

10 smokers' paradises: A guide for globe-trotters from the LA Times

"With so many places around the world instituting smoking regulations, increasing taxes and, quite literally, kicking smokers to the curb, it's getting harder to find cigarette-friendly vacation spots.



But not every country is trying to kill that buzz. On the flip side, some of them, such as Greece, are attempting to crack down but are failing miserably.

You may feel alone smoking in some major U.S. cities, so we've compiled a list of countries with the most prevalent tobacco use among people aged 15 or older, based on 2005 data from the World Health Organization. Nonsmokers, too, will want to take note of the list. As you might guess, a smoker's paradise can be, in turn, a nonsmoker's hell.

1. Greece: Because their country belongs to the European Union, Greeks are exposed to smoking literature and regulations that condemn

the habit. But that's not going to stop them. More than half of all adults, or 51.8%, living in Greece smoke tobacco. It's the only country above the halfway mark, according to the WHO data.

Surprisingly, though, tobacco use among Greek adolescents is relatively low, at 16.2%. That puts the number of Greek users aged 13 to 15 at No. 76 of all countries where data were collected.

Maybe all that anti-tobacco talk is starting to influence the younger generation. Either that or their parents are. Ask most kids, and you'll find that anything Mom and Dad do is

uncool.

2. Nauru: This tiny island republic near Papua New Guinea was previously known as Pleasant Island. That's probably because nobody told the legion of smokers about lung cancer. WHO reports that 49.2% of the island's inhabitants smoke tobacco. Still, we're guessing Marlboro hasn't bothered targeting the 14,000 or so living there.

3. Russia: Some Russians use cigarettes as a way to trick the body into feeling warmer. It's no wonder then that 48.5% of the Russian Federation population uses tobacco. Smokers heading for the

frozen motherland should probably bring along a pack of smokes and a bottle of vodka. It's a party!

4. Austria: While much of America's narrow view of Austrians may center around California's governor, the health buff, it's hard to imagine Arnold Schwarzenegger pumping iron and puffing smoke. In fact, Schwarzenegger is a "cigar aficionado" of sorts. And 43.3% of people who live in Austria consume tobacco.

5. Belarus: Unsurprisingly, the former Soviet Union territory, which is bordered by Russia to the north and east, picked up the nicotine habit. Of about 9 million residents, 42.6% of the adults use tobacco.

6. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Looking for a smoking-friendly place with varied climate and topography? This southeastern European country isn't a bad spot. You won't feel left out when you light up because 42.3% of adults will be right there with you.

7. Serbia: As it turns out, smoking is pretty hip in southeastern Europe. Adult smok-

ing in Serbia parallels that of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tobacco popularity among adolescents is similar as well — around 13%.

8. Samoa: Looking for a tropical isle on which to lounge around, cigarette in hand? Forty-one percent of adults in the island nation of Western Samoa, located in the Pacific Ocean, puff on tobacco.

9. Laos: WHO data were incomplete for Vietnam and Myanmar, also known as Burma — although what we have show strong signs of tobacco use. But for the bordering Lao People's Democratic Republic, smokers are aplenty, encompassing 40.5% of the adult population. Interestingly, Laos has even fewer adolescent smokers than Greece does, amounting to just under 9%.

10. Hungary: Smoking is just as prevalent in the central part of the Continent as in the southeastern part. Smokers looking for a safe haven won't be alone: Hungary is a popular tourist destination.

(source: LA Times)

International Conference of Greek Linguistics

The 9th International Conference of Greek Linguistics (ICGL) with the title "The course of the Greek language throughout the centuries, approaches to its study and analysis" was held at Chicago University from 29 to 31 October under the auspices of the International Society for Greek Linguistics and the Midwest Committee for Modern Greek Linguistics.

According to an announcement by the organizing committee "the Greek language, one of the oldest languages in the world with unceasing historical presence from the 14th century BC until today was always a vital laboratory on the studies of linguistic changes. The recent interest on other parts of the linguistic analysis by inspecting the language as a modern system of interrelated elements of structure, sound and meaning in the frameworks of the human interaction and intercommunication, opened a new horizon on the research of Greek language".

The International Congress is held every two years since 1993, and this was the first time that it took place in North America.

The biennial ICGL focuses on all aspects of the linguistic study and analysis of Greek from Ancient Greek up through Modern Greek, with greater emphasis on the later stages of the language.

Sparta Place Gets his Leonidas but no Garden

As part of the sisterhood of Greek city Sparta and Moreland in Melbourne, a bronze bust of King Leonidas is set to adorn Sparta place. The street of Brunswick was renamed Sparta place in 1987 to commemorate the two cities' relationship, and the new statue is set to further reinforce this relationship.

"From the first moment that the two cities became sister cities it was always discussed and the idea of having a bust of King Leonidas was always on the agenda", Moreland Mayor Tapinos explained and continued that the bust reflected "the contribution of the Greek community and its vibrant history within our municipality".

The \$32,000 cost of the bust is to be covered by Moreland council's annual sister cities budget, with the prefecture of Laconia in Greece and the Pallaconian community of Melbourne Victoria Leonidas, covering the rest of the cost which will include transportation and the construction of the statue's

base estimated at over \$10,000.

Some traders are objecting to the fact that they were not engaged in a consultation process by the Council — unlike a previous choice of artwork which they had suggested.

Mariana Hardwick who owns a well known wedding gown couture busi-

ness prides herself as the person who was instrumental behind the recent revitalization of Sparta Place.

"...[my objections] have nothing to do with the statue or whether it is Greek, or Italian, or Middle Eastern, it has to do with the fact that what we want in the precinct is sort of a garden or a water feature and what we keep getting is statues," Mrs Hardwick said.

The Mayor of Moreland responded by saying that trees have already been planted in Sparta Place and that the lack of sunlight makes Sparta Place an inappropriate space for a garden. He also underscored that water features in "times of water restrictions are not the best message to send to the community."

