



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on July 23, 2015

## Germans, Greeks, and Flying Crockery

“Rather go to bed without dinner than to rise in debt,” advised Benjamin Franklin.

That’s not how the Greeks seem to see things, where Franklin’s advice on borrowing and debt is likely to be swapped for an ethos that’s more in tune with short-term satisfaction and long -un deficits.

Here’s a modification of Franklin’s advice, as evidenced in Greece: Rather than heading off for a good night’s sleep and a wallet with some cash, better to take the money down to zero and run up a debt in order not to skip an enjoyable party that begins with chilled Ouzo and maza samplings of phyllo cheese triangles, tzatziki, hummus, grape leaves, falafel, calamari, baba and spanakopita, followed by some glasses of Moscofilero white and a mixed grill kabob of beef, chicken, and kafta, more Ouzo, and a main course of spit-roasted lamb and a side of oven-baked layered eggplant and spiced meat topped with creamy bechamel.

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The partying ends at daybreak with the squawking of seagulls, walnut baklava, and the tossing of dozens of plates against the wall, with the hefty bill for the entire evening’s fun of food, drinks, carousing and breakage forwarded to Berlin.

Reported the *Telegraph* in London a few years back, “The tradition of smashing plates at Greek restaurants is disappearing because of the ‘compensation culture’ which hundreds of owners fear will lead to them being sued by customers hit by flying crockery,”

As Jenny Morris, a safety connoisseur and the food policy officer at the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, told the *Telegraph*: “It’s one of those things that seem great fun, but there are hidden dangers. People running restaurants should do risk assessments.”

Said Chris Toumaz, operator of Trois, a Greek eatery in London, regarding the hazards of Greek flying saucers: “It’s a nice Greek tradition, but what can you do? All these claims now, everyone’s just looking for an excuse to sue you. We have stopped doing it.”

Taking the pragmatic middle ground, other Greek restaurateurs in London have replaced plates with less dramatic alternatives. “We’re throwing flowers now,” said Nikos Constantinou, manager of the Apollo Restaurant Taverna, “It’s not as messy, and if you hit someone it doesn’t matter.”

Others say they’ll continue throwing plates. “It’s a tradition that’s been going on for hundreds of years,”





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asserted Stefano Floridas of Athens Restaurant in south England. “It’s ridiculous that they’ve stopped doing it. It’s like stopping selling poppies on Remembrance Sunday, isn’t it?”

Meanwhile, May’s jobless figures showed Greece’s 25.6 percent unemployment rate was more than double the European Union’s average, with joblessness among the young especially severe, estimated at nearly 50 percent for those aged 15 to 24.

In November, with Greece’s debt unsustainable and its creditors increasing impatient, Greek Labor Minister [Yiannis Vroustsis](#) told parliament that approximately 75 percent of Greek pensioners were trying to secure an early retirement, prior to age 61.

“In the public sector,” reported Vroustsis, “7.91% of pensioners retire between the ages of 26 and 50, 23.64% between 51 and 55, and 43.53% between 56 and 61.”

In contrast, while a growing portion of Greeks are securing year-round beach days via borrowed pension funding, the percentage of older people in Germany remaining in the labor force in recent years has continuously increased, with the portion of Germans working between 60 to 64 years of age expanding from 28 percent in 2005 to over 50 percent in 2013.

Similarly, Germany’s Federal Statistical Office reported that among those “65 to 69 years of age, that is, among people beyond statutory retirement age, 13 percent were still working in 2013, up from 6 percent in 2005.”

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