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Greece opens for 2020 tourism season after coronavirus ‘lockdown’; pilgrimage sites featured



Greece officially inaugurated the 2020 summer tourism season today, a few weeks after a nearly three-month coronavirus-related “lockdown” ended, with flights to and from several countries resumed, and with most holiday lodgings opening for travelers and tourists.

Nevertheless, social distancing protocols are still in place, while private businesses must follow strict public health guidelines, similar to mass transit systems and transportation hubs, such as airports.

Beyond its myriad of islands, endless beaches and renowned archaeological sites, the predominately Christian Orthodox east Mediterranean nation of 11 million also features several noted pilgrimage sites. Foremost is the all-male monastic community of Mount Athos, the most important center of Orthodox monasticism in the world, itself a semi-autonomous self-governing entity comprised of 20 monasteries – and located on the eastern-most promontory of Halkidiki, a ruggedly stunning, verdant and remote corner of the country.

Other top pilgrimages include the rock formations of Meteora, in central Greece,

where several monasteries are built atop the huge formations, the Cave of the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos, various other centuries-old cathedrals, churches and monasteries around Greece, as well as remote chapels built atop summits, cliff-sides and isolated island locations.