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# Introduction

Every person has his vocation. And a lot of great things happen when a person follows it. One of my favourite things is travelling, that is why I have decided to be a student at the South Ural State University at the faculty of service and light industry. So I have chosen this profession because I enjoy visiting different interesting places. Every country has its tradition. And one of my best dreams is to find out something new in other countries. It is good to read different books about other countries’ history, geography, ways of life, and sightseeings. But if you see it with your own eyes you get an unforgettable impression and you can express your own opinion. I am sure that it is always interesting to discover new things, different ways of life, meet new people, to try different food, to learn their culture. I want to help people to organize their holidays and to find thee best ways of travelling. I think that the main thing of my future profession is to make life of people more interesting and more colorful. Visiting different countries gives us a lot of knowledge about their history, geology, art and makes their holidays unforgettable.

So I have chosen Greece as the theme of my research work. It is one of the most picturesque places in the world. Every one dreams to visit this country because Greece can tell us about mankind’s past. This is a small country with a long history, a country which has always fought for the great ideal of freedom. By reason of its geography, the spirit of the people who compose this country, and its position in the Eastern Mediterranean, Greece has taken on an enduring character which makes each generation of Greeks dependent on their forefathers and pledged to their descendents. Therefore, the State which is answerable for Greece, is in charge at one and the same time of yesterdays' heritage, today's interest, and tomorrow’s hopes.

If you get a chance to visit it the magic of Greece works on you the moment you set food in the country, and by combining ample leisure time with well planned sightseeing you will find that Greece has few equals for the wealth and variety of impressions it leaves in the mind. And these will remain cherished memories long after the holiday itself is over.

# 1. The face of Greece

It is true that Greece typifies the contrasts, geology, climate, even paradoxes inherent in the Mediterranean region. But contrasts between town and country, bareness and fertility, and between man dominating nature and nature dominating man, are more marked in Greece than anywhere else.

Although it is a geological prolongation of the Balkan peninsula, it is a distinct world that fills the mind with unforgettable impressions. The light is almost unnaturally clear and luminous, spilling over mountains and flashing of the sea on to the coasts and islands. The air is clean and fresh and scented with the aroma of countless wild flowers. More tangible is the aura of history that enfolds you: the sophistication of Minoan Crete, prehistoric Mycenae and megalithic Tiryns, classical Athens, Byzantine Mystra ahd medieval Rhodes. Partly it is the timeless background-ancient ruins and crumbling stone walls, Bronze Age volcanoes, and the tang of the sea. Dotting a historical span of almost 4000 years is Greece’s incredible tradition of arts and crafts, ranging from prehistoric pottery of ingenious shapes and vivid Minoan frescoes to the incomparable sculptures of the Golden Age and Byzantium jewel studded treasures'.

The Contrasts

Greece is always more than one expects. And with good reason. Around every corner it seems there lurks some hidden treasures: splendid ruins that indicate past glory and long human occupancy, a shop full of appealing folkcraft, a beach sited bungalow resort, a stretch of sapphire sea, or a wayside taverna inviting you to lose all sense of time over a glass of wine. This combination of antiquity and modern feeps the visitor hovering between reality and fantasy until the reconciles the long history of Greece with its living present.

Then again, Greece consists of several bits of diverse geography. Soaring mountains are separated by deep valleys, lakes and seas, its ternal imprint. There are countless peninsulas and bays and indentations, And, of course, innumerable islands. It is really a land of islands, one after the other, no two alike.

The waters that almost surround the 50,000 square miles of Greece are blue, pure and clear. They moderate its temperatures in all seasons, and the constant sunshine gives a diamond sparkle to everything. To think of Greece is to think of its climate, which is typically Mediterranean and just as warm and delightful in April and October as it is July and August.

The people

There are more than 9 million Greeks: cheerful, fun loving, unpredictable perhaps, but full of contagious enthusiasm. One hardly ever comes across a bored or Greek.

From the beginning, indeed, from the time when Greece was first inhabited, some 7000 years ago, her hardly been intent on proving that they are a special breed, fully capable of guiding their own destiny they still are. And they still do. Their boundaries may have altered, and they have undergone the most diverse experiences in the course of history, but this has mounded them into a signal nation embracing countless generations. The spirit that made this craggy land what it was 25 centuries ago, a very small corner of the earth that exercised an influence out of all promotion to its size, still persists. Greece is one again a living entity, responding to the call of the centuries, yet remaining herself through time.

The Present Scene

Along with scenery, the history, the beautiful islands, brilliant sunshine and blue seas, Greece also has to offer modern facilities in all parts of the country. That is why it is now fast becoming one of the favourite holiday countries in Europe and the Middle East. Almost all the hotels are new and equipped with every up-to-date amenity. Even a third class hotels are with a bath is the rule rather than the exception. Travel by boat, train, airplane, or car ferry is easy and comfortable. Reasonably cheap too. The beaches are crowd free, and there are well-placed camping sites for the go-it alone marinas, on islands and coasts.

The ideal way of to see Greece and to gain some insight into the true spirit of the Greeks is by car or bus combined with ship or airplane. The magic of Greece works on you the moment you set foot in the country, and by combining ample leisure time with well planned sightseeing you will find that Greece has few equals for the wealth and variety of impressions it leaves in the mind. And these will remain cherished memories long after the holiday itself is over.

# 2. Attica

Attica is the Greek area upon which ancient Athens nurtured philosophy and democracy. In this little corner of the earth the vitality of the Greeks found expression in all creative fields, and their thoughts helped to transform the whole outlook of Western man by the immortal and splendid Attic Civilization.

First inhabited in the 4th millennium B.C. by Pelasgians and later by lonians, possesses strong links with the historical past and there is hardly a part of the region where evidence of human activity centuries old cannot be found. Place names and historical remains at Marathon, Eleusis, Brauron, Amphiareion, Ramnous, Sounion and Athens itself commemorate an older Greece, which in those long-gone eras exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size.

However, this deservedly popular part of Greece does not live in the past. Along with the scenery, the history and the clear blue sea there are modern tourist facilities to be enjoyed in first class hotels, beach bungalow resorts and sports grounds. Excellent roads bring most of the beauty spots and historical sites of Attica within easy reach from Athens.

Attica's few small plains are intensely cultivated with grapevines, vegetables and fruit trees. And dark olive groves everywhere.

Attica is also the most highly industrialized part of Greece and accounts for the bulk of the country's industry. The rivers Ilissos and Kifissos flow across this beautiful part of Greece. They are not very big but they are historically associated with Attica's distant past.

The Attica coastline has been famous for its beauty from ancient times. Geographically the region forms a triangular peninsula terminating south at the temple-crowned Cape Sounion.

# 3. Athens

Greece begins in and revolves around this city, one o {, the most ancient capitals of the Western world. Cupped in a bowl on the west coast of Attica, with the mountains Aigaleo, Parnitha (Parnes), Pendeli and Hymettus on three sides and the Saronic Gulf on the other, it forms one continuous city with its seaport Piraeus and the suburbs. Together they have a population of about three million. New and ever expanding, the modern part of Athens has largely\*been built In the past forty years or so. The urban sprawl of high rise buildings reaches green suburbs as far as the surrounding mountains and the western coast of Attica. In almost every direction there is something to see: sparkling sea, lofty and delicately shaped mountains, the indelible imprints of an ancient past, and all the sophistications of twentieth-century living.

Athens was first inhabited some 6,000 years ago by Pelasgians and later by lonians who found the great rock of the Acropolis, or Upper City as the name implies in Greek, a nature stronghold. As the city grew, it was dedicated and named after the Goddess of Wisdom, Athena.

It enjoyed its first flourishing period in the Mycenaean era (1600–1100 B.C.). At the end of the 6th century B.C. tyranny (rule by a king) was overthrown and the democratic form of government which followed led to unprecedented achievements in the history of mankind. In the (5th century B.C. – the «golden age» of Athens –, under the enlightened leadership of Pericles, Athens had its full development in the fields of culture, commerce and military strength.

During the Hellenistic and the (Byzantine periods Athens was с secondary city. After the Greek liberation from the Turks in 183‑it was proclaimed capital of Greece.

# 4. Piraeus

This principal port of Greece, and one of the largest m the Mediterranean, is a city in its own right. It has a population of nearly one million and is only 10 km from Athens. Its strategic importance was established during the Classical era, about 450 B.C., when Themistocles built the famous Long Walls which linked both cities. Large sections of these walls can be seen today, as well as ruins of other ancient buildings, including two ancient theatres. The ancient harbours of Zea and Munichia are today called Passalimani and Mikrolimano, or Tourkolimano. Zea is one of the largest marinas in the Mediterranean, while Mikrolimano is well-known for its fish restaurants along the waterfront, next to colourful boats and small yachts anchored in the small harbour. It can be reached along the beautiful corniche road which skirts the coast from Zea to Kastella and New Phaleron.

Apart from being one of the busiest ports in the Eastern Mediterranean, Piraeus and its surrounding districts also constitute the centre around which most of the country's industries are concentrated. All kinds of industrial plants, factories, metal foundries, warehouses and dockyards are spaced out in all directions. But the city's centre is something of a surprise. It is well laid out and spotlessly clean with several small parks and broad tree-lined avenues. Sea-going passengers, especially those sailing to the Greek islands are well catered for by a number of efficient services available at the various embarkation stages.

Both the Archaeological and Naval Museums are worth a visit, and one should not miss seeing at least one performance at the «Veakeio», the open-air theatre on the top of Prophitis Elias hill. From here the panoramic view of the Saronic Gulf and the Apollo coast is truly breath-taking at night.

The nearby towns to Piraeus (Drapetsona, Keratsini, Perama, Nikaia, Korydallos, Kaminia and others) have their own atmosphere with factories, little harbours and popular quarters.

# 5. The Peloponnese

This large peninsula technically forms an island in southern Greece and resembles a huge mulberry leaf. For this reason it was called in the Middle Ages Moreas (from the Greek word for mulberry). Its ancient name was Peloponnese or Peloponnissos (the island of Pelops, the mythical King of Phrygeia, who later ruled over Ilia and Arcadia).

From antiquity, there have been efforts to cut the Isthmus that connected Attica to the Peloponnese. The cutting was eventually effected in the 19th century A.D. when the canal was completed.

This broad peninsula covers an area of 21,439 kilometers and has a population of about 1,000,000. Its greater part is a region of valleys separated by towering mountain ranges rising to 2,407 meters at Taygetos. Hills are intersected by fast flowing rivers with historic associations: Alphios, Pinios and Evrotas. The plains of Ilia, Messinia and Argolis are among the most fertile in Greece. The region's 7 provinces are: Achaia, Argolis, Arkadia, Ilia, Corinthia, Lakonia and Messinia.

There is evidence of human activity in the Peloponnese going back to 100,000 B.C. Archaeological remains from the Old Stone Age and the New Stone Age have been discovered at Ilia, Nemea, Lerna and elsewhere. The Peloponnese reached its most flourishing period during the Mycenaean Age (1600–1100 B.C.), with the growth of such cities as Mycenae, Tiryns, Pilos and Sparta all of which enjoyed a high level of civilization.

From prehistoric times, the Olympic Games were held in Olympia for peaceful competition between athletes from cities from all over Greece and her colonies.

During the Classical period, the rivalry between Athens and Sparta led to the Peloponnesian War and the start of Ancient Greece's decline.

With the coming of the Macedonians, the Peloponnese lost its independence and Alexander the Great was recognized as the leader of a «united» Greece. But the region's decline continued despite a short interval of prosperity under the Achaian Confederation and the efforts towards further improvement by the kings of Sparta, Agis and Kleomenis. The final blow came in 146 В.С., when the armies of the Achaian Confederation were defeated by the Roman general Mummius. The Peloponnese together with the rest of Greece became a Roman province. From then onwards the r Petoponnese suffered a series of invasions by barbarians. During those years of desolation and barbarism the whole of the peninsula lived in obscurity. The Byzantines, following the Romans, made the Peloponnese one of their provinces.

The Prankish rule that followed in 1204 under Godfrey de Villehardouin saw the division of the Peloponnese int 12 fiefdoms governed by Baron from France, Flanders and Burgundy, which accounts for the region's several Medieval Prankish fortresses. The three largest castles were at Monemvassia, Maina and Mistras. This last one became later a Byzantine town and saw many years of glory and splendour. From Mistras the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire Constantine Palaeologo went to Constantinople in 1453 and he died fighting against the Turks of Mohammed the Second, who then occupied Byzantium and Greece.

For almost five centuries, the Peloponnese and other parts of Greece were under the Turkish occupation. In 1.821 the Greek War of Independence actually begun in the Peloponnese. Following the Greek liberation», Napoleon was for a few years until 1834 the capital of Greece.

# 6. Central Greece

This part of mainland Greece is one of the largest in the country, extending from the Aegean Sea in the east to the Ionian Sea in the west. In the south it embraces the Saronic and the Corinth Gulfs and reaches northwards as far as Thessaly. (For Attica see pages 17–35). Central Greece is mostly a mountainous region dominated by the massive ranges of Giona, Agrafa, Tymphristos, Vardoussia, Parnassus and Iti. Several small and fertile plains and valleys lie between these mountains, their formation determined by the rivers Sperchios, Acheloos, Kifissos, Asopos, and Mornos. The largest lakes are Trihonis and Amvrakia in western Greece am Iliki in eastern Greebe. The climate is not the same everywhere, for whereas the seaboard climate is Mediterranean, the inland and mountain regions experience bitter winters and pleasantly cool summers. The main products in Central Greece are olive oil, wine, cotton, cereals, rice and tobacco. In the mountain regions stock-raising is also well developed. Ore is mined too in many-places: lead and zinc at Lavrion, bauxite in the mountains of Parnassus an Giona, and marble from Penteli Central Greece was the birthplace of Hellenism in very ancient times. In fact, recorded hi-story begins in what later developed as the most important cities in the ancient world-Athens, Thebes, Delphi.

The region also flourished during the» Byzantine period, when cities like Thebes were densely populated, enjoying a thriving industry and trade.

During the Turkish occupation, Central Greece together with the Peloponnese played an important role in the fight for freedom, since the countless Greek insurgents could easily harry the enemy from hideouts on the untrodden mountains of the region.

# 7. Delphi

The grandeur of Delphi has to be seen to be believed. Nature and ancient ruins blend in an extraordinary way enhancing the beauty of one another against a setting of mountains, terraces and trees. Situated at a height of 700 meters and at a distance of 164 kms from Athens, Delphi is impressive in all seasons. It has none of the garish quality and noisiness that are so much a part of popular tourist centers. It is still a village with some very good hotels and restaurants and the usual souvenir shops.

The history of Delphi began when the first mysterious fumes, rising from the earth below the Phaedriades rocks, gave a sacred character to the site. Originally, the place was sacred to Gaea or Themis, the earth goddess. Later, seafarers from Crete introduced the cult of Apollo Delphinius. In time, the mysterious prophecies of its oracle exercised great influence in the amcient world.

The sanctuary of Apollo was surrounded by a wall and within it the sacred site was filled with monument's, statues, and some twenty treasuries – replicas of temples–which housed valuable trophies from wars, archives and treasures. Also in the sanctuary were a small theatre, with a seating capacity of 5,000 and the Temple of Apollo (510 B.C.). In its «Adyton», the «Holy of Holies», Pythia (the High Priestess) sat on a tripod and delivered oracles in a state of intoxication from the fumes emanating from the chasm below. Delphi was consulted on all matters concerning religion, politics, and even individual morality.

Delphi was also the centre of meetings of the Amphictyonic League (the nearest equivalent to the United Nations Organization for the isolated ancient Greek city-states).

Just below the main road and opposite the sanctuary there is a group of ancient ruins called Marmaria, or the Marbles, which consists of the remains of two temples of Athens, and a Tholos, a round Doric temple. There are also traces of the Gymnasium where athletes taking part in the famous Pythian Games trained.

Delphi was plundered and its treasures carried away to adorn the capitals of its invaders, but the final blow came in 385 A.D., when the emperor of Byzantium Theodosius ordered its abolition.

The Museum of Delphi contains excellent pieces from the Archaic and Classical periods. Among them the Charioteer, the pediments from the temple of Apollo, the metopes from the treasury of the Sicyonians the «navel of the earth», the exquisite archaic statues («Kouroi») of Kleovis and Viton, the Winged Sphinx of the Naxians and the metopes from the treasury of the Athenians, among others They are all priceless finds that fill the visitor with wonderment and admiration for the art and the civilization that flourished at Delphi.

# 8. Crete

Crete, the largest of the Greek islands, offers yet another acceptable impression of life – enhancing friendliness, beauty, fertility and the accumulated spoils of time. An island of larger space and population (500,000 inhabitants), Crete has almost unlimited advantages for a holiday. The obvious ones are well known by now, but less common is the knowledge that it is fast developing into a splendidly planned holiday island, providing excellent accommodation in first class hotels, holiday villages and garden-enclosed beach bungalow resorts designed to suit their picturesque settings. Soft sandy beaches and seas as gentle and vividly blue-to-green as any in the Mediterranean are a special delight for carefree relaxation in the sun. Yet for all the progress Crete has made in recent years, it still remains a rugged and unspoiled island., The Cretans still live a simple life in the wild mountainous regions, or downland where vineyards and vast orchards of oranges and citrus fruit slope gently to villages and townships.

A mountainous, elongated island, averaging about 55 km in width and stretching for some 264 km from east to west, Crete is as diverse in character as the rest of Greece. A chain of high mountains (Dikti 2,142 m, Idi 2,456 m and the White Mountains or Lefka Ori 2,454 m), divide it into four distinct regions whose alternating scenery combines to form the impressive beauty of the Cretan landscape. These high mountain ranges, with their natural divisions, form the island's four provinces: Chania, Rethymnon, Heraklion and Lassithi.

An east to west road roughly follows the northern coast with well-surfaced access roads branching off at various points to lead to towns and places of historical and sightseeing interest. Remains of every period of Crete's history lie scattered everywhere, dating from the early Cretan and Minoan cultures to the more recent shelled buildings of the epic Battle of Crete in May 1941.

One can get to Crete either by air from Athens or by ship from Piraeus. The superb Minoan civilization, destroyed sometime in 1400 B.C., was developed in Crete. The many ruins of that civilization which exist on the island have^ stirred world interest for many years. In comparison with that ancient civilization and the heights it reached we can say that the later Classical and Roman ages were periods of decline for Crete.

In 824 A.D. it was captured by the Arabs who turned it into a Saracen Pirates' lair from where they launched their raids in the Mediterranean regions. They were driven away by the Byzantine General Nicephoros Phocas (who later became Emperor of the Byzantine Empire). About 250 years later the Venetians came to Crete. Under their rule the island knew economic and intellectual development, but this was curtailed when the Turks occupied the island in 1699. For as long as the Turkish yoke lasted the Cretans never ceased fighting for their freedom – which they finally regained in 1912, when the island became part of the Greek nation.

# Conclusion

Greece is the country with the visual splendor, its contrasting landscapes, the treasures of its parts, the people, the incredible brightness of its light, its sculptural coasts and blue seas, and the present; screenland, uniquely attractive. Not the most beautiful, not the most famous, not the most important – just the one people enjoy most. There is no place like home. But there are some place which you can love too. I think that Greece is one of the least places which everyone admires and consider on of the bests.