

**INTERNATIONAL
FORENSICS
ASSOCIATION**



***36TH ANNUAL SPEECH & DEBATE
TOURNAMENT AND CONFERENCE
MARCH 8 - MARCH 12, 2026***

ATHENS, GREECE

IFA TRAVEL GUIDE





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WELCOME MESSAGE



Dr. Michael J. McHan

President, International Forensics Association (IFA)

On behalf of the International Forensic Association, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 36th Annual Speech and Debate Championship, held this year in the timeless city of Athens, Greece, from March 8–12, 2026.

For centuries, Athens has been a cradle of rhetoric, democracy, and the art of persuasion—making it the perfect setting for our gathering of passionate speakers, critical thinkers, and global advocates. Here, where philosophers once challenged ideas in open forums, we now come together to challenge, inspire, and sharpen one another's voices on the international stage.

Over the next five days, you will engage in spirited competition, exchange perspectives across cultures, and forge connections that transcend borders. Whether you are here to compete, coach, judge, or cheer from the sidelines, your presence adds to the vibrant tapestry of ideas and dialogue that defines our community.

As you explore Athens, may the history beneath your feet and the energy in its streets remind you that words have the power to shape worlds. Let this be not only a competition, but also a celebration—of skill, of camaraderie, and of the shared belief that speech and debate make us better citizens of the world.

Welcome to Athens.

Welcome to the IFA 36th Annual Championship. Let the conversations begin!

MEET THE TEAM



Dr. Michael J. McHan
President
Grossmont College



Dr. Bryan Malinis
Vice President
San Diego Mesa College



Prof. Sarah Hinkle
Treasurer
Colorado College



Prof. Jacqueline Yu
Secretary
Pasadena City College



Prof. Trendi Nguyen
International Liaison
Texas Southern University



TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Tournament Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
Sunday, March 8, 2026	5 PM-6 PM	Registration
<i>Wyndham Grand Athens</i>	5 PM- 7 PM	Student Scavenger Hunt (Students only)
	6 PM - 7:30 PM	Business Meeting in Hera
	7:30 PM	Social at Veranda of the Rooftop
Monday, March 9, 2026	8:00-9:45	Round 1 Debate
<i>Wyndham Grand Residence</i>	9:45-11:30	Round 2 Debate
	11:30-1:15	Round 3 Debate
	1:15-1:45	Lunch Break
	1:45-3:30	Round 4 Debate
	3:30-5:15	Elim 1 Debate
	5:15-7:00	Elim 2 Debate

CONT...

Tournament Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
Tuesday, March 10, 2026	8:00-9:15	Round 1, Speech Pattern A (Duo, Pro, Info, Imp, RC)
<i>Wyndham Grand Residence</i>	9:15-10:30	Round 2, Speech Pattern A
	10:45	Extemporaneous Draw
	11:00-12:15	Round 1, Speech Pattern B (Poe, DI, Per, ADS, POI, EXT)
	12:15-12:45	Lunch Break
	12:45	Extemporaneous Draw
	1:00-2:15	Round 2, Speech Pattern B
	2:30	Extemporaneous Draw Semis
	2:45-4:00	Semis (events with 37+ entries) Finals (events with 36 or fewer entries)
	4:15	Extemporaneous Draw Finals
	4:30-5:45	Finals (for events that had semis) & Nuance Event
	6:00-7:15	Elim 3 Debate (if needed)
	ASAP	Awards



HOTEL INFORMATION

Wyndham Athens Residence

Location & Accessibility

- Situated at 2–4 Achilleos Street, Athens 104 37, the hotel is adjacent to the Metaxourgeio Metro station, offering direct access to major attractions and Athens International Airport.
- It's within walking distance of top historic sites like the Acropolis, Ancient Agora, and the National Archaeological Museum, and nearby lively neighborhoods such as Monastiraki and Gazi.
- Local insight: Some visitors caution that the Metaxourgeio area can feel a bit rough after dark.

Amenities & Services

- Guests enjoy shared access to features at the neighboring Wyndham Grand Athens just 50 meters away: a rooftop pool, sundeck with Acropolis views, health club, sauna, and two restaurants.
 - 24/7 front desk, concierge, currency exchange, business center, luggage storage
 - Express check-in/out, room service, housekeeping, laundry/dry-cleaning, ironing
 - Indoor parking, café, bar/lounge, children's services (cots, babysitting), massage/spa treatments

A photograph of a modern, multi-story apartment building at night. The building has a grid-like facade with many windows and balconies. Some balconies have glass railings and are illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. The sky is dark blue, suggesting dusk or dawn. The building is the central focus of the image.

Wyndham Athens Residence

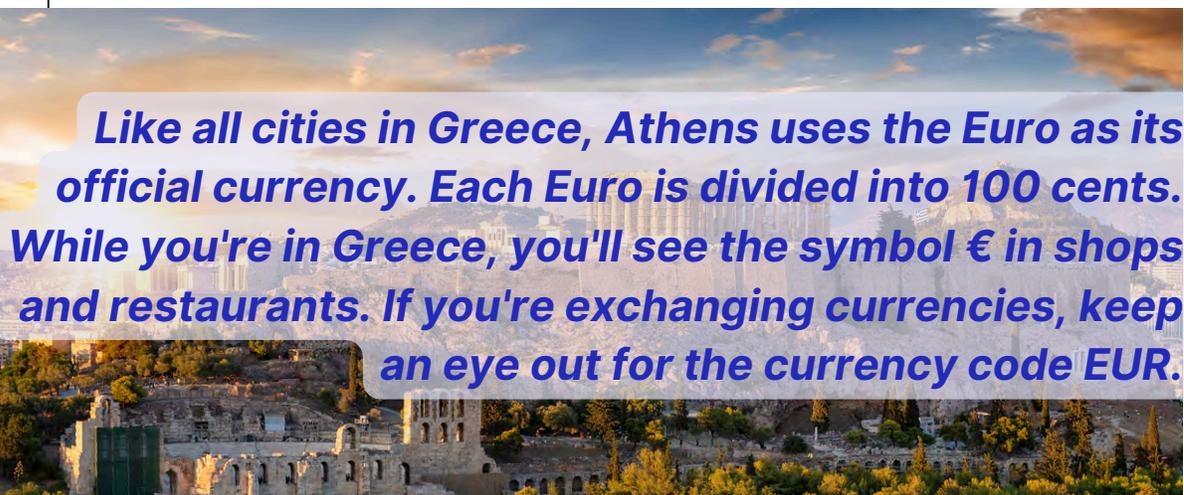
Policies & Practical Info

- Check-in: From 3 PM; Check-out: by 11 AM; both offer express options.
- Airport shuttle is available for ~€45 one-way; self-parking ~€15/day.
- A local overnight accommodation tax applies: ~€4 (Nov–Mar) or ~€15 (Apr–Oct) per night.
- Breakfast buffet is about €28/adult and €14/child.[Expedia](#)
- Pets are not allowed; the property is LGBTQ+ friendly.
- Security features include CO detectors, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and first-aid kits.ue to national regulations.

ATHENS

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

- **Emergency number (EU):** 112 (works for police/ambulance/fire). _gr.usembassy.gov
- **U.S. Embassy in Greece (Athens):**
 - 91 Vasilisis Sophias Ave, 10160 Athens
 - Tel: +30 210-721-2951
 - After-hours emergencies:
 - +30 210-729-4444 or +30 210-729-4301
 - Email:
AthensAmericanCitizenServices@state.gov
- **Register travel:** Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Emergency lines from the U.S./overseas listed here.





CULTURAL EXPLORATION



- **Acropolis & Slopes: Standard adult ticket €30 (winter discounts often apply Nov–Mar; check site before you go). usacs-info.com**
- **Acropolis Museum: Adult ticket €15 (seasonal variations); buy online or on site. [This is Athens](#)**
- **National Archaeological Museum: See Greece’s greatest ancient collection. Check latest prices/hours before you go.**
- **Panathenaic Stadium (Kallimarmaro): Track walk & audio guide available; adult ticket around €12. [Direct Ferries](#)**
- **Changing of the Guard (Evzones), Syntagma: Every hour; full ceremony Sundays 11:00. [Greeka](#)**
- **Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC): Park, sea views, free events. snfcc.org**
- **Mount Lycabettus: Best city sunset; funicular operates daily (check hourly schedule/fares). lycabettushill.com**



CULTURAL EXPLORATION



Social & Cultural Etiquette

Custom/Behavior	In Greece	In the U.S.	Notes
Greeting strangers	A firm handshake and eye contact	Similar	Among friends/family: hugs, cheek kisses.
Personal space	Closer, more physical	More distant	Greeks may stand closer while talking.
Talking volume	Loud, animated conversations are common	Can vary	Not considered rude—it shows engagement.
Tipping	5–10% appreciated (round up small bills)	15–20% standard	Less expected, but always welcome.
Table time	Meals are relaxed and unhurried	Faster-paced, turn tables quickly	Don't rush; enjoy a long meal.
Directness	Greeks can be frank but respectful	Americans often more reserved	Honesty is valued—don't take offense.



CULTURAL EXPLORATION

Social & Cultural Etiquette

What to Expect Day-to-Day

🕒 Shops may close mid-afternoon (~2–5 PM), especially in neighborhoods outside the center. Large stores stay open.

 Pharmacies and kiosks (periptera) sell snacks, drinks, and personal items—very convenient for tourists.

💧 Tap water is safe to drink in Athens (unlike some islands).

🛑 Don't flush toilet paper in most restrooms—use the bin provided.



CULTURAL EXPLORATION

Social & Cultural Etiquette

Local Norms to Respect

- 🏛️ **At churches and monasteries: cover shoulders, no short shorts or tank tops. Women may be asked to wear skirts (provided at monasteries).**
- 🙏 **Greek Orthodox customs are strong—crossing oneself is common when passing a church or shrine.**
- 📷 **Ask before photographing people, especially inside places of worship.**
- 🚬? **Smoking is still more socially common, even indoors (though officially banned in enclosed spaces).**

Safety & Street Smarts

- **Athens is generally safe, even at night in central areas (Plaka, Syntagma, Monastiraki).**
- **Be alert in crowded metro cars or touristy streets for pickpockets.**
- **Crosswalks aren't always respected—look both ways, even on green!**

STUDENT FRIENDLY EATERIES

(sample picks)

Affordable:



Kostas (Syntagma)

Legendary pork souvlaki/gyros.



O Thanasis

Classic kebab/souvlaki plates.



To Kati Allo

Hearty Greek home-cooking.

Moderate:



Tzitzikas & Mermigas

Modern meze, easy group dining.



Ta Karamanlidika tou Fani

Cured meats/cheese boards + hot dishes.

STUDENT FRIENDLY EATERIES

(sample picks)

Special Night Out:



Nolan

Modern Greek-Asian,
Michelin-recognized.



Spondi or Varoulko Seaside

Long-time Michelin
stars (reservations
recommended).



Hytra

Creative fine dining
with views



DAY TRIPS

Under ~1.5 hours

- Cape Sounion & Temple of Poseidon: sunset over the Aegean; ~70–90 min by bus/car from Athens.
- Aegina Island (from Piraeus): pistachios, seaside promenades; 40–70 min by ferry/hydrofoil.

Farther (full-day)

- Delphi: ancient oracle & superb museum; ~2.5–3 hours each way by road.
- Hydra: car-free island; ~1.5–2 hours by fast ferry from Piraeus.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Hospitals with ERs (central/near-central):

- Evangelismos General Hospital (central, large public). old.ntua.gr
- Hygeia Hospital (private, northern suburbs; English-speaking staff).

Pharmacies:

- Most keep daytime hours; each area has on-duty 24-hour pharmacies (look for “Φαρμακεία Εφημερίας” listings). Airport pharmacy available at Arrivals, Exit 4.

Water:

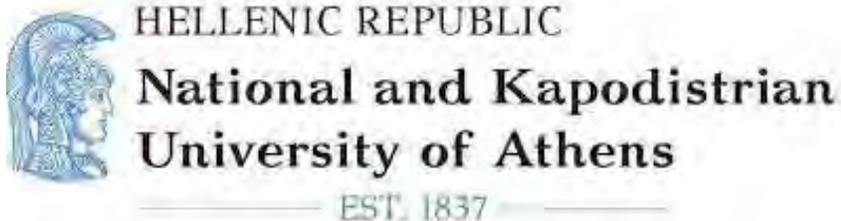
- In Athens, tap water is generally considered safe; many visitors still prefer bottled on islands.

Mind & Body:

- Hammam Baths (Thiseio)—traditional steam/bathhouse sessions. hammam.gr
- NYSY Studios—yoga/Pilates classes; drop-ins often available.
- Jog/run routes: National Garden → Panathenaic Stadium circuit; seaside paths at SNFCC.



LOCAL UNIVERSITIES



National & Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)

Central campuses around Panepistimiou; large humanities/law presence.



National Technical University of Athens (NTUA)

Historic Patission complex & Zografou campus.



Athens University of Economics & Business (AUEB)

Top econ/business campus near Victoria.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR ATHENS TRAVEL

Quick Tips for Tourists:

- For daily touring, stick to public transport with Tap2Ride—efficient, cheap, and simple.
- Use Citymapper, Moovit, or OASA app to check routes, schedules, and alerts.
- For early mornings or late-night returns, rely on Free Now or Uber Taxi—no cash needed and safer than hailing.
- Avoid renting a car—Athens traffic and parking are notoriously difficult [Daily Telegraph](#)[Reddit](#).
- Keep small change or a prepaid card for kiosks, sidestreet stops, or remote connections.

Public Transportation — Reliable & Budget-Friendly

• Metro

- The Athens Metro is the fastest way to navigate the city. It runs from ~5 AM to midnight.

• Buses & Trolleybuses

- A comprehensive network connects neighborhoods not covered by the metro. Buses typically run 5 AM–midnight; some night routes operate 24/7 .
- Note: you must purchase tickets beforehand—drivers don't sell them onboard

• Tram

- Two tram lines link central Athens with coastal suburbs like Faliro, Voula, and Piraeus, spanning over 27 km with about 59 stops.
 - Tickets cost €1.20 for 90 minutes (same as other transport types)



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR ATHENS TRAVEL

Contin...

Suburban Railway (Proastiakos)

- This commuter rail links central Athens with suburbs and farther regional towns—including the airport, Corinth, and Chalcis.
- Within the urban zone, your standard ticket applies; beyond that, regional fares begin.

Tap2Ride Contactless System

- Athens introduced “Tap2Ride” in early 2025. You can now simply tap your contactless bank card or mobile wallet to pay.
- The system applies the lowest fare automatically, and daily charges are capped (around €4.10).

Apps to Guide You Around

- **Citymapper** – best all-in-one transit planning
- **Moovit** – real-time updates across transit modes
- **Google Maps** – reliable for walking and transit directions
- **OASA Telematics or the Athens Transport App** – official transport info, schedules, and updates

Ride-Hailing & Taxi Apps — Convenient for Night or Heavy Luggage

- **Uber (Uber Taxi only)**
 - Uber operates in Athens acting as a platform to book licensed yellow taxis. You get fare estimates, cashless payments via card or PayPal, and driver details in-app UberThe Tour Guy.
- **Free Now (formerly Beat / TaxiBeat)**
 - A hugely popular alternative, Free Now also connects users to official taxis and is widely used in the city



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**LET'S WORK
TOGETHER**



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