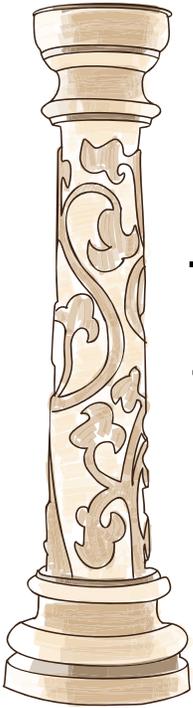


# Cultural Facts



**Greek culture is defined by traditions, music, language, wine, food, art, literature. The immense passion that Greek people pride themselves on contribute to their ethnic and national sense of belonging.**



Literature and theatre were an important aspect of Greek culture and influenced modern drama. The Greeks were known for their sophisticated sculpture and architecture. Greek culture influenced the Roman Empire and many civilizations, and continues to influence modern cultures today.

Customs and traditions in Greece and the Greek Islands are an important aspect of the Greek culture. There are either of a religious character or coming from paganism. Furthermore, most of the traditions and festivals still celebrated today are religious.

Greece today is a multi-cultural country of great and diverse interests. It has been influenced by its location at the confluence of the East and the West and by the continual occupation of Greece and its people from the Romans until its independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century.

There are many museums around Greece that mostly host archaeological findings or folk artifacts. The most interesting are the archaeological museums, that host exhibits from the prehistoric til the Roman times.

# Cultural Facts

The Acropolis of Athens was a runner-up for the New Seven Wonders of the World. There are many throughout Greece, but the most famous one is the Acropolis of Athens. Situated high above Athens and surrounded by stone walls, the fortress protected the ancient city from attacks.

The Greek alphabet was the first to use vowels. Many English words come from Greek words, especially ones beginning with ph- (photograph, philosophy). For example, *philos* means love and *sophia* means wisdom, so philosophy means love of wisdom.

The Olympic Games originated in Ancient Greece. The first Olympic Games were held in 776 BC in Olympia near Greece's southwest coast. They were held every four years and lasted five days. The Olympic Games were in honor of Zeus – god of the sky and leader of the Greek gods.

Beware of the Evil Eye! Evil eye is believed to be a curse that is given by a glare that has negative intentions. Anger, envy, jealousy can cause the evil eye curse. Wearing a special charm called a *mati* (meaning “eye” in Greek) is believed to help prevent the curse from ever happening.



Finding a coin in your slice of the New Year cake is lucky. A coin is baked into the cake, and the person who gets the slice with the coin in it is believed to have good luck in the coming year. The slices are served in a particular order beginning with serving the oldest person first, then in age order down to the youngest person.