

C O U N T Y M I N I L E S S O N

GREECE



Welcome to Greece!

Before we dive in, meet Archie and his friends, the Intrepid Explorers. They are five adventurous Aussie kids who travel the world on missions to recover stolen artefacts or protect endangered species. This time, they are headed to Greece

Before landing, they have decided to read up on the country's geography, history, and wildlife, and we hope you have fun learning with them!

And the adventure does not stop there. On our website, www.thelittleexplorersjournal.com, under the resources page, we've also shared fun resources from their journey, including quizzes, games, recipes and activities to keep your kids learning and having fun every step of the way.



MINI LESSON



GREECE IS A COUNTRY IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE, FAMOUS FOR ITS ANCIENT GREEK HISTORY, HUNDREDS OF BEAUTIFUL ISLANDS, CLEAR BLUE MEDITERRANEAN BEACHES, AND MOUNTAIN RANGES SUCH AS MOUNT OLYMPUS. IT'S KNOWN FOR GREEK MYTHOLOGY WITH POWERFUL GODS LIKE ZEUS, ATHENA, AND POSEIDON, AND FOR EVERYDAY TRADITIONS LIKE EASTER CELEBRATIONS, TRADITIONAL DANCING, AND FOODS SUCH AS SOUVLAKI, OLIVES, AND FETA CHEESE.



GEOGRAPHY OF GREECE

Greece is a country in southeastern Europe, bordered by Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey, and surrounded by the Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.



1. Albania
2. North Macedonia
3. Bulgaria
4. Turkey



GEOGRAPHY OF GREECE

Greece has a very diverse landscape, with rugged mountains covering much of the mainland, deep valleys, and over 6,000 islands and islets scattered across the seas (around 227 are inhabited!).

The coastline is one of the longest in Europe, with beautiful beaches, rocky cliffs, and hidden coves. Greece is also home to famous mountain ranges like the Pindus Mountains, and even Mount Olympus—the highest mountain in the country and, in Greek mythology, the home of the gods. The capital is Athens and the country has a population of around 10 million.



HISTORY OF GREECE

Around 3000 BCE, one of Europe's earliest civilisations, the Minoans lived on the island of Crete. They built enormous palaces, made colourful frescoes, sailed the Mediterranean to trade goods, and may have inspired legends like the Minotaur and the Labyrinth. Later, around 1600 BCE, the Mycenaeans grew powerful on mainland Greece. They built fortified cities and are linked to famous stories like the Trojan War.

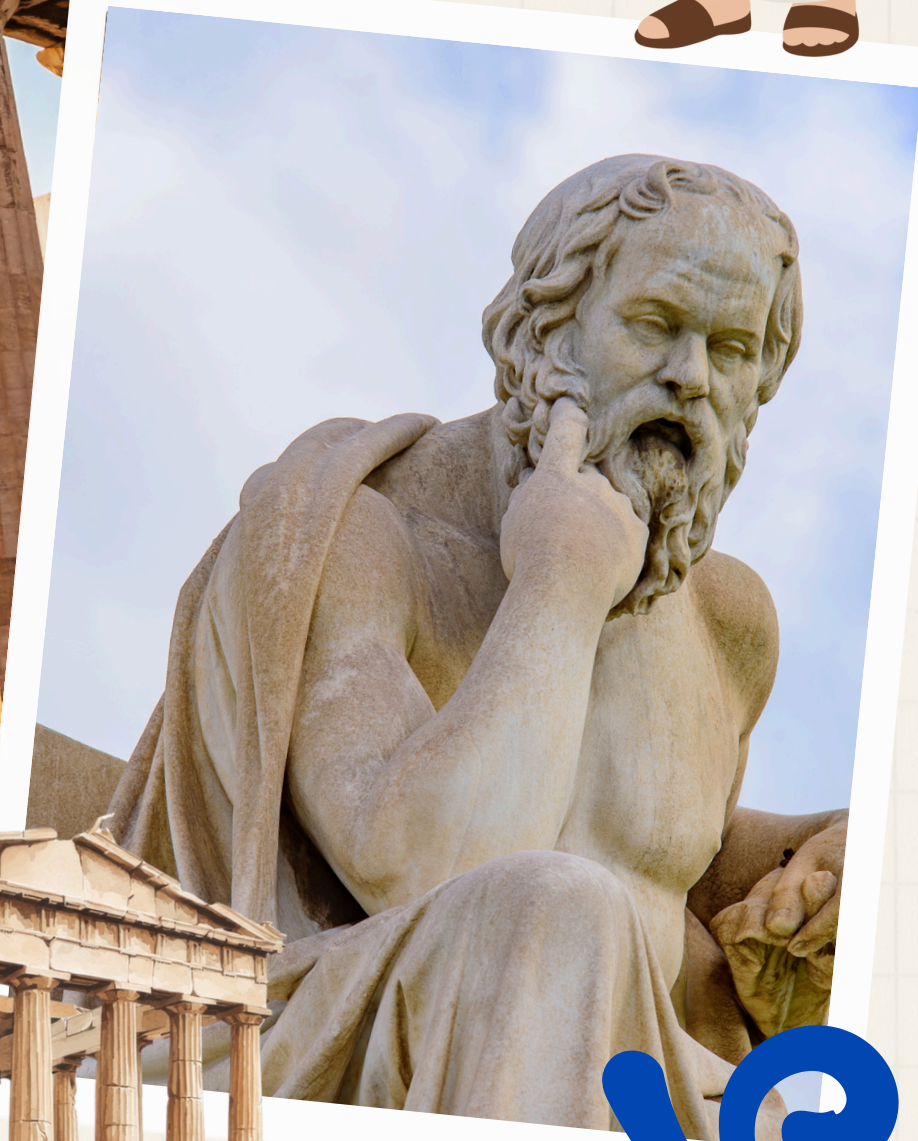


HISTORY OF GREECE



By around 800 BCE, the world of Ancient Greece was taking shape, with city-states such as Athens and Sparta. Each had its own way of life—Athens was known for learning and ideas, while Sparta was famous for disciplined warriors. Around 508 BCE, Athens developed one of the first forms of democracy, where citizens could help make decisions.

The Golden Age of Greece followed, especially during the 400s BCE. This was a time of great ideas and amazing buildings. The Parthenon was built in Athens, the Olympic Games brought athletes together, and thinkers like Socrates and Aristotle explored questions about science, maths and life. Many stories about gods and heroes, like Zeus, Athena and Odysseus, were told during this time too.



HISTORY OF GREECE

In 336 BCE, Alexander the Great became king. He created a vast empire stretching across parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. As he travelled, he spread Greek language, art and learning far beyond Greece.

Later, Greece became part of the Roman Empire, and then the Byzantine Empire, where Greek culture, language and traditions continued for many centuries. In 1453, much of Greece came under Ottoman rule, but Greek customs, faith and stories were kept alive.

In 1821, the Greeks began fighting for independence, and after years of struggle, Greece became free again. In the modern era, Greece has grown into the country we know today, while holding tightly to its ancient roots. From ruined temples and theatres to traditions still celebrated today, Greece's past is still part of everyday life.

**Alexander
the Great**



GREEK MYTHOLOGY



According to Greek myths, in the beginning there was Chaos, a great empty space. From Chaos came the first beings, including Gaia (Earth) and Uranus (Sky). They had powerful children called the Titans. One Titan, Cronus, became ruler, but a prophecy said one of his children would one day overthrow him. When Cronus's son Zeus grew up, he challenged the Titans in a huge battle. Zeus and his brothers and sisters won and became the new gods of Mount Olympus. Zeus ruled the sky, Poseidon ruled the sea, and Hades ruled the underworld.

Many other gods and goddesses were part of this great divine family. Athena, goddess of wisdom, Apollo, god of music and light, Artemis, goddess of the wild, and Ares, god of war, all had their own powers and stories. The gods often helped—or caused trouble for—humans!

The Greeks also loved stories of heroes. Hercules, the son of Zeus, completed twelve dangerous tasks. Perseus defeated Medusa, the snake-haired monster. Theseus entered a maze to defeat the Minotaur, and Odysseus faced Cyclopes and sea monsters on his long voyage home after the Trojan War.

These myths were filled with gods, monsters, magic and adventure, and they helped ancient Greeks explain nature, bravery and the world around them. Even today, these stories still inspire books, films and legends around the world.

GREEK GODS & GODDESSES

ZEUS



Son of the Titans Cronus and Rhea, Zeus is the king of the gods in Greek mythology.

Powers: He hurls lightning bolts (forged by the Cyclopes) and controls the weather.

Symbols: The eagle, the oak tree, the sceptre, and the shield.

Worship: His main sanctuary was at Olympia, where the Olympic Games were held in his honour. He lives on Mount Olympus, above the clouds.

Myth: To escape a prophecy that one of his children would overthrow him, Cronus swallowed each of his children at birth. Rhea saved Zeus by hiding him in Crete and tricking Cronus into swallowing a stone instead. When Zeus grew up, he freed his brothers and sisters and overthrew the Titans.

Children: Heracles, Athena, Apollo, and many others.

HERA



Sister and wife of Zeus, Hera is the queen of the gods of Olympus. She is the goddess of marriage and fertility, and the protector of weddings, marital faithfulness, and family life.

Powers: Hera is known for her jealousy and her ability to shapeshift. She can transform mortals into animals or monsters and influence the mind, sometimes driving people mad.

Symbols: She is often shown with a sceptre and a crown, along with a peacock and a cow.

Myths: Hera held a deep hatred for Heracles, the illegitimate son of her husband. She tried to kill him as a baby by sending snakes into his cradle. Later, she drove him mad, causing him to kill his own family. As punishment, he was forced to complete the twelve nearly impossible labours, challenges Hera hoped would lead to his death.



GREEK GODS & GODDESSES

POSEIDON



Brother of Zeus, Poseidon is the god of the seas, oceans, and earthquakes.

Powers: He is known for his fiery and unpredictable temper, capable of unleashing powerful storms and shaking the earth.

Symbols: His trident, which he uses to stir the seas or make springs burst from the ground. He is often shown riding a chariot pulled by sea creatures.

Myths: In The Odyssey, Poseidon becomes furious with Odysseus after the hero blinds his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus. He then prevents Odysseus from returning home for ten years.

Children: The hero Theseus, the winged horse Pegasus, and others.

Medusa



ATHENA



Daughter of Zeus, Athena is the goddess of wisdom, strategic warfare, intelligence, cunning, reason, and craftsmanship. She is the patron of artisans, weaving, and the arts.

Powers: She brings victory through intelligence and careful planning rather than brute strength. With her wise guidance, she helps heroes like Odysseus, Perseus, Heracles, and Jason on their quests.

Symbols: Her main symbols are the owl (a sign of wisdom), the olive tree, the aegis, and the helmet. With the aegis—a shield decorated with the head of Medusa—she can strike fear into her enemies.

Myths: Athena and Poseidon competed for control of Attica. Poseidon created a saltwater spring, while Athena offered the olive tree. The people chose the olive tree as the more useful gift, making her the protector of the city.

GREEK GODS & GODDESSES

APOLLO



Son of Zeus, Apollo is the god of light, the sun, the arts, music, prophecy, and healing. He represents youthful beauty and perfection.

Powers: He delivers the oracles of Zeus through the Pythia, the priestess at his temple in Delphi, influencing major political and religious decisions in ancient times. He also has the power to heal both body and soul. With his bow and arrows, he can spread disease or protect his followers.

Symbols: He is often shown with a lyre, a bow, a quiver, and a laurel branch.

Famous myths: Struck by one of Eros's golden arrows, Apollo falls in love with the nymph Daphne and chases her. To escape him, she transforms into a laurel tree. Apollo then adopts the laurel as his symbol. In another story, the satyr Marsyas challenges Apollo to a musical contest using a flute. The Muses declare Apollo the winner, and to punish Marsyas for his boldness, Apollo kills him.

HADES



Brother of Zeus, Hades is the god of the Underworld and the realm of the dead. He separates the living from the dead and ensures that no soul can leave his kingdom. He is also the master of the earth's hidden riches.

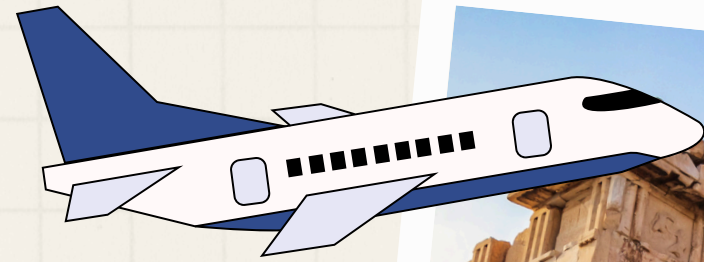
Powers: He can bring the dead back to life and make himself invisible using his helmet.

Symbols: He carries a sceptre and the cornucopia (a symbol of the earth's wealth) and is often accompanied by his three-headed dog, Cerberus.

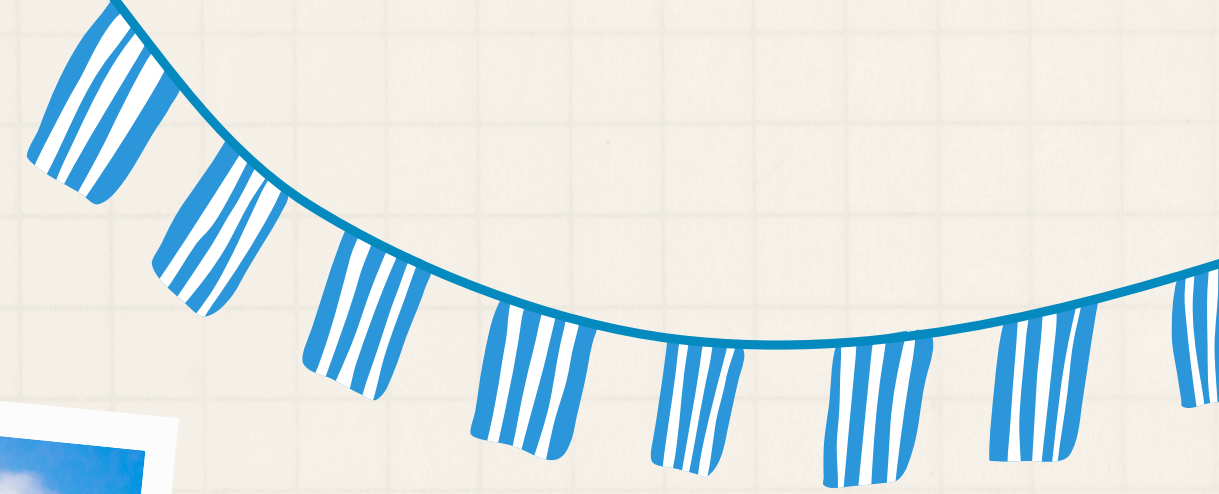
Myths: Hades kidnapped Persephone, the daughter of Zeus and Demeter, the goddess of agriculture, to make her queen of the Underworld. Devastated, Demeter searched for her daughter and neglected her duties, causing a great famine on Earth. Zeus intervened: Persephone would spend part of the year (autumn and winter) in the Underworld with Hades, and the other part (spring and summer) with her mother on Earth. This myth explains the cycle of the seasons.



THE ECONOMY OF GREECE



Greece's economy is based on tourism, shipping, agriculture, and services. The country welcomes millions of visitors each year who come to explore its islands, beaches, and ancient sites, making tourism one of its biggest industries. Greece also has one of the largest shipping fleets in the world, transporting goods across the seas. Farmers grow products like olives, grapes, and wheat, which are used to make famous foods such as olive oil and wine. In addition, services like banking, trade, and hospitality play an important role in supporting the economy.



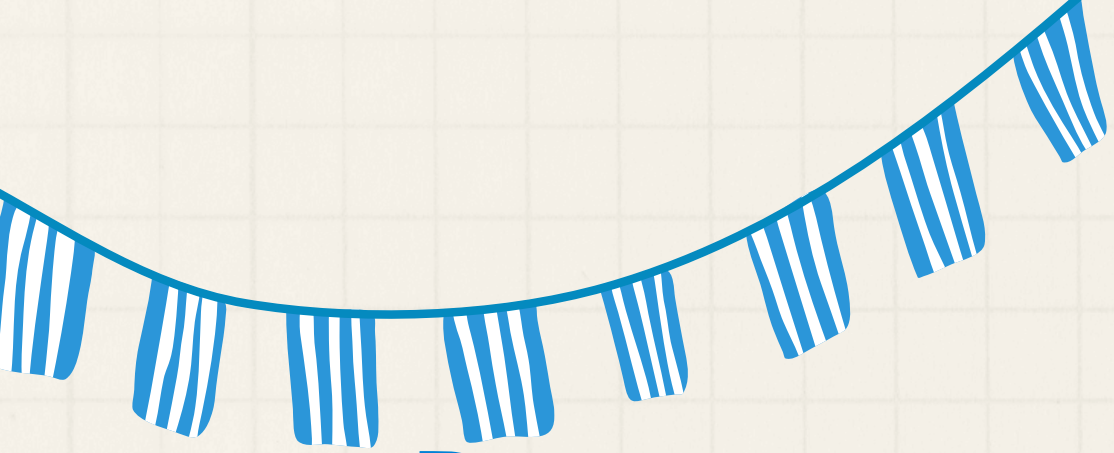
TOURISM IN GREECE

Greece is one of the most popular travel destinations in the world, and it's easy to see why! Tourism plays an important role in the country, bringing visitors who want to explore its history, landscapes, and culture.

One of the most famous places to visit is the Acropolis of Athens. This ancient site sits on a hill above the city of Athens and was built over 2,000 years ago. It includes the Parthenon, a temple dedicated to the goddess Athena. Greece is also known for its many islands. Places like Santorini and Crete attract visitors with their clear blue seas, sandy beaches, and sunny weather. But these islands are not just for relaxing, they are full of history too! Crete, for example, was home to the Minoans, one of Europe's earliest civilisations.

Other important sites include ancient Olympia, where the first Olympic Games were held, and Delphi, once a sacred place where people came to ask the gods questions. These locations help visitors understand how ancient Greek ideas, like sports, religion, and storytelling, have shaped the world we live in today.

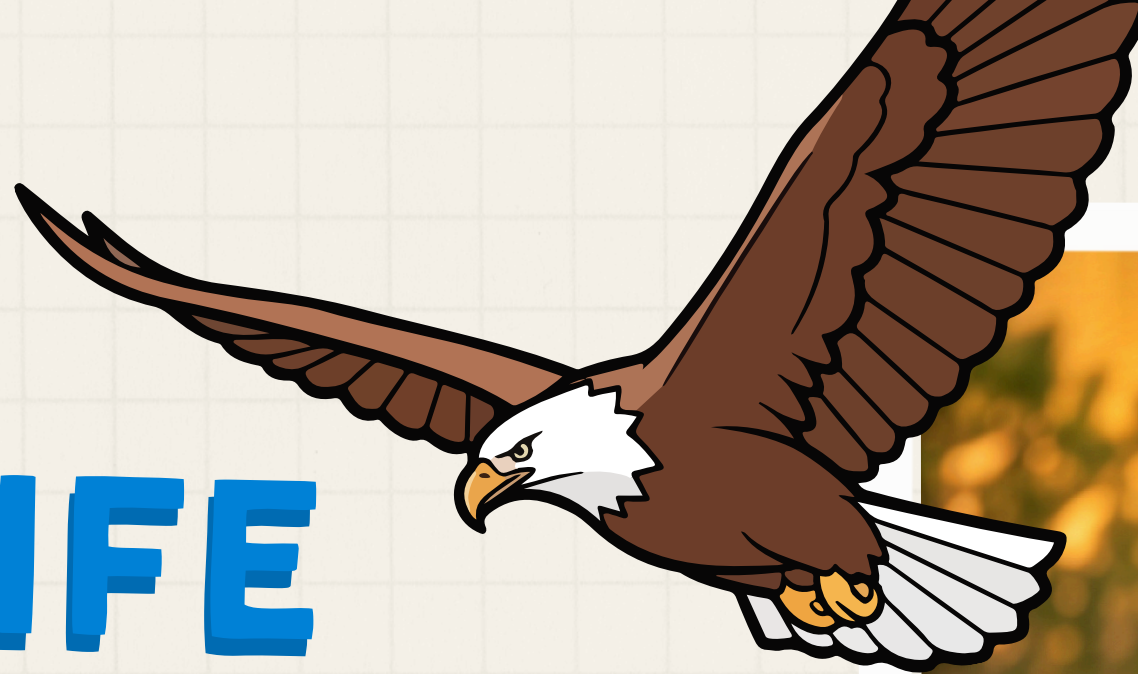




NATURAL LIFE IN GREECE

Greece is home to a variety of natural environments, from rugged mountains to sunny islands and clear blue seas. These different landscapes create habitats for many kinds of plants and animals.

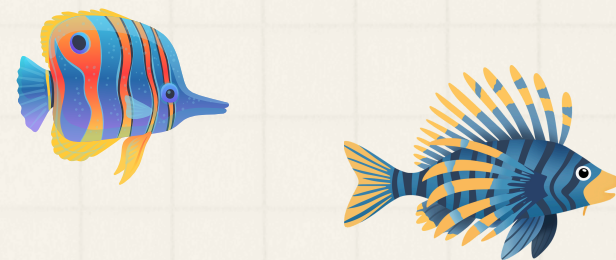
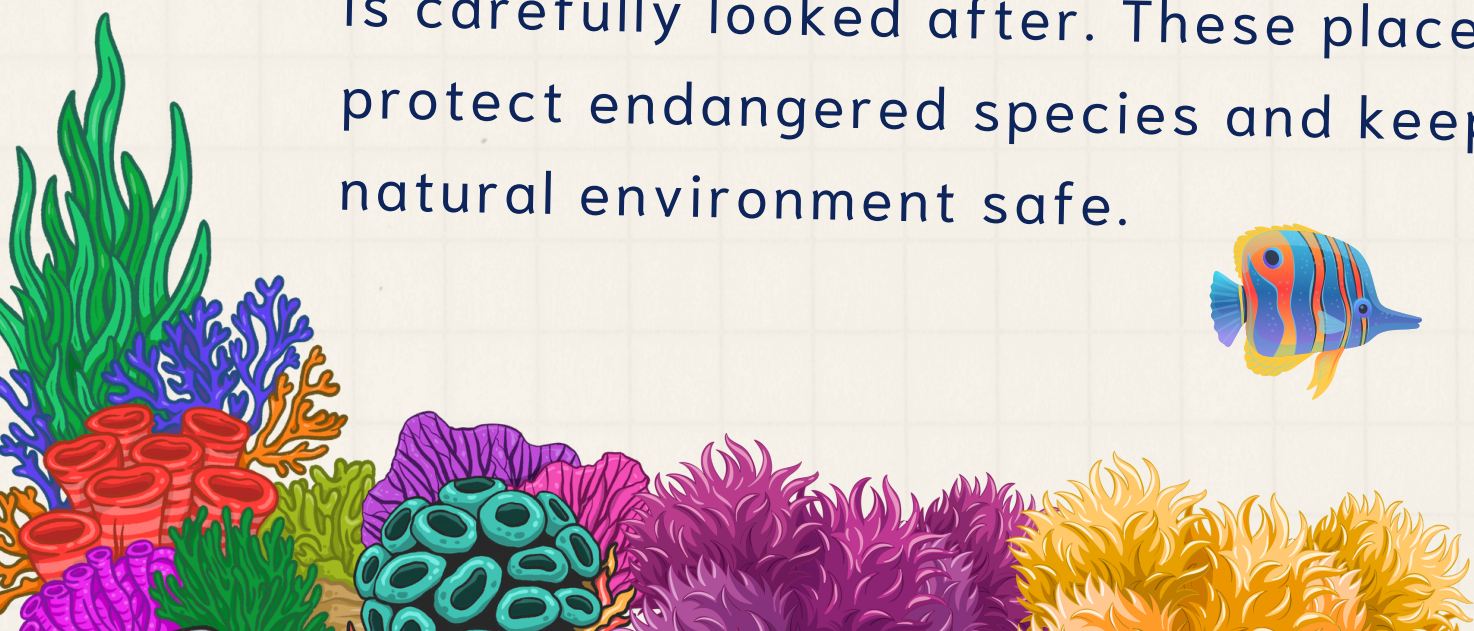
In the mountains and forests, you might find animals like brown bears, wolves, and wild goats. Greece is also an important place for birds, with species like eagles and flamingos living or stopping there during migration.





NATURAL LIFE IN GREECE

Along the coast and in the sea, marine life is just as exciting. The waters are home to dolphins, sea turtles, and colourful fish. One special animal is the loggerhead sea turtle, which comes to Greek beaches to lay its eggs. Greece also has protected natural areas like Zakynthos National Marine Park, where wildlife is carefully looked after. These places help protect endangered species and keep Greece's natural environment safe.



FESTIVALS AND TRADITIONS IN GREECE

Greece is full of colourful festivals and traditions that are celebrated all year round. Many of them come from a mix of ancient customs and religious beliefs, especially from the Greek Orthodox Church.

One of the most important celebrations is Greek Orthodox Easter. It is the biggest holiday in Greece! Families gather together, people decorate eggs in red, and at midnight, everyone holds candles as they celebrate with fireworks and food. Another fun tradition is Apokries, a carnival-like event before Easter. Children and adults dress up in costumes, join parades, dance, and celebrate in the streets.

Greece also has many local festivals called “panigiria.” These are village celebrations held in honour of a saint. People enjoy traditional music, dancing, and delicious food, and everyone in the community comes together. Some traditions go back to ancient Greece too. Festivals like the Athens Epidaurus Festival celebrate theatre and performances in ancient-style open-air theatres, connecting modern Greece to its past.



GREEK CULTURE AND CUISINE

Greek culture is influenced by ancient traditions, as well as Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman history. These different influences have shaped the way people live, celebrate, and share their traditions today. Music and dance are an important part of everyday life in Greece. Traditional dances are often performed at festivals and family celebrations, with people joining hands in a circle and moving together to the rhythm of the music.

Greek cuisine is fresh, simple, and full of flavour. Popular dishes include souvlaki (grilled meat on skewers), moussaka (a layered dish with eggplant and meat), and tzatziki (a yoghurt and cucumber dip). Meals are often shared with family and friends, making food an important part of social life. Olive oil is a key ingredient in Greek cooking and has been used for thousands of years. Bread, cheese, olives, and fresh vegetables are also common in daily meals.



SPORTS IN GREECE

Sports play an important role in life in Greece, both in the past and today. In fact, Greece is the birthplace of the Olympic Games, which began over 2,700 years ago in Olympia. These games were held to honour the gods and included events like running, wrestling, and chariot racing. Today, modern sports are very popular across the country. Football (soccer) is the most loved sport, with many people supporting local teams and the national team. Basketball is also very popular, and Greece has some of the best teams in Europe. Because Greece has so many islands and a long coastline, water sports are common too. People enjoy swimming, sailing, and windsurfing.



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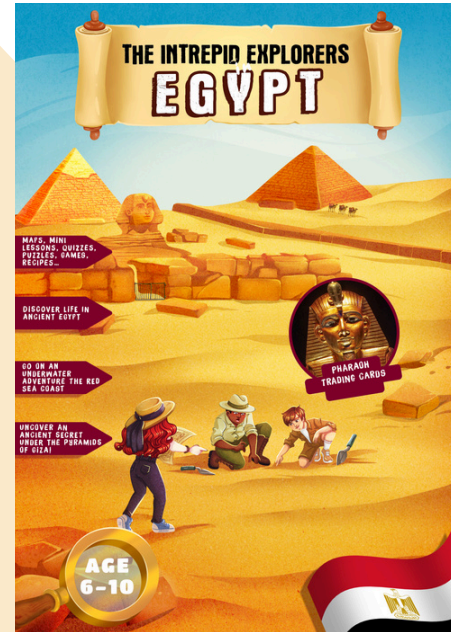
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G R E E C E M I N I L E S S O N

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