

GREECE SPECIAL 2019

How not to come across as a Brit in Greece: our etiquette guide

Don't smash plates in a taverna or wear your bikini and shorts in a monastery

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Get a head: expect your fish to be served whole ALAMY

Want to blend in? Don't be that Brit who...

...wears shorts and a bikini top to a monastery

It's perfectly fine to rock up to a seaside taverna in nothing but your swimming trunks, no matter how big your beer belly. But do cover up when visiting a monastery. Otherwise a monk will bundle you into some kind of goat-hair cassock, kept in a trunk that reeks of mothballs.

...makes noise during the village siesta

The siesta is sacrosanct in rural Greece. It's wholly inappropriate to have a wild sex session or a blazing row, or do any primal screaming at your holistic retreat, between 2pm and 5pm.

...demands champagne in a village kafenion

I once witnessed a well-known actor ask the hoary waiter at a traditional coffee shop what type of champagne he had. As the menu was scrawled on a hand-painted sign, and nothing cost more than a fiver, Zoolander probably would have been more self-aware.

...gets righteous about people smoking in bars and restaurants

Yes, smoking in these places is officially banned in Greece. But Greeks love to break the rules. So light up and blow smoke in the face of health and safety.

...freaks out about fish being served whole

Don't you know the cheeks are the best bit of a fish? The first time my son tried red mullet, he went straight for the eyeballs and pronounced them delicious. There's an art to choosing your fish from the taverna kitchen: go for the one with bright eyes, red gills and shiny scales.

...tries to smash plates in a taverna

Plate-smashing is the preserve of bouzouki clubs — anyway, these days, patrons fling carnations at the singers as a gesture of appreciation. Much safer than another defunct practice: throwing knives at the dancers' feet.

...haggles over the bill

Greeks invariably argue about the bill. But it's not over who's had what, it's about who gets to pay for everyone else. Accept graciously or treat others generously. And don't be stingy with the tip.

For our ultimate guide to holidaying in Greece in 2019, see [thesundaytimes.co.uk/greece](https://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/greece)