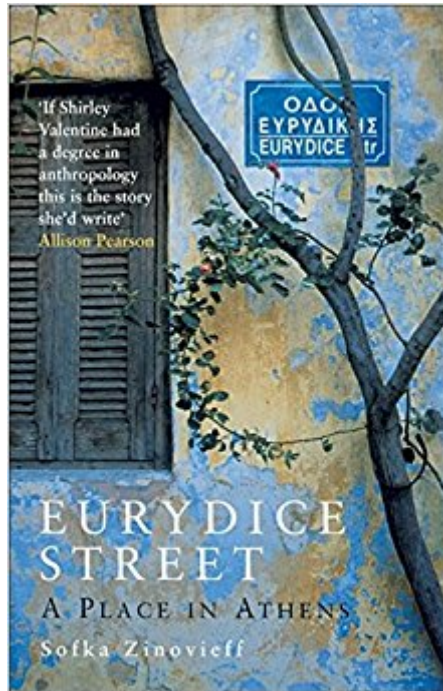




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# Eurydice Street: A Place In Athens



## Synopsis

Sofka Zinovieff had fallen in love with Greece as a student, but little suspected that years later she would return for good with an expatriate Greek husband and two young daughters. This book is a wonderfully fresh, funny and inquiring account of her first year as an Athenian. The whole family have to get to grips with their new life and identities: the children start school and tackle a new language, and Sofka's husband, Vassilis, comes home after half a lifetime away. Meanwhile, Sofka resolves to get to know her new city and become a Greek citizen, which turns out to be a process of Byzantine complexity. As the months go by, Sofka's discovers how memories of Athens' past haunt its present in its music, poetry and history. She also learns about the difficult art of catching a taxi, the importance of smoking, the unimportance of time-keeping, and how to get your Christmas piglet cooked at the baker's.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In 2001, Sofka Zinovieff accompanied her husband on a posting back to Athens. This book is both an account of her enthusiastic, if often balked, attempts to transform herself into a Greek, and a vivid evocation of a city in a chaotic ferment of change. In its lively and often trenchant blend of personal recollection and a depiction of an Athens of rowdy tavernas, resourceful refugees, majestic prostitutes, innumerable theater companies, ferocious demonstrations, and age-old customs affectionately preserved, this is a thoroughly engaging memoir."

Sofka Zinovieff trained as an anthropologist and has worked as a journalist. She lives in Athens.

This is her first book.

The author, raised in Britain has married a Greek government employee and they move back to Athens with their two children. The book relates her experiences in her first year living in Greece. She had lived in Greece as a student years before so she had some idea of what the experience would bring. The story is set mainly in Athens but she does have sections on Greek villages and especially the affinity that Greeks have for their native villages. Using members of her husband's family to illustrate her story she brings alive the blood-spattered history of Greece since WWII. Using her own experience trying to gain Greek citizenship she tells of the difficulties working with Greek government employees. The relationship of Greeks to their Orthodox Church is described by looking at the religious holidays that are celebrated each year. The deeply negative feelings that Greeks have to the US and the UK are explained (in typical ugly American fashion I had no idea of the Greek feelings and the US actions that caused them). This is a highly readable book and in my opinion a must read. The stories the author tells are indelible in my mind. I am only sorry that this story ends in the late 1990's so I didn't get the author's take on present day Greek troubles. In looking for books to read about Greece I have stumbled on an excellent author you should read -Greek travel or not. I am looking forward to her next book, the fictional *The House on Paradise Street*. (Note *Eurydice Street* was a little hard to come by, I had to order it from a UK publisher but it was reasonably priced and came within a week.)

*Eurydice Street* is a beautifully written account of a British woman of Greek and Russian ancestry, who moves to Greece with her expatriate Greek husband and their two young daughters. As a trained anthropologist and a journalist, she reflects on her observations of present-day Greece. The family rents a maisonette on *Eurydice Street* in Vouliagmeni, a suburb of Athens. Written in first person, author Sofka Zinovieff transports her reader to Athens, vividly detailing the country's culture, her morals, religious holidays, ancient wars, Greek war of independence from the Ottoman Empire, World War 11, the communist civil war, among other topics, perhaps more than a reader cares to read. However, it's a serendipitous way of learning the history and culture of a country that has been ravaged by wars and foreign invaders. *Eurydice Street* is more than a one woman's travelogue but a search into a country's psyche. This book is informational, at times amusing, and insightful; not a boring book, as one reviewer claimed. He was in the wrong genre. I recommend this book to any one who cares to learn about Greece, why the country is what it is today, and simply looking for a good read. Pauline Hager, author *Memoirs of an American Housewife in Japan* Giorgi's Greek

## Tragedy

In my search for books that would give me a sense of what it's like to live in contemporary Greece, I found *Eurydice Street*, a book by an anthropologist who is married to a former expatriate Greek. The author and her husband decided in 2001 to move to Greece to live, and raise their two young daughters as Greeks. They find a house in Athens on Eurydice Street, and begin their first year living in Athens as Greek citizens. This book is the story of that year. I have read several books about modern Greece, but *Eurydice Street* is one of only two (the other being *Dinner with Persephone*) that I consider outstanding. By "outstanding", I mean that not only is the book well written, but it goes beneath the surface to convey not just customs, practices and descriptions of landscape, but the psychological and feeling aspects of life in the Greek culture. I came away feeling that I understand something about the way Greek people experience life. Ms. Zinovieff writes extremely well, and she brings her anthropologist's eye for cultural norms and folkways to her account. The book takes us through the year, starting in the dead heat of August, and each chapter focuses on a particular aspect of Greek culture -- the festival of Panaigia, Oxi Day, November 17, the Greek way of celebrating Christmas, which is to celebrate the New Year instead, and of course, Easter. Even though the chapters each focus on a particular event in Greek life, they flow naturally because the author experiences these events as part of her family's daily life. By the time you've finished the book, you feel that if you went to Greece to live for a period of time, you would be going to a familiar place that you understand. This is a wonderful book, and I recommend it highly.

I'm about halfway thru this book. It's about what I expected - a slice of life in a country I have developed a considerable interest in. I'd recommend the book to anyone who has an interest in Greece (bear in mind, that it does NOT take place in the current period of financial crisis). While I've heard people complain about these authors not being Greek and not really understanding everything, that's not the point. Most of us are outsiders to this or any other land but our own but our opinions of places we've been can be very valid within that context. I'm glad I bought this book.

This is a memoir of a British married woman who moved to Athens with her husband and children in the late 1990s. It has great descriptions of real life in Greece. It is so engaging that I worry about what is happening NOW to the people described in it, given the present troubles in Greece.

Great book- well described

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