



CITY BREAK Athens

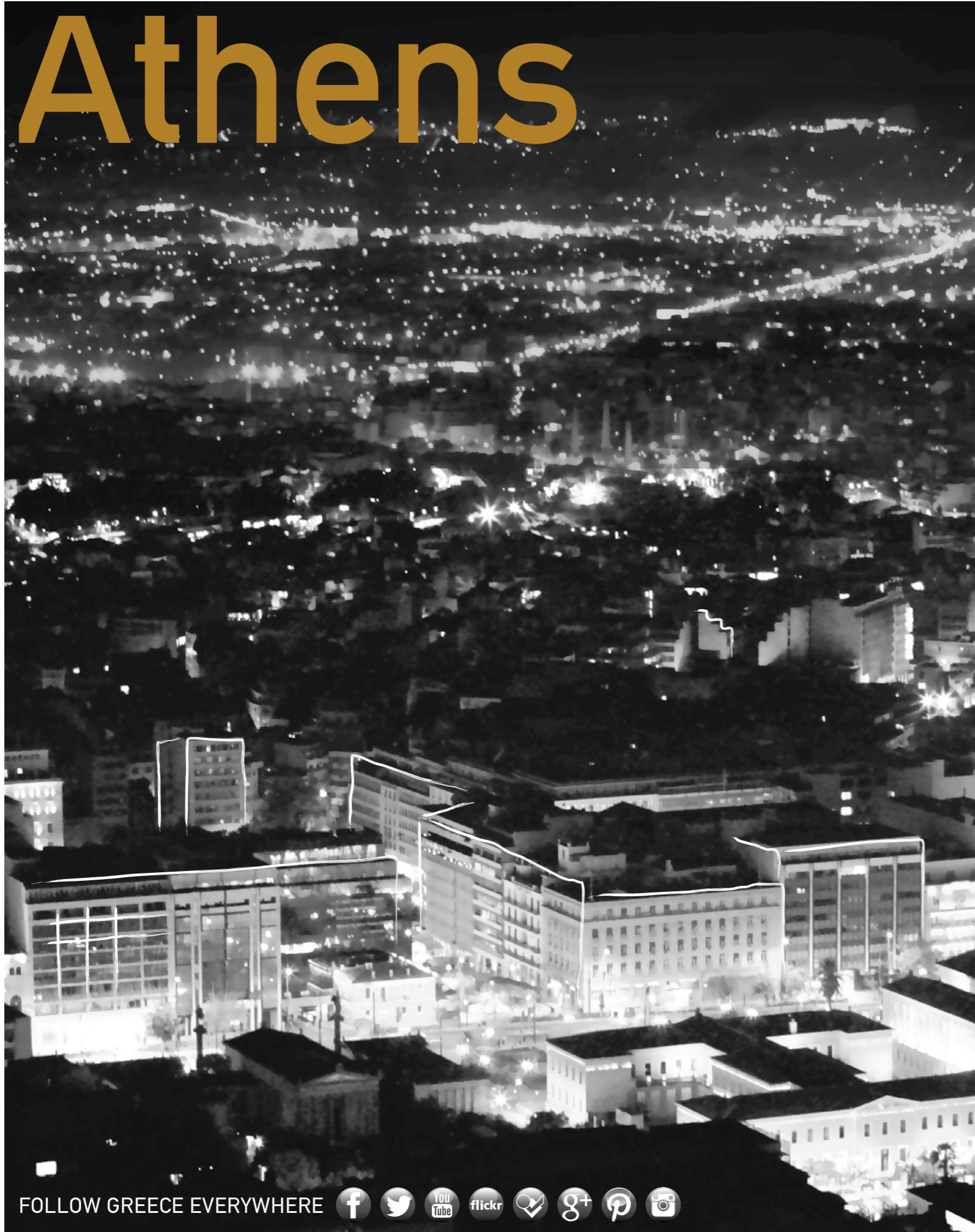


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GREECE

MINISTRY OF TOURISM - GREEK NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION

Athens



FOLLOW GREECE EVERYWHERE



So
old,
yet
so
fresh

ATHENS IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST CITIES WITH ITS RECORDED HISTORY SPANNING AROUND 3,400 YEARS AND BEING INHABITED SINCE THE 11TH MILLENNIUM BCE.

In the 5th Century BCE classical Athens was a centre of arts, democracy, science and philosophy. Home of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, Athens is considered the cradle of western civilization. Over the years, a multitude of conquerors occupied Athens, and erected unique, splendid monuments - a rare historical palimpsest, evident everywhere in the city.

In 1834, Athens became the capital of the modern Greek state. The choice was based on the symbolic significance of Athens' classical history. During that period the city was constructed around the Acropolis walls.

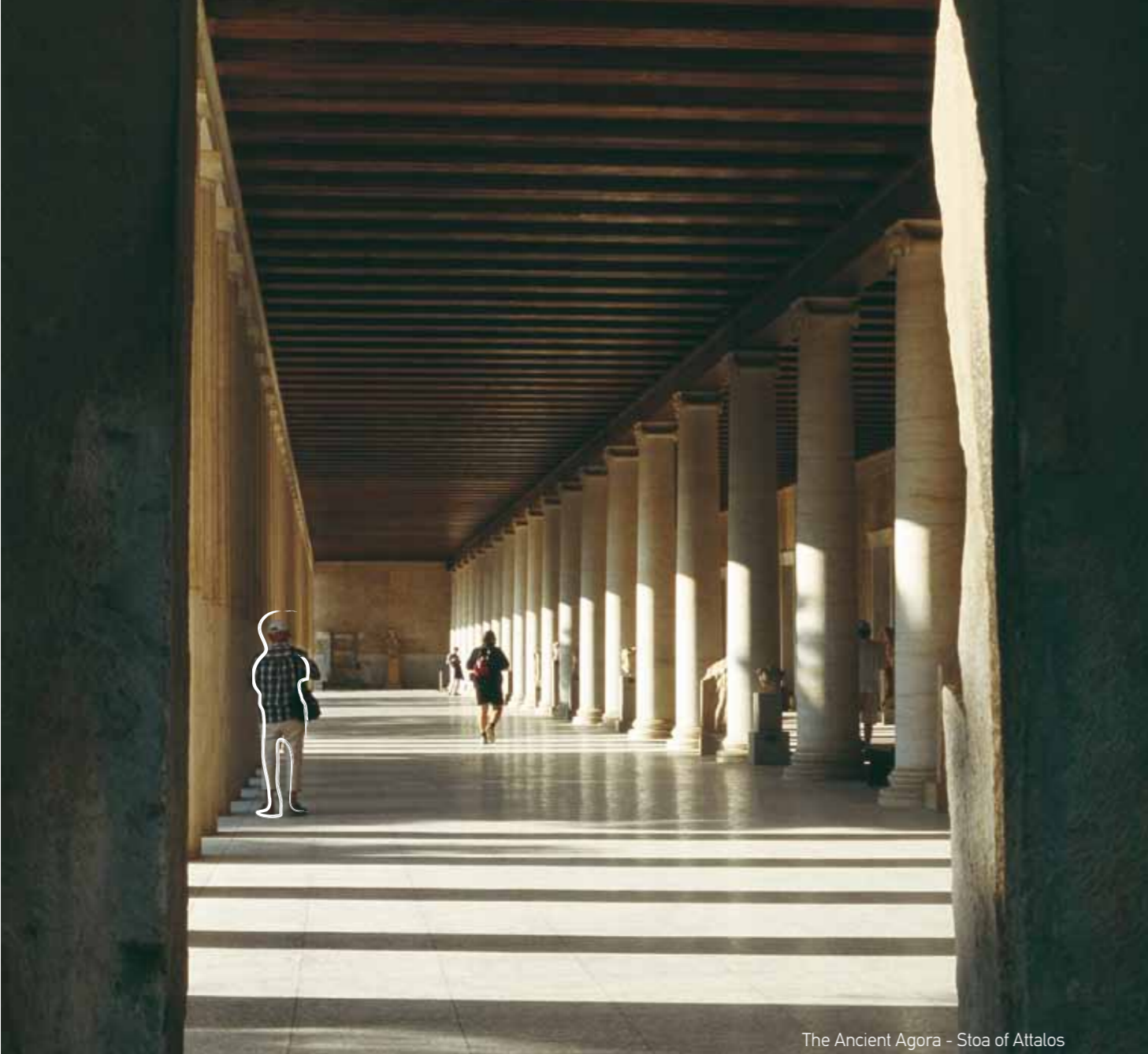
Today, the greater urban complex of the Greek metropolis is called Attica and includes suburbs and the neighbouring city of Piraeus. Home to more than 4 million people it is the political, social, cultural, financial and commercial centre of Greece. The contemporary urban scenery of the sprawling city reflects its exciting history, its multi-cultural modern personality as well as the infrastructure and facilities. In Athens and the wider Attica area, you will find high standard hotel accommodation, modern means of transportation such as the cutting - edge modern metro, a wide choice of opportunities for shopping, dining and night life but above all the hospitality and warmth of its inhabitants.

In other words, Athens is a must destination that combines modern urban innovation with history, culture and natural beauty throughout the year.





Serenity



The Ancient Agora - Stoa of Attalos



The Temple of Olympian Zeus

A journey through history

A LARGE PART OF THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL CENTRE HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO A 3-KILOMETRE PEDESTRIAN ZONE, WHICH IS THE LARGEST IN EUROPE. IT LEADS TO THE MAJOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (THE "ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK"), SIMULATING THE ANCIENT LANDSCAPE. EITHER ON FOOT OR BY BIKE, THE "GRAND PROMENADE" IS AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE, A REAL JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY...

The Athens Grand Promenade



The Hadrian's Library



The Parthenon



The Acropolis Museum - The Parthenon frieze

Classicism

A real live tour of the past



The Acropolis Museum

Start your tour at the temple of Olympian Zeus (6th c. BCE), one of the largest in antiquity. Right next to it, Hadrian's Arch (131 CE) is the symbolic entrance to the city. From there, walk along Dionysiou Areopaghitou Street and pass by the ancient open Theatre of Dionysos (5th c. BCE) where the ancient plays of Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus and Aristophanes were performed. After the ruins of the Asclepieion (5th c. BCE) and the stoa of Eumenes (2nd c. BCE), visit the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, the once closed theatre, which was built in 161 CE and is nowadays the venue of the Athens Festival.

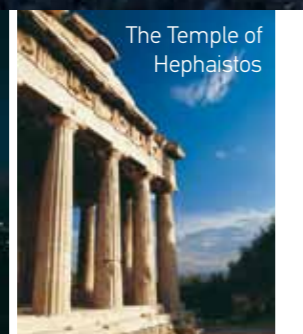
From there you can climb up to the sacred rock of Acropolis. Here you can find some of the most important architectural and art masterpieces in the world, such as Propylaea, the temple of Athena Nike and Erechtheion. The most renowned is the Parthenon temple, built by Callicrates and Iktinos during the 5th c. BCE and gloriously decorated by famous sculptor Phidias. Only 300m. away from the sacred rock of Acropolis stands the impressive new Acropolis Museum, which houses 4,000 priceless finds from the Acropolis monuments.

Coming down from Acropolis, you arrive at Areios Pagos, the most ancient law court in the world. Right opposite, beautifully cobbled little roads leading to the Roman monument adorn Philopappou Hill. Closeby the ancient Pnyx was the place where Athenians used to assemble and exert their democratic rights. Walking farther along the pedestrian road, you arrive at Ancient Agora, the commercial, political and religious centre of ancient Athens and the Temple of Hephaistos, the best-preserved temple of Greek antiquity. Nearby, you will find Roman Agora with the famed "Tower of Winds" (1st c. BCE) and Hadrian's Library (132 CE).

From there, via Ermou Street, you arrive at Kerameikos, the largest cemetery of the ancient city, with impressive tomb sculptures and stelae.



The Philopappou Monument



The Temple of Hephaistos



The Roman Agora

Never ending

SO MUCH MORE TO SEE

Plaka the Athens' oldest district has been inhabited continuously since antiquity. Walking through the narrow labyrinthine streets lined with houses and mansions from the time of the Turkish occupation and the neoclassical period (19th c.) you encounter more ancient monuments, scores of Byzantine churches and remnants of the ottoman buildings such as mosques, a Turkish bath, a Muslim Seminary. There are also some interesting museums, lots of picturesque tavernas, cafes, bars, as well as shops selling souvenirs and traditional Greek products.



Plaka



Monastiraki Square

YOU WILL NEED SEVERAL DAYS TO SEE ATHENS. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES NEVER END AND THE MODERN CITY HAS MANY SURPRISES TO OFFER.

Thissio



Ermou street



Kotzia Square

Continuing from Plaka, you arrive at Monastiraki, a characteristic area of 'old' Athens, with narrow streets, small buildings and the town's traditional bazaar (Flea Market). Close to it, there is the Psyri area, a traditional neighbourhood, which in the past few years has evolved into one of the most important centres of the city's nightlife. However, the heart of the historical centre is the modern commercial area, with more than 2,500 shops lining the streets surrounding the centrally located Ermou street.

The western border of the area is Athinas street and the surrounding area where you can find ethnic shops and bistros. Here are situated, among others, the 19th century neoclassical mansions of the City Hall, the Municipal Market (where meat, fish and vegetables are sold) and spacious Kotzia square.

Stroll through the picturesque neighbourhoods of Makrigianni (where the new Acropolis Museum stands), Ano Petralona, Thissio, Kerameikos and Metaxourgeio. Gazi, named after the old Gas Company, is one of the revamped downtown areas and home to "Technopolis", the avant-garde cultural city centre.

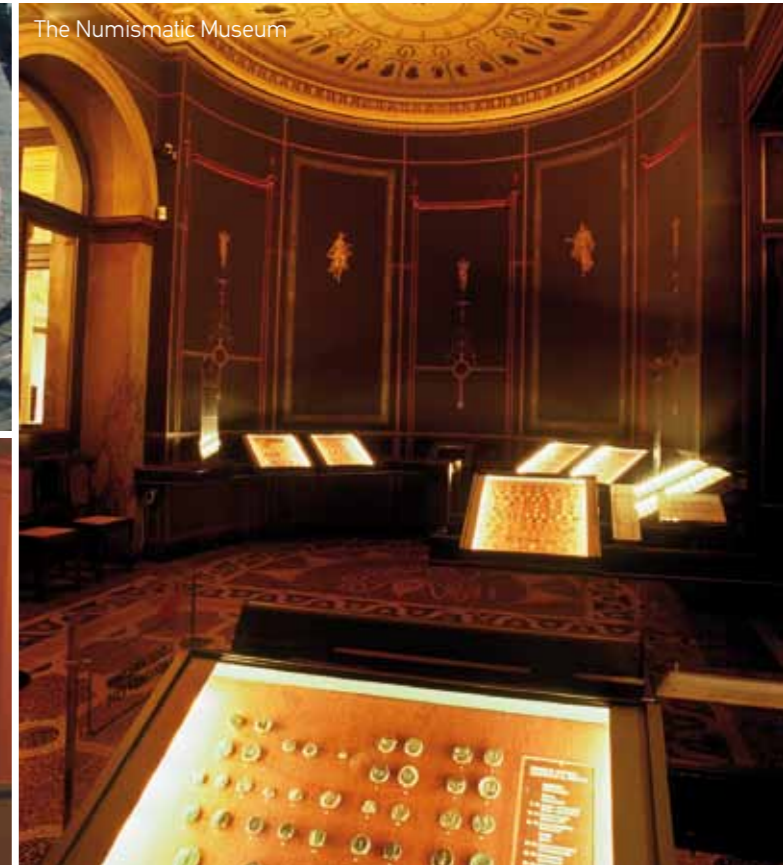
Today

THE OLD MEETS THE NEW

Syntagma and Omonia, the main central squares of the town, are linked by Stadiou street and Panepistimiou Avenue, along which you can see some of the town's most beautiful neoclassical buildings. Dominating Syntagma Square is the Greek Parliament building and in front the Monument to the Unknown Soldier, guarded by "Evzones", the 19th century soldiers, dressed in traditional costume. Here lies the beautiful 40-acre National Garden south of which stands the impressive neo-classical Zappeion Mansion. From there you can continue towards the Presidential mansion (1897) and thence to the Panathenaikon (Kallimarmaro) Stadium where the first Olympic Games in modern history (1896) were held. From there, crossing the Metz area, the road leads you to the first Cemetery, the oldest one in Athens, which is basically an outdoor sculpture display with a wealth of wonderful monumental tombstones.



The Panathinaikon Stadium



The Numismatic Museum



The Athens Academy in Panepistimiou Avenue

The National Archaeological Museum



The Greek Parliament



The Zappeion Mansion



From Omonia Square, starts the bustling Patission Street, with its interesting buildings such as the Neoclassical mansions of the Polytechnic School and the National Archaeological Museum. It ranks among the leading museums in the world and hosts rare art treasures from the Neolithic era up to the Roman period. Close to the museum is the Exarchia area, the charming art district with many alternative shops, interesting cafés, organic food places and innovative products. From Exarchia, crossing the Neapoli district, you can climb the verdant Lycabettus Hill. From its top you have the view of the entire city, all the way to the sea. On the other side of the hill is the Kolonaki district, the boundary of which is Vassilissis Sophias Avenue, one of the most grandiose streets of Athens with beautiful buildings and many museums (Museum of Cycladic Art, Benaki Museum, Byzantine and Christian Museum, National Gallery etc). In Kolonaki, one of the places to see and be seen, you will find many upscale restaurants, boutiques and modern cafés. It is worth taking a leisurely walk through the central streets and marvel at the art deco, art nouveau and interwar period buildings.

Beyond

ATHENS IS THE IDEAL BASE TO VISIT SOME OF THE GREATEST AND MOST FAMOUS PLACES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN ATTICA AND NEARBY AREAS.

OUTSIDE THE CITY CENTRE

Attica is surrounded by sea to the north, east and south. The southern suburbs of the city, located on the coast of the Saronic Gulf, offer many opportunities for a walk along the seaside. There you will also find many beautiful both organized and free beaches, large shopping centres and nightclubs (especially during the summer). On the opposite direction, in Maroussi (a suburb north of the centre) you can find the Olympic Stadium where the 2004 Athens Olympic Games took place. Kifissia (another suburb north of Maroussi) is also worth a visit, with its beautiful villas, impressive mansions, amazing shops and restaurants. The neighbouring town of Piraeus is Greece's and Athens' main port from where most connections to the Aegean islands depart. Another important site is the Daphni Monastery (11 km west),

one of the most significant Byzantine monuments of the country (12th c.) with unique mosaics. Other important monuments are the Kaisariani Monastery (5 km east) which was founded in the 2nd century and was declared a world Heritage Site in 1990 by UNESCO and Cape Sounio (58 km south) with its astonishing view and the temple of Poseidon (5th c. BCE). Following a wonderful route along the coast to the northeast, you can visit the area of the battle of Marathon (490 BCE) with the Tomb of Marathon, the archaeological sites of Eleusina (23 km west), of Amphiareion (48 km northeast), of Vravron (38 km east) and Ramnous (close to Marathon). Athens is a basin surrounded by the wonderful mountain massifs of Parnitha with its renovated casino, Penteli and Hymettos.



Beach in Attica region

The Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounio



The Olympic Stadium of Athens



Piraeus port



If you wish to leave the Attica region behind you, take a day trip to:

- The city of Nafplio - the first capital city of the modern Greek state - with its charming old town full of post-Byzantine, medieval and neoclassical monuments.
- The archaeological site of Mycenae, which was the main centre of the Mycenaean world, and gave its name to a civilization that evolved between the 16th and 12th c. BCE and the Mycenaean Tyrins.
- The Asklepieion and the ancient theatre of Epidaurus, the most famous and best preserved of all the ancient theatres in Greece, where during the summer months takes place a famous ancient drama Festival hosting productions from all over the world.
- The Ancient Olympia, the birth place of the Olympic Games,

where every four years the Olympic Flame is lit.

- The archaeological site of Delphi, the most famous oracle of ancient Greece which lies in an imposing landscape at the foot of Mount Parnassos.
- And even more, being in Athens you have the opportunity to discover a whole new "world": the magical world of the Greek Archipelago. From the ports of Piraeus, Rafina and Lavrio or the Athens International Airport catch a ferry or a plane to the islands of the Saronic (Saronikos) Gulf (Salamina, Aegina, Angistri, Hydra, Poros and Spetses), the Cyclades, Crete, the Dodecanese and the islands of the Northeast Aegean (Lesvos, Limnos, Agios Efstratios, Chios, Inousses, Psara, Icaria and Samos) and the islands of the Northeast Aegean (Lesvos, Limnos, Agios Efstratios, Chios, Inousses, Psara, Icaria and Samos).



Daphni Monastery



Aegina - The Temple of Aphaia



Relax



DISCOVERING ATHENS IS MUCH MORE THAN A TOUR AROUND ITS MONUMENTS AND SIGHTSEEING. IT OFFERS A GREAT ARRAY OF EXCITING CHOICES, EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND VISITOR-FRIENDLY AROUND THE YEAR.

DISCOVER, CHOOSE AND ENJOY

Athens is the perfect place for shopping! At the city centre but the suburbs as well, you will find luxurious department stores and small intimate shops with all the brand names of fashion, as well as many amazing Greek products. Take a stroll in Ermou street, one of the best shopping areas, and its 2,500 shops right at the heart of the traditional commercial area. Kolonaki is the area where you will find many shops selling expensive brands and haute couture. Feel the cosmopolitan air of Voukourestiou street, one of the hippest and trendiest in Europe with the prestigious designer boutiques and the world renowned jewellery stores. Discover the bohemian chic shops of Exarchia selling clothes, old records, books, art and handmade jewellery, and the sensational Flea Market in Monastiraki, displaying great bargains on new and second-hand goods.

Have fun with your children! Take a walk around the National Garden where you will find a small pond with ducks, a small zoo, the Botanical Museum, a children's library and a playground. Visit the Children's Museum and the Museum of Greek Children's Art, both situated in Plaka. Take your kids to the "Planetarium" of the Eugenides Foundation, one of the biggest and best equipped digital planetariums in the world. The "Goulandris Natural History Museum", its "Gaia" Centre and "Hellenic Cosmos" present ancient Greek history in a virtual reality theatre. Enjoy yourself in the "Allou Fun Park", the greatest amusement theme park in Athens, the thematic "Adventure Park" at Malakasa (40 km from Athens), and the "Attica Zoological Park" (near the airport in Spata), one of the largest and best zoos in the Balkans.



Attica Zoological Park



"Gaia" Centre



Take a swim in the big blue! One actually doesn't have to get on a ferry to the islands to enjoy the Aegean Sea. Athens has the unique privilege of offering a string of beaches along the Apollo Coast, only 30 min. from the city centre, accessible by car, public buses, tram or even your bike for a real sportive experience! Many of them are organized, offering changing cabins, self-service restaurants and water sports facilities. In the greater area of Attica (no more than 50 km from the city centre), you can find less crowded though equally nice and organized beaches.

Relax and golf. The Golf course, located in Glyfada, a seaside suburb of Athens, is an 18-hole, Par-72 course. It is landscaped with mature trees and shrubbery and frequently hosts significant international events.

Reaching for the top! Mount Hymettos, Penteli and Parnitha (located 30 km northwest and hosting one of Greece's National Parks) offer a network of trails through wonderful natural scenery, several mystic caves as well as ancient and Byzantine monuments. People who love horseback riding, mountain bike or rock climbing will also be at their best here.



Appolo Coast



The National Observatory



The Parthenon and the Lycabettus Hill

Savour

ATHENS BY NIGHT

FOR A CITY SO STEEPED IN MYTH AND HISTORY, ATHENS IS A MODERN METROPOLIS WHICH LIVES IN THE MOMENT, WITH THE PARTHENON TOWERING OVER IT, A GREAT REMINDER OF A GLORIOUS PAST. GREEK AND FUSION RESTAURANTS, AFTER-HOUR BARS, DANCE CLUBS, TAVERNAS, BOUZOUKIA (GREEK FOLK MUSIC) PLACES, BEACH PARTIES, THEATRES, CINEMAS. THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

In Psyri, the up-and-coming district between Athinas and Ermou streets, you will find some of Athens' newest and most popular restaurants, coffee shops, clubs and galleries. Nearby, two more districts are being revitalized: Kerameikos and Gazi. There you can find the Athens Municipal Cultural Centre "Technopolis" and the impressive new Benaki Museum Building. But also numerous trendy restaurants, coffee shops and clubs (featuring greek, ethnic, dance, lounge or rock music).

It is widely known that Greeks enjoy nightlife and don't think about dinner until 9 o' clock in the evening (or even later in the summer). Around midnight, the party may move to a club for music and dance. You should probably try at least once to experience the bouzoukia (Greek folk music) scene.

If you are fond of ancient drama, modern theatre or music (from classical to electro-dance and techno) it is more than certain that you will find a lot of choices year-round. Athens maintains more than 180 active theatre stages as well as various live music and dance performances. Every summer, the Hellenic Festival features famous Greek and foreign artists at Odeon of Herodes Atticus and other venues. Several jazz, rock and pop stars make appearances at the outdoor amphitheatre near the top of Lycabettus Hill in the summer. Rockwave festival, Athens Dance Festival and star appearances in clubs, theatres and football fields seem to form an interesting, joyful nightlife menu for people of all ages and lifestyles.

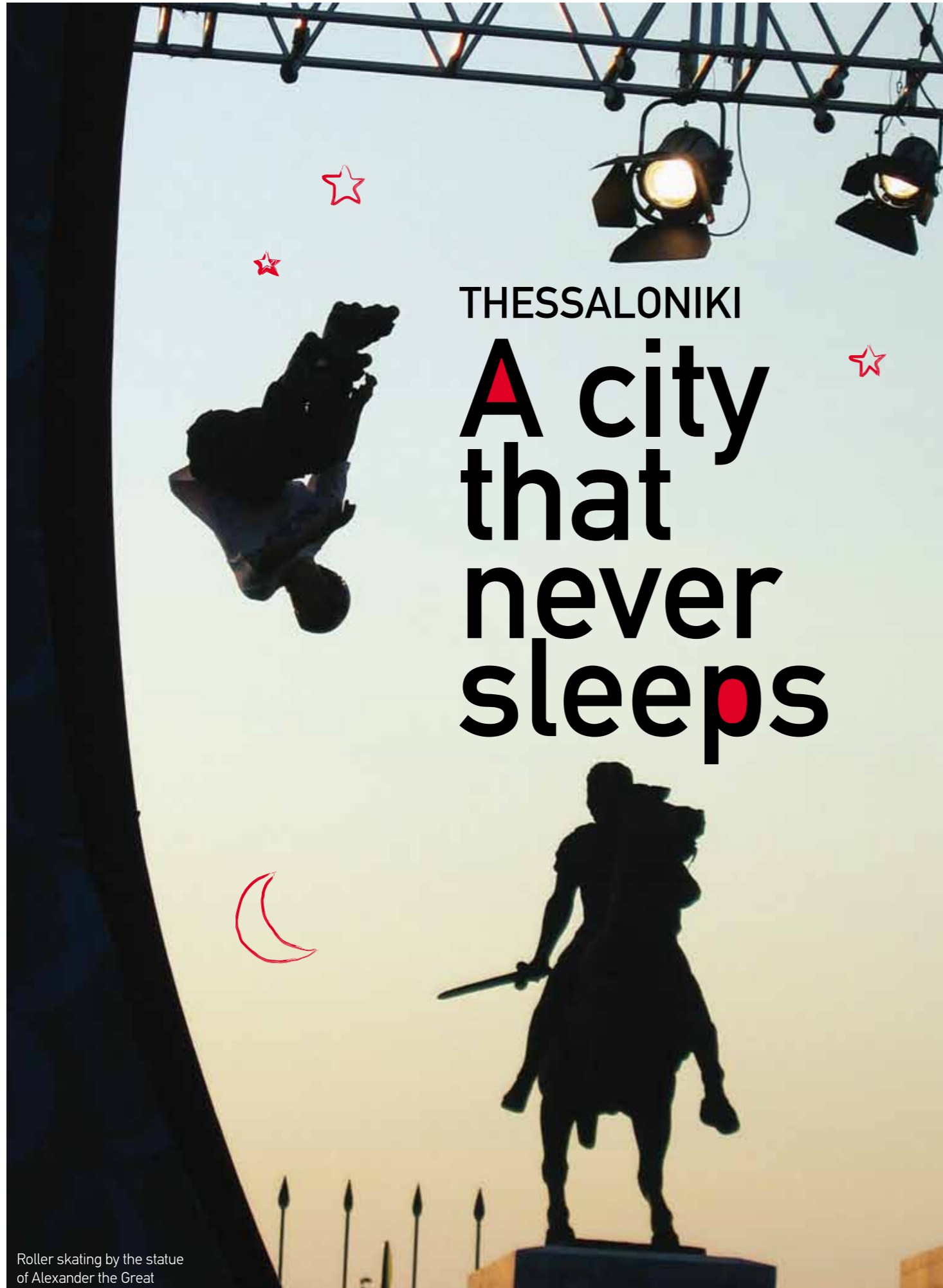
Whatever you decide to do, there is one thing you can be sure of: Athens is the ideal opportunity for sharing a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



The "Pallas" theatre at Voukourestiou Street

The "Technopolis"
Cultural Centre in Gazi

The Odeon of Herodes Atticus



Roller skating by the statue of Alexander the Great

THESSALONIKI

A city that never sleeps



NIGHTLIFE IN THESSALONIKI IS EXCEPTIONAL AND BUZZING 24 HOURS A DAY. ENJOY THE CITY PLEASURES EVERY MINUTE, FROM DUSK TILL DAWN.

Begin your promenade from Aristotelous Square to the White Tower and have a scrumptious meal in one of the elegant restaurants, ouzerias and tavernas spread around town. Later on, the party moves to the numerous clubs and bars, which stay open till late at night or early in the morning. Those who prefer the "bouzouki" folk music can take their pick from a wide range of venues in the area near the airport.

A lot of the city's nightlife revolves around "Mylos", an old windmill that has been converted to a complex of clubs and restaurants. The "Ladadika" district near the harbour, which used to be a working-class area, has been regenerated and developed into an area devoted to entertainment. Moreover, the area near the University also seems to be the place-to-be.

Thessaloniki is a bustling cosmopolitan city that you can never have enough of.



The main venue of "Thessaloniki International Film Festival"



Aristotelous Square

Feel

THESSALONIKI IS A YOUTHFUL METROPOLIS WITH AN INTRIGUING MULTI-ETHNIC HISTORY AND AN ARTY COUNTERCULTURE. IT IS A LIVELY MODERN PLACE, BUSTLING WITH ENERGY AND VERVE.



RELAX & HAVE FUN ALL DAY LONG

Start with a stroll along Nikis Avenue on the waterfront and visit one of the many cafés and bars offering a magnificent view of the open sea. "Nea Paralia" is the new city trend with theme parks, lakes, cycling routes, playgrounds, tennis courts, basketball fields and tracks for skate-boarders. Drink your coffee at the impressive beaux-arts Aristotelous Square, the "heart" of the city at Eleftherias Square.

Let the city reveal its colourful history to you as you walk along the narrow streets of Ano Poli (old town quarter). There you will

find many notable examples of ottoman and traditional macedonian architecture. Have a romantic dinner in a little taverna by the Byzantine walls and the Heptapyrgion castle and take in the unforgettable view.

Smell the aroma of exotic spices in the traditional markets: Modiano which is housed in a 1922 rectangular building, with a pedimented façade and a glass roof; Kapani or Vlais market; Athonos Square and "Louloudadika" (literally flower market).

Feel the shopping temperature rise, as you walk on the glamorous



The "Umbrellas" by G. Zongolopoulos



Thessaloniki Museum of Photography



The Byzantine Walls



The Rotunda and the Kamara



Mount Athos (Ayion Oros)

Mitropoleos Street, Tsimiski Street and Ermou Street area or wander around the modern shopping centres of the city.

Visit the University area, the International Trade Fair grounds, the Thessaloniki Concert Hall, the National Theatre of Northern Greece stages and the Lazarist Monastery (1886) [Moni Lazariston] now used for cultural events.

Spend a day at the splendid Archaeological Museum, the Folk and Ethnographic Museum, the State Museum of Contemporary Art, the Thessaloniki Cinema Museum.

Go for a swim to the beaches near the city or to the Halkidiki district, one of the most beautiful, popular and up-scale tourist

areas in Greece.

Pay tribute to the significant archaeological sites of Vergina, with the spectacular Royal Tombs of the ancient cities of Aigai and Philippi, with its distinctive ancient theatre. Mount Athos is a short trip from Thessaloniki where you can visit twenty awe-inspiring Byzantine monasteries in a breathtaking landscape.

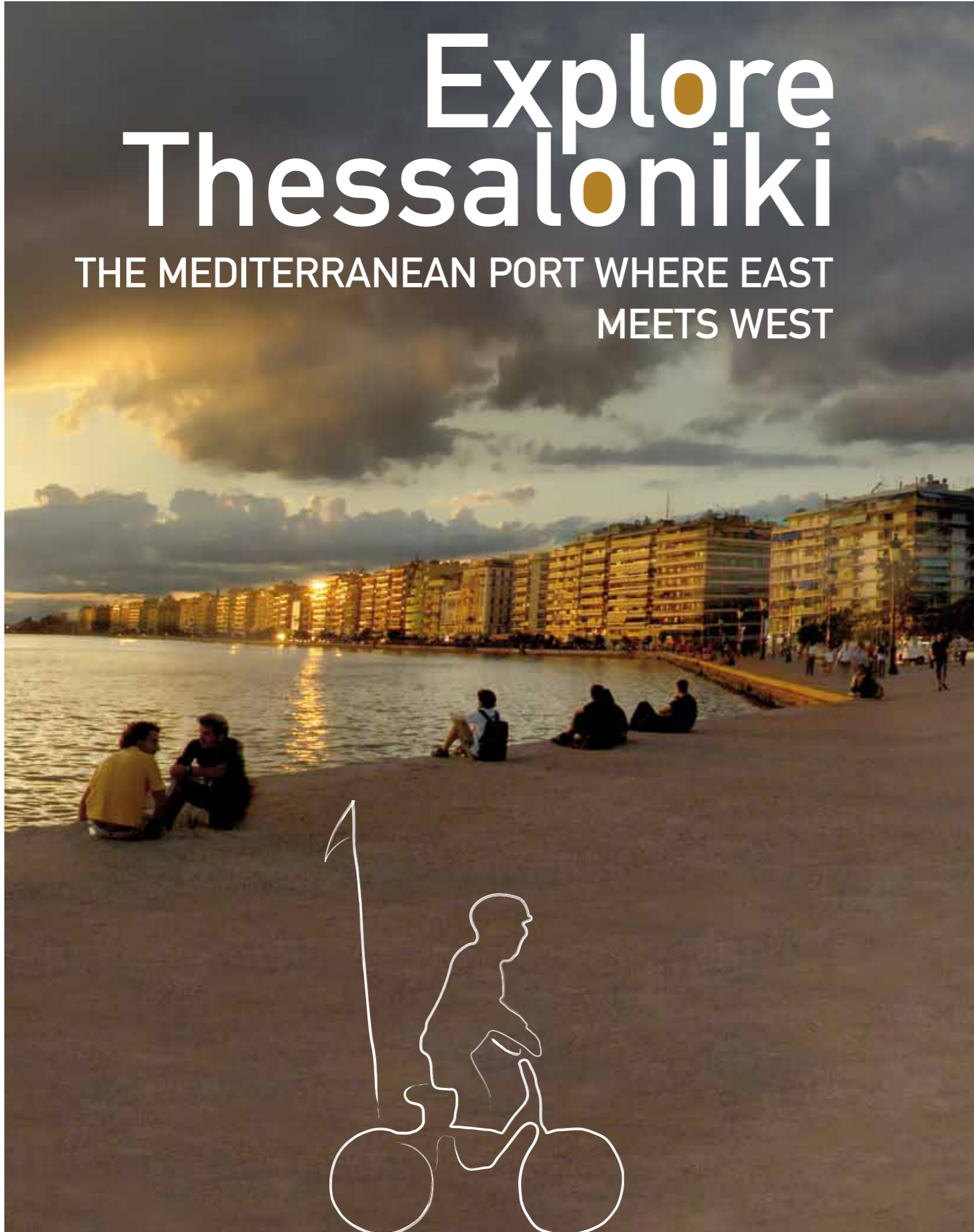
Don't forget to experience the unique tastes and varieties of the world renowned local cuisine: mouthwatering "mezedes" such as "tzierosarmades", "mydopilaf", spicy peppers with cheese or stuffed squid and for dessert the delicious "trigona" or the traditional creamy "bougatsa".



Chalkidiki

Explore Thessaloniki

THE MEDITERRANEAN PORT WHERE EAST
MEETS WEST



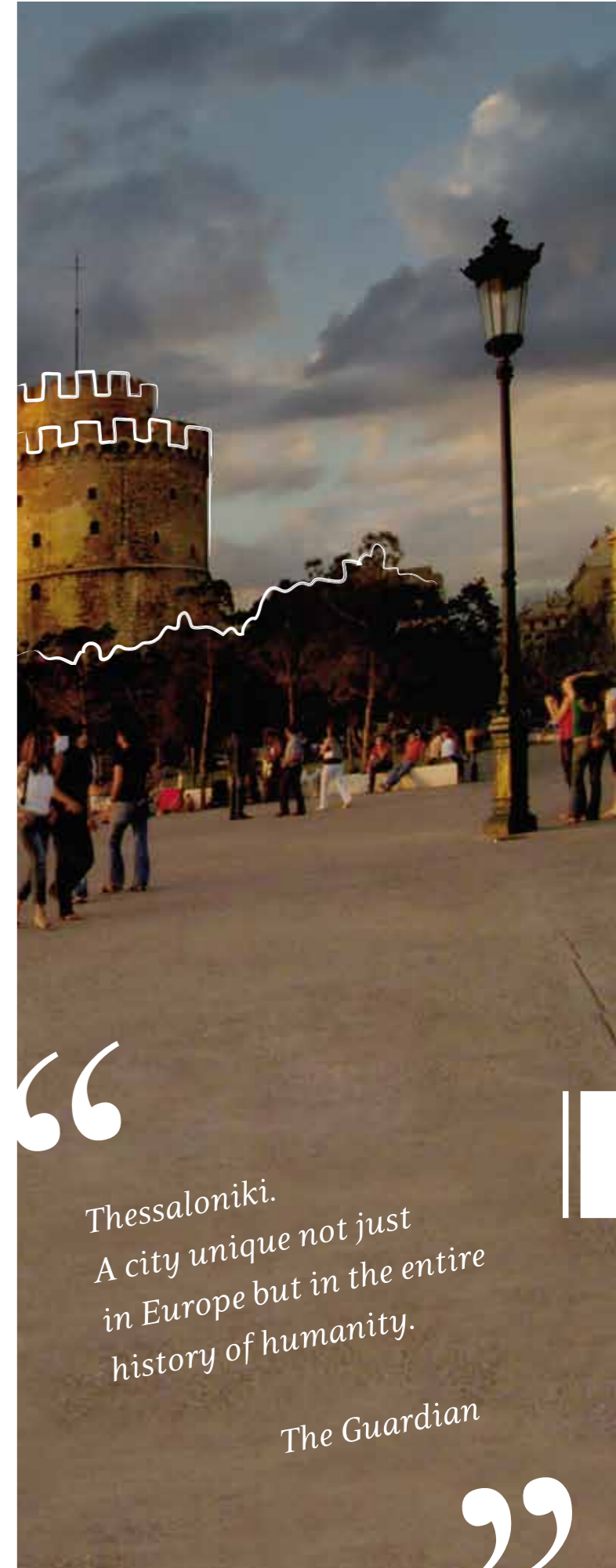
THESSALONIKI (520 KM NORTH OF ATHENS) IS THE SECOND LARGEST CITY IN GREECE WITH MORE THAN 1 MILLION INHABITANTS. THE CAPITAL OF MACEDONIA IS BUILT ON THE WATERS OF THE THERMAIKOS GULF. A MODERN METROPOLIS, THESSALONIKI BEARS THE MARKS OF A HISTORY STEEPED IN CENTURIES OF PROSPERITY AND MULTI-CULTURALISM.

The city was established in 316 BCE by Kassandros and named after his wife, Thessaloniki, half sister of Alexander the Great. It is here that the Apostle Paul first brought the message of Christianity (50 CE) and Demetrius, a Roman officer died in martyrdom (303 CE) and became the city's patron saint. After the Byzantine wealth and glory followed a long succession of conquerors, until it became a part of the modern Greek state in 1912.

Nowadays, it is a metropolis with large avenues and squares, neoclassical and art-deco buildings which stand side by side to modern dwellings and high-standard hotels. It hosts the annual "International Trade Fair" (in September), the "Thessaloniki International Film Festival" and the international "Thessaloniki Book Fair". Its many theatres, cinemas, galleries, art-café, significant museums and concert halls boast a flourishing cultural life that heightens the spirit and comforts the soul.

The city is full of archaeological sites: the ancient forum (dated to the late 2nd or early 3rd c. CE), the palace complex of Galerius Maximianus (4th c. CE), the thermae, the hippodrome, temples, the famous Stoa of the Idols, the Arch of Galerius (Kamara) built in 305 CE and Rotunda, an early 4th c. building which was later converted to a Christian church.

As the second biggest city of the Byzantine empire, Thessaloniki is an actual open-air Byzantine Museum. In 1988, it was designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site because of the number and priceless value of its Byzantine and post-Byzantine churches and monuments spread all over the city's historical centre. Various aspects of life during that period are presented in the excellent Museum of Byzantine Culture, one of the best of its kind in the world. Furthermore, you will find numerous ruins and surviving monuments from the Ottoman period such as the White Tower (15th c.), the city's symbol, many mosques, hammams and Bezesteni, a textile marketplace built in the late 15th c.



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Thessaloniki.
A city unique not just
in Europe but in the entire
history of humanity.

The Guardian

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GREECE