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Underline indicates entry made in most recent calendar quarter.

guest rooms are decorated in a whimsical, artsy array of colors, patterns, and textures that appeal to the trendy 30- and 40-something Greek couples who flock here for romantic weekends. By day, the action is at the rooftop pool bar. Order a cocktail and soak up the view of the bay from the whirlpool—a great way to relax after a day of sightseeing and before a night on the town. Ask for one of the rooms on the upper floors, which offer better views. €€ Panos 8, 210 896 4901, classicalhotels.com

Closures (please make note in your Black Book.)

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hot. If you're looking for a trendy dive, this is the place. Thursday night is the best time to drop by, when prominent Greek hip-hop turntable maestro DJ Noiz hosts One Happy Cloud hip-hop night, which brings DJs from around the world for one-night appearances. When the clock strikes 12 and the party is truly jumping, you'll be glad you came to shake your thing with a feel-good crowd that never lets the mood drop. *Daily 6pm–3am.* ☒ Aristofanos 12 (Katsigoyianni), 210.322.2256

Downtown Athens Attractions

Qbox Gallery • Omonia • Art Gallery

Qbox is small, but sassy. Located in Athens' trendy equivalent to New York's Meatpacking District, it shares a building with two other major art galleries in Varvakios square. Qbox is literally at the center of the cultural compass, with the Meat Market on one side, Psirri on the other, Omonia behind it, and Plaka ahead. The best time to visit is at the end of the summer, when their one-month residency on Kea Island has been completed and the artist in residence presents a show reflecting the Greek island experience. *During exhibitions, Tue–Fri 2–8pm, Sat noon–4pm, and by appointment.* Armodiou 10 (Plateia Varvakios), 211.119.9991, qbox.gr

By-the-Water Athens Hotels

Astir Palace Resort • Vouliagmeni • Modern (508 rms)

This is the hotel of Greeks' fantasies, and the backdrop for scores of movies from the Greek cinema's golden era. The guest list is an eclectic mix of jet-setting moguls and media stars, executives, and foreign dignitaries who like to relax away from prying eyes but without going into seclusion. Jane Fonda and Ted Turner are rumored to have stayed here, but the hotel won't confirm that (sleep-and-tell is so tacky). Set on 75 acres of private grounds on a peninsula with spectacular sunsets over the sea, this resort is 25 km southeast of the city center, which is served by a shuttle, limousine service, and even a heliport. The complex encompasses three modern hotels—the Arion, the Nafsika, and the Aphrodite. It was remodeled in 2004 by the world's top hospitality interior design firm, Hirsch Bedner Associates, whose work you'll be familiar with if you've visited the Fullerton Hotel in Singapore, the Mandarin Oriental in Miami, or the Bacara Resort in Santa Barbara. Rooms now boast modern furniture, high-tech facilities, and 24-hour room service. There are three beaches complete with chaises and parasols, three outdoor pools, floodlit tennis courts, and a great choice of bars and restaurants. All rooms in Nafsika have sea views. Arion sea-view rooms are arranged so the bathtubs have prime water views. €€€ Apollonos 40, 210.890.2000/800.888.1199, astir-palace.com

Vouliagmeni Suites • Vouliagmeni • Modern (36 rms)

This midsized all-suites hotel is perfect for travelers who want to enjoy both the vibrant pace of city life and the peaceful seclusion of a seaside resort. Vouliagmeni, a swank seaside suburb, is less than a half-hour's drive from downtown and just ten minutes from Glyfada, with its lively shopping, cafés, and club scene. Spacious

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Classic Athens Restaurants

Café Bohème • Kolonaki • Bar/Café/Restaurant

Romantic lighting and lace curtains beckon passers-by into this cozy retreat, warmed up by natural materials and a low-key, semi-rustic decor. Comfort food—like fried Norwegian cod with pureed potatoes and boiled greens—is served at either the small tables or in the two ample nooks with large wood tables and couch seating reserved for larger parties. The Greek-English ownership is reflected in the mix of Mediterranean standards like chickpeas in tomato sauce and more international flavors such as the baked apple dessert topped with vanilla ice-cream and rose sauce. A bar stretches along one brick wall, serving up London bar cocktails, including champagne-based drinks like the Honeyberry Fizz and refreshing strawberry daiquiris. The crowd mostly includes well-heeled Athenians still in officewear or spruced up for dates. Live-music nights, including a funk band, may boost its rep as a bar. By day, it's a good spot to read the paper solo with a coffee and croissant, or for a discreet tête-à-tête. *Mon–Sat 8.30am–midnight.* € ☒ Omirou 36, 210 360 8018

Katsourbos • Pangrati • Cretan

If you can't make it to Crete, Katsourbos is the next best way to sample the island's delicious cuisine. Dishes are made with ingredients brought over from Crete, from snails to the rare wild greens known as stamnagathi. The tiny kitchen at the edge of the dining area injects a homey atmosphere, and the service is personal and friendly yet unobtrusive. Prepare to rub elbows—space is tight—but this adds to the genial air created by the chic, yet not faddist crowd. In warm weather, ask for one of the handful of tables on the pavement, but book ahead—indoor or out, seating is limited, especially on Saturdays when tables start filling up just after midday. This is a good meal alternative to Kolonaki after visits to the Benaki or Cycladic museums. *Daily noon–1am.* € ☒ Amynta 2, 210 346 2077

Kuzina • Thisio • Mediterranean (G)

Most people come to Kuzina for the view, but return for the food. If you're in a romantic mood, head for the rooftop bar for a mesmerizing view of the Parthenon and a romantic dinner under the stars. If you're in a more social frame of mind, stake out a table on the pavement for some prime people-watching: There's a steady stream of activity from around noon until well past midnight. Located in a beautifully renovated neoclassical home a short distance from the Monastiraki and Thisio stations, Kuzina fuses old Athens with modern Greece. Clean lines and white surfaces create the perfect backdrop for Chef Aris Tsanaklidis's imaginative Mediterranean menu that borrows equally from traditional Greek dishes and nouvelle cuisine. The rooftop bar is sometimes reserved for private parties, so if you have your heart set on that view, call ahead to check. *Daily noon–12:30am.* €€ 📍 [Adrianou 9 \(Thisio\), 210.324.0133, kuzina.gr](#)

Classic Athens Nightlife

Booze • Downtown • Bar

Vodka with fresh lemon juice is the specialty in this bar that's housed in a 19th-century building surrounded by linen shops. It feels like a successful party most weekend nights, as crowds squeeze down from the upstairs bar to the newer high-ceilinged gallery below. The gallery room features its own bar and a massive chandelier made of preserved "diples" (dough cookies). The year-round establishment is the site for ongoing exhibits and shows. By day, patrons dip in to have a coffee and set up their laptops on its massive wood table. 📍 *Daily 10am-midnight.* [Kolokotroni 57, 210 324 0944, boozecooperativa.com](#)

Cabaret Voltaire • Metaxourgio • Dance Club

Cabaret Voltaire is a party waiting to happen. Set in a renovated former carpenter's workshop in an old working-class neighborhood, this bar features live jazz and Latin bands on Sundays and a torch singer of sorts on Tuesdays. But during the rest of the week, it's like one massive night at the improv thanks to the actors from nearby theaters who come here to kick back after the show. Brightly painted walls and funky furnishings add to the arty atmosphere. Nibble on seafood or a salad from the limited menu as you keep an eye on the piano where spontaneous jam sessions start—and sometimes last until closing. *Daily 8:30pm-2am.* 📍 [Marathonos 30, 210 522 7046](#)

Hip & Cool Athens Hotels

Classical Baby Grand Hotel • Omonia • Trendy (70 rms)

Honored on the *Conde Nast Traveler* Hot List in 2008 and ranked among the 65 best new places to stay in the world, Classical Baby Grand puts the hip into hipster. Of course, the Mini Cooper reception desk, Moët and Chandon Bar, and Meat Me restaurant help. A boutique hotel that puts all others to shame, it had the foresight to commission a series of 55 graffiti rooms designed and painted by some of Athens' hottest artists before they were hot. Being so central, this Baby is perfect for those on a city break with an insatiable need for anything but the status quo. €€ [Athinias 65 \(Lycourgou\), 210.325.0900, classicalhotels.com](#)

fried puffs of wild greens or favas paired with chopped onions and capers while sipping chilled raki, then linger over grilled squid or a chickpea stew as lunch stretches into the early part of the dinner hour. The menu is pure Greek taverna fare with ingenious touches that create new flavors while remaining true to the roots of traditional Greek cuisine. The décor gets the same treatment, with wooden taverna tables painted a cheery pastel green. This is the perfect place to relax after a visit to the National Archaeological Museum nearby. On Saturdays, claim your table early as it gets extra crowded with Greeks who settle in after shopping at Exarchia's open-air produce market. *Daily noon-1am.* € 📍 [Emmanuil Benaki 69, 210 330 0237](#)

To Filema Mezopoleio • Syntagma • Mediterranean

To Filema is on the same street as the Bliss Organic Café, but it could not be more different. It is a die-hard traditional meze-taverna, dishing out food from the past against an unassuming, minimal taverna-inspired décor. It's on a quiet road populated by haberdasheries and the like, and sitting outside during the late summer and early autumn can be easily one of the inner city's greatest pleasures. The food is traditional Greek food, just like Mama made, with a few specialties. For the adventurous, why not take a chance on the camel pie, known in Greek as *pastourmadopita*? *Daily 11:30am-1:30am.* € 📍 [Romvis 7 \(Kolokotronis\), 210.325.0222](#)

Downtown Athens Nightlife

Badminton Theater • Goudi • Theatre

The Badminton Theater is named after the sport it once hosted as a stadium for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Since renovated, it has become a cultural center for the city, and one of the most innovative and successful theatres in Athens, which has seen the likes of *West Side Story*, Prague's National Theatre and Ballet, Tiger Lillies, Le Quattor, and *Mamma Mia!* tread its stage, and that doesn't even include musical acts, such as PJ Harvey, who have graced the city's most active stage. If you want something to do any night of the week, simply log on to Badminton's website. You're bound to find something worth your while. *Hours vary.* 📍 [Alsos Stratou Kanelopoulo iAvenue, 211.101.0020, badmintontheater.gr](#)

Bar Guru* • Psirri • Bar/Restaurant/Lounge

Every Saturday night, good-time crowds descend on Bar Guru Bar for some of the best Thai fusion cuisine the city has to offer. They sip cocktails and perch their funky derrieres on traditional Thai furniture amid the burgundy, violet, turquoise, and forest-green shades dripping from the walls. Golden accents and low lighting create a seductive aura of opulence in a ghetto-fabulous location. After midnight, move over to the bar, where DJs spin for an enthusiastic crowd hitting up the dance floor. If that's not your style, head up to Bar Guru's Jazz Upstairs club, for an evening of live performances by musicians from around the world. *Kitchen: Mon-Sat 9pm-1:30am, Sun 8:30am-12:30am. Bar: daily 9pm-late.* 📍 [Plateia Theatrou 10 \(Menandrou\), 210.324.6530, bargurubar.gr](#)

One Happy Cloud • Psirri • Bar

You can't get more descriptive than a bar called One Happy Cloud. A small and modest venue, the interior is boutique-cool, and the eclectic clientele street-

Koukoutsis • Kolonaki • Store



Neatly folded into one of Athens' most happening streets, Koukoutsis, Greek for the pit of an olive, is literally a tiny seed from which beautiful things grow. The shop stocks graphic T-shirts created by designers from Greece and abroad, as well as collectors' accessories including wallets from the unique Poketo range. With an emphasis on functional chic, Koukoutsis should be your first port of call if you're looking for wearable art that is just a little bit tongue-in-cheek. It's a little shop with a very loud voice and an even louder reputation. *Mon 10am–6pm, Tue 10am–9pm, Wed 10am–6pm, Thu–Fri 10am–9pm, Sat 10am–6pm.* Skoufa 81 (Asklipiou), 210.361.4060, myspace.com/koukoutsis

Downtown Athens Restaurants



Bar Guru Restaurant* • Bar Guru Restaurant • Psirri • Thai

Guru's food is just like its décor: slick, stylish, and decadent. Thanks to chefs who have trained at the Royal Thai School of Culinary Arts and Bangkok's Bengarong Royal Thai Restaurant, only the freshest and best ingredients are used here. Rare spices imported directly from Thailand send you into a world where only aroma exists. Cradled by soft lighting, warm, wooden furniture, and a Thai aura, you just might forget that you're in Europe. *See Classic Nightlife for more information. Kitchen: Mon–Sat 9pm–1:30am, Sun 8:30am–12:30am. Bar: daily 9pm–late.* €   Plateia Theatrou 10 (Menandrou), 210.324.6530, www.bargurubar.gr

Bliss • Syntagma • Café

One of the only places serving up traditional Greek taverna fare with the panache that only organic is capable of, Bliss is more than a café, it is a state of mind. A restored three-story neoclassical building with oak wood interiors bathed in natural light, it is located on a charming street in the grubby heart of Athens. As it's devoted to all things organic, you just might find forgiveness for all your sins in this eco-haven frequented by laid-back people with a penchant for cotton fabrics, flowing skirts, and stripy socks. There is a yoga and alternative therapies space, a corner selling new-age gifts, and a warm café area. *Sun–Fri 8:30am–11pm, Sat 8:30am–12:30am.* €   Romvis 24A (Kolokotronis), 210.325.0360

The Good Life (I Kali Zoi) • Thisio • Greek


Adrianou is a pedestrian street lined with an eclectic array of café-bars and tavernas with a constant flow of people. Yet on the Thisio side, next to the Opera House where Maria Callas once graced the stage, a small and mysteriously modest taverna is clearly visible in the distance. The Good Life Taverna, a cult classic among locals, serves up rustic meatballs, village sausages, myriad local favorites, and possibly the tastiest French fries in Athens. Set against the ruins of Thisio, both ancient and modern, a meal here evokes the true spirit of the area. *Daily noon–late.* €€   12 Thisio (Adrianou), 210.321.6733

Rififi • Exarchia • Greek



Rififi opens for lunch at noon, but the crowd of regulars—writers, musicians, students, and other denizens of this vibrant downtown neighborhood—doesn't really start packing the tables until well after 3pm. Follow their lead and nosh on deep-

Hip & Cool Athens Restaurants



Dasein Coffee Art & Spirits • Exarchia • Café

It's not just the usual smoke, but also ideas and art that float around this high-ceilinged hangout with a rigorous weekly schedule of philosophy, literature, free films, widescreen sports, music, and art. Beyond the huge wooden swinging-door entrance, two enormous black-and-white, celebrity-filled photo collages by local graffiti artists Carpe Diem set a creative tone. Arty and mainstream clientele chat at the bar, at street-side window tables, and on big black couches while nursing mochachinos, straight scotch, or imported beer. Food is limited to the likes of simple toasted sandwiches and stark nachos, but coffee is served 'til late. Things get hopping on weekends after 10pm. *Daily 11am–1am.* €–  Solomou 12, Exarchia Square, 210 384 1857, dasein.gr



Fasoli • Exarchia • Restaurant/Taverna

Though the food and prices are taverna-like, it's the place's quirky sense of style—with lamps made of clothespins and disco tunes pumping—that makes this eatery so hip. The new branch's glass-walled corner location, showcasing an open kitchen and split-level interior, lights up the block. The 30ish-to-40ish crowd often fill tables for lunch or dinner (after 8:30pm) to enjoy the red house wine, a wide array of salads, and light, inspired Greek classics, including egg-plant or fava bean dip. The chef applies special touches to some dishes, like a drizzling of balsamic vinegar sauce here or a shaving of parmesan cheese there. Top off the meal with a light panacotta, drenched in your choice of sauce. *Mon–Sat 1:30pm–12:30am.* €   Ippokratous and Navarinou Sts. (also a branch at 54 Emmanuel Benaki St.), 210 360 3626

Hell's Kitchen • Kotzia Square • Cafe

The flames periodically flare as the chef prepares dishes in the open kitchen, but Athenians find this small corner hangout heavenly. Located behind Athens' Town Hall, this minimalist joint has big windows and a colorful mural. It is one of the few places in town serving breakfast, with six omelets available till 6pm. By night, a DJ spins, and you can have a drink (including inspired mojitos), a meal of salads, sandwiches, or heartier fare from the New York–inspired menu, or munch on a salad buffet around schoolroom-like tables. *Times vary; call ahead to make sure it will be open.* €   Agisilaou 6B, 210 346 2077

Nixon • Psirri • International

Nixon is one of those places known only to Athens insiders, a luxurious lounge-bar where media-weary celebrities go to kick back. Dark, primary colors and leather, wood, and brass accents create an elegant, somewhat unusual, complement to the burger-driven menu and eclectic playlist. Movie screenings, private and public, add to the clubhouse atmosphere that has made it popular among the city's traditional elite 20-somethings who meet here for cocktails, gossip, and occasionally a screening. *Times vary; call ahead to make sure it will be open.* €€   Agisilaou 6B, 210 346 2077

Hip & Cool Athens Nightlife

Circus • Exarchia • Cafe

There aren't any jugglers or clowns, only young urban professionals vying for barstools at this small but airy two-floor bar located in a student neighborhood. By day, there is coffee, tea, and food (mainly salads and pasta). By night, the bartenders shake up drinks, including the "Flying Circus" cocktail, composed of vodka and melon, strawberry, cranberry, and pineapple juices. But it's not so much the drinks that draw the crowds as it is the warm lighting, the R&B music, and the fact that it's become a neighborhood hub. *Mon-Fri 9am-midnight, Sat 10am-midnight, Sun noon-midnight.* ☰ [Navarinou 11, 210 361 5255](#)

Joker's • Syntagma • Café/Bar

Joker's is small, but it exudes enough cabaret kick to charm the socks off anyone who comes across this uncut ruby in the rough. With walls covered in old posters, tickets from Rolling Stone gigs, large paintings, a jukebox, and pretty much any piece of memorabilia that puts the glitter into glitter ball, Joker's is one of those rare places that suits any time and any occasion. With its excellent selection of cocktails, spirits, coffees, teas, and homemade pies and sandwiches, this little place is where it's at—that is, if you can find a place to sit among the chattering crowd. *Daily 8am–4am.* ☰ [Voulis 7 \(Mitropoleos\), 210.321.9225](#)

K44 • Gazi • Bar

Packing an ice-cool clientele and a poker-hot reputation, K44 is the perfect place to mingle. Located in the painfully hip Gazi district, this venue is more than just a bar: It is a shooting star. The converted warehouse acts as a gallery, studio, office, and performance venue, and the bare concrete space is a beacon for the city's hip young things who come looking for their own kind. Underground DJ nights, arts exhibitions, and design events showcase anything from graffiti to fashion to the darkest depths of emo rock, ensuring all genres and styles are accounted for. On quiet nights, listen for that intellectual buzz of conceptualization, or simply observe the diverse crowds that come through the gritty glass doors. *Daily 10am–2am.* ☰ [Konstantinopoleos 44 \(Elasidon\), 210.342.3560, k44.gr](#)

Passepartout • Kolonaki • Cafe

From late morning to past midnight, a steady stream of ultra-image-conscious patrons stops in to Passepartout for a quick cup of coffee or a drink on their way somewhere else. Oddly enough, this role as an in-between place not only works but has established this spot as an official meeting point. If you're into crowd-watching, stake your place at the lacquer-topped bar or in one of the leather-backed banquette-style couches on the perimeter, order your favorite tippie, and enjoy watching the social scene unfold before you. You can nosh on café food during the day and nibble on bar food at night as you raise your martini glass to the 20-something blonde across the room. *Daily 10:30am-1am.* ☰ [Skoufa 47-49, 210 364 5546](#)

Underworld • Downtown • Dance Club

Take a walk on the wild side of the Athens club scene as you descend into the dark—literally, barely lit—interiors of Underworld, one of the season's hottest late-night clubs. The theme here is the seven deadly sins, many of which are being played out before your eyes. The combination of goth aura and deafening industrial rock

suggests a rough edge, but the mixed gay and straight crowd is really just indulging in good, clean fun. Check local listings for live performances—although some are unscheduled. And don't bother arriving before 1am. *10pm-2am and later.* ☰ [Gambetta 5, 210 384 0965](#)

Hip & Cool Athens Attractions

Apivita Shop and Polis Spa • Kolonaki • Store/Spa

Stop by the Apivita boutique in Kolonaki to stock up on your favorite natural personal-care products, from quick-acting face, hair, and body masks from the Express range to light fragrances for women and men. Consultants are on hand to custom-blend skin-care products and create a regimen just for you. Feeling drained from all the late nights? Try one of the signature facials or a massage in the adjoining Polis Spa. Apivita's Propoline products have propolis, a substance collected by honeybees, as its active ingredient, combined with herb extracts and other natural ingredients. Available in 16 countries, this wondrous line has a loyal following around the world. After a visit here, you'll know why. [Solonos 26, 210 364 0560, apivita.com](#)

Bettina • Kolonaki • Store

Bettina is one of Athens's oldest and most pioneering boutiques. Opened in 1964 by Vana Konstantinidou, a woman with a fierce reputation for introducing new trends into a closed fashion scene, Bettina was the first to import the likes of Balenciaga, Lanvin, and Vivienne Westwood to the city. Today, Konstantinidou's grandson, Meletis Koropoulos, continues the march into the fashionable future. "In an ideal boutique, there is no constancy, just constant change. That is the only way to be creative," he insists. The three-story boutique has been renovated three times since 2001, and it has now taken on the identity of a giant wardrobe, a concept devised by noted designers Metamorfosis. Bettina organizes and takes part in fashion events and exhibitions, and even provided the costumes for Dimitris Papaioannou's production of *Medea* [2]. You can't get more avant-garde than that. *Mon 10am–4pm, Tue 10am–8:30pm, Wed 10am–4pm, Thu–Fri 10am–8:30pm, Sat 10am–4pm.* [Anagnostopoulou 29 \(Pindarou\), 210.339.2094, bettina.com.gr](#)

Herakleidon Experience in Visual Arts • Thisio • Art Museum

Exposed brick walls and wrought-iron railings aren't the sort of look you'd expect of a private museum specializing in modern art, but Herakleidon Experience in Visual Arts pulls it off beautifully. Located in the heart of the Thisseio bar district and within a stone's throw of the Acropolis and Ancient Agora, this new museum's exhibits by artists like Victor Vasarely and M.C. Escher are the perfect antidote to an antiquities overdose. In addition to the permanent exhibit, you'll find rotating temporary exhibits highlighting the works of both Greek and foreign artists. Check the website ahead of time to find out about musical performances, seminars, and lectures. Pick up some unusual souvenirs from the gift shop on the way out. *Tue-Sat 1-9pm, Sun 11am-7pm.* €- [Herakleidon 16, 210 346 1981, herakleidon-art.gr](#)