

## Tales from Greece

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:34 pm

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I'm not the world's most enthusiastic traveller. I travel, more than I want. It's part of my job. It's why I am in Athens this morning. I do it because I think it useful: not because I enjoy it. Candidly, the UK has more than enough to keep me amused when it comes to leisure travel for the rest of my life.

But, there is always something to be learned, I admit, when travelling, and not always the expected. I grilled my taxi driver from the airport to hotel last night; they're always a good source of information. We covered the usual stuff I'd be concerned about; the economy, politics, tax, tax evasion, making ends meet, social stresses (poor guy, he must have wondered what hit him).

Then we got to cars. The Mercedes felt oldish. I looked at the clock. 193,000km. I commented. He laughed. "No", he said "that's 1,193,000km".

What? I looked incredulous, I'm sure. He promised me it was true: a 14 year old Merc taxi, one engine, second gear box. 1.2 million kilometres.

Most cars that age in the UK get scrapped with 20% of that mileage.

The secret was, he said, love it. I don't love cars any more than I love travelling (although I do make them last a long time). But it was an interesting point: if only we would better look after much of what we own - and have the chance to do so - not only would we be greener, but we'd be more local too, since that's where the servicing happens, and more skilful too.

Maybe I didn't need to come to Greece to learn that. But it happened that way.