

THE WHITE EDIT

OUR FULL GUIDE TO GETTING MARRIED IN GREECE

You can legally marry in Greece, in either a Civil wedding ceremony or a religious ceremony. Greek Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish ceremonies are all possible. There are no residency requirements for foreign nationals but if you do reside in Greece (but are not a citizen) you must have a residence permit.

Alternatively, to avoid the legalities and paperwork involved, couples can have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK to fulfil the legal requirements followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist Ceremony in Greece at a venue of their choice.

Civil Ceremony

In Greece, civil ceremonies are often performed by the mayor and take place at the town hall, Mayor's office or other community office. The couple's hotel or resort may also be an approved venue. Civil ceremonies cannot be held at archaeological sites.

Although there are no residency requirements couples need to have a wedding notice published in a local Greek language newspaper at least 8 days prior to applying for their marriage licence.

Same sex couples cannot legally marry in Greece.

Religious Ceremony

You can have a legally binding religious ceremony if...

...one/both of you are Greek Orthodox and you wish to have a Greek Orthodox ceremony.

...one/both of you are Protestant and you wish to have a Protestant ceremony.

...one/both of you are Roman Catholic and you wish to have a Catholic ceremony and neither of you are divorced. However, Greek law does not allow a religious marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian.

...both of you are Jewish and you wish to have a Jewish ceremony.

Wedding Blessing / Humanist Ceremony

The private, non-denominational, non-institutional nature of a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony gives you the flexibility to marry when, where and how you want.

There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to take place in a licensed building. Therefore, you can hold your ceremony wherever you like—at your favourite restaurant, in a private villa, on a secluded beach or in the middle of an olive grove. The choice is yours.

There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to follow a set structure so it can be as formal or informal as you like—you can have a traditional Church Ceremony with the religious parts replaced with readings and vows or you can have a light-hearted ceremony with humorous readings and vows. Once again, the choice is yours.

These ceremonies are usually performed by a celebrant who will be able to help you select the style, structure, readings, music and vows that reflect your tastes and feelings as a couple resulting in a highly personalised and unique, non-religious ceremony.

Please note: If you do choose to have a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony you will also need to have an official civil ceremony in order for your marriage to be legally binding.

Civil Ceremony

Civil ceremonies are often performed by the mayor and take place at the town hall, Mayor's office or other community office. The couple's hotel or resort may also be an approved venue. Civil ceremonies cannot be held at archaeological sites.

Although there are no residency requirements, couples must publish a wedding notice in one of the local Greek language newspapers a minimum of eight days before applying for their marriage licence. There should be a separate notice for both the bride and the groom and their names must be written phonetically in Greek characters. In small towns that do not publish a local newspaper the notice must be posted at the Town Hall or Community office instead.

The process:

1. The required documentation (see below) must be taken to the Town Hall (Dimarcheío) or president of the Community. If you have a wedding planner it may be possible for them to do this on your behalf.

You will probably require the following documentation:

- A CNI or equivalent from your home country. This document confirms you are not married in your home country and there are no other impediments to the marriage. Information about UK-issued CNIs can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/greece>

Non-UK citizens can click **here** for details on how to obtain the relevant certificate from their home country.

- Birth certificate (long form version)
- A valid passport (with a minimum of 6 months validity)
- Passport sized photos
- You will require two witnesses for the ceremony and will need to provide photocopies of their passports.
- If you are widowed, you must provide both your previous marriage certificate and the death certificate of your husband/wife.
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- If you are divorced or your marriage was annulled, you must provide the relevant certificates.
- A copy of the local newspaper in which the wedding notice was published.

If the name on any of your documents doesn't appear exactly as it does on your birth certificate, you will need to provide the Greek marriage authorities with evidence of your name change (Eg. adoption certificate; marriage certificate; deed poll).

** Legal requirements may vary depending on the city, town or island where you wish to be married so it is always a good idea to check with local authorities. **

Please note: Documents issued outside of Greece must have a Hague Apostille from the relevant issuing office in your country of residence (For UK issued documents go to www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised). They will also need to be translated into Greek. The translation must be certified by a lawyer, the Greek consulate in your home country or the Foreign Ministry's department of translation in Greece. Alternatively, the translation can be carried out by a certified translator.

2. The marriage licence will take a minimum of 7 days to be issued although it can take longer. Your wedding must take place within 6 months of the marriage licence being issued.

3. Once the licence is issued you must submit a joint application to the Mayor stating where and when you wish to be married.

4. The marriage ceremony is usually conducted in Greek so you may need a translator.

5. You will require 2 witnesses for the ceremony. They must have either their passports or Greek identity documents with them on the day. One of the witnesses may act as the interpreter if required.

6. Once the ceremony has taken place the couple must declare their marriage at the local Registry Office in Greece within 40 days of marrying, so that a Marriage Certificate can be issued. This must be done for the marriage to be legal in the UK. Once registered, the Marriage Certificate is issued within three days and can be collected from the Registrar or mailed to the couple.

Religious Ceremony

It is possible to have a legally binding Greek Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic or Jewish wedding ceremony in Greece .

The process:

1. Contact the minister of the church/synagogue in your local parish to find out what documentation may be required.
2. Contact the minister of the church/synagogue where you would like the ceremony to take place and he/she will be able to guide you through the process and requirements.
3. The required documentation (listed below) must be taken to the minister you wish to perform the marriage ceremony. The minister will then apply for the Marriage License on your behalf. Additional requirements and waiting periods vary between religions/denominations so couples are advised to contact the minister involved as early as possible to determine what is required in their specific case.

You will probably require the following documentation:

- A CNI or equivalent from your home country. This document confirms you are not married in your home country and there are no other impediments to the marriage. Information about UK-issued CNIs can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/greece>

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** Greek law does not allow a religious marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian
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For a Greek Orthodox wedding...

- One/both of you must be Greek Orthodox.
- You must both have been baptised and have a Baptism certificate signed and stamped by your local parish priest.
- The Greek Orthodox Church must issue a 'letter of Celibacy', a certificate giving you freedom and consent to marry.

For a Protestant wedding...

- One/both of you must be Protestant.
- You must both have been baptised and have a Baptism certificate.
- You may need to attend a series of pre-marital counselling sessions

For a Roman Catholic wedding...

- One/both of you must be Roman Catholic
- You must both have been baptised and have a Baptism certificate.
- If Roman Catholic, you must provide evidence of your Confirmation.
- Neither of you must be divorced
- Proof of freedom to marry, given by your church.

For a Jewish wedding...

- You must both be Jewish.
- You need a certificate of freedom to marry from your local Rabbi.

4. Once the wedding ceremony has taken place the couple must declare their marriage at the local Registry Office in Greece within 40 days of marrying, so that a Marriage Certificate can be issued. This must be done for the marriage to be legal in the UK. Once registered, the Marriage Certificate is issued within three days and can be collected from the Registrar or mailed to the couple.

Some couples choose to have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK to fulfil the legal requirements (check out our TWE Guide to The Best UK Registry Offices) followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist Ceremony in Cyprus—regarding this as their actual 'Wedding Day'—where they share vows and exchange rings in the presence of their friends and family.

Wedding Blessing / Humanist Ceremony

The private, non-denominational, non-institutional nature of a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony gives you the flexibility to marry when, where and how you want.

There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to take place in a licensed building. Therefore, you can hold your ceremony wherever you like—at your favourite restaurant, in a private villa, on a secluded beach or in the middle of an olive grove. The choice is yours.

There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to follow a set structure so it can be as formal or informal as you like—you can have a traditional Church Ceremony with the religious parts replaced with readings and vows or you can have a light-hearted ceremony with humorous readings and vows. Once again, the choice is yours.

These ceremonies are usually performed by a celebrant who will be able to help you select the style, structure, readings, music and vows that reflect your tastes and feelings as a couple resulting in a highly personalised and unique, non-religious ceremony.

Please note: If you do choose to have a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony you will also need to have an official civil ceremony in order for your marriage to be legally binding.

*** Although we have done our best to ensure the information above is correct, please note it is intended only as a guideline and should not be regarded as legal advice. ***

