

Banya Bashi Mosque

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/bulgaria/sofia/attractions/banya-bashi-mosque/a/poi-sig/423963/358779>

Sofia's only working mosque was built in 1576. It's certainly an eye-catching edifice, and the red-brick minaret makes a convenient landmark. Visitors are welcome outside prayer times if modestly dressed.

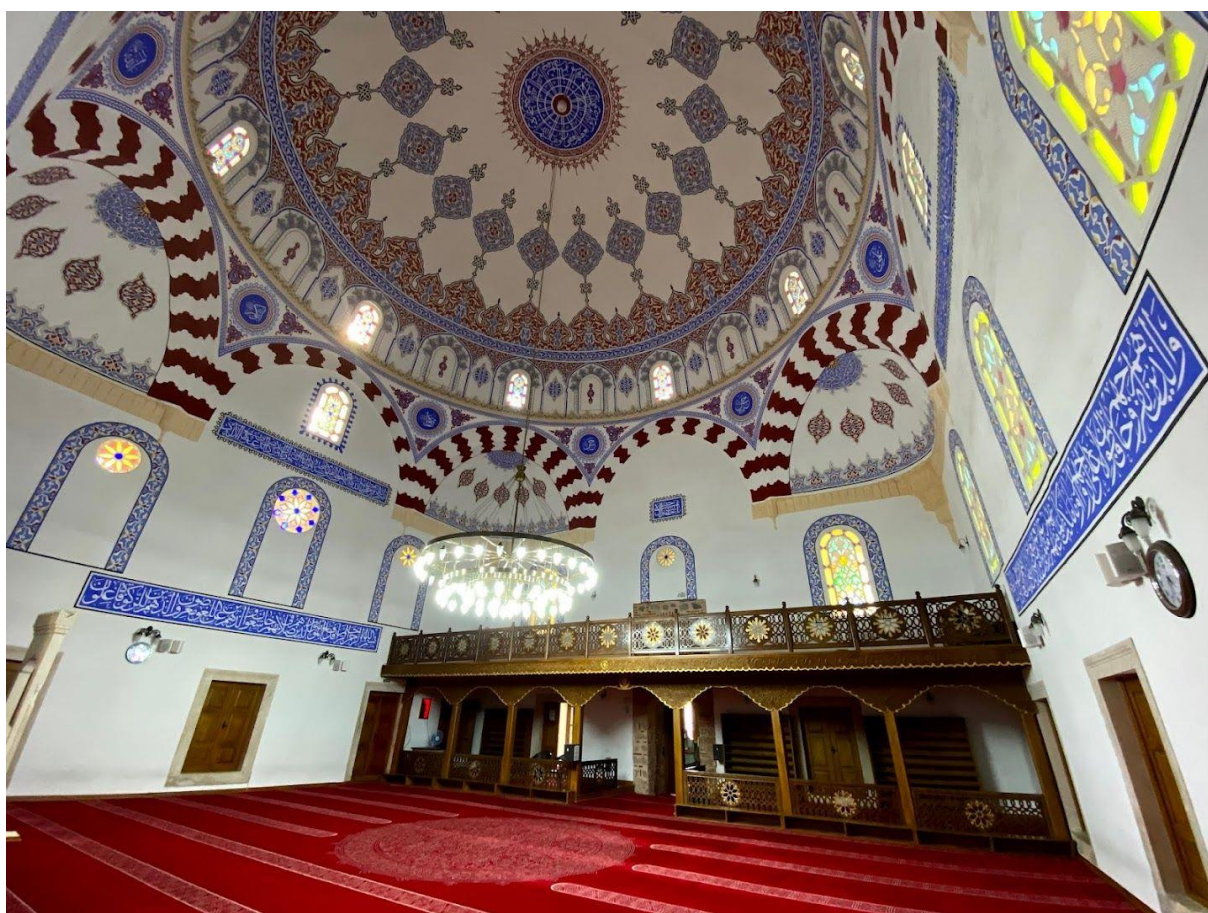
Sofia mosque - Banya Bashi

<https://wanderlog.com/place/details/155449/sofia-mosque-banya-bashi>

The Central Mosque of Sofia, also known as Banya Bashi Mosque, is a stunning architectural gem dating back to the 16th-century Ottoman Empire. It stands as one of the oldest and largest mosques in Sofia, Bulgaria. The mosque's design showcases a large dome and minaret, reflecting its unique architectural style. Situated near thermal baths, it serves as a significant monument to Bulgaria's Islamic history and Ottoman past.





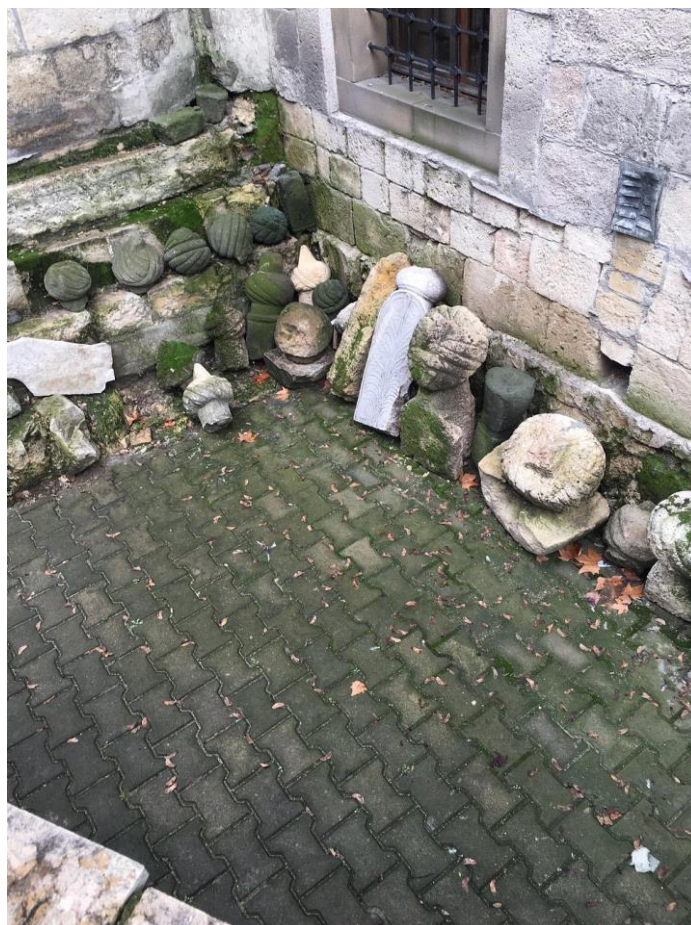


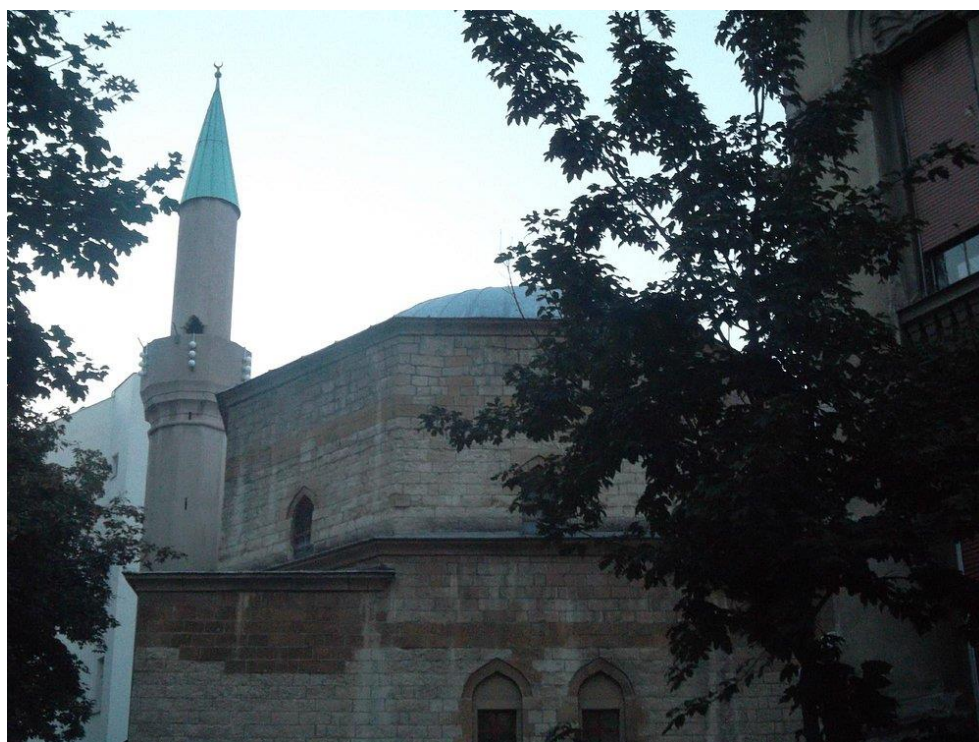
Avis

Visitors to the Central Mosque of Sofia, also known as Banya Bashi Mosque, praise its beauty both inside and out. The mosque's historical significance dating back to the Ottoman rule in the 16th century is highlighted by reviewers. While entry is free, visitors must remove their shoes before entering and may need to wait during prayer times. Some mention discrimination issues regarding access for non-Turkish Muslim women but overall recommend visiting this peaceful spot that offers a glimpse into Bulgaria's Muslim community.

Bayraklee mosque (Bajrakli džamija)











MOSQUÉE BAJRAKLI

<https://www.petitfute.com/v57292-belgrade/c1173-visites-points-d-interet/c937-monuments/364280-mosquee-bajrakli.html>

La mosquée Bajrakli de Belgrade, également connue sous le nom de Bayrakli, est la seule mosquée survivante de la capitale, dans une ville qui autrefois sous l'autorité des Ottomans n'en comptait pas moins de quatre-vingts ! Construite aux alentours de 1575, elle a été rénoverée à plusieurs reprises mais a gardé certains de ses éléments d'origine, comme la cour d'entrée. Son nom actuel date du XVIII^e siècle : il vient du mot turc *bayrak* qui signifie « drapeau », en référence au drapeau que l'on hissait sur la mosquée au moment de l'appel à la prière.

Mosque of Tzistarakis

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/greece/athens/monastiraki-psyrrri/attractions/mosque-of-tzistarakis/a/point-sig/1154012/1342284>

Built in 1759, this building on the south side of Monastiraki is one of few surviving examples of a *tzami* (mosque) in Athens. It has not functioned as a mosque since Independence, except to cater to King Saud of Saudi Arabia when he visited in 1966. Maintained by the [Museum of Greek Folk Art](#), it opens intermittently for temporary exhibitions

Tzistarakis Mosque ([Greek](#): Τζαμί Τζισταράκη, [Turkish](#): *Cizderiye Camii*) is an [Ottoman](#) mosque, built in 1759, in [Monastiraki](#) Square, central [Athens](#), [Greece](#). It is now functioning as an annex of the [Museum of Greek Folk Art](#).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzistarakis_Mosque

History

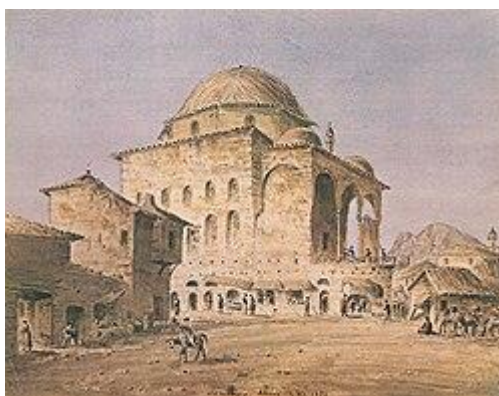


Illustration of the mosque in 1839

The mosque was built in 1759, by the [Ottoman](#) governor (*voevoda*) of Athens, Mustapha Agha Tzistarakis (In original Turkish: Dizdar Mustafa Ağa, Dizdar being a rank in the Ottoman system). According to tradition, Tzistarakis used one of the pillars of the [Temple of Olympian Zeus](#) to make lime for the building, although it is more likely that he used one of the columns of the nearby [Hadrian's Library](#). This act led to his dismissal as the Turks considered it a sacrilege which would cause vengeful spirits to be loosened upon the city, a superstition that some Athenians believed to have been confirmed when there was an outbreak of the plague later in the year.^{[1][2]}

The mosque was also known as the "Mosque of the Lower Fountain" (Τζαμί του Κάτω Σιντριβανιού) or "Mosque of the Lower Market" (Τζαμί του Κάτω Παζαριού) from its proximity to the [Ancient Agora of Athens](#).^{[2][3]} During the [Greek War of Independence](#), the building was used as an assembly hall for the local town elders. After Greek independence, it was used in various ways: thus it was the site of a ball in honour of King [Otto of Greece](#) in March 1834, and was also employed as a barracks, a prison and a storehouse.^[2]

In 1915, it was partly rebuilt under the supervision of architect [Anastasios Orlandos](#), and was used to house the Museum of Greek Handwork from 1918 (in 1923 renamed to National Museum of Decorative Arts) until 1973.^{[2][3]} In 1966, it was provisionally refurbished to provide a place of prayer during the stay of the deposed [King of Saudi Arabia](#), [Saud](#), in the city.^{[1][2]}

In 1973, the main functions of the [Museum of Greek Folk Art](#) moved to 17 Kydathinaion Str., with the mosque remaining as an [annex](#) to it. The V. Kyriazopoulos pottery collection of ceramics remains in the mosque to this day. In 1981, the building was damaged by an earthquake and was re-opened to the public in 1991.^{[2][3]}

□ [Τζαμί Τζισταράκη](#). *Archaeology of the City of Athens (in Greek)*. National Research Foundation. Retrieved 22 June 2014.

□ □ [Giochalias & Kafetzaki 2013](#), p. 109.

□ ["The Mosque"](#). *Museum of Greek Folk Art*. Archived from [the original](#) on 24 May 2012. Retrieved 16 December 2016.

Cizderiye Camii

https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cizderiye_Camii

Cizderiye, Dizdar Mustafa Ağa veya Cistarakis Camii ([Yunanca](#): Τζαμί Τζισταράκη *Tzami Tzistaraki*), [Yunanistan](#)'ın başkenti [Atina](#)'nın [Monastiraki](#) meydanında yer alan 18. yüzyıldan kalma bir [Osmanlı](#) camisidir. [Camii](#) 1759 yılında dönemin Atina'daki Osmanlı valisi Cizderiyeli Mustafa Ağa tarafından inşa ettirilmiştir. Camii inşaatında kullanılan yakınındaki Hadrian Kütüphanesi'nin bir sütunu, uğursuzluk getireceğinden korkulduğu için [Mustafa Ağa](#)'nın valilikten alınması ile sonuçlanmıştır.

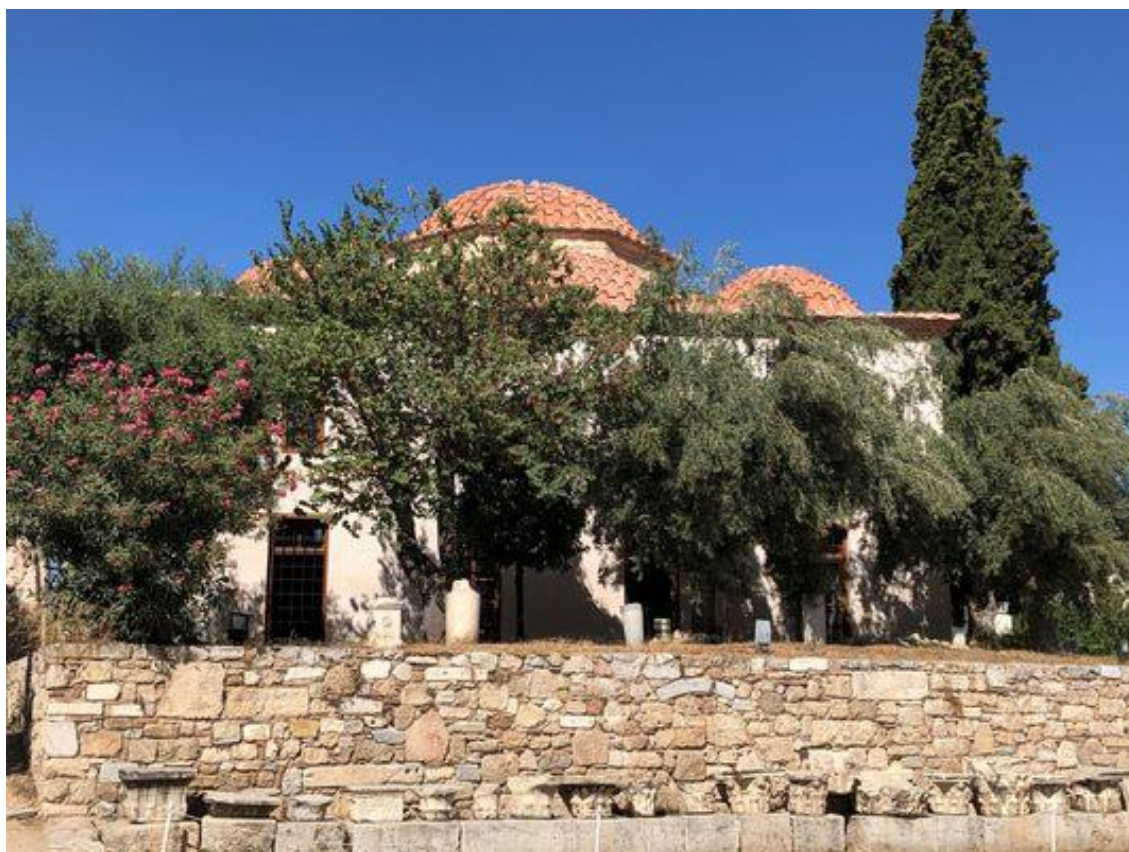
Camiinin [minaresi](#) yıkılmıştır. Osmanlı'nın Atina'yı terk etmesinden sonra cami [ibadete](#) kapatılmış ve günümüze dek çeşitli amaçlarla kullanılmıştır. Bunlar arasında 1834 yılında, Yunanistan'ın ilk kralı olan [Danimarka](#) kökenli Otto'nun caminin içinde verdiği bir [balo](#) da vardır. 1915 yılında mimar Anastasios Orlandos tarafından restorasyondan geçerek 1918'de Yunanistan Elishleri Müzesi olarak açılmıştır. 1923-1973 yılları arasında ise Yunan Dekoratif Sanatlar Müzesi olarak kullanılmıştır. 1966'da Suudi Kralı'nın Atina'ya ziyareti sırasında kendisine ibadet etmesi için cami olarak tahsis edilmiştir. Bugün Yunan Halk Sanatları Müzesi'nin ek binası olarak kullanılmaktadır, içinde [seramik](#) el sanatları sergilenmektedir.^[1]



Fethiye Mosque

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/fethiye-mosque>

This historic structure has been used as a mosque, a barracks, a prison, a school, and a bakery.







Old Madrasa of Athens - The ruined doorway is a portal to the building's turbulent and torturous past

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/doorway-of-the-madrasa>



Many ruins in Athens are glamorous and romantic, but this site is a visible reminder of dark times. The doorway is all that remains of the Ottoman era Islamic Madrasa (Theological School) of Athens, Greece. In the center of the courtyard was a large plane tree that became a gathering place for leaders of the Muslim community. Over time, this tree became the symbol of the Madrasa.

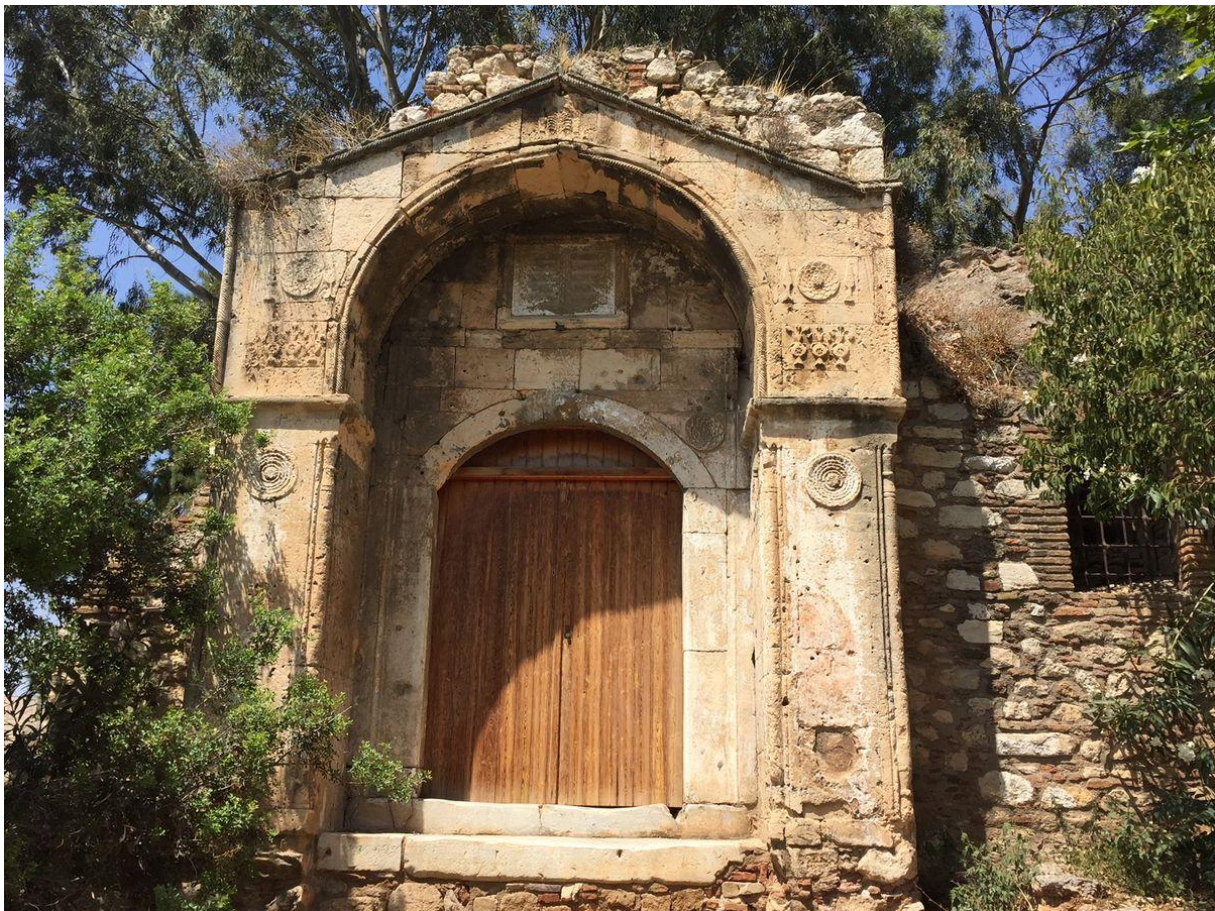
Like most Ottoman Madrasas, the school was a rectangular building with living quarters surrounding a large courtyard. The structure, which was built in 1721, functioned as a Madrasa until the later years of the Ottoman period, when the Madrasa was moved to another location and the site was converted to a prison.

During its years as a prison, the living quarters became overcrowded, inhumane prison cells, and the plane tree became a hangman's tree for hundreds of executions. Those not executed were subjected to torture and slavery.

The Madrasa was nearly destroyed during the early part of the Greek War of Independence. After the liberation of Athens, the Madrasa was rebuilt and used as barracks by the Greek Army for the remainder of the war. After the Greeks' victory, it was converted yet again, this time into a prison for both Turks and Greek political prisoners. The new Greek government revived the hangings on the plane tree for "deserving" Turks and traitorous Greeks.

The prison was finally closed right before the 20th century, and the Archaeology Department began demolition in search of older and more important artifacts. By 1915, all that remained was the main door and a small portion of the adjacent exterior walls, most of which can be seen today.

The tree was destroyed by a lightning strike in 1919, appropriately closing a chapter on the horrific things that took place on and around it. While the tree may be gone, history buffs can still gaze upon the doorway that led students, prisoners, and the condemned to the plane tree and their fate.



Five historic Ottoman sites to visit in Athens

The Greek government has been refurbishing Ottoman buildings in recent years to attract Middle Eastern tourists

By [Patrick O. Strickland](#) in Athens, Greece - 9 May 2023

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/greece-five-ottoman-sites-visit-tzistarakis-mosque-bath-house-winds>

From the Parthenon to the Panathenaic Stadium, the [Greek](#) capital has no shortage of spectacular historic sites for visitors. Millions of [tourists](#) pass through the city each year, and not just en route to popular islands like Mykonos and Santorini.

The Acropolis, the world-famous citadel that sits atop the city, is amongst the most popular, as is the ancient Agora, once the market and main meeting place for Athenians.

In the narrow streets of the Plaka neighbourhood in the shadow of the Acropolis, tourists pause for selfies in front of monuments dating back two millennia or more.

As for the city's later historic sites that originate from the Ottoman era, until recent years many were neglected and ignored. But that is changing.

Athens was under [Ottoman](#) rule from 1458 until 1821, when [Greece](#) declared independence (it was briefly under Venetian rule from 1678-88). The long and often violent struggle between the Ottomans and the Greeks during the 19th and early 20th centuries left a bitter legacy, resulting in widespread destruction of Ottoman architecture and symbols.

In parts of northwestern Greece, home to the country's Muslim minority - [Turks](#), Pomaks, and Roma - mosques and other [Islamic](#) and Ottoman sites are common. But in many parts of Greece, symbols of the Ottoman times have been destroyed or altered.

Dimitris Loupis, an academic and expert in Ottoman-Greek history, says Ottoman sites have been restored more and more since the 1990s, a trend that reflects a shift in “the state ideology towards the preservation of sites of various eras”.

In northern parts of the country that Greece gained in the decades following its independence, Loupis told Middle East Eye, “a considerable number of Ottoman sacred and secular buildings survived”.

Loupis, who has worked on restoration projects around the country, added: “Unfortunately even today historical sites are in private hands, but these gradually will be purchased by the state. In northern Greece, there is a [large] number of Ottoman buildings that need to be restored.”

Still, travellers can find several such spots in Athens hiding in plain sight, relics that testify to the Greek capital's historical relationship with the Islamic world and the Ottoman Empire.

Nicolas Nicolaidis, a historian who specialises in Balkan history and gives tours of Athens' surviving historic Ottoman monuments, said none of the sites serves their original purpose nowadays.

“They're not all directly connected to Islam but mostly about the Ottoman presence,” he told Middle East Eye.

But many sites no longer exist. “They were intentionally demolished,” Nicolaidis said. “They were not considered as heritage, especially back in the 19th century. The ones that were preserved were preserved for practical reasons.”

Last year, the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) [teamed up](#) with the online travel marketplace Wego to help encourage more visitors from the Middle East and North Africa to visit the country.

According to Wego’s data, [Saudi Arabia](#) and the [United Arab Emirates](#) are the Middle Eastern countries whose residents are most interested in visiting Greece.

Below Middle East Eye looks at five popular sites related to Athens’ Ottoman past.

Tzistarakis Mosque

Built in 1759, the Tzistarakis Mosque was named after the Ottoman governor Mustapha Agha Tzistarakis, or Mustafa Aga. The mosque still stands in Monastiraki Square, an area frequented by tourists.

Legend has it that Tzistarakis used a pillar of an ancient Greek temple in the mosque’s construction, which violated a Sultan’s order to maintain temples and monuments for public use.

After Greek independence in 1821, the mosque was used for purposes including as a military barracks and a prison (MEE/Nick Paleologos)

To tamp down on anger amongst locals, the sultan banished Tzistarakis, who was later assassinated.

The mosque remained a house of worship until the start of Greece’s war to separate from the Ottoman Empire. After Greek independence in 1821, the mosque was used as military barracks, a warehouse, and a prison, amongst other purposes. Its minaret is believed to have been destroyed at some point between 1839 and 1843.

During the early 20th century, the mosque became a museum. For a short period in 1966, the building returned to its original purpose as a place of prayer for King Saud during his [exile to Greece](#) following his removal from power.

Today, the Tzistarakis Mosque sits across from the Monastiraki metro station, and is a popular attraction for tourists.

Old Madrasa Gate

Built in 1721, the Ottoman-era madrasa, or Islamic school, was a gathering place for important figures within the city’s Muslim community. The school included a spacious courtyard and residential quarters.

In 1821, much of the madrassa was damaged and destroyed during Greece's war to break away from the Ottoman Empire.

Then, the structure was rebuilt and converted into a prison for a period, and those sentenced to death were hanged from a tree in its courtyard.

The prison was later closed down, and further damage occurred when Roman ruins were excavated from beneath the site of the madrassa.

Today, all that remains standing is the entryway, known as the Old Madrassa Gate. What's left of the entrance includes a stone arch and a wooden door surrounded by overgrown bushes and trees.

Fethiye Mosque

Located in the ancient Agora of Athens and a short walk from the Tzistarakis Mosque is the Fethiye Mosque, or "The Mosque of Conquest," which has been open to visitors since 2017.

Built on the ruins of a Christian basilica, the former church was converted into a mosque not long after Ottoman rule began in Athens. The Venetians briefly reconverted the mosque into a church during their hold on Athens in the late 17th Century.

The building changed purposes again after Greek independence, when it was used as a school, military barracks, a prison, and a military bakery.

Starting in the early 20th Century, the structure became a storehouse for artefacts found during the excavation of the Agora and the Acropolis.

In 2010, the Greek government decided to restore the site and in 2013, Greece's Central Archaeological Council signed off on its restoration, which includes significant structural renovations. Since 2017, it has remained open to the public.

The Bathhouse of the Winds

Situated near the ancient Agora, the Bath House of the Winds was built as a hammam during the Ottoman era and is the only surviving historic bathhouse in the city. Its exact construction date is unknown.

Once known as the Abid Efendi Hammam, the structure operated as a traditional bathhouse and had alternate times for use by men and women.



The historic public bath is now used for exhibitions (Creative Commons)

Its structure was altered several times throughout its existence, but it continued to be used as a bathhouse until 1965, according to the Greek government.

It was later restored, and its oversight was given to the Museum of Modern Greek Culture. Since 1998, it has been used for exhibitions and cultural events.

Venizelos Mansion

Built in the early 1500s, the Venizelos Mansion is often described as the oldest standing house in Athens. The two-story home underwent renovations in the 19th century, and today it serves as a museum.

Surrounded by high walls, the mansion has a small courtyard, a well, and a fountain, amongst other features common to houses built during the Ottoman occupation of Greece. It is located on Adrianou Street, not far from Monastiraki Square.



Venizelos Mansion offers a glimpse into Ottoman life in Athens (Nick Paleologos)

This typology of houses was common [during Ottoman times] regardless of religion,”
historian Nicolaides explained.

Originally built by nobleman Angelos Venizelos, the house was a residence of his daughter,
Philothei, a Greek Orthodox saint and martyr in the 16th Century.

In 1972, the Greek Ministry of Culture took over its sponsorship, and the home was given to
the Holy Archdiocese of Athens in 1999.

Restored and open to the public since 2017, it now serves as a private museum and a window
into domestic life in Ottoman-era Athens.