

*Come to Greece and live in a cultural universe!*

*(...and it's not just that! It is much more...)*



# *Athens Epidaurus Festival*

The Athens Epidaurus Greek Festival takes place every summer (from June to August) and includes various performances, like modern theatre, ancient drama, ballet, opera, jazz, and classical music concerts and art exhibitions. The events take place in various theatres around Athens and in the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus. In fact, the peak of this festival is the ancient drama performances that are displayed on summer weekends in Epidaurus.



# Patras Carnival



The Patras Carnival, Patrino karnavali is the largest event of its kind in Greece and one of the biggest in Europe. It has more than 160 years of history. The events begin on 17 January.

The carnival of Patras is not a single event but a variety of events that includes balls, parades, hunting of hidden treasure, kids' carnival etc. Its characteristics are spontaneity, improvisation, inspiration and volunteerism.

Over 5000 children participate whereas the festival is completed by numerous game events and constructive activities. The closing ceremony is an extension of the traditional festivities based around the burning of the float of the Carnival King, with concerts, dances, a farewell to the carnival past, announcements about the carnival to come and countless fireworks.

**Patras Carnival Photograph by Gontzi**

# **Ifestia Festival (Volcano Festival) Santorini**



It's not just romance that's erupting in gorgeous Santorini. The annual Ifestia Festival, which is held every September, is dedicated to the volcano that shaped Santorini's famous landscape after its eruption in 1646 BC. The explosion is estimated to have been 100 times more powerful than the eruption of Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii. The Ifestia Festival features live music and a fantastic fireworks display coming out of the volcano, complete with sound and light effects to represent the lava flow and explosions.

# Festive Greece all year round!

## Celebrations and festivals in Greece with local character



Visitors are often surprised by the number of public holidays in Greece. It's true – Greeks celebrate various and religious or cultural festivals throughout the year.

Some of them, like Greek Easter and Christmas, are tied to Greek religion.

Others, like the Carnival, the Greek Independence Day, and the Oxi Day, go

hand in hand with tradition, customs and history.

Let's explore the most important festivals and national holidays in Greece.

# 1 January – New Year's Day

New Year's Day is a big celebration in many parts of the world.

The Greek word, Protohronia, literally means “the first (day) of the year”. On this day, people in Greece cut a special cake, called vasilopita, where a coin has been hidden. The person who gets the piece with the coin gets good luck for the whole year!

As for New Year's Eve, Greeks usually celebrate with family and friends.

On New Year's Eve, it is customary for children and teenagers to go around their neighborhood and sing the New Year's Carols.



# **February - Tsiknopempti - Grilled Meat**

## **Thursday**

Twelve days into the Carnival season, there is a special day when it is customary to eat lots of meat. In Greek, this is called Tsiknopempti, which is close to “grilled meat Thursday”. Pempti is Thursday, and the word tsikna literally means “the smell of grilled meat”!

On this day, you will typically see many Greeks eating out at restaurants and grillhouses. It's a good opportunity to meet friends and eat and drink like there's no tomorrow.

In 2022, Tsiknopempti falls on 24 February. Meat lovers rejoice!



# 25 March - Greek Independence Day

25 March is the Greek Independence Day, the anniversary of the Greek War against the Ottoman Empire, which began on 25 March 1821. It is celebrated with student and military parades all around Greece and the Greek islands.

If you are in Athens, it's a great opportunity to stroll around the city and watch the military parades. If you like fried fish, look out for the traditional dish of the day, battered cod with skordalia, a thick garlic sauce.





# April / May - Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Greek Orthodox Easter, or Pasha, is the most important religious festival in the Greek Calendar. Visiting during that time is a rewarding cultural experience, as Easter celebrations around the country are unique. Throughout the Holy Week, people attend various masses at the Greek Orthodox church.



Holy Friday at Nauplio

# 15 August – Dormition of Virgin Mary.

One of the most important holidays in Greece is the 15th of August, when Greek Orthodoxy commemorates the Dormition of the Mother of God.

Hundreds of churches all around Greece celebrate with masses. These are typically accompanied by other events and festivities, such as live music and dancing, known in Greek as panigiria.



Virgin Mary of Tinos