



*Introduction to Greece

Greece has the longest coastline on the Mediterranean Sea. It's a country in Southern Europe that includes thousands of islands, including Crete, Corfu, Rhodes and Santorini.



The town of Oia on the island of Santorini

On a map, you'll find Greece close to where Europe and Asia meet, and just across the water from Libya and Egypt in North Africa. Why not try to locate it now?



Aside from Greece's eye-catching islands, with their sandy beaches and white-painted, hill-top homes, the Greek mainland is also a must-see on a trip to this part of the world. Many of Greece's ancient ruins have been preserved and the Greek capital Athens gives a great introduction to this nation's rich cultural history. Can you imagine the view from the top of the Acropolis?



Athens and the Acropolis

The tallest mountain in Greece is called Mount Olympus: it's where the ancient Greeks believed their gods lived. In this extended Country Spotlight on Greece, you can read about how people lived in Ancient Greece, the battles they won and lost, what they achieved and what they believed.



Mount Olympus is Greece's highest peak

Today, Greece is a peaceful nation and a member of the European Union (EU). It shares a land border with four other countries: Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey. To the east, the south and west, Greece is surrounded by sea. Different areas of sea are given different names: to the west is the Ionian, to the east, the Aegean. To the south of the mainland you'll see the Sea of Crete. But all of this water sloshes around in one huge basin, called the Mediterranean.



Midday in harbour of Heraklion, Crete

Visiting tourists spend a lot of money in Greece. Tourism is one of the top-earning industries in this country and is really important for many different jobs.

What do you think the attractions of this country are for the many foreign visitors that holiday here each year?



Athens



Greek parliament



Market in Athens



Houses near the Acropolis



Cathedral in Heraklion



Katsiki beach



Socrates and Apollo



Goat in Rhodes



Olives



Falakro ski resort



Beach



Marathon runners

Which of these are examples of physical geography and which are human?

Facts about Greece

- **Continent:** Europe
- **Capital city:** Athens
- **Leader of country:** Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis
- **Major cities:** Thessaloniki and Patras
- **Population:** 10,424,317
- **Size:** 131,957 square kilometres (50,949 square miles)
- **Currency:** euro (€ or EUR)
- **Internet country code:** .gr
- **Official language:** Greek
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 78 years (men), 83 years (women)
- **Motto:** Freedom or death
- **Olympic country code:** GRE

Travel Facts about Greece

- **Climatic zone:** Warm Temperate climate
- **Flight times to Athens from:** London 4 hours, Rome 2 hours, New York 11 hours
- **Time zone:** When it is 12.00 in London (UTC) it is 14.00 in Athens (UTC+2).
- *(UTC or Coordinated Universal Time is the internationally-agreed standard for time. Countries around the world set their clocks using it and different time zones are compared to it.)*

Handy Phrases to use in Greece

Hello: Yassas (formal) Ya Sou (informal). These terms are also used for goodbye.

How are you?: Ti kanete?

I'm fine, thanks: Kala, efharisto

My name is: Me lene ...

Please: Parakalo

Thank you: Efharisto

Delicious: Nostimo

Yes: Ne

No: Ohi

Famous People from Greece

- **Irene Papas** (1926 -) Actress and singer who starred in over 70 films, including numerous films of Ancient Greek stories of tragedy
- **Vangelis** (1943 -) Composer of pop, rock and orchestral music, who won an Academy award (an 'Oscar') for the original music he composed for the film Chariots of Fire:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSav51fVlKU>
- **Stelios Haji-loannou** (1967 -) Business entrepreneur, best-known for founding the EasyJet low-cost airline
- **Georgios Karagounis** (1977 -) International footballer who played for Panathinaikos (in Athens), Internazionale (Milan), Benfica (Lisbon), Fulham (London) and Greece
- **Elena Paparizou** (1982 -) Singer and songwriter, who won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2005

Popular Food



- **Souvlaki:** A Greek fast food, souvlaki consists of meat or vegetables grilled on a skewer
- **Meze:** A range of small dishes, served hot or cold – the range could include cooked fish (squid, perhaps), meat, vegetables and cheese
- **Dolma:** Stuffed vine leaves with rice and spices
- **Tzatziki:** A dip made from yoghurt, cucumber and garlic
- **Tiropita:** A popular breakfast food, this pastry is baked with a mixture of cheeses at its centre
- **Baklava:** A dessert made of thin pastry layers with nuts and syrup or Greek honey



Animals



- Roe deer
- Red-footed falcon
- Fire salamander
- Greek tortoise
- Mediterranean monk seal



Festivals/Celebrations

- **Independence Day:** (25th March)
- **Carnival or Apokriés:** (Dates vary, ahead of Easter and Lent) The Greek city of Patras holds the largest carnival or festival of events each year, including a children's carnival
- **Easter:** (Date varies: in March or April) Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This festival is bigger than Christmas in Greece!
- **Christmas:** (25th December) Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus

Listen to some traditional Greek music and watch some Greek dancing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYG5l9SQLp8>