

NAFPLIO DESTINATION GUIDE



Introduction

Named after Nafplios, the son of Poseidon, this city was long a strategic and commercial center thanks to the fort overlooking the bay. Ruled by the Byzantines from around the 6th century AD until the fall of the Byzantine Empire (1204), it was invaded by the Franks, then handed over to the Venetians, who pass the city back and forth between the Turks until 1821, when the city is finally liberated and becomes the first capital of the modern Greek State.

Exploring Nafplio

Take a leisurely volta on the Megalos Domos (The Great Road). Start in Syntagma Square, Nafplio's heart. The square is surrounded by many neoclassical buildings. The Archaeological Museum is housed in the old Venetian arsenal, built in 1713 on the west end of the

square. The Old Parliament Building is located to the south. It was built by the Turks in 1730 as a mosque and later housed the first Greek People's Assembly.

On the opposite side of the square you can find the Trianon, one of the city's oldest buildings. It takes its name from the movie theater that it once housed, but it was also originally a mosque built in the 1500s.

The Megalos Domos starts just to the left of the old mosque in the east of the square. There are plenty of places along the way to stop for a coffee or a glass of wine or get some shopping done.

The road leads into Three Admirals' Square, named after the admirals who fought with the Greeks in the Battle of Navarino in 1827: the British Codrington, the French DeRigny and the Russian Heyden. The buildings on this square were also built in the neoclassical style. The Town Hall, on the southern end, originally served as Greece's first high school in 1857. There is a statue of King Otto, Greece's first king, where his home once stood.

Across the square is a statue of Kapodistrias, who was appointed Greece's first president in 1828 when the city became Greece's capital. He was later assassinated outside Ag. Spyridon Church. The road ends with several large parks, where there are playground and

benches, tavernas and cafes. See the statue of Kolokotronis, one of the great freedom fighters in the 1820s. Or just take some time to relax in the shade.

Around the headland, to the beach and Akronafplia.

Walk down to the harbor and continue along the waterfront promenade toward Bourtzi, the fortress in the bay (see below). If you follow the paved walking path along the coast you will soon come to Arvanitia beach. Take the steps down to head to the beach or follow the road back into town.

The steep road to the left in the parking lot will take you to a panoramic view of Old Town and then on to Akronafplia, the city's oldest castle (see below).

Castles and Fortresses Akronafplia

This is the city's oldest castle, located on the hill above Old Town. There are great views of the northern part of the city and of the bay. It was the site of the Byzantine early medieval town and the whole city once existed within its walls. Parts of the castle were built as early as the Bronze Age. It was later extended by the Romans, Franks, Phoenicians and Turks and there are lots of ruins to explore: castles, city walls, gates and bastions.

The five brothers bastion is at the tip of the headland on the western side and gets its name

from the five identical canons that still point out toward the bay. It is unclear whether it was built by the Venetians or the Turks.

Palamidi

This fortress seems to float on the steep hill 700 feet above the city. The Venetians built the citadel in just three years, between 1711 and 1714, and the Turks overran it just one year later.

In 1822, a group of Greek rebels overpowered the Turks here and the liberation of Nafplio began. From 1840 it was used as a prison. The stairs leading up to the castle date to this time.

There are 857 steps, but the walk is worth it. The views from the fortress are stunning. Go in the morning when the stairs are in the shade and bring lots of water. Be sure to check the opening hours before you climb the stairs!

Bourtzi

The Venetians built this fortress in the bay in 1471, but at the time it only consisted of the central tower. To defend the bay from enemy ships, thick chains that ran from the castle to the mainland would be hauled up out of the water to block access.

Once the Greeks took back that city, it served as the executioner's home for a time (1865-1935) because no one wanted to be their neighbors. It later became a hotel and restaurant but

today is mainly a tourist attraction. Take a boat out to the fortress and make sure you look back to see great views of the city.”





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