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According to figures released by *The Bank of Greece*,in the first quarter of 2015 arrivals to Greece grew by 45.6 per cent and 37.7 per cent from the UK market alone compared to the same period last year, while tourism revenue for the same period reported an increase of 12.8 per cent and a staggering 25.5 per cent from the UK.

Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos announced that it is marking its best season since it first opened in 2001, welcoming over 6 million passengers in the first five months of 2015, which is a 23.7 per cent increase from the same period last year. In May alone a total of 1.65 million passengers passed through its gates, up by 22.3 per cent compared to the same period last year.

Salsa dancing in the Aegean

Tour operator Signature Travel in collaboration with Athens's Salsa Sinners dance school will introduce the first-ever salsa cruise in Greece aboard the Celestyal Cruises *Olympia* departing from Piraeus port on July 31. Latin dance lovers will have the chance to experience seminars and workshops with top salsa artists as well as participate in a walking and tasting tour around Athens before starting their cruise to get to know the city's gastronomic side. For more info see here: http://news.gtp.gr/2015/06/04/signature-travel-holds-first-ever-greek-salsa-dance-cruise/

Ellinair introduces new domestic flights

Greek airline Ellinair recently announced its summer 2015 program which includes more flights to and from international destinations, competitive prices, and for the first time, five new domestic flights. Regarding the latter, the airline's 96-seater RJ85 aircraft will be flying on a weekly basis from Athens and Thessaloniki to five popular Greek islands, including Santorini, Mykonos, Rhodes, Zakynthos and Heraklion in Crete. For more info see here: http://en.ellinair.com/news/2015-04-23/en_jmkjtr

Re-launch for ferry connections to the islands of Limnos and Agios Efstratios

Starting this June Hellenic Seaways re-launches the ferry service from Lavrio to the Northern Aegean islands of Limnos and Agios Efstratios.*Express Pegasus* will operate the route Lavrio – Agios Efstratios – Limnos – Kavala four times a week (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday) and Kavala – Limnos – Agios Efstratios – Lavrio three times a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) giving travellers the chance to experience the hidden beauties of these amazing lesser known Greek islands. For more info see here: http://news.gtp.gr/2015/06/03/ferry-services-to-limnos-and-agios-efstratios-resume-from-lavrio/

Greece has an amazing bathing water quality according to EEA

According to the annual bathing water quality report from the European Environment Agency (EEA) Greece bathing waters are of outstanding quality. The EEA report is compiled from data gathered from more than 21,000 coastal and inland bathing sites across the EU, Switzerland and Albania in 2014. Greece came in fourth for having a high number of sites with excellent bathing water quality (97 percent), followed by Croatia (94 percent). For more info see here:http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-in-2014

Keeping Beaches Beautiful in Greece

As part of the Make Holidays Greener campaign and awareness-raising month in July, nearly 20 Greek hotels have already committed to dedicated beach cleans for the campaign, which this year is focussed on reducing plastic on beaches. Make Holidays Greener, which is jointly organised by the charity The Travel Foundation and Travelife has created five top tips for consumers to reduce plastic on beaches. These are: Take reusable bags and bottles with you; avoid plastic straws; use an ashtray on the beach and don't drop cigarette butts (they include plastic); remove packaging before you travel and avoid bathroom products that contain micro plastic particles such as some toothpastes and body wash. See makeholidaysgreener.org.uk and travelifecollection.com.

Athens to co-host the prestigious art event documenta 14 in 2017

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For the first time since its inception in 1955, documenta 14, one of the world's most prestigious art events, will be hosted in Athens in 2017 – the first time the event will be jointly hosted in two cities – as to date it is usually exclusively held in Kassel, Germany. Attended by over 905,000 visitors in 2012, the documenta event is held every five years for 100 days. documenta 14 hosts the works of contemporary artists from across the globe. The artistic director of documenta 14, critic and curator Adam Szymczyk said that Athens would serve as a workshop of contemporary cultural ideas. For more info see here:http://www.documenta.de/en/news.html

Athens and Thessaloniki climb up ICCA rankings

According to the newly released ICCA (International Congresses and Conventions Association) city rankings report, Athens and Thessaloniki have climbed up the list, re-establishing their status as meetings & events destinations. Athens has climbed twenty places to number 27 worldwide, while Thessaloniki also had a significant rise moving up from the 209th to the 108th place worldwide after hosting 22 international events last year (57% increase since 2013). For more info see here: http://news.gtp.gr/2015/05/14/athens-rises-20-places-in-world-conference-and-conventions-ranking/ ;http://news.gtp.gr/2015/05/20/thessaloniki-goes-up-icca-ranking-of-business-events/

Three Greek destinations among the best honeymoon spots in the world for gay travellers

According to a research conducted by Destsetters, an online platform for the International LGBT market, in collaboration with *Gay Star News*, Santorini, Halkidiki and Thessaloniki are included in the list of the 12 most amazing destinations for gay travelers on their honeymoon. More specifically Gay Star News said about the Greek destinations:

- *"**Santorini**: The stunning and romantic setting of Santorini as well as the high level of gay acceptance in the island, make the destination the number one choice for gay honeymoons in Greece. The stunning sunset of Santorini is an absolute must-see!"*

- ***"Thessaloniki and Halkidiki:** The second largest city of Greece, Thessaloniki, can be ideally combined with the exotic beaches, fabulous hotels and romantic sceneries of Halkidiki peninsula. The delicious cuisine, vivid gay nightlife and sophisticated character of Thessaloniki are located just 40 minutes' drive from the first exotic beach of Halkidiki." meaning that you can live all types of experiences during just one day!"*

For more info see here:

Ancient Greek cuisine revived in Athens

Restaurant Archeon Gefsis (*Ancient Tastes)* recently opened its doors in the Psyri District Athens aiming to offer visitors a unique culinary experience. Branded as an ancient Greek-style restaurant and with the support of a team of specialized architects, chefs and researchers, Archeon Gefsis focuses on the revival of ancient Greek cuisine showcasing the healthy dietary habits of the ancient Greeks. The restaurant offers a very interesting combination of recipes dating back to the 5th, 4th and 3rd BC, adapted to suit contemporary tastes. For more info see here: http://news.gtp.gr/2015/05/12/ancient-greek-cuisine-revives-in-psyri-district-in-athens/

The Almeida theatre meets the Greeks

Inspired in spirit and form by the ancient Festivals of Dionysos, the London theatre The Almeida is running 'Almeida Greeks' - a summer-long festival which presents an eclectic mix of performances, events, talks and readings as an array of contemporary artists interrogate the Ancient Greek canon. The festival will also present an eclectic range of music and live art echoing the entertainment that once followed the formal tragedies. This will include a timely reworking of Lysistrata by all-female ensemble Gaggle.

Almeida Greeks will run from June to November, with the summer festival running alongside three main stage productions; Oresteia, Bakkhai and Medea. Oresteia, directed by Almeida Associate Director Robert Icke, is now running until 18 July. Bakkhai, starring Ben Whishaw as Dionysos, will run from 23 July until 19 September. Finally Medea, brought to new life by Almeida Artistic Director Rupert Goold, will run from 25 September until 14 November. For more info see here: http://www.almeida.co.uk/greeks

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