

Introduction



"Your Year in Greece Calendar," was prepared by a high school student under the guidance of the Fulbright Foundation. We wish to acknowledge the work of Christos Gabritsos a graduating senior from Athens College who developed this project during his 2013 winter internship.

Coming to Greece, either for educational purposes or for an internship, gives you a good chance to gain valuable information for one of the world's most ancient cultures. In order to help you learn more about the Greek culture, traditions, destinations and generally lifestyle, the Fulbright Foundation has created Your Year in Greece Calendar. The calendar explains some important Greek cultural events and topics with a focus to Greece's national and historical events that are being organized and celebrated each year. According to Greek Orthodox tradition, every day of the year is dedicated to a Christian saint or martyr. Name-saint days play a vital role in the Greek everyday life; the saint days in Christianity are theoretically more important than birthdays and are celebrated.

Several sources were used for the development of this calendar. Most of them were provided by the Wikimedia Foundation® and answers that were given to me by friends and other acquaintances. The landmark events that have been included in this calendar were chosen after lots of research and opinions that have been expressed on the topic.

Hope you find this effort helpful – Christos Gabritsos

September

International Exhibition of Thessaloniki

The International Exhibition of Thessaloniki is an international annual exhibition for the entire year in Greece. Founded in Thessaloniki in 1957, it has a commercial character and every September it attracts exhibitors from many countries that set up stands to present and inform people about their products. During the days of the exhibition, there are concerts, while the prime minister of Greece usually addresses the state of the economy.

Official Website: <http://www.helexpo.gr/>



Anniversary of the 3rd September 1843

The revolutionary events of the 3rd September 1843 led to the deposition of King Otto, the monarch of the newly formed Greek independent state, and the establishment of a democratic constitution. It marked the transition from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy; at the same time the square in front of the palace, previously known as "Palace Square" was renamed "Constitution Square" (square of the constitution), to honor the events. The 3rd September Street in the centre of Athens has been also named after the events of 3rd September.

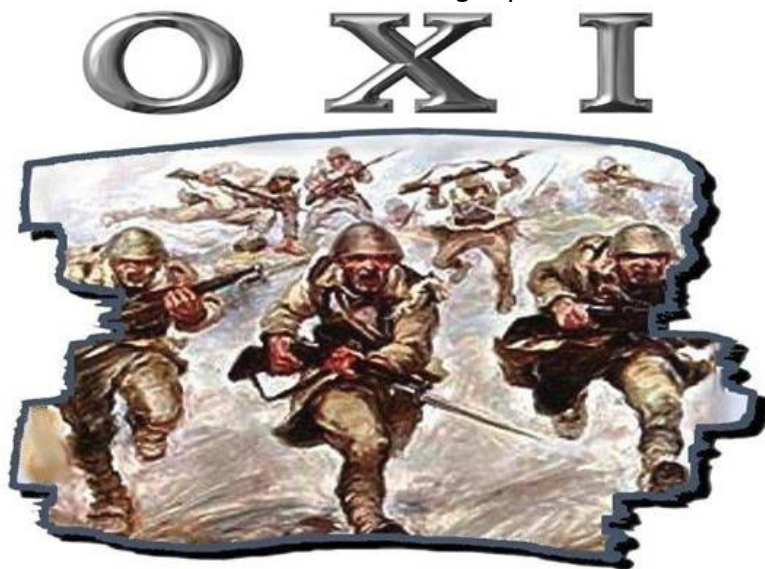


*Flag from the
Revolution that reads
"Unity -
..."*

October

October 28 - The anniversary of “NO Day”

On October 28 1940, the Italian government under Benito Mussolini sent Greece an ultimatum, in which they demanded the free passage of the Italian army from Greek borders in order to then take over strategic points in the Kingdom of Greece. The ultimatum was delivered to the Greek Prime minister Ioannis Metaxas by the Italian ambassador. He replied using the historical French phrase “Alors c’est la guerre”, and in this way Greece entered the Second World War. October 28 is celebrated in Greece every year as an official national holiday, in memory of the Greece’s refusal to Italy. This is a bank holiday and schools are closed; school parades take place throughout Greece and there is a military parade in the town of Thessaloniki and Athens.



October 26 - Thessaloniki



The 26th of October is the most important day for Thessaloniki, as it celebrates the city patron saint, St. Demetrius, combined with the anniversary of the liberation of the city in 1912 from the Ottoman Turks. Saint Demetrious, in Greek called "Agios Dimitrios" was born around 280 AD and died in 305 AD in Thessaloniki and is one of Christianity's greatest martyrs. He is the patron saint of Thessaloniki, where the temple was built on top of his grave. He is celebrated on 26th October the schools and public services are closed in Thessaloniki.



patron saint
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November

Athens Classic Marathon

The Athens Classic Marathon is an annual marathon road race held in Athens, during a Sunday in early November. It is one of Greece's largest international athletic events, since it usually attracts more than 5000 competitors. The marathon event is based on a Greek ancient myth: In the early 5th century B.C the Greeks were fighting the Persians in the so called "Greek-Persian" wars. Following the victory of the Greeks in the area of Marathon, which is located approximately 40Km east of Athens,, Pheidippides, a messenger, ran from the battlefield of Marathon to Athens to announce the Greek victory over the Persians. This is how the race got its name and it is his ran that we celebrate every year through this event. On the day of the marathon, certain streets are closed in Athens.



Official Website: <http://www.athensclassicmarathon.gr/>

Anniversary of the November 17 1973 Polytechnic Uprising

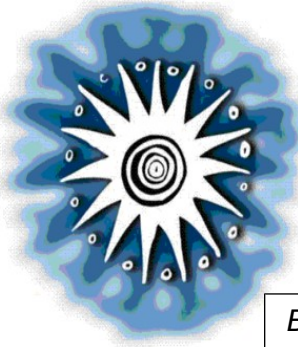
The Athens Polytechnic uprising of 1973 was a massive demonstration of popular opposition to the dictatorship of the Colonels. The uprising began on 14 November 1973, with the occupation of the Polytechnic University of Athens by students. It escalated to a revolution against the junta and ended in bloodshed the morning of November 17, after a series of events that began with the entrance of a battle tank in the



institute. This event is celebrated every year on November 17 with marches in the center of Athens.

Thessaloniki International Film Festival

The Thessaloniki International Film Festival is a series of events that occur every year during the first weeks of November in the city of Thessaloniki. During the festival, the year's Greek productions are presented to the audience. The Festival is considered to be the [Balkans](#)' primary showcase for the work of new and emerging filmmakers. The event features the International of [Greek](#) films, the New Horizons program and the B. in 1960 as the "Week of Greek Cinema", it became including a Competition Section.



THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

*Banner that was placed
on the roof of the
Polytechnic and reads
"Freedom"*

Official Website: <http://www.filmfestival.gr/>

December

Christmas Day-25 December

This religious holiday is one of the most important, since it is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. In the past, people used to decorate small handmade wooden boats for Christmas but today, everyone follows western traditions and decorates Christmas trees. On the day before Christmas, December 24th, children traditionally sing Christmas carols, which in Greek are called “kalanta”, going from door to door. During the day all shops are closed, since Christmas is a very important family day during which people eat and generally meet with many family members.



New Year's Eve

On the 31st of December families and friends gather in houses in order to hold dinners, parties or receptions to celebrate the upcoming change of the Year. It is traditional to play card games, and usually several kinds of meat are being served, along with champagne and wine. At the moment of the change of the year, fireworks go off in most of the cities of Greece and people wish to each other “Kali Chronia”, which means happy New Year. Many tend to leave one or two hours after the change and head to nightclubs to celebrate the evening till early hours of the morning. During New Year 's Eve all shops and public services are open till late afternoon, for people to buy last minute gifts. It is also a tradition to exchange presents and lucky charms between friends and family members.



January

New Year's Day

On January 1st, the Greeks celebrate the feast of Santa Claus (in Greek Agios Vassilis). Families and friends exchange gifts and all Greek families cut a "vassilopita", a kind of cake with a coin inside one of the pieces which brings good luck to the person that finds it for the whole year. Another tradition is for the man of the house to enter the house with his right foot, and to break a pomegranate behind the door, throwing it down so that the berries are thrown everywhere.



Epiphany

Epiphany (or Theophany) is a large annual Christian celebration in order to celebrate the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Celebrated on January 6, it is the final day of the Twelve Christmas holidays. During Epiphany, water is blessed by Christian priests and evil spirits are banished. At several locations, the priests throw a large cross into the water of a river, the sea or even a pool for young locals to dive and compete for the privilege and blessing of catching it (known as the cross catching ceremony).



February

The Carnival

The Carnival in Greek called "Apokries" is celebrated by two weeks of feasting, dressing up in costumes and dancing. The Carnival takes place three weeks before the so called "Lent Monday". The most important "Carnival Parade" takes place in the city of Patra, with several other smaller parades in Xanthi, Corfu and Rethymno turning into wonderful unique parties. The exact dates of the Carnival vary each year depending on the Easter; in fact, the Carnival is always over exactly 49 days before the beginning of Easter. Its origins are believed to come from the ancient Greek celebrations of Dionysius, the god of wine and feast.



Smoke Thursday

It is the second Thursday of the carnival and two weeks before the Lent Monday. During this day, according to tradition, large quantities of meat are consumed, usually in the traditional Greek "Tavernas" (traditional restaurants) along with lots of wine and beer. This celebration was established because of the important feasts of Wednesday and Friday. Since Christians were not allowed to eat meat on these days of the week, Thursday was considered to be the most well suited day for eating large quantities of meat. Nowadays people honor this tradition by going out in large numbers and eating Greek meat specialties.



March

25th of March- Independence Day

March 25th is a day of celebration and has a double meaning for the Greeks; it is a religious and national holiday. It is celebrated as religious because we celebrate the Annunciation, and as a national, because this day marks the beginning of the Greek revolution against the Turks in 1821. It is believed by the Greek Orthodox Church that on a day like the 25th of March, angel Gabriel conveyed God's message to Virgin Mary that she will give birth to His Son. This is what we call the Annunciation. This day also marks the start of the 1821 revolution against the Ottoman Turks. The Greeks were enslaved for almost four hundred years by the Turks and finally decided to fight for their freedom. The people rose up to fight for their freedom with the idea of "Freedom or Death". The day is a public holiday in Greece and Cyprus. Usually, the celebrations include parades and other festivities on the same day or the previous one. The biggest events are military parade in Athens on March 25, and a school parade on March 24.



Lent Monday

It is the Monday that gives the end of the Carnival. The Greek name of the day is translated to "Clean Monday"; the day took its name from a Christian tradition: Christians used to get "cleaned up" spiritually and physically during that day. It is both a fasting day and a day of holiday for Christians. Fasting lasts for 40 days. During Clean Monday, it is usual for Greek orthodox families to eat lagana (specific kind of bread). It is also customary for children to fly a kite.



April

Easter

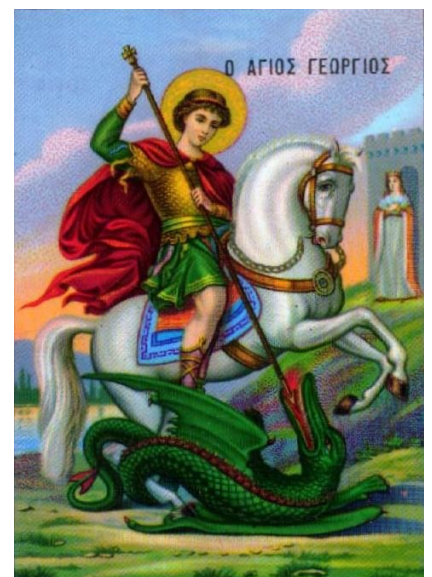
It is considered to be the most important festival of the Greek Orthodox Church. It begins seven weeks before the Easter Sunday. The most important events occur during the so-called "Holy Week". The days during the holy week are called "good days"; On Good Friday, a special celebration takes place, since small, decorated "tombs" of the Christ make the tour of many towns. The most important day of the Easter is Good Saturday: Approximately at



midnight, when families go to churches in order to get what Christians call the "Holy Light", the priest appears holding a lighted torch and shares the Holy Flame on the candles of near worshippers. Many fireworks explode in the streets around the Church and everyone shares the holly flame with other people. Many families bring the candles home and mark a small cross with the candle above their door in order to bring good fortune upon the house. After midnight, families and friends eat many traditional foods, such as "magiritsa". The rest of the lamb is grilled on Sunday morning for lunch.

April 23rd, The Feast of Saint George

This feast celebrates Saint George, the killer of the Dragon. According to the Greek Orthodox Church, Saint George is the patron of shepherds. Celebrations are organized throughout the whole country. Most important activities and feasts take place in the Greek towns of Arachova, and the islands of Skiathos and Skyros. In other Greek towns or areas where Saint George is considered their patron saint, other celebrations of smaller scale take place. Celebrations in Arachova last for three days.



May

Mayday (Protomagia)

Mayday (in Greek Protomagia), is the first day of May, a holiday for many countries of the world, as well as for Greece. The day is also known as “The day of the workers”. It is the celebration of the rebellion of the workers of Chicago in May 1886, when the trade unions in Chicago rose up demanding working hours to be reduced to 8 and better working conditions. At the same time the 1st of May is celebrated as day of



flowers and spring, since it is located just between the Spring Equinox and the Summer Solstice, therefore it also marks the beginning of spring. In Greece, the day was established as a holiday and all services and businesses remain closed, while several marches and protests occur in the center of Athens.

International Museum Day

The international Museum day is a celebration held around that world annually, around the date of May 18th. It has a different theme every year and almost three thousand museums participate throughout the globe. In Greece, the most important events organized during museum day take place in “The Acropolis Museum”, “The Benaki Museum” and the “Archeological museum of Thessaloniki”; all museums offer free admission and extended opening hours. At the same time, at the museums mentioned above, lectures, exhibitions, workshops and live music concerts are organized to honor the day.



June

Athens-Epidaurus Greek Festival

The Athens-Epidaurus Greek Festival is an annual Festival of several different performances such as modern theatre, ballet, opera, classical music concerts, jazz, and ancient drama that takes place from the beginning of June till the end of August. It takes place in many locations around Attica and in the ancient theatre of the city of Epidaurus. The most important events of the festival each year are the several drama performances that occur

during the festival. Many important figures of the world theatre, music and dance scene arrive each year in Athens to participate in the festival.



Official Website:

<http://www.greekfestival.gr/en/>

Festival

The International Jazz and Blues Festival of Athens, Greece occurs every year during June. Most of the events take place at the Lycabettus theatre, on top of a hill with a panoramic view of Athens. Some events and concerts also take place in Technopolis Gazi, a gas factory that has been turned into a cultural venue. Jazz and Blues artists from every corner of the world are welcomed to perform their works. For the concerts that are given in

Technopolis, entrance is free for everyone.

Athens Jazz



July

Rockwave Festival

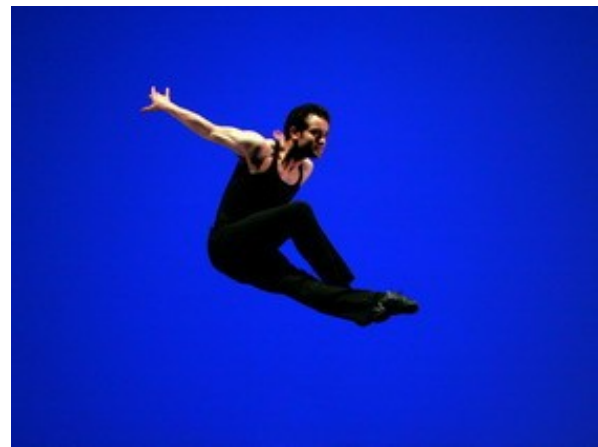
Rockwave Festival started its journey in 1996, born from the need of a pop - rock musical institution in Greece. From then until today, the Rockwave Festival has achieved the goal of its creation since it is now more than a simple festival - institution, since it is the most premium festival, not only of Greece, but of Eastern Europe. Moreover, Rockwave Festival each year attracts the biggest groups and most popular artists of the national and global music industry. Till today, over 160 international and local artists have been a part of the history of Rockwave Festival. It is organized on a weekend during early July.



Official Website: <http://www.rockwavefestival.gr/site/>

Athens Dancing Festival

It is an event that is held annually at the Technopolis Arts Complex during the two first weeks of July. The festival promotes new talents and gives to young artists the opportunity of performing in front of both national and international audiences. In addition, some other events that take place during these two weeks including two photo exhibitions of dance images. Other interesting parallel events being organized are the seminars conducted by choreographers. Finally, the whole festival ends up with a costume show in which many famous designers participate in order to present their creations.



August

15 August- Assumption of Mary

The Assumption of Mary is a feast of the Christian Church, celebrated on August 15. In most parts of Greece the day is celebrated with very big events. It also is one of the official holidays of Greece. According to tradition, when Mary learned about her impending death, she prayed on the “Mount of Olives”, prepared herself, and reported the news to the Apostles. Since the day of the Assumption not all apostles were in Jerusalem, a cloud grabbed them and brought them to her. She was placed in the grave of Gethsemane; after three days the tomb was empty, since Virgin Mary was transferred to the heavens. In most Greek cities, the tradition of the epitaph takes place.



Megaro Gyzi Festival

The “Megaro Gyzi Festival” takes place each August in the Greek Island of Santorini. It specifically takes place in Megaro Gyzi, a cultural centre in Fira, Santorini. The events include one painting exhibition and seven music concerts. The festival begins on August 1st and ends on the 23rd. The Megaro Gyzi Cultural Centre is considered to be one of the few 17th-century old family mansions of Santorini. Admission is free to all events of the festival.



Official Website: <http://www.megarogyzi.gr/>