



EXCLUSIVE
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THESSALONIKI

ReThinkRelo series:

UNCONVENTIONAL TRAVEL TIPS



Your guide
Klaudia Matuszna

Culture

Food

Safety

Transport

Daily Life

Accommodation

Free Time

Local Tips

here's WHAT'S INSIDE

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Explore RethinkRelo – our knowledge hub for relocation professionals, expats, and anyone adapting to life in a new city, featuring industry insights, expert advice and local guides.

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about THESSALONIKI

QUICK OVERVIEW

Thessaloniki is the second-largest city in Greece, set on the Thermaic Gulf of the Aegean Sea in the country's north. Known for its blend of Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern European influences, the city is celebrated for its waterfront promenade, lively nightlife, and rich cultural traditions.

[VISIT OFFICAL WEBSITE](#)[VIEW ON MAP](#)

HEART OF GREEK CULTURE & GROWTH

Often called Greece's cultural capital, Thessaloniki hosts major festivals, international trade fairs, creative industries, and an emerging innovation ecosystem. Its youthful energy is fueled by a large student population from Aristotle University and a thriving startup scene.

EVERYDAY LIFE & CITY CHARACTER

Life here combines history and modernity, leisurely café culture by the sea, late-night dinners, and scenic strolls along Nea Paralia coexist alongside fast-paced business and tech events. The urban rhythm is relaxed but vibrant, especially in central districts and waterfront zones.

local BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

A KEY ECONOMIC GATEWAY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Thessaloniki is the economic hub of Northern Greece and a key gateway to Southeast Europe and the Balkans. The wider region of Central Macedonia, where the city is located, generates around 14–15% of Greece’s GDP, making it one of the country’s most important regional economies outside Athens.

The local economy is primarily service-driven, supported by trade, logistics, tourism, education, and light industry.

14–15% of Greece’s GDP

Generated by Central Macedonia

One of the country’s most important economic regions, driven by industry, agriculture, and the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki.

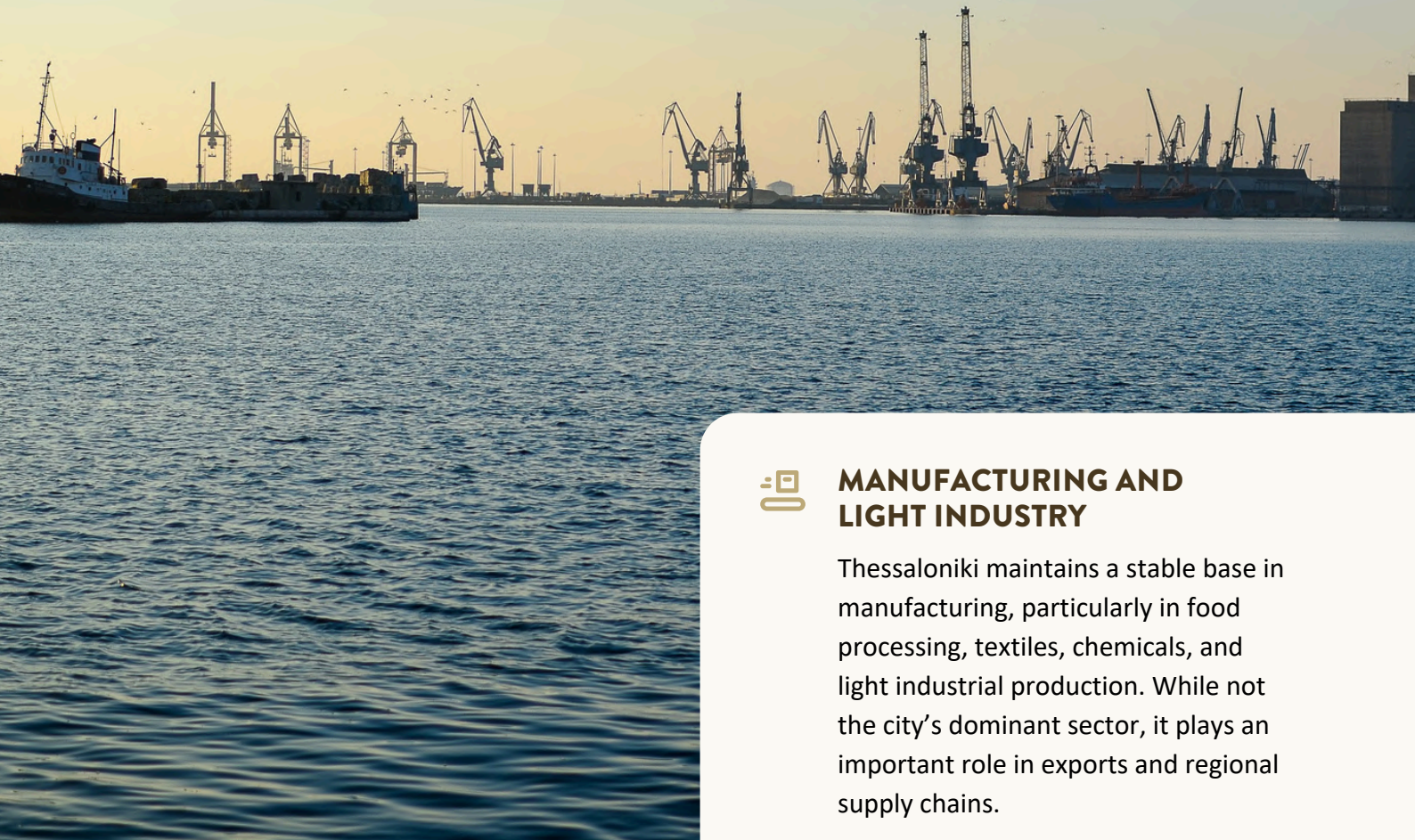
2nd largest city in Greece

Heart of Northern Greece

Home to 1M+ people in its metropolitan area, it blends rich history with a vibrant urban culture and a dynamic economic landscape.



local BUSINESS LANDSCAPE



EDUCATION AND TALENT BASE

A major economic driver is the presence of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the largest university in Greece. The university and broader academic ecosystem generate a large student population, support local consumption, and supply a steady pipeline of skilled graduates for the labor market. This contributes to the city's youthful demographic profile and growing knowledge economy.

MANUFACTURING AND LIGHT INDUSTRY

Thessaloniki maintains a stable base in manufacturing, particularly in food processing, textiles, chemicals, and light industrial production. While not the city's dominant sector, it plays an important role in exports and regional supply chains.

TRADE, LOGISTICS, AND PORT ECONOMY

At the core of Thessaloniki's economy is its port, one of the most important in the Aegean Sea. It acts as a strategic gateway for trade between Greece, the Balkans, and Southeast Europe, supporting container transport, warehousing, and regional distribution. This makes the city a key logistics hub in the wider Balkan trade corridor.

local BUSINESS LANDSCAPE



EMERGING INNOVATION AND STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

In recent years, Thessaloniki has been developing a growing startup and innovation ecosystem, supported by universities, EU funding, and local initiatives. Activity is concentrated in digital services, software, and creative industries. Although still in early development compared to major European hubs, the sector is expanding steadily.



TOURISM AND CULTURAL SECTOR

Tourism is a major contributor to the city's economy, driven by its coastal location, cultural heritage, and gastronomy. Thessaloniki attracts both international and domestic visitors year-round, with strong seasonal peaks during major events such as the Thessaloniki International Film Festival and the Thessaloniki International Fair. Hospitality and food services are key beneficiaries of this sector.



SERVICES, RETAIL, AND CONSUMER MARKET

The services sector dominates the local economy, accounting for the majority of employment. Retail, hospitality, healthcare, education, and professional services are all strongly represented, supported by a dense urban population and steady domestic demand. The city center and waterfront remain the main commercial zones.



CONSTRUCTION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Urban development is an ongoing growth driver, supported by residential expansion, tourism infrastructure, and public investment. Major upgrades in transport infrastructure, including the new metro system, are improving mobility and supporting long-term urban modernization.



top NEIGHBORHOODS



CITY CENTER

The city's commercial and social core, packed with shops, bars, historic sites, and cafés. Great for first-time visitors, business travelers, and anyone who wants to be in the middle of the action.

ANO POLI (UPPER TOWN)

A traditional quarter with narrow cobbled streets, Ottoman-era houses, and superb views over the city and sea. Quiet by day and atmospheric at sunset, perfect for culture lovers.

NEA PARALIA (NEW WATERFRONT)

A reimagined seaside promenade perfect for jogging, cycling, seaside dining, and sunsets. A favorite for locals and expats alike.

LADADIKA

Former oil warehouses turned into a lively entertainment and dining district. Known for tavernas, meze bars, and nightlife, this area pulses into the early hours.

TOUMBA & PYLAIA

Residential and modern zones with shopping malls, business parks, and convenient transport links, popular with families and professionals.

about ACCOMMODATION

SERVICED AND FURNISHED

Thessaloniki offers a range of places to stay, from modern serviced apartments to boutique hotels and well-equipped furnished flats. Many properties include essentials like Wi-Fi, air conditioning, and kitchen facilities. Note: washing machines aren't always included, so confirm before booking.

WHERE TO STAY

Business travelers often choose the city center or waterfront for convenience and proximity to major venues. Residential neighborhoods like Toumba, Pylaia, and Ano Poli offer quieter, more local living.

SAFETY & COMFORT

Safety is generally good throughout Thessaloniki, with central areas active and patrolled late into the evening. Standard apartment amenities vary by property, so check for elevators, security features, and utilities.

public TRANSPORT

THESSALONIKI METRO

Thessaloniki's long-awaited metro began operations in late 2024, significantly improving commuting times and comfort for residents and visitors.

BUS NETWORK

The main public transport system covers the city and suburbs. Tickets are purchased at kiosks or onboard machines, there's no single multi-city transport card like in Athens.

TAXIS

Taxis are plentiful and affordable. Ride-hailing apps like Beat and Taxiplus help you book vehicles easily with upfront pricing.

AIRPORT ACCESS

The city is served by Thessaloniki Airport Makedonia, located about 15 km from the center. Regular buses, taxis, and private transfers provide connections between the airport and the city.

ON FOOT OR BY BIKE

Central Thessaloniki is compact and easy to explore on foot. The city's long waterfront promenade is particularly popular for walking and cycling, offering scenic views and connecting several central neighborhoods.

must-see ATTRACTIONS

ARISTOTELOUS SQUARE

Thessaloniki's main plaza, perfect for coffee, people-watching, and admiring neoclassical architecture.



ROTUNDA OF GALERIUS

UNESCO-listed monument paired with the Arch of Galerius – key Roman Empire heritage sites. Originally built in the 4th century as part of Emperor Galerius' palace complex, it later served as a church and a mosque.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF THESSALONIKI

Housing treasures from Ancient Macedonia, this museum is a must for history enthusiasts. Its extensive collection includes gold artifacts, sculptures, and everyday objects from the era of Alexander the Great.

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must-see ATTRACTIONS

WHITE TOWER OF THESSALONIKI

The city's most iconic symbol and history museum, offering panoramic views from the top. Originally built in the 15th century during Ottoman rule, it now houses exhibitions on the history of Thessaloniki.

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AGIOS DIMITRIOS CHURCH

A landmark basilica dedicated to Thessaloniki's patron saint, rich in religious art and history. The church is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an important pilgrimage destination in Greece.

LEARN MORE

MOUNT OLYMPUS (DAY TRIP)

About an hour's drive away, ideal for hiking, mythology tours, and nature excursions. Known in Greek mythology as the home of the ancient gods, it is also Greece's highest mountain and a national park.

LEARN MORE



local CUISINE

BOUGATSA

A beloved local pastry filled with sweet cream, cheese, or minced meat. Made with crispy layers of phyllo dough and often dusted with powdered sugar or cinnamon, it is a warm and satisfying snack commonly enjoyed for breakfast in Thessaloniki.



TSOUREKI

Soft braided sweet bread flavored with mahlep and mastic, traditionally baked for Greek Easter and widely enjoyed in Thessaloniki bakeries.



MEZE PLATES

Small shared dishes showcasing Greek flavors, olives, dips, grilled veggies, and seafood meze.



TRIGONA PANORAMATOS

Crispy phyllo pastry cones filled with creamy custard and soaked in syrup, a famous dessert originating from the Panorama district of Thessaloniki.



GYROS

Slices of seasoned meat served in pita with vegetables and tzatziki - Greek casual staple.

WHERE TO EAT

Thessaloniki is famous for its lively food scene. For Mediterranean seafood and creative dishes, try [Grada Nuevo](#), a great choice for a special dinner. For authentic Greek tavern cuisine, visit [Kanoula](#) or [Rouga](#), both known for traditional local recipes and a relaxed atmosphere.



Your guide
Klaudia Matuszna



do it LIKE A LOCAL

COFFEE RITUALS

Locals love their frappé and freddo espresso, long café hangs are part of daily rhythm, especially near Aristotelous Square.

NIGHTLIFE STARTS LATE

Dinner usually begins around 9-10 PM, bars and clubs get lively after 11 PM.

EVENTS & CULTURE

The International Film Festival (November) and International Fair (September) are major highlights.

LANGUAGE & GREETINGS

While English is widely understood, Greeks appreciate local phrases like “efcharistó” (thank you) or “kaliméra” (good morning).

CASH VS CARD

Cards and contactless payments are widely accepted, though cash still helps in markets and smaller cafés.

SHOPPING HOTSPOTS

Tsimiski Street for international brands, Modiano & Kapani markets for local produce and spices.

DAY TRIPS FROM THESSALONIKI

Halkidiki beaches, Vergina archaeological site, and Mount Olympus offer great weekend escapes.

remember, SAFETY FIRST

EMERGENCY NUMBERS



112 GENERAL EMERGENCY NUMBER

100 POLICE

166 MEDICAL EMERGENCY

199 FIRE DEPARTMENT



STAY STREET SMART

Thessaloniki is generally safe, but stay aware of pickpockets in crowded areas such as markets and public transport.



SAFE RIDES ONLY

Choose licensed taxis or well-known ride-hailing apps instead of hailing cars on the street. It's safer and usually cheaper.



KEEP COPIES HANDY

Visitors should keep digital copies of passports and visas and carry identification when required.



*Hey there,
this is me
who prepared this
cool loco
for you!*

Klaudia Matuszna
Project Manager

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