

# Olympia: The History of the Olympics Revealed

Located in mainland Greece in the west of the Peloponnese, Olympia is the site of the first Olympic Games which were held in 776 BC. This small town offers accommodation which allows the visitors to stay less than a mile from the ruins of this world famous site.

The town itself has cafes, tavernas, bars and shops and makes an excellent base for exploring the Peloponnese region. Here you will find unspoilt green countryside with forested hills, rivers and valleys, traditional mountain villages and a beautiful coastline with wonderful sandy beaches.

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For history enthusiasts this is the place to be. Highlights of a holiday in Olympia include the workshop of Phidius who sculptured the famous statue of Zeus, the Palestra wrestling academy, the ruins of the stadium and hippodrome and the religious monuments. Not to be missed are the historical Museum of the Olympic Games and the Archaeological Museum, both found in Olympia town.

The Greek gods had a very important part to play in the ancient Olympic Games which becomes very clear when visiting the Ancient Olympia archaeological site where new finds are being found nearly every day.

The Temple of Zeus was mostly destroyed by an earthquake but parts still remain. There is a crepidome (platform) measuring 91 ft by 210 ft which has 34 ft columns in a 65 ft tall building. At these ruins you can also see some impressive sculptures from the 5th century BC.

When visiting the Museum at Olympia you will see the finds from the Sacred Precinct of the Altis which date from prehistoric times to early Christian times. Also on show at the museum are collections of bronze and terracotta.

Olympia was once the site of the Panhellenic Games and is now home to the Museum of the Modern Olympic Games. Here you will find many interesting artifacts from the Modern Olympic Games. The museum is the final resting place of the heart of Pierre de Coubertin who resurrected the games and who died in Paris.



Steeped in history and culture, Olympia is a must visit whilst on your package holidays to Greece.

**By Emma Healey**

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