

# TO BHMA

International edition

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## A Safari To One Of Europe's Rarest Wild Cats

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By **Jamie Lafferty**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The writer Miguel de Cervantes knew about the Iberian lynx. He repeatedly mentions the wild cats in his masterpiece, "Don Quixote." "Lynx eyes" evoke lethality; mischievous boys are "lynxes that nothing escapes." Cervantes's readers would have understood the references instantly: The wild cats once prowled the Spanish countryside in abundance.

Four hundred years after "Don Quixote," the lynx had become a less relatable metaphor. A victim of government-sanctioned culling, trigger-happy farmers and rising road traffic, by 2002 the Iberian lynx was on the verge of extinction, with just 94 cats left in their natural habitat.

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## Jill Biden On Her New Memoir And Marriage

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By **Kara Voght**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Jill Biden knows people are mad about her new book.

They're mad that she's only now disclosing that she thought her husband, former President Joe Biden, was having a stroke during his debate against Donald Trump. They're mad that she publicly praised his debate performance after the fact—"You answered every question! You knew all the facts!"—even though she privately agreed with Joe's assessment that he had "f—d up." They're mad that this book exists at all, picking at Democrats' scabs from the 2024 presidential election. Not that anyone has expressed that anger to her face.

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TO BHMA International edition

## When Experience Speaks: Why Stories Transform People

By **Maria Katopodi**

Social change—or, more precisely, social improvement, whether on a personal level or within the broader fabric of society—has remained a fundamental aspiration throughout the ages.

Today, the idea of self-improvement has been integrated into the public discourse as an almost self-evident obligation. Yet, despite living in an environment where information is immediate, continuous, and almost unlimited—and although knowledge has never

been more accessible—meaningful change still seems very hard to achieve.

"People know more, but do not act accordingly. They understand, but do not easily shift. They listen, but are not substantially transformed," Psychiatrist Professor Antonios Dakanalis told *TO BHMA International Edition*.

Perhaps this is because change is not primarily a cognitive process. It does not begin with what we understand, but with what we recognize—and, to some extent, identify with, he added.

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Hearing others speak about our same struggles is transformative.

TO BHMA International edition

## The Only Athenian Summer Survival Guide You Will Need

By **Nansy Samaka**

We may have reached the end of the first week of June, but it's just the beginning of what will be an action-packed summer in Athens, Greece. Concert and festival season is in full swing, with the Athens Epidaurus Festival alone hosting over 90 cultural events this season. However, summer in the capital is not for the weak—or the unprepared.

Each year, the heatwaves across Europe are causing more and more discomfort. A recent news bulletin by the UN World Meteorological Organization, warned that the extreme weather phenomenon known as El Niño will be exacerbating what is an already overheated climate. This year's heightened temperatures have already brought heat-related casualties to Spain, France and the United

Kingdom. Athens is surely not far behind, with this month's forecasts predicting hot days upwards of 32 degrees Celsius.

With enough sweaty years spent in the city and painful sunburns to boot, this survival guide contains a local's wisdom for you to follow. That way, exploring the city will be fun without any sudden fainting spells, or unnecessary visits to the nearest ER.

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A sunny, seaside tavern on the Athenian riviera.

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One with the future

# They're One of Europe's Rarest Wild Cats. A Safari Can Take You Right to Them.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Iberian lynx nearly vanished from the wild. Now travelers are flocking to rural Spain for a chance to see one.

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Now, thanks to a two-decade conservation initiative across southern Spain and parts of Portugal, there are an estimated 2,700 Iberian lynx in the wild, making it one of the world's most miraculous comeback stories.

In a coordinated captive breeding program, conservationists trapped wild cats and bred them under carefully controlled conditions. Cubs were tagged before being released into the wild. Nuria El Khadir Palomo, director of CBD-Habitat, one of the organizations instrumental in the recovery, said that although in some areas the population still "requires active management and constant monitoring," in other places the populations are self-sustaining.

As the number of cats has grown, so has a burgeoning safari trade. For around \$350 a day, I booked a trip with one of the ecotourism companies that have popped up in recent years. I arranged to meet Samuel Plá Benitez of Lynxperience for a three-day search in Extremadura, a western rural region of Spain. Benitez pivoted to a career as a guide after working for several decades in lynx conservation.

Each morning we'd set out to explore this corner of the country, one part of what is sometimes called La

España Profunda, or Deep Spain, for the way it has resisted urbanization. Like any safari guide, Benitez had warned there were no guaranteed sightings.

As the smooth highway north of Seville stretched into the vastness of pastoral Extremadura, the chances of finding a lynx, which remains rarer than the snow leopard or the Bengal tiger, felt impossibly small.

From my vantage point on a cold, wind-battered hilltop north of the white-walled city of Llerena, little moved. Rolling hills rose to become mountains. Below, the Matachel River ran smooth in the silent dawn.

We had come to what Benitez described as his "secret mountain," a short walk from a public wildlife viewing area at a bend in the river.

Then, a mischief of magpies began a ruckus, chattering and hopping from branch to branch of a scraggly tree. Benitez searched for the English word to describe the birds' behavior. "They're snitches," he said, raising a stubby thermal scope to one eye. "Maybe they have seen a lynx."

When examining lynx prints, Benitez and other guides first try to gauge whether they're trailing a male, female or juvenile lynx.

Judging the newness of a print can be difficult, but is key to gauging the urgency of a search. Seeing deep tracks



"VOLAERA"

"VENTORRO"

right after a rain shower can mean the lynx is very close by.

Even a few scant tracks can at least point to a general area to concentrate a search.

After a moment, he passed the device to me, and ahead, at great distance, I saw three spectral outlines tumbling around on a nearby peak. I looked away from the infrared scope but could see nothing. The Iberian lynx was right there and still invisible. "I think maybe it's a mother with cubs, but it's hard to tell from this far," Benitez said.

Thermal imaging gave him a huge advantage for spotting the cats, but otherwise he relied on hard-won experience. With tourists, he refuses to use radio trackers, the type employed by conservationists to keep tabs on the animals. Instead he looks for scat and footprints, which were harder to spot in the winter because of the frozen ground.

Later that afternoon, we tried our luck in the public viewing area. The experience was largely ruined by

an unhappy toddler in a Paw Patrol chair.

Researchers, like Manuel Martín of CBD-Habitat, use radio-tracking antennas to keep tabs on the lynx population.

Compared to Extremadura, the neighboring region of Andalusia has eight times more residents and millions more annual international tourists. "So it's normal that we have more animals than them, no?" Benitez said.

He had just picked me up from Casa Rural Cieza de León, a charming inn in Llerena, my base camp 90 minutes north of Seville. We made a quick pit stop at a bakery in the village of Valencia de las Torres and then continued on, as a dense fog formed around us. Once we got off the main roads, Benitez often drove, scouted and interpreted at once, sometimes steering with his elbows.

We were heading to a private ranch to which my guide had paid for rare access. Hunters pay big money to enter the grounds, but they are given express instructions to focus on deer



and partridge, and leave the felines well alone.

As we drove, Benitez told me more about his two decades working on lynx restoration, before making the switch to tourism. He had found the work rewarding, if not lucrative, because it was ultimately successful: In 2024, the cats' conservation status was upgraded from "endangered" to "vulnerable."

During the busiest months, he guides up to 20 days a month. He explained that while felines are the biggest prize for each safari outing, guests are constantly surprised by the less heralded wildlife. I nodded, but I'd have been lying if I said I hadn't come for the lynx—or pretended that the distant views through the scope on day one had been entirely satisfying.

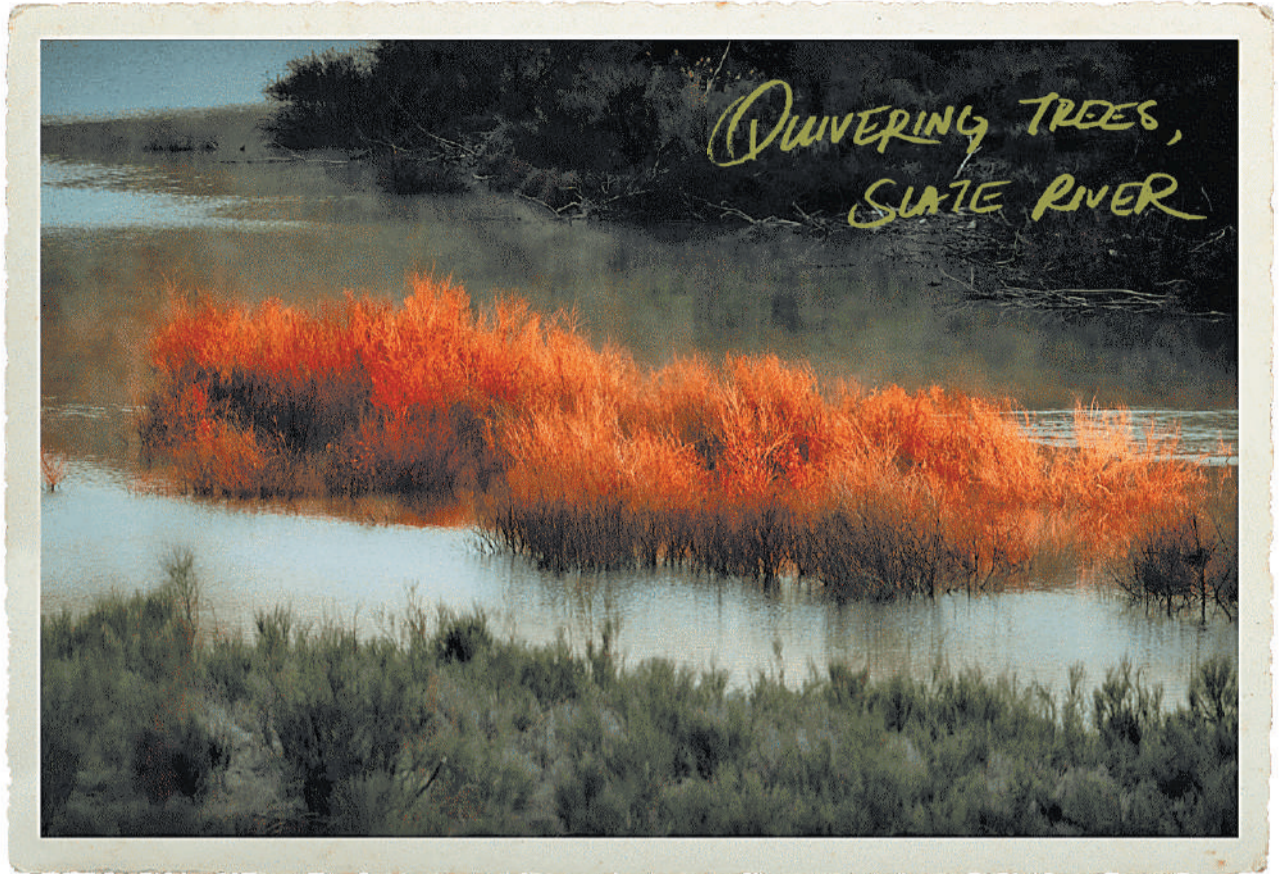
From the passenger seat, I often spotted rabbits fleeing down dirt roads and scampering under bushes, many joined by red-legged

partridges. Rabbits, Benitez explained while looking through binoculars from his moving truck, account for around 90 percent of the lynx diet.

"It's the same for many of our raptors," Benitez added, pointing out the birds of prey that were our constant companions. "If we have a problem with the rabbits, we have a problem for so many animals."

The wind was biting, so we stopped by the wreckage of an old farm building to seek shelter. Benitez set out a charcuterie board of local meats and cheeses on the back of the truck, and I took a look through the thermal scope. Rabbits dotted the mountainside like patches of snow. When the restoration project chose locations to release lynx, rabbit abundance was the first and most important factor. "If they're not here, we have nothing," Benitez said.

From the air, a dozen species of raptors scanned



the ground for the doomed and the vulnerable. My wildlife checklist grew: red kites, black-winged kites, common buzzards, golden eagles, Spanish imperial eagles, a goshawk, three types of owl, two kinds of vulture. As the day went on, we saw wild boar, red deer and a single nervous fox. By the time the sun dipped on the horizon and we made our way back to Llerena, it felt like the only thing we didn't see was an Iberian lynx.

Just after sunrise, we drove through more fog, our headlights only making the visibility worse. Benitez drove carefully. As lynx numbers continue to rise, traffic will once more become an issue. In recent years, local dogs posed problems, too, as did the occasional irate farmer who had lost a chicken.

"Working with the people was the hardest part," Benitez said, recalling his days in the conservation trenches. "I think that's the same all over the world, no?"

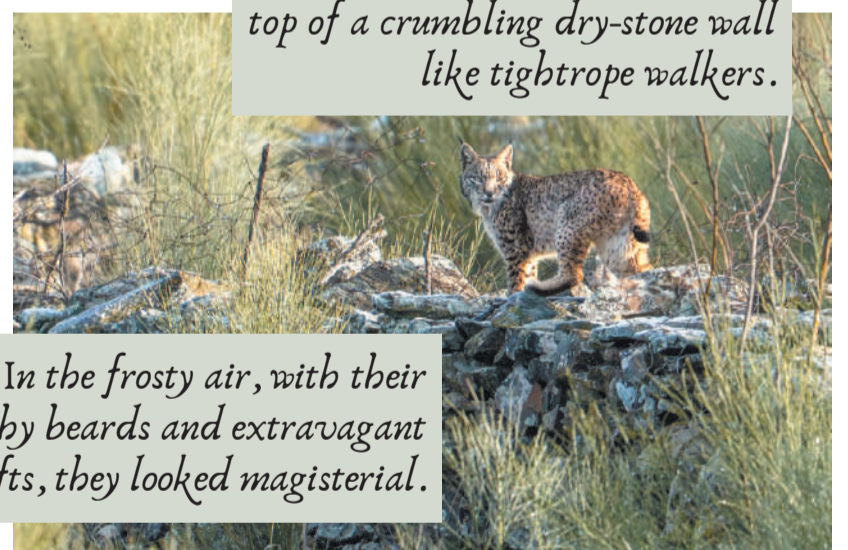
He had heard a tip from some former clients that the mournful yowls of lynx had been heard overnight near the public viewing area, so we reinstalled ourselves nearby on his secret mountain.

I tucked my hands in my pockets as the cold hours ticked away. I felt a creeping desire to give in and get warm, but just as I started to work out how to say that to Benitez, he calmly told me that the lynx had finally arrived. I prepared to grab the thermal scope, but this time we didn't need it.

Videos by Anna Huix for WSJ; Colorist grading by Shrayya Kag; Footprint Photography and Additional Lynx Videos by Lynxperience; Lynx Catalog Images by CBD-Habitat

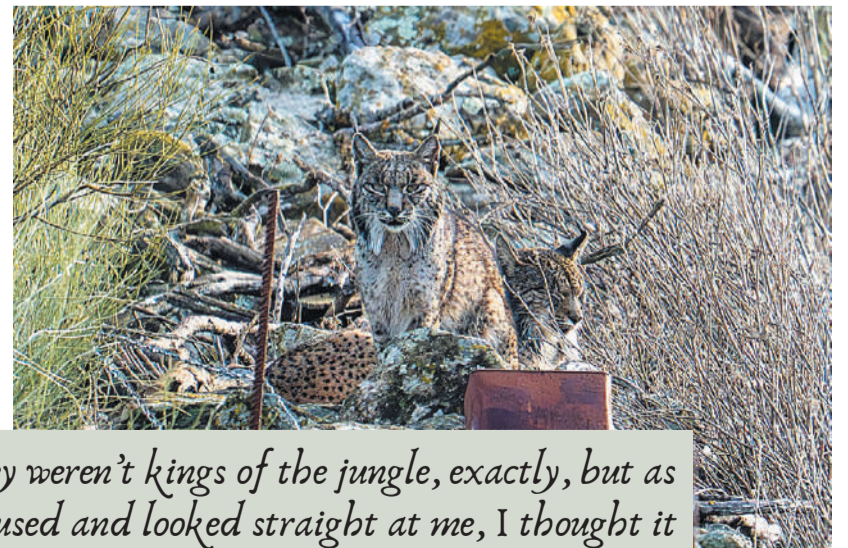


*I struggled to keep my cool as I spotted a pair of cats just ahead.*



*They picked their way along the top of a crumbling dry-stone wall like tightrope walkers.*

*In the frosty air, with their starchy beards and extravagant ear tufts, they looked magisterial.*



*They weren't kings of the jungle, exactly, but as one paused and looked straight at me, I thought it looked at least princely—and in lieu of something grander, that the old wall made for a fine throne.*



# When Experience Speaks: Why Stories Transform People

How shared experiences awaken empathy, challenge perceptions, and inspire lasting personal and collective change

*Continued from Page One*

A participant in KETHEA (Greece's Therapeutic Center for Dependent Individuals), Michalis S., a young man struggling with drug addiction, described how transformative the storytelling sessions in the support groups he attended were for his recovery.

"Hearing the other 'friends' speak about the same dark and painful experiences I was going through made me wake up, relate to them, and realize that I needed to stop," he said. "Even though I already knew I was destroying my life, the experiences of others proved decisive in my difficult journey toward self-improvement."

Dakanalis argues that people know they "should set boundaries." They have read it, heard it, and understood it. They may even have advised others on what is morally correct.

"And yet, they do not change—until the moment they hear a story," he notes.

Then, without instruction or advice, something begins to shift—not because they have learned something new, but because they have recognized something familiar.

Nafsika, a student in the Department of Psychology at

the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, confirms Dakanalis's claims.

"When I was in the second year of senior high school a few years ago, I took part in a school project about bullying. As part of the workshops and sessions we attended, the school social worker asked us to share our personal experiences with bullying.

"One girl, who was constantly treated badly by her classmates, agreed to speak about what she had been through. She talked about how she felt every time people made fun of her for speaking more slowly than the others, or when they pushed her to the sidelines because she struggled to socialize due to her Asperger's syndrome.

"Listening to her story changed something inside me. I saw myself in her—not because I was the victim of cruel behavior, but because I realized that I had also bullied others," Nafsika admitted.

"Advice speaks to logic. Story speaks to experience," the psychiatrist emphasizes. "It activates not only thought, but memory, emotion, and embodied representation."

That is where the critical shift occurs: identification—the moment when something belonging to another person ceases to feel foreign and becomes personally meaningful.



That was exactly how that other student's experience moved Nafsika so deeply. She made it her own, identified with it completely, and changed the way she viewed difference and diversity as a result, while also becoming more critical of herself.

"I put myself in the other girl's shoes and I felt really awful about myself and about my classmates. Until that moment, all the advice and warnings from our teachers had had no impact at all. It took hearing that story to change me completely," she said.

In this case, storytelling had a truly profound impact; as Nafsika relates, it was one of the reasons she decided to study Psychology at university.

rejection, shame, existential anxiety, despair, doubt, and inner conflict.

This is not because these experiences do not exist, but because they do not find a framework within which they can be spoken about.

Michalis says that if he had not joined the KETHEA groups, it would have been very difficult for him to find a place where he could connect with and relate to other people's experiences.

"People like me don't tend to open up easily," he emphasizes.

The stories of Nafsika and Michalis are powerful examples of how sharing personal experiences can profoundly affect people's lives, leading not only to personal growth and self-improvement, but also to broader collective change.

In today's digital era, Dakanalis stresses, images have largely replaced narrative. Lives are presented as moments rather than trajectories. Success is visible, but the inner path behind it remains unseen.

Research shows a consistent pattern: people speak more easily about difficulties when they first see others doing so. Identification reduces stigma. It creates space. This is why initiatives that shift

the public discourse from image to experience are becoming increasingly significant, the professor emphasizes.

Storytelling—whether through digital platforms or direct, community-based interaction—has the power to connect people through shared experiences across different backgrounds. Personal stories of poverty, discrimination, or social marginalization, for example, can help others view these social issues from a different perspective. This may foster empathy and advocacy, potentially leading to collective action and, ultimately, to social change.

Professor Dakanalis says that storytelling is not only a personal act; it is a social mechanism, too.

"When a story is told, it can be recognized. And when it is recognized, it ceases to be purely private. It becomes shared experience."

In this way, the distance between the personal and the collective diminishes—and stigma with it.

The professor's initiative to create a platform where well-known personalities—and others—can share their personal stories and experiences through the YouTube channel *UNTOLD* aims to make social change both more achievable and more empowering.

## Markets Reward Audacity — Until They Don't

Boards today face a dangerous paradox: urged to "think bigger" while navigating the most fractured geopolitical and economic landscape in generations. Markets reward audacity - until they don't. And when the music stops, it isn't activist investors who bear the full weight of failure. It's pension fund beneficiaries, employees, small business owners, suppliers, and entire communities.

The question is deceptively simple: what constitutes prudent risk-taking versus opportunistic pursuits funded by stakeholder futures?

### Risk Models vs. Reality

Traditional risk frameworks - Value-at-Risk models, historical stress tests - are backward-looking tools in a forward-breaking world. Ge-

opolitical assumptions underlying corporate strategy have dissolved: stable supply chains, predictable trade relationships, accessible capital.

Consider shipping and energy sectors navigating the Hormuz crisis. Do boards reroute at 30% higher cost? Negotiate a position placed by one of the factions? Or maintain operations hoping tensions ease? Market analysts reward "boldness" - until a tanker gets detained or a facility gets targeted.

Tech sector boards approved 20-30% workforce layoffs while placing billion-dollar AI bets. The narrative: layoffs are "responsible cost management," AI investments are "strategic necessity." But those layoffs destroyed careers and tax bases while committing capital to uncertain ROI timelines.

By  
Cleopatra  
Kitti



Shareholders exit within milliseconds. The downside lingers for decades.

### Who Really Pays?

This highlights a profound mismatch between board accountability frameworks and stakeholder exposure realities. Pension funds cannot trade like hedge funds. Teachers and nurses and small business owners cannot absorb volatility that activists seek. Employees face offices closed, skillsets obsolete overnight.

The public backstops systemic failures. Boards can take enormous risks knowing losses are shared publicly while profits remain private.

### Prudence vs Paralysis

This isn't anti-risk-taking. Boards must take risks for value creation and survival. The question is whose risk tolerance governs decisions, and who bears consequences when bets fail. Boards serving pension capital shouldn't make the same calculus as those serving venture capital - yet frameworks obscure this distinction.

Executive compensation tied to 1-3 year share price appreciation conflicts with long-term stakeholder health. Boards are rewarded for projecting confidence. Caution gets punished as "lack of vision."

### Wisdom, Not Emotion

The path forward requires rebalancing governance culture with smarter regulation. Institutional investors should demand disclosure of not just *what* risks boards take, but *why* and *for whose benefit*. Regulators should require explicit, public articulation of risk tolerance and stakeholder prioritization.

Successful boards will distinguish:

- Calculated risks grounded in stakeholder reality
- Speculative capital allocation driven by market euphoria

When risk-taking becomes performative rather than analytical, the distance between strategic boldness and fiduciary failure collapses. Board members don't suffer most—pensioners, workers, small

business owners and communities do.

In moments of genuine uncertainty, patience is courage. The discipline to resist market euphoria, protect stakeholder security, and say "not yet" when others scream "now" may be the most valuable risk management available.

Smart risk-taking creates sustainable value. Hyped speculation destroys it. The difference lies in quality of analysis, honesty about consequences, and alignment between risk and stakeholder capacity.

Prudence isn't risk-aversion. In an age of genuine uncertainty, it's the highest form of accountability.

*Cleopatra Kitti is a Certified Independent Director and senior policy adviser for ELIAMEP*



Stall of vintage second-hand items on a flea market in Thessaloniki, Greece.

## The Boom of Greece's Second-Hand Economy

Driven by rising living costs, changing consumer habits and growing environmental awareness, second-hand shopping is evolving from a niche market into a mainstream economic force in Greece

By Konstantinos Dedes

Yiannis is getting married. Like most grooms, he went through the familiar process of finding the perfect suit, shoes, belt, socks and pocket square to be carefully folded and placed in his jacket pocket. Everything came from a high-end menswear store in Kolonaki, Athens' upscale shopping district.

The shirt, however, was a different story.

He bought it on Vinted, the popular online platform for buying, selling and exchanging second-hand clothing.

"I paid a total of six euros, not for one shirt, but two," he says. "It's worth it. If I don't like one, I have the other. I saved over a hundred euros."

### A conscious financial choice

Yiannis's decision reflects a broader shift toward second-hand clothing as a deliberate financial decision. Increasingly, the second-hand market is moving beyond its traditional role, creating what is effectively a parallel retail system that is gradually becoming about much more than fashion, trends and even the environmental consciousness that lies at its core.

Used goods — mainly through popular platforms such as Vinted and Vendora — are already thriving in Greece. Even Facebook Marketplace remains a reliable tool for finding all kinds of products. "I'll check there too because I can always find something interesting," says Yiannis. "I've bought everything from shoes to electronic devices on Marketplace. For clothes, though, I now look exclusively at dedicated platforms. For now, I only buy; I don't sell."

When similar platforms first appeared in Greece in 2024, Athena saw her group of friends adopt them almost immediately, helping, as she puts it, to keep "money circulating." She did the same. In fact, Athena had been buying second-hand clothing both online and in physical stores since she was very young. "It's worth it," she says today. "Money goes in a circle because you sell and buy. But even if you don't sell, the prices are completely different from what you find in stores. It's far more affordable."

Shortly before the end of 2025, a Europe-wide survey by Solid Havas found that one in two Greeks had purchased a second-hand product during the previous year. Seventy-two percent cited financial reasons as their primary moti-



vation, while among younger consumers, environmental awareness also played a significant role.

The fashion industry, after all, produces 92 million tons of textile waste every year — equivalent to a garbage truck full of clothing being discarded every second.

The survey also found that people aged 56 to 65 are particularly active in the second-hand market, ranking first in purchases. Many would assume that Generation Z and Millennials dominate the sector because of their heavy social media use, but the data challenges that stereotype.

That does not mean

younger generations are inactive. Quite the opposite.

The second-hand shopping experience in Greece is overwhelmingly digital. Eighty-eight percent of consumers buy used items through apps, with online advertising and social media serving as their primary sources of information.

This helps explain the popularity of these platforms and marketplaces.

"I first learned about them through Instagram," Katerina tells *To Vima*. "I've noticed that people in my age group, between 20 and 27, are moving in the same direction. There's a 'second

chance' philosophy when it comes to clothes: you pass on something you no longer use, someone else gets value from it, and you can use that money to buy something you actually need."

The rapid rise of second-hand products in Greece is also reflected in official figures from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). Sales at physical second-hand stores increased from €8.6 million in 2020 to €57.1 million in 2025.

Vivi and Yiannis, who own a second-hand store in the Kypseli neighborhood of Athens, see the boom as a completely natural development.

"We opened our store in 2020. We're 'children of the coronavirus era' — that's when we were born," they say. "It was inevitable that things would reach this point. We could see it coming. People were looking for low prices then, and they still are."

Their most common customers are between 25 and 50 years old.

What are they looking for?

"Mostly jeans, sportswear and pieces from well-known designers that are now difficult to find. And a lot of vintage clothing too — items with quality and character. More and more people are turning their backs on fast fashion," the pair tell *To Vima*.

Vintage items remain one of the strongest attractions of second-hand stores. "They simply can't be compared to new clothes in terms of quality. But there's also the nostalgia factor — people are drawn to past decades, especially the 1980s and 1990s."

For his wedding, Yiannis chose an Italian suit. He says the designer drew inspiration from earlier decades, evident in the thin pinstripes often seen in films from the 1970s.

"As for the shirt, who knows?" he says with a laugh. "It only cost six euros. Besides, it won't even be visible. Who pays attention to the shirt anyway?"

# The Only Athenian Summer Survival Guide You Will Need

TO BHMA International Edition's pocket guide to making the most of your Athenian getaway—and bearing the summer heat

Continued from Page One



Basking in the sun without the correct precautions could sour an otherwise fun summer getaway.

## The basics

### Shade ≠ protection

Avoiding the sun doesn't guarantee you won't get burned. What burns the skin isn't the actual sunlight itself, but ultraviolet (UV) rays which are invisible to the naked eye. In a research article published through the Skin Cancer Foundation titled "If You Can See Sunlight, Seek The Shade", it is repeatedly noted that not all shade is equally protective. A beach umbrella makes you feel covered enough, but you remain exposed to 80% of all UV rays.

Take note of the daily UV index in your Weather app of choice. It's more valuable than you may realize.

### Reapplying sunscreen is not optional

This may be common knowledge to some, but it bears repeating. We

have moved on from "sloppy" tubes of sunscreen that get tedious to apply, so there is no excuse to skipping this step. High-SPF sunscreens are now available in face mist and stick form, so pick whichever suits you best.

It is recommended by Johns Hopkins Medicine that you reapply your sunscreen every 2 hours, and immediately after swimming and/or excessively sweating. The lowest SPF protection you should be using is at least 30, but Greek locals tend to go for factor 50. Sunshine and heat are particularly aggressive, on a busy day that extra strength can help balance one or two missed re-applications.

At the end of the day, nobody likes dealing with itchy, flaking skin on their vacation. So make sunscreen a daily priority!

## Days at the seaside taverna

### Mediterranean cuisine and peak fruit/vegetable season

An authentic Greek gyros is irresistible even on the hottest summer day. No one is telling you not to indulge—but it would be wiser to keep the heavier dishes for dinner.

Take advantage of the fresh produce and Mediterranean dishes during the day to stay full without weighing yourself down. Tried and true taverna staples Athenians most look forward to come summer are taramosalata (Greek roe fish dip), fried calamari and steamed mussels. Fresh figs are a Greek summer snack staple, as well as cantaloupe and watermelon.

### Spending your time... swimmingly!

Health authorities worldwide strenuously discourage tanning, but it's

a summertime tradition embedded into vacationing.

When we're at the beach we often rely on tanning oils to help bring that sun-kissed skin home. However, you should know: not all body types tan. If you have noticed that, unlike others, you peel but don't get that glowing caramel shade, it's genetic. All bodies contain melanin (the pigment that darkens the skin when exposed to sunlight), but in different quantities and quality. Do not fall for the tanning oil advertisements promising you the perfect tan.

If you're trying tanning oils regardless, use an SPF factor 30 sunscreen prior and don't go cooking yourself under the scorching heat for longer than 2 hours at a time. Instead of a lovely tan, you may end up looking more crustacean than desired.



Steamed mussels are a must-try delicacy.



MANST SAMAYA

Consider picking up a book and staying in the shade during peak afternoon hours.

## Battling the Heat-Bag Essentials

- face and body sunscreen
- thermos with cold water
- antiseptic wipes
- bug spray
- bug bite relief stick
- sunglasses
- after-sun cream
- portable charger or power bank
- hat or bandana
- hand fan



### Afternoon strolling tips

Resisting the temptation to go outside when the sun is at its hottest, so as to make the most of your trip, is hard. Museums, shops, outdoor exhibitions, festivals, there's so much to do in the city and only so many days to do it.

The warmest hours vary slightly by day, so keep an eye on your Weather app of choice for accurate data. Generally, from around 1p.m. to 4p.m. is when Athens starts sizzling—but that can start earlier and end later if we're experiencing heatwaves. If your need to see the sights trumps all, do not leave home without a large bottle of water and all the sun protection aforementioned.

You may notice as you walk around the busy downtown streets that everyone is holding takeaway cups with skinny black straws. Hot days are ideal to try the quintessential Athenian beverage: an ice-cold freddo

espresso. The magical caffeine booster that when created correctly, can withstand even the hottest of days!

### Don't be a dead giveaway tourist

Athenians, similar to New Yorkers, have certain pet peeves which also translate into great self-defense for any newcomers. "Emily In Mykonos (Paris)" may have some extravagant brand sponsorships and couture wardrobe... but that's Mykonos. Someone kind will tell you that locals won't judge you for living your Greek vacation dream—someone honest may disagree. Athenians dress with intention and sneaky thieves in mind, which makes spotting the tourists among a crowd that much easier.

It is the densely packed, central areas that you should avoid if you're planning on wearing your finest summer outfits. TripAdvisor put Greece 9th in its list of Top 10 Places to Be

ware of Pickpockets, one should "keep their bags close to the vest while your eyes admire the rest". Since most ancient sites are outdoors, you never know who may slip by you.

Kolonaki, which is downtown Athens' most expensive neighborhood, would be the safest place to wear your high-end resort pieces. Even so, to any true Athenian, the overly polished look is a dead giveaway of a tourist. Similar to the lobster-red skin, cargo shorts and flip flops movie trope!

### Finally, don't ignore government warnings

If you're going to take anything away from this guide, let it be the following: take the severe weather alert issued by the Ministry for Climate Crisis and Civil Protection seriously. Heatwaves in Athens and any concrete-filled city are no joke, which is why every household is properly equipped: fans, air conditioners, cold

water etc. An alert urging you stay indoors means the cityscape is reaching boiling temperatures.

Braving the heat is not worth it, even if it costs you precious hours from your booked and busy day. Unlike a casual sunburn, a heatstroke can have pretty immediate, potentially deadly consequences. Symptoms include confusion, lack of coordination, fever, and skin that is cool to the touch despite high body temperature. Heatstroke can also cause severe breathing difficulties, further escalating to seizures and losing consciousness. No amount of historical adventuring or time pressure is worth risking ones health and even life over.

Which is why when the streets are suspiciously empty, stay in a cool space until sundown. Enjoy a choriatiki (Greek salad), some tsipouro and take it easy for a while—arguably the most Athenian quality one could embody!

## Stepping out or staying in?

## Your summer looks

### Open-toed footwear VS sneakers

Regardless of how hot it may or may not be outside, you will be traipsing around a city. Taking any form of public transport in open-toed shoes can be done successfully... as long as it's not literal flip flops. You don't want to find yourself gluing your shoe back together or wrapping up your foot with the first thing in your bag. Sneakers are always preferable when a long commute (or an extra long walk) is anticipated. If that's not at all your style, opt for a stronger-soled companion like the trusted Birkenstock. For anyone choosing to wear heeled sandals, the sidewalks in Athens are not particularly heel-friendly. Beware of cracks in the road, sudden dips and slippery cobblestone.

### All-time summer trend: chic headwear

Whether you prefer straw hats, baseball caps, cotton bandanas or silk scarves, pick some headgear to wear along with your sunglasses.

Much like all shade is not equally protective, same goes for hats and head coverings. Health authorities advise you pick a wide-brimmed hat that covers your face, ears and neck. Bucket hats tend to be the ideal candidate, but straw hats can also do the trick.

Understandably, you may not want to wear a prominent hat. Most Athenians who are not hat-wearers alternatively wear bandanas or scarves. Even if you don't go for the safest option, any head covering in the summer is better than none.

### Linen and natural fabrics preferred

Speaking of fashionable choices, clothing also plays a huge role in combating the heat. Basic color theory dictates that darker colors absorb more light, thus get warmer faster. Assuming this will not stop you from committing to a dark-hued summer wardrobe, your next "saving grace" lies within your closet's composition labels.

Beware of anything 100% polyester, elastene and synthetic fibers. Not only do they get very hot, they absorb all bad odors faster and are tough to keep clean. Opt for natural fibers that breathe: silk, cotton, viscose and any variable blends.



# Jill Biden on Her Memoir and a Marriage Where Difficult Things Weren't Discussed

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The former first lady talks about her husband's health, losing the East Wing and Nancy Pelosi

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"But today's Day 1," she says with a small laugh. "So, who knows what's to come?"

It's Monday morning, the day before the publication of her memoir, "View From the East Wing." Few know the full extent of what the former first lady discloses in the book. If they know anything, it comes from interview clips that revealed what Jill was thinking as she watched her husband onstage saying "something nonsensical about beating Medicare," as she puts it in the book.

"It's one chapter in 35 chapters," she tells me. "They're going to see this is not a political book." This memoir, she says, is about being "an ordinary woman living an extraordinary life." About "work-life balance" and the demands of modern femininity. About her life "as a teacher, as a grandmother, as first lady."

"I was—I am—a political spouse," Jill, 74, says, "but it wasn't [told] through that lens."

And yet, some may struggle to see it through any other. The book is the first accounting of the Biden administration from the person closest to the president himself. It tells us things we never knew, such as the fact that Jill supported the notion that Joe, now 83, should take a cognitive test, because she thought he could pass it. There are also details we'd only heard from one side: Jill confirms, for example, that Vice President Kamala Harris urged Biden to endorse her immediately after he dropped out, just as Harris describes in her own telling of the 2024 race.

These are stories she says she must share in order to tell her own. "It's a reflection of my four years," she says.

Let's return to that rainy Saturday of July 20, 2024, when President Biden, huddled with his top advisers at the family's vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, Del., wondered whether he should drop out of the presidential race. He had not been kept "in a bubble of delusional optimism," Jill writes, but was drowning in a deluge of negative headlines about his re-election prospects. From the porch that afternoon, Biden called his wife to join him.

"He said, you know, 'What do you think, Jill? What do you think?'" she recalls in



Biden says her book isn't political.

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our interview. "I said, 'No, Joe, I'm not giving you my opinion. This is a decision you have to make for yourself.'"

This, she says, is how decisions work in the Biden household—despite being one of her husband's closest advisers, someone who sat in on key political strategy meetings and the vetting of his vice presidential candidates. "I've always let Joe steer his own ship, as he has always let me steer mine," she writes, sometimes disagreeing with one another, but never second-guessing.

She was adamant that she would support him, no matter his decision. She was adamant that he was up for the job. And yet, in the book she voices doubts—if not in his capacity to serve, then in his ability to overcome the public beliefs that he couldn't. In those trying weeks after the debate, she wondered if she could trust his doctors, advisers—or even herself.

"Had he grown too old for the job and I hadn't noticed?" she writes. "I didn't think so, but could I be objective enough to be sure?"

Through the book, we learn there are several things Jill Biden didn't share with her husband. She didn't think he could pull through the 2020 presidential primaries after his poor early showings—fourth in Iowa, fifth in New Hampshire—though vowed to "support Joe as long as he stayed in the race." She had worried about his lack of sleep in the final year of his presidency—waking up sev-

en times one night to use the bathroom, she notes, which can be a sign of a prostate issue—and flagged her concern to Joe's doctor instead of the nature of our relationship that we've maintained a veil of discretion around personal health," she writes.

She knows how this sounds. "Old-fashioned," as she puts it in the book.

"We kept it separate—it was just the way we grew up," she says on Monday. "I think it's generational." She similarly never told him about her menopause symptoms—the insomnia and night sweats.

Then, of course, there are the things she didn't tell the American public, the things that Democrats are agitated to be revisiting now. She frames those decisions at the time as attempts to "stay out of the fray"—to "play by the rules" and "ignore the ludicrous attacks." After the June 2024 debate and the discourse that followed, she writes that "the

biggest lesson" was "that if you don't explain something well enough then the question won't go away."

She winces now hearing those words read aloud. "I don't want to sound defensive about things that happened in the White House," she says. "Should we have reacted more? I mean, is that a lesson I've learned as I look back? Maybe. Maybe I should have spoken out a little more, but I don't know." There's a paradox to being first lady, as Jill notes throughout the book—the risk of being seen as too involved in her husband's presidency, or too hands-off.

"Joe was the politician," she says, "Not me."

But she still wants to say her piece. "After we left the White House, so many people wrote books," she says, "so these were my reflections on my experiences, my years with Joe in the White House." There is also praise for her husband's adminis-

tration and its accomplishments: "That's something I worry people may have forgotten in all that came after," she writes.

She titled her memoir after Trump began demolition on the East Wing, the traditional home of the first lady's offices. Swaths of the book eulogize its demise—in particular, the interactive tour displays and gallery of first lady portraits Jill had taken care to update during her husband's administration. "I loved the East Wing," she says on Monday. "I loved it."

She writes something nice about every living president and first lady, save for Donald and Melania Trump. She says she hasn't read Melania's book nor seen her documentary. She refuses to weigh in when I ask if she thinks Trump's health has received sufficient scrutiny.

"Oh, I'm not going to talk about him," Jill says.

In her 2019 memoir, "Where the Light Enters," Jill contrasts Joe's capacity for forgiveness with her proclivity toward grudges, how she recalls "every slight committed against the people I love." Near the end of her husband's term, that applied to former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who Jill notes in the book had both privately told Biden to leave the race and publicly nudged him to do so on "Morning Joe" during those fateful July weeks. "We were friends for 50 years," she told the Washington Post in January 2025. "It was disappointing."

She says her husband and the former speaker made up at Tatiana Schlossberg's funeral, during the "sign of peace" ritual of a Catholic Mass. Jill herself hasn't made amends: "I haven't actually seen her to make up with her or not make up with her. I didn't even see her in the church," she says, explaining Joe had left his pew to shake the former speaker's hand. Pelosi wasn't immediately available to comment.

"That's what I've learned through this cancer diagnosis," Jill tells me. "Life's so short. Why live with the anger and the pain of it all? I mean, move on. Let's move on."

And now, there's her husband's cancer: prostate, stage four, metastasized to his bones. It likely won't kill him, she writes, but he'll never be cured. He finished radiation therapy in October. Now, he's on a hormone regimen that makes him tired and occasionally moody. Still, he takes the Amtrak to his Washington office once or twice a week; he gave a Memorial Day speech in Delaware and will speak at a Democratic gala in South Dakota on Friday.

Jill, meanwhile, is chair of the Milken Institute Women's Health Network. She is still exercising most days and reading books by Ann Patchett and Elizabeth Strout. She's caring for Joe—making sure he schedules his doctor's appointments and takes his medications—and for her granddaughter Naomi's family, who are staying with the Bidens in Delaware for a few weeks, visiting from Los Angeles. And for her children, Ashley and Hunter, more present at the homestead in the wake of their father's diagnosis.

"Thank you, God, he's through his addiction, and he has a new life," she says of Hunter.

That new life includes a recent podcast appearance with Candace Owens, a far-right commentator. It's a curious choice; Owens once called Hunter, among other things, a "degenerate" and a "crackhead." Jill hasn't listened but respects his choices.

"That's one thing I think you're going to find out in life," she continues with a chuckle. "You cannot control other people, even though you want them to do certain things or don't want them to do certain things."



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A Valentine's Day gift from Jill to Joe.