



## +DOC HOLIDAY

# Should we drive or catch buses in Greece?

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**Our family (five adults) will be staying in Athens before travelling first to Evia and then Lefkada. Would it be best to hire a vehicle, or travel by bus?**

Calling Greek coaches “buses” is like referring to Jessica Fox as “that chick with the paddle” – a huge understatement. Unlike vehicles you’ll find elsewhere, even buses used to ferry tourists short distances are luxury air-conditioned coaches with padded seating and a schedule that runs like a well-oiled machine.

If you go for this option, you won’t have any difficulty finding direct services to both destinations from Athens (you could also opt for the scenic 90-minute train ride from Athens’ Larissa train station to Chalki, Evia – a ridiculously affordable alternative). The islands themselves are serviced by a broad network of local buses connecting major towns and villages, particularly handy in summer when extra local services are added. Remember that you won’t have a great deal of flexibility if you’d like to venture beyond the usual tourist beats at these destinations, or if you’re keeping to strange hours.

Hiring a car will allow you to follow your own schedule and take in some of those hidden beaches and hard-to-get-to spots. If you hire a car at each destination rather than drive from Athens, you’ll find convenient rental car options across the islands’ major towns, as well as at airports and ports.

Greek roads can seem lawless, with local drivers treating the road rules as mere suggestions, so you’ll have to pay close attention if you’re planning to drive.

Me? I would opt for the local public transport network but ultimately your decision should rest on how easily you get stressed behind the wheel, whether you’re travelling with any backseat drivers and how many people are planning on sharing driving duties.

**We’ve only ever travelled domestically but now that my husband has retired, I’m hoping to venture further afield. Any tips for first-timers heading overseas?**

Oh, I’m so excited for you. Assuming you’ve already applied for, or have, your passports, you’ll have to work out whether you’d prefer to first experience overseas travel independently, or within the comforting confines of a group tour such as those offered by APT, Collette, On the Go Tours or perhaps the Easy Pace tours offered by Insight Vacations which promises at least three nights in each hotel so you can make the most of each destination.

With these tours, almost all of the logistics – accommodation, many meals, entrance fees and activities – will be taken care of and you’re likely to meet like-minded travellers along the



Lefkada

way. On the flip side, they may not offer the flexibility you desire.

Once you’ve worked out where you might like to go, you’ll need to take a look at visa requirements for that destination (smatraveller.gov.au is a great first step for information) and whether vaccinations are recommended or required, and do some research on the local lay of the land (can you drink the water? Is it a cash or card-reliant society? What kind of scams are prevalent and how best can you protect yourself?). If you’re travelling in peak season (Europe in July, for example), you’ll need to book everything – accommodation, attractions and tours – in advance, and then take out comprehensive travel insurance. The sooner you buy travel insurance, the cheaper it will be, although be sure to check policies on comparison sites such as Compare Travel Insurance.

Unless you have a debit card that doesn’t attract international transaction and ATM fees, you may wish to use a travel money card such as Wise to control your finances, and set up eSIMs (guides are available online) to avoid paying what can be sky-high roaming charges if you’d like to stay in contact. Of course, you could also opt to use your hotel’s free wi-fi provided you don’t use it for internet banking or anything else that involves the sharing of sensitive information.

When you’re packing, remember to make and pack copies of important travel documents including your passport, double the meds you think you’ll need while you’re overseas (travel delays aren’t uncommon and you don’t want to be caught out) and embrace the golden travel rule of packing half the clothes, but double the money you think you’ll need. May the force be with you!

## TRAVEL UPDATES



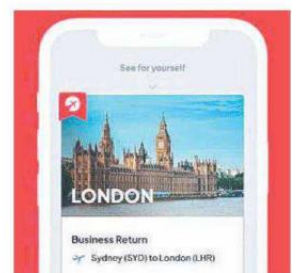
### FIJI TO TEXAS

Fiji Airways has announced the first non-stop flights between Nadi and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, Texas. From December 10, the 13-hour service will fly Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Fiji Airways also has plans to join American Airlines’ AAdvantage loyalty scheme.



# 12%

The percentage of Australians who have worked from a holiday destination without telling their boss, according to research done for recruiter Robert Half.



### LOYALTY LAUNCH

Pointrs, a new travel loyalty website, has launched with the goal of simplifying earning and redeeming rewards points. With a dash designed around finding and using loyalty programs and credit card promotions, the site aims to provide a clear and concise one-stop shop – updated daily. [pointrs.com](https://pointrs.com)



ARE INCOMING PASSENGER CARDS ABOUT TO BE HISTORY? SCAN TO SEE.



## NEED HELP?

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