



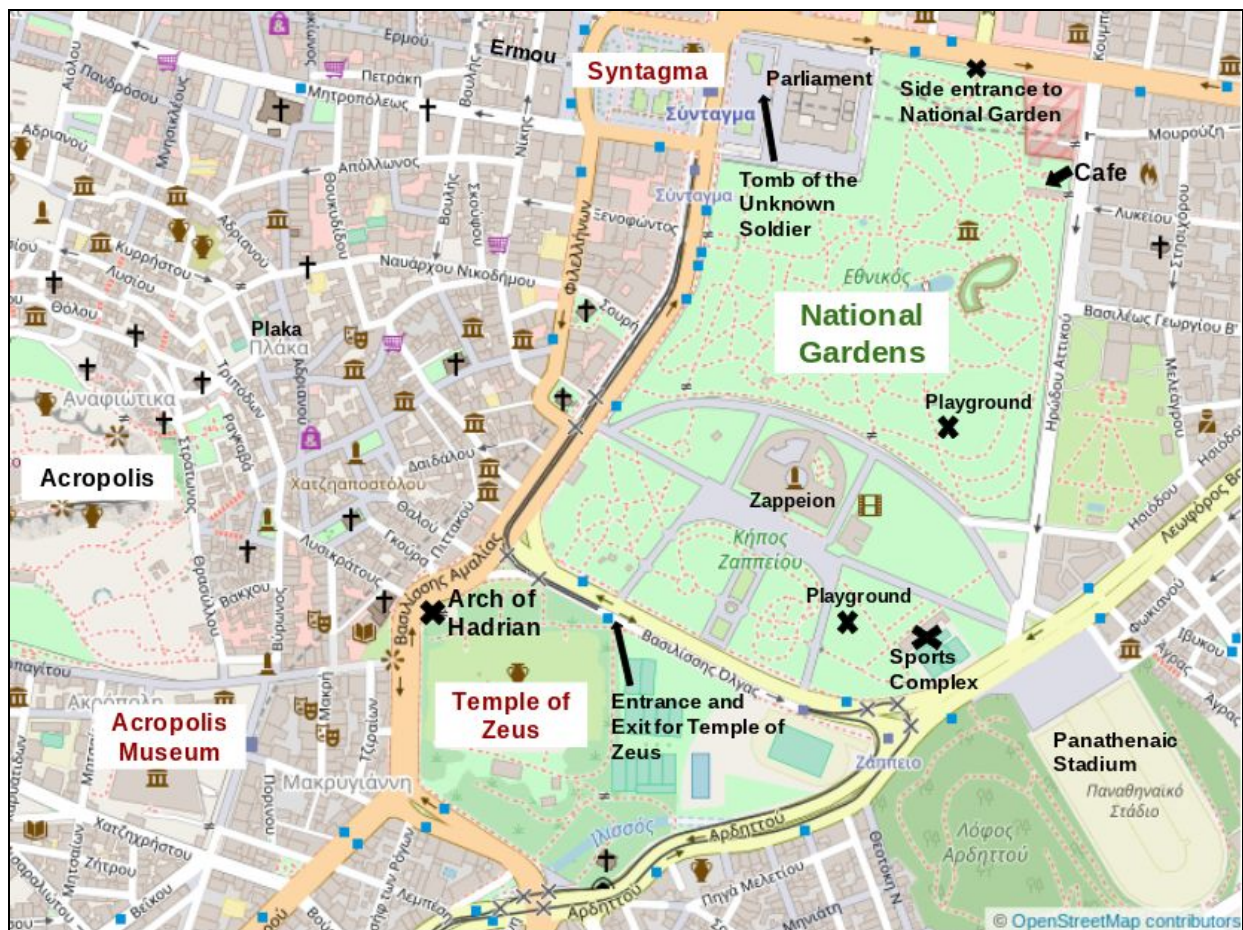
Sample Pages- Afternoon Day 1 of 2 Days in Athens

Get the full itinerary on the [Simply Awesome Trips website](https://www.simplyawesometrips.com) or find it on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)

Syntagma Square, National Garden, Panathenaic Stadium, Temple of Zeus, and the Acropolis Museum

Approximately 2.5 miles total walking this afternoon

*****Pro Tip-** If you are arriving in late June, July, or August, then do this itinerary backwards. Start in the air- conditioned Acropolis Museum during the early afternoon when it is hottest before moving onto the outside stuff later.



Map of Sites for Afternoon Day 1



Start In Syntagma Square

Spend 20- 60 min, depending if you watch the Changing of the Guard

Named for the Constitution of 1844 (*syntagma* being greek for constitution), this is the political heart of Athens. The square has been a protest site since soldiers and civilians marched on the square in 1843, demanding King Otto's removal and a return to a constitutional democracy. He granted it from the balcony of his Palace, which now houses Parliament. In 2010, anti-austerity marches drew over 100,000 people to the square to shout their demands to Parliament.

The main metro station of Athens is in Syntagma as well as a large, semi- roundabout that you could spend hours watching. It is amazing to see how so many people can drive so insanely and yet there be so few wrecks. Seriously, grab a beer and some ice creams from the McDonald's on the corner of Ermou St and Syntagma (see the previous map), sit at one of its outside tables, and just observe the madness. (There are other places to eat around Syntagma so you won't have trouble finding something besides McDonald's for a bite to eat.)



Changing of the guard in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Parliament is the building in the background.

The **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier** is in front of Parliament and is guarded by the [Evzones](#) (the Presidential Guards) who do a pretty elaborately choreographed changeover at the top of each hour. On Sundays at 1100am the complete company is involved and they wear the traditional white tunics. The tunics have 400 pleats, one for each of the 400 years of Turkish occupation.

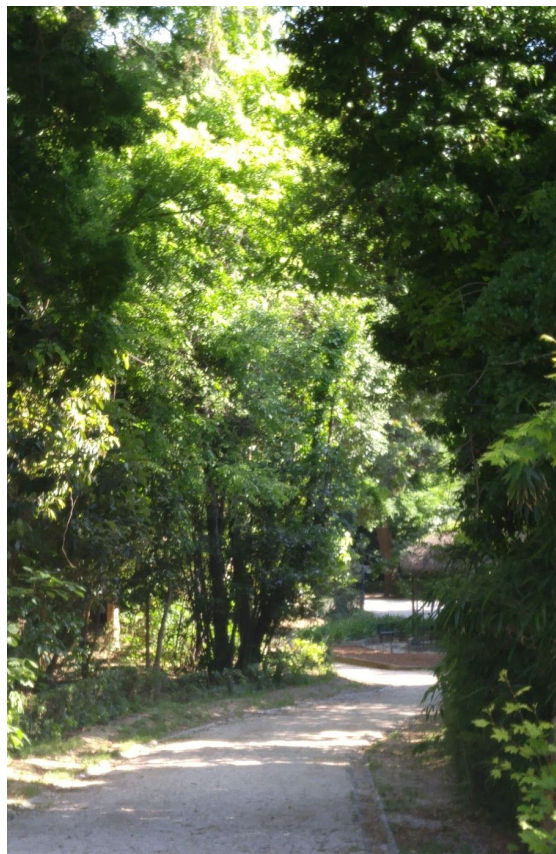
Evzones are not paid but serve as part of the 9 months each Greek male must spend in the army. The kids were very impressed by the precise movements and the seriousness of the soldiers. They were also very impressed by their ability to stand still in 100 degree heat in wool tights. The adults found that impressive too.



Get there about 15- 20 minutes before the hour to get a good spot at the front and a little to the side (the new Evzones will come down the middle so the other guards will move you out of the way if you stand in the center). Then get ready for the tour buses to pull up about 5 min before the changing and disgorge lots of very pushy people. You are gonna have to stand your ground a little.

Best blog about the Evzones: [Talking With The Presidential Guards](#)

*Now walk up the street to the left of Parliament to the entrance to the National Gardens. (Marked on the **Map of Afternoon of Day 1.**) You will pass several embassies on the left side of this street and you can make a game out guessing the country by the flag out front.*



National Gardens

¾- 1 mile walk from one end to the other and 30-60 min, depending on how many playgrounds you visit

The gardens are nice as they are one of the few shady places in Athens and a good place to let the kids explore. They are a little run- down, understandable considering the economy, but the ponds are chock full of turtles and the trees provide a welcome respite from the heat of Athens.

As you enter the gate, walk past the remains of a floor mosaic from a Roman villa and then keep left. Look for the big maps that are occasionally posted around the entrances to find your way to the turtle ponds.

You'll find a garden cafe (or *Kafenio* in Greek) near the east entrance off Iroudou Attikou St. It is a nice spot for a coffee or beer, but the food is a bit expensive for what you get. (See the previous **Map of Afternoon Day 1** for location.) Or keep walking south towards the playground and take a breather there.

Quiet path in the National Gardens

Pass to the left of the Zappeion (the big yellow mansion) and you will come across another playground and another [cafe at the sports complex](#), just beyond that playground. The cafe has decently priced snacks, drinks, and meals. If your kid is desperate for a hotdog or pizza, this place would be perfect.

The Details: The gardens are open sunrise to sunset and are free to enter.

Exit the gardens by the sports complex labeled on the map and cross the street to the Panathenaic Stadium.

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