

# Acropolis closes at hottest hours amid Greece heatwave

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Access to the UNESCO-listed archaeological site dating to Antiquity will be suspended between midday and 5:00 pm.

The Athens Acropolis, Greece's top tourist attraction, closed during the hottest hours on Friday and may well close again Saturday as the country

wilts under a heatwave.

Access to the UNESCO-listed [archaeological site](#) dating to antiquity is being suspended between midday and 5:00 pm (0900 GMT and 1400 GMT) before reopening "to protect workers and visitors", Culture Minister Lina Mendoni told public broadcaster ERT.

"It's highly likely that we will take the same measure tomorrow (Saturday)," she said.

Temperatures reached 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit) in Athens on Friday, and parts of the country could see highs as much as 44 C on Saturday, according to the national weather service EMY.

Other popular tourist sites surrounding the Sacred Rock on which the Acropolis stands, such as the Ancient Agora, have remained open.

The Acropolis, which has seen a major rise in visitor numbers in recent months, is normally open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm every day.

Some tourists were left disappointed in front of the site's closed entrance, saying the official website had not provided enough information.

"I am not feeling really comfortable about it, but what can we do?" said Serbian human resources director Sonya Ivkovic, who planned to return for the reopening at 5:00 pm.

"We weren't expecting it, we just came and thought it would be open," Emelie Den, a doctor from Australia, told AFP. "Kind of caught us off guard but makes sense, it is really, really hot today... we've been drinking lots."

## Fire risk

A summer heatwave is hitting several Mediterranean countries, with the mercury hitting 42C in parts of northern and western Greece on Friday.

The authorities have in recent days taken measures to help people cope. The Red Cross deployed at the Acropolis on Thursday to hand out water bottles and help visitors suffering from the heat.

"We're going to hand out at least 30,000 50-cl bottles of water a day," the president of the Greek Red Cross, Antonios Avgerinos, told AFP.

Shelters were set up near the entrance at the start of the week to protect the thousands of sightseers who come to admire the Parthenon from the Acropolis.

The authorities have warned about a greater risk of fires, particularly in regions where strong winds are expected.

Greece suffered major wildfires in 2021 as an exceptionally intense heatwave gripped the country.

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