoon stroll. Not much remains of the Greeks in **Greek Street**, but it was here the first community settled in the 1920s.

6pm Time for dinner, so hop on the Northern Line to **Camden Town**. You have two choices here: for an authentic, great-value supper, head to **Andy's Taverna** on Bayham Street or **Café Corfu** on Pratt Street, both a stone's throw from each other and both excellent. Or if you're in the mood for something special – or need a great place to meet friends – walk the 15 minutes or so to upmarket **Primrose Hill** where you'll find one of the locals' favourite spots, **Lemonia**. Be sure to book though.

9pm If it's the weekend and you're still in the mood for traditional Greek entertainment, it's back to **Café Corfu** for some late-night dancing, or if you're bushed, sit back and watch the belly-dancers strut their stuff.

Aroma Patisserie 424 Green Lanes, N13 5XG (020 8886 8083)
Vrisaki 73 Myddelton Road, N22 8LZ (020 8889 8760)
British Museum Great Russell Street, WC1B 3DG (020 7636 1555/thebritishmuseum.ac.uk) **Andy's Taverna** 81-81A Bayham Street, NW1 0AG (020 7485 9718) **Café Corfu** 7 Pratt Street, NW1 0AE (020 7267 8088) **Lemonia** 89 Regent's Park Road, NW1 8UY (020 7586 7454)



Greek Deli, Green Lanes

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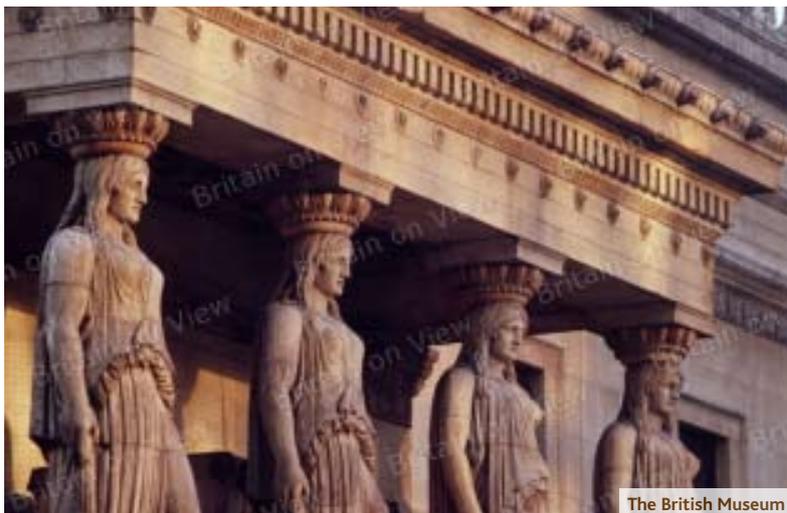


BACKSTORY

In 1670 the first 100 Greek immigrants arrived on British soil. Who would have thought that over 250 years later more than 150,000 Greek people would have made London their home?

The arrival of the first Greeks in London came about as a result of the Ottoman rule of Greece when many people left their homeland. In the 1920s, after Cyprus became a British colony, many of the population of the Island came to London in search of a more prosperous life. Some found jobs in the catering industry whilst others opened their own cafés and restaurants. A large proportion of these people settled in Soho – hence Greek Street – but as post-war rents in central London rose, the community tended to move out to places like Camden, Euston, Camberwell and Fulham.

In 1974 there was another major influx of Greek-Cypriots to London. Most joined relatives in areas already populated by the community and centred around the places of Greek Orthodox worship. Many of the existing community had also saved enough money to buy homes in areas such as Hackney, Haringey, Enfield and Southgate. Today some of the largest communities can be found in parts of North London such as Wood Green and Palmer's Green or Palmer's Greek as the locals call it!



The British Museum

GREEK LONDON HOT SPOT

The British Museum

Great Russell Street, WC1B 3DG (020 7636 1555/thebritishmuseum.co.uk). Tottenham Court Road tube.

Every Londoner, and every visitor to London, should make a beeline for the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities in the world's greatest museum and see the Parthenon Marbles. You won't be able to see everything in one day so our tip is to take an 'Eye Opener' tour: it acts as an introduction to the museum's world culture collections.

EATING & DRINKING TOP TIPS

Greek cooking remains one of London's favourite cuisines. The comfort of its simplicity and flavours mean we keep going back for more.

Café Corfu

7 Pratt Street, NW1 0AE (020 7267 8088/cafecorfu.com). Camden Town or Mornington Crescent tube.

Award-winning Café Corfu is a family run restaurant in the heart of Camden Town. Diners can expect a combination of fine modern Greek cuisine and lively entertainment from the resident DJs and belly dancers!

Elysee

13 Percy Street, W1 1DT (0871 3327799/nostos.com/elysee). Tottenham Court Road tube.

The menu combines both Greek and French cuisine with an equally eclectic wine list to match. A great night out for parties and larger groups as there's live entertainment every night.

Fanari

62 Alderman's Hill, N13 4PP (020 882 8085/fanarirestaurant.co.uk). Wood Green tube.

Greek hospitality knows no bounds at this popular North London restaurant where the traditional menu of meze, souvla and seafood arrangements almost comes second to the vibrant atmosphere. An authentic Greek experience and good value for money.

The Real Greek & Mezedopolio

15 Hoxton Market, N1 6HG (020 7739 8212/therealgreek.com). Old Street tube.

This is the original venue for this now burgeoning chain and the place remains as popular as ever. In the spirit of founding chef Theodore Kyriakou, the menu offers a grown-up version of Greek-inspired Mediterranean flavours – at grown-up prices.

Vrisaki

73 Myddleton Road, N22 8LZ (020 8889 8760). Bounds Green or Wood Green tube.

Located on a quiet residential street in Wood Green, Vrisaki could easily be mistaken for a busy kebab shop. Behind the bustling exterior lies an inviting and friendly taverna, humbly decorated but delightfully traditional.

Andy's Taverna

81-81A Bayham Street, NW1 0AG (020 7485 9718/andystaverna.com). Camden Town tube.

A visit to Andy's is like stepping into Mamma's front room: the service is warm and the food equally as welcoming. Classic starters are beautifully prepared and the mains never fail to disappoint.

Lemonia

89 Regent's Park Road, NW1 8UY (020 7586 7454). Chalk Farm tube.

This restaurant in one of London's most fashionable neighbourhoods is always busy and you'll know why when you get here. The atmosphere is light, airy and never dull. The food is gorgeous and the service impeccable. No wonder people keep coming back.



Music Shop, Wood Green

Greek London



Music Shop, Wood Green

SHOPPING

Trehantiri

365-367 Green Lanes, N4 1DY (020 8802 6530/trehantiri.net).

Wood Green tube.

For over 30 years Trehantiri has been the main outlet for Greek music in the UK with over 5,000 titles on offer, including many rarities. They also sell a variety of Greek magazines, newspapers, books and musical instruments as well as a selection of children's DVDs. Performers from Greece often make a special journey here to stock up on discs they can't find back home. A true London gem.

The Hellenic Bookshop

91 Fortress Road, NW5 1AG (020 7267 9499/hellenicbookservice.com).

Tufnell Park tube.

Set over an impressive four floors, The Hellenic Bookshop offers a large range of Greek and Latin books, both in and out of print.

Athenian Grocery

16A Moscow Road, W2 4BT (020 7229 6280). Bayswater tube.

If you're in the Bayswater area and in need of a Greek fix, try this local deli. It stocks fresh produce, tinned specialities and also has a delivery service.

For authentic Greek bread and snacks, try these local favourites:

Neo's Bakery

206 High Road, N22 8HH (020 8889 3433). Wood Green tube.

To Halepi

24 Green Lanes, N4 (020 8802 5585). Manor House/Turnpike Lane tube.

EVENTS

Cyprus Wine Festival

Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, N22 7AY (020 8341 0751/alexandrapalace.com/cypruswinefestival).

Bounds Green or Wood Green tube.

The Cyprus Wine Festival is designed to promote the produce, traditions and culture of the island. The wine festival itself is a 2500 year old Cypriot tradition which took place to honour the gods of wine and love, Dionysus and Aphrodite. The tradition gained popularity in the UK in the 1980s.

Visitors to this Ally Pally event can expect to sample the delights of Cypriot food and drink alongside a host of special guests from the island including winemakers, commentators and critics. Live music and Greek dancing are also part of the festivities.

The Hellenic Centre

16-18 Paddington Street, W1U 5AS (020 7487 5060/helleniccentre.org).

Baker Street tube.

Originally, The Hellenic Centre was founded as a charity with the aim of providing a focus for the Hellenic Community in London. Today, it continues to organise a range of cultural and social events with anything from film screenings to cheese and wine parties. Check out their website for up to date event information.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

The Orthodox Church remains at the heart of many parts of the Greek community. Below is a list of the major places of worship in London.

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Dormition of the Mother of God

Trinity Road, N22 NLB (020 8888 2295). Wood Green tube.

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom

Moscow Road, W2 4LQ (020 7229 7260). Bayswater/Queensway tube.

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Nativity of the Mother of God

305 Camberwell New Road, SE5 0TF (020 7703 0137). Oval tube.

The Greek Orthodox Church of St John the Baptist

Wightman Road, N8 0LY (020 8341 1301). Turnpike Lane tube.

The Greek Orthodox Church of St Anthony, St John the Baptist & the Holy Trinity

Sussex Way, N7 6RT (020 7281 0407). Caledonian Road tube.

The Greek Orthodox Church of St Barnabas

Finsbury Road, N22 8PA (020 8889 1122). Wood Green tube.

The Greek Orthodox Church of St John the Theologian

Mare Street, E8 3RD (020 8985 5803). Bethnal Green tube.

DID YOU KNOW ?

- One in every six Greek-Cypriots lives in the United Kingdom.
- In the 1950s and '60s more than 10% of Greece's population emigrated.
- In the Museum of London there is a charm against the plague written in Greek. It was found in Upper Thames Street in the City and is believed to have belonged to a 4th Century CE Greek Londoner. The charm is inscribed on a piece of lead which would have been rolled up and worn around the neck on a thong.
- There has been a Greek presence in London since ancient times. In the 4th Century BCE, the famous navigator Pytheas wrote an account of a journey he had made to Britain in search of tin, a rare commodity in the eastern Mediterranean.



Music posters, Green Lanes