

# Greek Alphabet

SMALL LETTER	CAPITAL LETTER	LETTER NAME	PRONUNCIATION GUIDE
α	Α	Alpha	a (as in "father")
β	Β	Beta	v (as in "vase")
γ	Γ	Gamma	g (as in "go") or y (before ε, ι)
δ	Δ	Delta	th (as in "this")
ε	Ε	Epsilon	e (as in "pet")
ζ	Ζ	Zeta	z (as in "zebra")
η	Η	Eta	i (as in "machine")
θ	Θ	Theta	th (as in "thin")
ι	Ι	Iota	i (as in "machine")
κ	Κ	Kappa	k (as in "kite")
λ	Λ	Lambda	l (as in "lamp")
μ	Μ	Mu	m (as in "man")
ν	Ν	Nu	n (as in "net")
ξ	Ξ	Xi	x (as in "axe")
ο	Ο	Omicron	o (as in "not")
π	Π	Pi	p (as in "pot")
ρ	Ρ	Rho	r (trilled, as in Spanish "perro")
σ, ς*	Σ	Sigma	s (as in "see")
τ	Τ	Tau	t (as in "top")
υ	Υ	Upsilon	i (as in "machine")
φ	Φ	Phi	f (as in "phone")
χ	Χ	Chi	ch (as in German "Bach")
ψ	Ψ	Psi	ps (as in "lapse")
ω	Ω	Omega	o (as in "tore")

\* Final sigma, used at the end of the word, especially in icons.

## Special Pronunciation Rules

### Diphthongs:

- **αι** is pronounced like "e" in "pet".
- **ει** is pronounced like "ee" in "see".
- **οι** is pronounced like "ee" in "see".
- **υι** is pronounced like "ee" in "see".
- **ου** is pronounced like "oo" in "boot".
- **ευ** is pronounced like "ev" before voiced consonants (β, γ, δ, ζ, λ, μ, ν, ρ) and "ef" before voiceless consonants (θ, κ, ξ, π, σ, τ, φ, χ, ψ).
- **αυ** is pronounced like "av" before voiced consonants and "af" before voiceless consonants.

### Gamma (γ):

- **Gamma (γ)** before another gamma (γ), kappa (κ), xi (ξ), or chi (χ) is pronounced like "ng" in "sing".

### Rho (ρ):

- **Double rho (ρρ)** is pronounced with a strong, trilled "r".
- **Initial rho (ρ)** in a word is pronounced with a strong, trilled "r".

# Greek Vocabulary

## Church Roles

- **Λαός (Laós)** - "Laity, Layperson."
- **Διάκονος (Diákonos)** - "Deacon."
- **Πρεσβύτερος (Presvύτερος)** - "Priest."
- **Πρεσβυτέρα (Presvytéra)** - "Priest's wife."
- **Επίσκοπος (Epískopos)** - "Bishop."
- **Προϊστάμενος (Proistámenos)** - "Chief Priest"
- **Ψάλτης (Psalti)** - "Chanter"

## Liturgical Bread

- **Προσφέρω (Prosphero)** - "I offer", e.g. bread offered to be consecrated as the holy gifts or used as Antidoron.
- **Ἀντίδωρον (Antidoron)** - "In place of the gift" (refers to the bread blessed but not consecrated during the Divine Liturgy and distributed to the faithful, even those not Orthodox).
- **Ἄρτοκλασία (Artoklasia)** - "Breaking of bread" (refers to a service where bread is blessed (typically special sweet bread) in honor of a saint or for a particular feast).

## Greetings and Responses

- **Χρόνια πολλά (Krónia pollá)** - "Many years", commonly used to wish someone a happy birthday, happy name day, or other celebrations.
- **Καλημέρα (Kalí méra)** - "Good morning"
- **Καλό απόγευμα (Kaló apógevma)** - "Good afternoon."
- **Καλησπέρα (Kalí spera)** - "Good evening."
- **Χριστός ανέστη (Christós anésti)** - "Christ is Risen!", said after Pascha (Easter).
- **Ἀληθώς ανέστη (Alithós anésti)** - "Truly He is Risen!" (what you say in response to "Christ is Risen!").
- **Χριστός γεννάται (Christós gennátai)** - "Christ is Born!", said after Christmas. Usually you hear this only in English, not Greek.
- **Δοξάσατε (Doxásate)** - "Glorify Him!", said in response to "Christ is Born!" Usually you hear this in English only, not Greek.
- **Ζωή σε σάς (Zoi se sás)** - "Life to you," said to those mourning.

## Common Liturgical Phrases

- **Αμήν (Amín)** - "Amen"
- **Ἄλληλουία (Allilouia)** - "Alleluia."
- **Κύριε ἐλέησον (Kýrie eléison)** - "Lord, have mercy."
- **Δόξα σοι, Κύριε (Dóxa soi, Kýrie)** - "Glory to You, O Lord."
- **Σοφία, ὀρθοί (Sofia, orthoi)** - "Wisdom, arise."
- **Δύναμις (Dynamis)** - "Power", origin of word "Dynamite" (Chant louder).
- **Πάτερ ἡμῶν (Páter ēmōn)** - "Our Father", beginning of the Lord's Prayer.
- **Ἅγιος (Hágios)** - "Holy", also the word for Saint, e.g. **Ἅγιος Νικόλαος**, Saint Nicholas.
- **Δόξα Πατρί καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι (Dóxa Patrí kai iō kai Hagíō Pnévmati)** - "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit" (Tip: often a cue to stand, check to see what comes next in the service.)
- **Νῦν καὶ αἰεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων (Nēn kai aeì kai eis tous aiónas tōn aiónōn)** - "Now and ever and unto the ages of ages", (Aion is the root of 'Eon').
- When the priest says "Let us pray to the Lord" we respond with "Lord, have mercy" - **Κύριε ἐλέησον (Kýrie eléison)**.
- When the priest says, "Let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole lives to Christ our God." we respond with "To you, O Lord" - **Σοὶ Κύριε (Sē Kýrie)**
- When the priest says "Christ is in our midst" we respond with "He was and is and ever shall be" ('I've only heard this in English).

## Hymns

- **Σῶσον, Κύριε, τὸν λαόν σου (Soson, Kýrie, ton laón sou)** - "Save, O Lord, Your people."
- **Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, Ἅγιος Ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος Ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς (Hágios o Theós, Hágios Ischyros, Hágios Athánatos, eléison emás)** - "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us", a.k.a. the Trisagion Hymn (Trisagion means 'Three Holies').

## Relatives

- **Μαμά (Mama)** - "Mom."
- **Μπαμπάς (Babas)** - "Dad", but I usually hear 'Baba' which I guess is like 'Daddy' instead of 'Dad'. (Note: I have no idea why the Greek here is spelled so differently from how they are pronounced).
- **Θεία (Theía)** - "Aunt."
- **Θείο (Theío)** - "Uncle."
- **Γιαγιά (Yayá)** - "Grandmother."
- **Παππού (Papou)** - "Grandfather."

## Spiritual Relatives

- **Νουνό (Nounó)** - "Godfather."
- **Νουνά (Nouná)** - "Godmother."
- **Κουμπάροι (Koumbáre)** - Plural for "Spiritual relatives," e.g. god sisters, relatives of your wedding sponsor, etc. Used as in "I'm Koumbáre with John". When addressing an individual it is **Κουμπάρα** (Koumbára) for a female and **Κουμπάρο** (Koumbáro) for a male.

## Fun with Saint Names

- **Νικολέττα (Nikoletta)** - Female version of Νικόλαος (Nikólaos) "Nicholas". In Greek it means "victory of the people", from (Νίκη (Níki) "victory" (like Nike the shoe brand) and Λαός (Laós) meaning "people."
- **Other examples of saint name gender transitions:** Ιωάννης (Ioánnis) "John" becomes Ιωάννα (Ioánnna) "Joanna", Γεώργιος (Geórgios) "George" becomes Γεωργία (Georgía) "Georgia" or Γεωργέττα (Georgéttta) "Georgetta". Conversely you can make female names male, e.g. Εὐφημία (Euphēmía) "Euphemia" becoming Εὐφήμιος (Euphēmios) "Euphemos".