

JAW-DROPPING GEOGRAPHY

FUN LEARNING FACTS ABOUT



BY: JESS ROCHE

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Jaw-Dropping Geography:
Fun Learning Facts About
GROOVY GREECE

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INTRODUCTION – WHERE IS GREECE LOCATED?



Greece is located in southern Europe on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea. The beautiful, beach-filled country is made up of mainland territory and a string of islands, many of which stretch towards Turkey in the east. The islands run along three separate seas: in the east, the Aegean Sea; to the south, the Mediterranean; to the west, the Ionian Sea. There is a little saying to help you remember some of the countries surrounding Greece. It goes like this: Serbia got Hungry, slipped in Greece and fell in Turkey!

WHAT LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN IN GREECE?

Alpha Α α	Iota Ι ι	Rho Ρ ρ
Beta Β β	Kappa Κ κ	Sigma Σ σ
Gamma Γ γ	Lambda Λ λ	Tau Τ τ
Delta Δ δ	Mu Μ μ	Upsilon Υ υ
Epsilon Ε ε	Nu Ν ν	Phi Φ φ
Zeta Ζ ζ	Xi Ξ ξ	Chi Χ χ
Eta Η η	Omicron Ο ο	Psi Ψ ψ
Theta Θ θ	Pi Π π	Omega Ω ω

The Grecian people primarily speak Greek. Greek is an ancient language that has been spoken since the Bronze Age! Did you know that famous philosophers like Plato, Socrates and Aristotle all spoke Greek? There are also many words in the English language that come from Greek. For example, the words academy, alphabet, and marathon all have Greek roots! In Greece today, ninety-nine percent of the people use Greek as their primary language. Other languages spoken in Greece are English, French, Italian and Spanish.

WHAT ARE THE LANDSCAPES LIKE IN GREECE?



The Grecian mainland consists of mountains, lakes, forests, and of course, beautiful coastlines. With so many islands, there are literally hundreds of beaches to be discovered! In addition to the flatlands, a beautiful mountain range, the Pindus, holds one of the deepest gorges in the world, the Vikos Gorge, as well as Greece's highest mountain, Mount Olympus.

HOW MANY ISLANDS ARE THERE IN GREECE?



Greece has over six thousand islands and inlets! However, only 227 of the islands actually have people living on them. The largest of all the Greek islands is Crete and it is located in the south of the Aegean Sea.

WHAT ARE THE BEACHES LIKE IN GREECE?



Beaches in Greece are many and varied. There are coves and sheltered bays where sea creatures roam such as large fish, sea urchins and even octopi! Stretches of shoreline can be made up of golden sand or pebble beaches and there are even some black sand beaches. The black sand is formed by volcanic soil, which is coarse granular lava rock – could you imagine building a sand castle out of black sand? Some Grecian beaches even have caves with steep rocks for climbing.

WHAT KINDS OF SEA CREATURES ARE FOUND ALONG THE COAST OF GREECE?



The Grecian seas are filled with an abundance of interesting sea life. Starfish, sponges, seahorses and anemones are just a few small creatures that can be found swimming among the seaweed when snorkeling. There are also the endangered loggerhead turtles, which can also be found in the United States and other places around the world. Octopi are another favorite sea creature to spot while diving in Greece. Divers and snorkelers come from all over the world to explore the breathtaking coves and seas of Greece each year.

TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE GRECIAN PEOPLE



In Greece children live with their parents for much longer than they do in other places around the world. Some children stay at home with their parents after college or even after getting married. This is because close family ties are very important to the Greeks. Families respect their elders and hold onto tradition generation after generation, producing a rich social culture that is still somewhat untouched by the rest of the world.

WHAT KINDS OF FOOD DO PEOPLE TRADITIONALLY EAT IN GREECE?



Olives, olive oil and lots of seafood are all traditional, staple foods eaten by the masses in Greece, in the past and still today. Diet also includes lots of lamb, chickpeas, and a huge variety of fruits and vegetables. Greece is certainly known for its olives and every town in Greece even has its own olive grove! The Greeks actually eat their dinner – their biggest meal – at lunchtime! Like in Spain, the midday meal is called Siesta and traditionally Greeks would eat a large meal of salad or an appetizer, a main course, bread, cheeses and wine. Then they would lie down for a nap!

WHY ARE PEOPLE SAID TO LIVE LONGER IN GREECE?



Did you know that people are actually said to have a longer lifespan in Greece than anywhere else in the world? Many specialists believe this is in part because of the Grecians diet, rich in olive oil and fish. The Greeks also consume a lot less meat than the rest of the world. Many believe that the Greeks' consumption of fresh ingredients, and their lack of unhealthy snack foods, contribute greatly to their long lives. Some even say that the olive oil, wine and coffee keep the Greeks young and vibrant!

WHAT IS THE LARGEST CITY IN GREECE?



Athens is the largest city in Greece. It is also Greece's capital city. Over 3.7 million people crowd the streets of Athens today! Many historic monuments and sites are found in Athens too, such as the Parthenon. Athens became the official capital of Greece in 1834. Athens is also the birthplace of many innovative ideas and classical studies such as Western literature as we know it today and major mathematical principles like geometry! Democracy and the theories of comedy and tragedy also came from Athens. Comedy and tragedy theories are still represented in theater masks today!

WHERE DID ATHENS GET ITS NAME?



The capital city, Athens, was named after the Greek goddess, Athena. Athena was said to have invented the olive tree. The story says that Athena dropped a seed into the ground and it immediately grew into an olive tree. The people believed that this was an offering from the goddess signifying peace and wisdom. The myths tell us that since Athena's gift was so important to the Greek people, they decided to name their most important city, Athens, after her.

WHAT IS THE PARTHENON?



The Parthenon is a temple honoring the goddess Athena, who sits atop the Acropolis. The Acropolis is the highest hill in Athens and the word Acropolis means high city. All Greek temples were traditionally built to be viewed from the outside and people were never meant to enter the temples. So, when viewing the Parthenon from the outside onlookers will find an ornate display of columns: a total of sixty-nine grand columns make up the Parthenon, forty-six outer columns and twenty-three inner.

WHAT TYPE OF GOVERNMENT DOES GREECE HAVE?



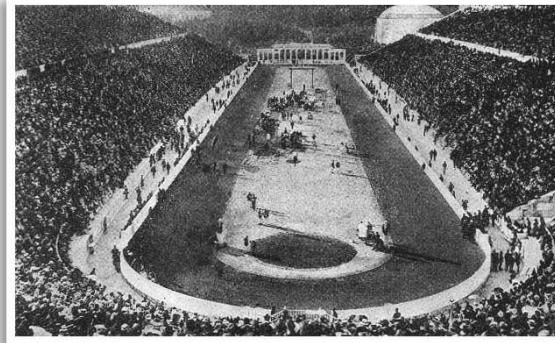
Throughout history many different types of government have presided over Greece. Today Greece is a parliamentary republic, which means a governing house – or a group of elected leaders – makes the laws. Then, a leader or president enforces the laws. The country was once a monarchy, which means that a king and queen once ruled Greece. But, in 1975 the monarch was abolished so now a prime minister and a parliament rule the country. The parliament in Greece is called the Vouli.

WHO WERE THE MINOANS?



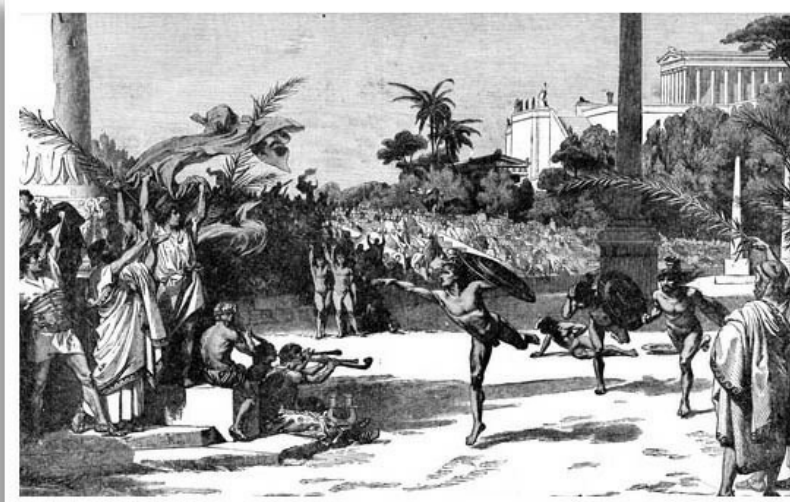
The Minoan culture was one of the earliest civilizations worldwide. The Minoans were also called the Cretans because they originally came from the island of Crete. These ancient people lived as early as 2000 B.C. Archeologists have found paintings along the walls of the ruins in the palace Knossos, which is located on Crete and is one of the most famous Bronze Age ruins in the world! These famous paintings represent Minoan people doing back flips over charging bulls!

HOW ARE THE OLYMPIC GAMES RELATED TO GREECE?



The first Olympic games to ever occur were held in Greece in 700 B.C. They took place in the city of Olympia and were meant to honor the god Zeus, who was king of all the Greek gods. Did you know that during the ancient Olympic games women were not allowed to compete in, or even attend, the games! The sportsmen who won each category did not receive monetary prizes. Instead they would receive olive wreaths, which were wreaths made out of branches from olive trees, or food.

WHAT TYPES OF SPORTS DID THE FIRST OLYMPIC GAMES HAVE?



In some ways the early Olympic games were not too different from our games today – during the games opposing athletes and teams competed in a variety of different strength and sport activities. The early Greek games, however, did not have nearly as many different categories of sports as we have today. Sportsmen competed in the long jump, wrestling, sprinting and discus to name a few. The discus, or disc, looked just like a Frisbee, but they were much, much heavier and made from iron, stone, lead or bronze! The original Olympics also had choir, or singing, competitions! However, during the early games they also had javelin tournaments and chariot racing!

WHO WERE THE GREEK GODS?



The Greeks had many, many gods, but the twelve main gods were called the Gods of Olympus. They are Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Hestia, Aphrodite, Ares, Apollo, Athena, Hera, Hermes, Artemis, and Hephaestus. All of the Greek gods are related in some way or another and many are named for, or have, special talents. For example, Hades is another word for the underworld, which is where Hades ruled. Just as seen in the Hades example, the gods' talents were also usually associated with where they lived.

TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE TWELVE GODS OF OLYMPUS!



Zeus was king of all gods and Poseidon was Zeus' brother, king of the sea. Hades, also Zeus' brother, ruled the underworld and Hestia, a sister of the three brothers, was goddess of the hearth. Hera was both Zeus' sister and wife! Aphrodite was Zeus' daughter and the goddess of love and Athena, another daughter, was fierce and brave and sprung from Zeus' forehead at birth. Ares and Apollo are both sons of Zeus and are the god of war and god of music, respectively. Hermes was Zeus' messenger. Artemis, a hunter, served as lady of the wild things and Hephaestus was said to be the only unattractive god in Greek mythology!

TELL ME ABOUT MOUNT OLYMPUS



Mount Olympus has been a famous site since ancient Greek times. The ancient Greek people believed that their many gods lived on Mount Olympus. A rich variety of lush greenery grows on Mount Olympus consisting of Mediterranean flora, a number of varying forests and a no forest zone where, although there are no trees, there are expanses of great alpine meadows and grasslands. Because of its natural diversity and size, Mount Olympus was the first national park founded in Greece.

WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR PLACES TO VISIT IN GREECE?



Mount Athos is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Greece. It is a large mountain and peninsula in the northern part of Greece. Mount Athos is an autonomous state under Greek rule and entry into the site is strict – only males are allowed to enter the site! This is because Mount Athos is considered a very holy site and follows strict religious rules and traditions. It is home to over twenty eastern orthodox monasteries and many people refer to the mountain as the Holy Mountain.

Thank You!

We hope you enjoyed the book! All pictures and words were lovingly put together by experts who really love what they do! We really hope you learned something new today!

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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

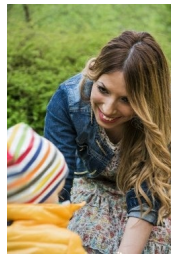
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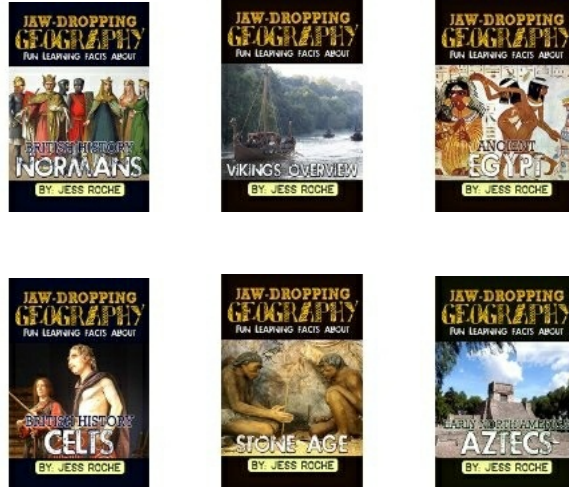
Jess is a passionate and friendly mom from Texas. She writes with her own children in mind, ensuring her books are accessible and easy to learn from. She believes this is the secret to her own success!

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