

A photograph of an olive branch with green leaves and small olives, positioned against a light-colored stone wall. The branch is draped over the wall, with some leaves and olives hanging down. The background is a textured stone wall with vertical lines.

Inside tips about Ancient Olympia & beyond

by Elena Aggeli

Olympia Insider's Travel Guide

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Elena Aggeli

Hi everyone! I am Elena and I will be more than happy to offer you my insights on **Ancient Olympia**, **Katakolon** and their surroundings. I am a **certified tourist guide** by the **Greek Ministry of Tourism** and speak **fluent English, Spanish and Greek**.



My studies in archaeology and the deep love for my area, **Olympia**, will be your **inside guide!**

About:

I was born and raised in a suburb of Athens; however, my roots are from a small mountainous village close to **Ancient Olympia; Tripotamia**. This was the place where I spent most of my summers when I was little, listening to my grandparents' fascinating stories about **ancient Olympia** and the surrounding areas.

Studies:

When I turned 18, my love about history and travels led me to study **History & Archaeology** at the **university of Ioannina**. During my participation in the excavations on the island of Kythera as an intern, I had the good fortune to meet many foreign scientists and travelers, and soon I realized that there were many stimulating challenges outside the field of archaeology.

About Elena Aggeli - Ancient Olympia Local Expert

Therefore, I decided to make my dream come true and enrolled in the **Public School of Tourist Guides of Corfu**. Along with my studies as a tourist guide, i continued my career as a **field archaeologist**, as well.

For many years, i have split my time on **archaeological research, travels, and tourism**. However, in 2007, I decided to move to **ancient Olympia** and have been living there ever since.

Work Experience:

The long collaborations with top companies in land tours and shore excursions, were the turning point to my career.

Travel Advisor:

I decided to listen to my inner compass and walk my own path. In 2013, I founded with my sister, [The Travel Insiders](#); a tour operator based in **Katakolon**. We specialize in **custom-made shore excursions and private tours**.



About Elena Aggeli - Ancient Olympia Local Expert

Also, we arrange for our guests the **transportation from/to ports, airports, and hotels**, creating a worry-free experience for them and their families.

As a family-run business, we work with families, friends, and groups of various ages, giving everyone the feeling of a family. Our hand-picked private tours and activities promise to bring the travelers closer to the locals and together to create out-of-the-ordinary travel experiences.

Afterall, our motto ... **"trust us as locals as we know best!"** describes exactly what we stand for.

Alongside this project, I started to design my own private tours and activities focused on the fascinating history of **ancient Olympia** and the **Olympic Games**. Through my personal website, [Olympia Insider](http://OlympiaInsider.com), I create **custom itineraries** and run **educational programs** for the visitors of **ancient Olympia** and beyond.

Ancient Olympia has numerous options to choose from that may satisfy even the most demanding visitor regardless the age, the available time, or the background.

Local Licensed Tourist Guide:



About Elena Aggeli - Ancient Olympia Local Expert

As a **local tourist guide**, I have the opportunity to share with my guests the past and present of **Olympia** and help them experience the area like an insider! I offer private tours in Greek, English, Spanish, and ,explore with my guests the artifacts of the **Olympia Museums** and the antiquities of the **Olympic Site** (UNESCO monument).

Ancient Olympia is a pure gem with many unique spots, such as: the area where the **Olympic torch** is lit, the **Olympic track**, the **temple of Zeus** where once, stood one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the statue of Zeus.



Collaborations:

I have had the good fortune and honor to collaborate with the renowned travel Guru, [Matt Barrett](#) since 2018 and be his **GO-TO local expert in Ancient Olympia**.

Furthermore, I maintain close collaboration with various travel companies, members of VIRTUOSO, such as Greece in Style, Dorkas travel, Cudos travel, Kyvernitis travel etc.

Olympia & Children:

My passion for history and love about **children** led me to work closely with travel companies which specialize in family friendly tours. I am the trusted partner of: kids love Greece; Mamakita; Greeking me.

Together we design mythology & kid-oriented programs!

Interesting Facts about the Tourist guides in Greece:

According to the **Greek Law**, only **certified tourist guides by the Ministry of Tourism** may offer tours within the museums, monuments, and sites in Greece. They can be easily recognized by the badge they wear while on a tour.



Learn all about "[Why hire a certified tourist guide](#)"

A. Ancient Olympia

Introduction

Olympia, the playground of the Gods and the heroes of Greek mythology, gave birth to and hosted the **Olympic Games** throughout history. It was also one of the first sites in Greece, included to the listed monuments of the world heritage of **UNESCO** (1980's).

In the heart of the Greek countryside, it is blessed with its fertile land and diverse landscapes. **Ancient Olympia** was once the site of **Zeus'** most magnificent sanctuaries. His **gold and ivory statue**, one of the seven wonders of the world, converted the area into the center of interest in the Ancient World. And now the only place where the **Olympic Flame** is lit each Olympiad.



Don't miss the opportunity to run the ancient track so...on your mark, get set, GO!

A. Ancient Olympia

Location

Located in the **western Peloponnese**, **Ancient Olympia** or just **Olympia**, was an ancient Greek sanctuary dedicated to the worship of **Zeus**. Nowadays, it consists of the **open-air Olympic site**, the **archaeological museum** and the **museum of the history of the ancient Olympics**.

The **Olympic site** is built at the foot of a hill, called **Kronion**, in the valley formed between the Alpheios and the Kladeos rivers. It has the appearance of a big open-air park, full of perennial pine and olive trees and it is the ideal destination for everybody.

Paved trails

connect the **site** to the **museums** and the **parking lots**.



One may also admire the small **botanical garden** with local plant species and herbs which lies in between. Finally, the rest area which is covered by poplar s and seasonal bushes make **ancient Olympia** the perfect escape for the whole family. A must-visit is also the nearby museums, the **archaeological museum**, and the **museum of the history of the ancient Olympics** where one may explore unique artifacts from the excavations at the site.

B. 1. Olympia in a Nutshell – Timeline

In a Nutshell:

Ancient Olympia is the area that hosted the Olympic Games throughout ancient times. Moreover, it is the place where the **Olympic spirit** was born, making the site a unique universal symbol of peace and unity. The idea of balance and ideals of physical and mental harmony were expressed in the best way and accompany us all till the present day.

However, it is important to underline the religious character of the **Olympic Games** which were held in honor of **Zeus**. The origin of the cult and of the festival went back many centuries though, before the official beginning in the 776BC.



Local myths concerning the famous **Pelops**, the first ruler of the region, and the river **Alpheios**, betray the close bonds between the sanctuary and both the East and West.

B. 1. Olympia in a Nutshell – Timeline

Timeline Highlights:

Archaic period (8th - 6th cent. BC.)

It is the era where the great development of the sanctuary began, and the first monumental buildings were added to the site.

- The temple of Hera
- The Prytaneion
- The Bouleuterion
- The Treasuries
- The first Stadium



B. 1. Olympia in a Nutshell – Timeline

Classical period (5th - 4th cent. BC)

The sanctuary continued to flourish with more impressive temples & civic buildings to cover the needs of both the priests, officials, and athletes.

- The temple of Zeus (470-456 BC)
- Baths, stoas
- The workshop of Pheidias
- The stadium - It moved to the east approx. 80 m., outside the Altis



Hellenistic period (323–146 BC)

As the training of the athletes slowly moved from the city of Elis to the Olympic site, athletic facilities were important within the Olympic site.

- The Gymnasium
- The Palaestra

B. 1. Olympia in a Nutshell – Timeline



Roman times (1st cent. BC - 5th cent. AD)

Olympia during the Roman times was converted into a cosmopolitan center and several buildings were refurbished whereas new ones built.

- Hot baths
- Luxurious mansions and villas, such the villa of Nero
- Aqueduct – It facilitated with fresh water the whole site, including the stadium – A donation of Herodes Atticus.

393 AD

The last Olympic Games were held in Olympia. Theodosius I prohibited all pagan festivals including the Olympics and Olympia was abandoned.

B. 1. Olympia in a Nutshell – Timeline

522 & 551 AD

Earthquakes devastate the temple of Zeus and part of the site is being partially buried. Olympia remained forgotten under a layer of silt 5-7 metres deep due to overflow of the rivers Alpheios and Kladeos along with landslides from the hill of Kronos.

Olympia in modern times

Systematic excavations began by the German Archaeological Institute in 1875 and continues to the present. Several monuments of the site are currently under conservation and restoration.



B. 2. Olympia in a Nutshell – Monuments

Olympic site:

The **Olympic site** is a fascinating area to visit for various reasons. Not only did it host exclusively the **Olympics** throughout their long history but also it attracted some of the brightest minds of ancient Greece. Furthermore, none of the monuments were erected at once! The monuments were built slowly, following the evolution of the **Olympics**, thus reflecting their glory!

The heart of Olympia was **Altis** (= olive grove in Greek) and included a series of remarkable monuments.



Pelopeion:

The **Pelopion** was the oldest one, dating back to the 3rd mill. BC. it was a tumulus dedicated to the cult of King Pelops of Pisa, the mythical founder of the Olympics. The tomb is an evidence to the vast history of the area which is older than the one of the Olympics.

B. 2. Olympia in a Nutshell – Monuments

Temple of Hera:

The **temple of Hera** in Olympia was the first monumental construction in the sanctuary and hosted the cult of the couple; not just Hera's. However, this changed when Zeus' temple was built, and Hera remained the sole resident of the temple. It is one of the earliest **Doric** temples in history and its columns reflected the evolution of the Doric style, overall. Originally, they were all made of wood, however, as they



started to rot, they were slowly replaced to stone ones reflecting the style of each era! In modern times, at the **altar** of the **temple of Hera** is hosted the **ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Torch**.



B. 2. Olympia in a Nutshell – Monuments

Temple of Zeus:

The **temple of Zeus** was added in the early 5th century BC. It was built in the center of the **Altis** among dozens of wild olive trees. Even though the architect who built the temple was a local, Livon, his designs were used by the architects of the Parthenon, as well! Thanks to him, the **temple of Zeus** was one of the most famous ones in the whole of Greece.



Treasures:

The **treasuries**, 12 in total, were small temple-like buildings, lying on the slopes of the hill, overlooking the sacred **Altis** and the stadium. They were constructed by powerful Greek city-states to store valuable votive offerings and show case their prestige. Surprisingly, there is not an Athenian treasury!

B. 2. Olympia in a Nutshell – Monuments

Philippeion:

The **Philippeion** was erected in the 4th cent. BC. It was basically a shrine in honor of **Alexander the Great** and his family. His father, Philip II, started it first, however, after he was

assassinated,

Alexander

ordered gold

and ivory statues

of his whole

family and

finished the

construction. It

was partially restored for the **Olympics of 2004**.



Nymphaeum:

The **Nymphaeum** was one of the most impressive monuments in Olympia. It was erected much later than all the other buildings, in the 2nd cent. AD. by **Herodes Atticus**. It solved a crucial problem that Olympia had until then; access to water.

As Olympia spanned a big area, the direct access to drinkable water was limited and wells only covered the needs. The architects piped water from springs outside the **Altis**, ensuring in this way, access to fresh running water.

Outside the **Altis** were gradually added several other buildings that covered the needs of the priests and priestesses, the artists, the renowned visitors, and the athletes.

Olympic Stadium:

The **stadium of Olympia** that the visitors see nowadays is the third one in the row and was constructed in the 5th cent. BC.

B. 2. Olympia in a Nutshell – Monuments

It was a very simple construction without any seat for the spectators. The **Olympic track** was the longest one, 192 meters long and had a capacity of 45,000 spectators. The **ancient Olympic Games**, were conducted within the stadium.



There were two (2) available options to enter the stadium; if you were an athlete or a judge, there was a tunnel connecting the **Altis** to the **stadium**, called the Krypte. The spectators on the other hand, would have access by walking through the area of the **Treasures**.



B. 2. Olympia in a Nutshell – Monuments

Workshop of Pheidias:

In the 5th cent. BC. **Pheidias**, the Athenian artist, was invited to Olympia and the locals assigned to him a very important project; to create a **statue of Zeus**.

For the above reason, a **workshop** was constructed within a very small distance from the temple, however, outside the sacred Altis.

Pheidias worked in his **workshop** for several years and the result of his efforts was a **gold and ivory statue** which was centuries later, characterized as one of **seven (7) Wonders** of the Ancient World.

The statue represented **Zeus** sitting on his throne, holding the symbol of his authority; a scepter, crowned by an eagle.



learn more about the [Gold-and-Ivory statue of Zeus](https://www.olympiainsider.com/gold-and-ivory-statue-of-zeus)



B. 2. Olympia in a Nutshell – Monuments

Gymnasium & Palaestra:

There were no **athletic facilities** within the **Olympic site** until the 3rd cent. BC., underlining the religious character of the event. However, while the **Olympics** evolved and attracted more participation, a small "**Olympic village**" made its appearance on the west of the site, next to the river Kladeos. The **gymnasium** that hosted the preparation of the **running**, the **disk** and the **javelin throw**, is what visitors face once in **Olympia**.

However, the **Palaestra**, adjacent to the **Gymnasium**, is in better condition as it was partially restored. As its names indicates, the **Palaestra** hosted the preparation of the **wrestlers (-pali in Greek)** and the **long jumpers**.



Ancient Olympia Museums

Introduction

Just a stone's throw away from the Olympic site are the two museums of Ancient Olympia that promise to satisfy even the most demanding visitors of all ages.

1. Archaeological Museum:

The building:

The **Archaeological Museum of Olympia** or as the locals call it, the **New Museum**, is one of the most important archaeological museums in Greece. Built in the late 1970's and inaugurated by Melina Mercouri, it covered the need to host the abundance of findings and unique artifacts from the excavations at the Olympic site and the surrounding areas. In its three (3) wings is revealed the fascinating history of Ancient Olympia before the eyes of the visitor through its unique exhibits. Everything is ORIGINAL and they are arranged in the wings in a chronological order.



Olympia Museums

1. Archaeological Museum

The Highlights of the Olympia Archaeological Museum:

Bronze collection:

The **Archaeological Museum** presents the rich bronze collection of helmets, weaponry, and cauldrons.



Terracotta collection:

The large terracotta collection is also noteworthy covering the first centuries of life of Ancient Olympia.

The pediments of the Temple of Zeus:

The **sculpted pediments of the Temple of Zeus** which cover the central gallery of



the museum, offer the visitor an awe feeling the moment he stares at them. They were sculpted in marble from the island of Paros and reflect the glory of the 5th cent. BC, impressing the visitor with their good condition.

They represent the foundational myth of the Olympic Games and a Centauromachy!

Olympia Museums

1. Archaeological Museum

Nike of Paionios:



The marble over life sized statue of **Nike**, which dates in the late 5th cent. BC. Is one of the most imposing exhibits of the museum. It was made by **Paionios** and was placed opposite the

entrance of the temple of Zeus on top of a tall pedestal. It represented the **goddess of Victory**, Nike, winged, descending to Olympia to crown the Olympic victors.

Hermes of Praxiteles:

The marble statue of **Hermes**, one of the most famous sculptures attributed to Praxiteles is the masterpiece of the Archaeological museum. Covering an entire gallery, it may be the only



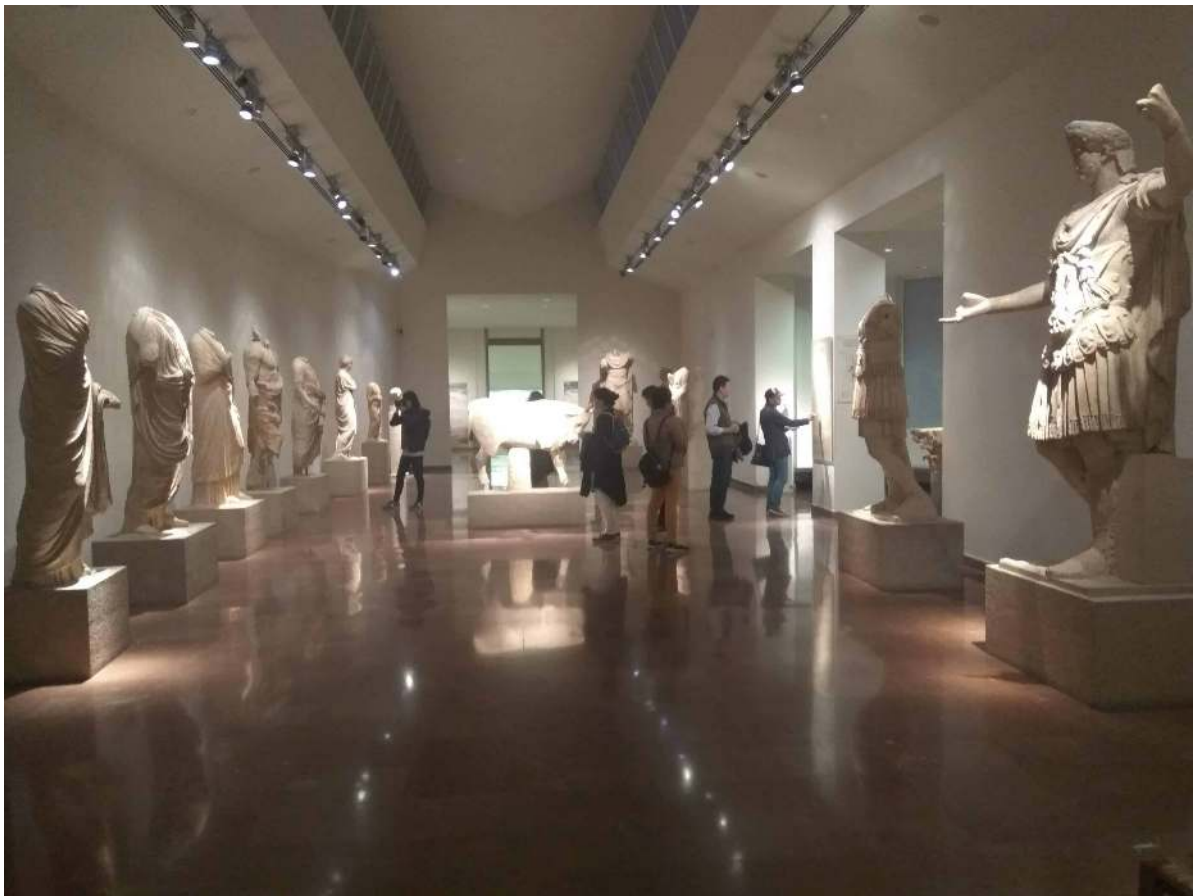
surviving artwork of **Praxiteles**. Dating in the 4th cent BC, it was sculpted entirely in Parian marble and represents Hermes holding in his arms **baby Dionysus**.

Olympia Museums

1. Archaeological Museum

Sculptures of Roman Emperors:

The impressive **sculptures of Roman Emperors**, once used as the decoration of **the aqueduct of Herodes Atticus** at the Olympic site, now they are exhibited in the last wing of the museum. They unfold the history and art of the last centuries of the Olympics and they reveal the secrets of the Roman art.



Olympic site model:

Once you enter the archaeological museum, the Olympic site model stands right before you. The model that replicates the entire archaeological site, offers the opportunity to imagine how the **Olympic site** would look like in the ancient times.

Olympia Museums

1. Archaeological Museum

Good to know:

Opening Hours:

Monday - Sunday: 08.00 - 15.00 – Winter season (variable).

Monday - Sunday: 08.00 - 20.00 – Summer season.

Admission:

Regular: 12€, Reduced: 6€

Valid for: Archaeological Museum of Olympia, Olympic Games Site, Museum of the History of the Olympic Games.

⚠ Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors.

Restrictions:

- Pets are not allowed within the museum.
- Flash on cameras needs to be deactivated.
- Disrespectful posing is not allowed.

Museum shop:

There is a bookstore and a gift shop available to the visitors, following the opening hours of the museum.

Disabled:

The Archaeological museum, the museum shop and the water closets (W/C) are accessible for disabled.

Ancient Olympia Museums

2. The Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games

The building:

The Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games or the Old Museum as it is usually called by the locals is the architectural gem of Ancient Olympia. Resting at the top of a low hill next to the main parking lot of the Olympic site, it is surrounded by perennial pine trees and overlooks the Olympic site. It was the first museum which was erected during the period of the excavations as an attempt to host the antiquities found on site.

Its construction, in the late 1800, was a donation by the Greek benefactor Andreas Syngros and reflects in a beautiful way the principles of the Neoclassical style.



Once the visitor enters the museum, he has immediately the feeling of visiting a living ancient temple! A robust wooden roof crowns the entire building and creates a feeling of aweness with all the exhibits arranged in the three (3) main wings.

Olympia Museums

2. Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics

The exhibition Consists of a plethora of art that covers a wide chronological range. There is a mixture of original art crafts and copies of statues which all together unfold the vast history of the Ancient Olympics and their great impact.

The Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics is ideal for families with children. All the exhibits are presented in a thematic way and cover a wide range of the history not only of the Olympic games but also of similar major athletic and religious events around Greece.

The Highlights of the Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics

The Olympic events:

What would the main **Olympic events** be? The central gallery is dedicated to the main events of **the Ancient Olympics**, such as: the running, the jumping, the javelin, the discus throw, the long jump and the equestrian events.



Olympia Museums

2. Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics

The prizes:

What would the prize be in the Ancient Olympics? Who would offer the Olympic victors the prize? These are some of the topics covered in the gallery following the central one. A copy of the **statue of Nike introduces to the visitor, the believes of the ancients according to which Nike, the Goddess of Victory** would be the one crowning the Olympic victors with an **olive wreath**; the symbolic prize in the Ancient Olympics.

Women in the Ancient Olympics:

Were women allowed to compete in the Ancient Olympics? Could they watch them? The role of the women in Ancient times remains one of the most interesting topics till the present. Even though women could not compete in the Ancient Olympics, they would use the Olympic stadium to organize, host and celebrate their own games. They were called the **Heraean Games**, and they were in honor of Goddess **Hera**.



What was the typical training of an Olympic athlete like?

The **Olympic athletes** were the superheroes of the ancient people and they were treated like that. They were all male and aristocrats, however their training was long and strenuous and required great commitment. They have a unique and beautiful collection of the personal tools of the Olympic athletes (scrapers, aryballi), tools they would use for their hygiene and metallic plates with their names inscribed on them.

Olympia Museums

2. Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics

How would the spectators experience the Olympics?

The **Ancient Olympic Games** were open to the public and free of admission, therefore, they attracted thousands of visitors from all the ancient Greek city-states. For them, watching the Olympics was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and above all, a great opportunity to worship their Gods and interact with other people.

Every single visitor would bring animals and buy ex-votosto offer them to their Gods . **Ancient Olympia** has the biggest collection of ever found on Greek site.votive offerings A collection not to be missed!

Who was the founder of the Ancient Olympic Games?

There are several different tales on how the **Ancient Olympics** began, and that is exactly presented in one of the galleries of the museum. Through the ancient ceramic vases and figurines found in the area and the surroundings the visitor is initiated to the myths and legends about the beginning of the Olympics. The most popular ones focus on prince **Pelops** who defeated the king of Elis in a chariot race and **Hercules**.

Were there other events like the Olympics?

The **Ancient Olympics** were not the only religious event in Ancient times. The last wing of the **Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics** is dedicated to the three (3) other major **Panhellenic events** of the Ancient Greeks; the **Pythian Games** in Delpgi, the **Isthmian Games** in Corinth, the **Nemean Games** in Nemea. Furthermore, the visitor may enjoy a tribute section to the **Panathenaic Games**, the local games of the Athenians.

Olympia Museums

2. Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics

Good to know:

Admission: Regular: 12€, Reduced: 6€

Valid for: Archaeological Museum of Olympia, Olympic Games Site, Museum of the History of the Olympic Games.

⚠ Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors.

Monday - Sunday: 08.00 - 15.00 – Winter season (variable).

Monday - Sunday: 08.00 - 20.00 – Summer season.

Restrictions:

- Pets are not allowed within the museum.
- Flash on cameras needs to be deactivated
- Disrespectful posing is not allowed.

Disabled:

The **Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games** and the water closets (WC) are accessible for disabled.

Contact:

Seventh Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities

☎ +30 26240 29119

Olympia Museums

3. Museum of Ancient Greek Technology - Archimedes museum

International Awards: European Museum of the Year 2019

The Museum of ancient Greek technology is a unique thematic museum in Greece and operates under the auspices of the municipality of Ancient Olympia.

It is also called as the "**Archimedes museum**" as a big part of the exhibition is a dedicated to the Mathematician, Physicist, Engineer, Astronomer and Inventor, **Archimedes**. However, it is not the typical museum one should expect. In a 2-storey building in the main street of the village of Ancient Olympia, the visitor has the opportunity to discover the ancient Greek world, to enjoy live demonstrations of the ancient Greek devices and inventions and above all, to interact with the exhibits.

The phrase that best describes this museum is "**how it was all done**" and this was exactly the goal of Mr. **Kostas Kotsanas** who is the man behind this unique



project as all the exhibits have been constructed by him, through 20 years of assiduous research and study.

The exhibits range from the catapults used by Alexander the Great, the first clock, Plato's alarm clock and the first automatic vending machine to the first robot, the first "cinema" and the first computing device in history, covering the period from 2000 BC to the end of the ancient Greek world.

Olympia Museums

3. Museum of Ancient Greek Technology - Archimedes museum

Good to know:

Admission:

It varies as it is a private collection.

It is recommended to contact prior to visit.

Opening hours:

Daily: 10:00-20:00 - April 1st - September 30th

Daily: 10:00-15:00 - October 1st - March 31st

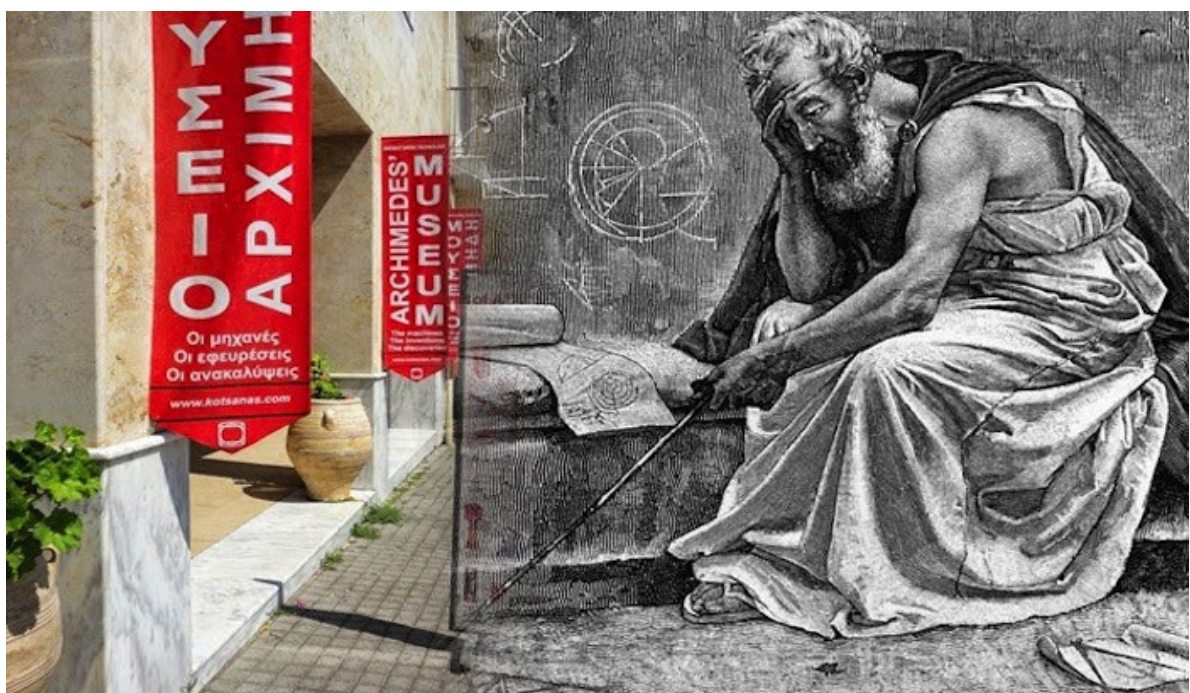
Disabled: The Museum of Ancient Greek Technology is accessible for disabled.

Contact:

Konstantinos Kotsanas

✉ kkotsanas@hotmail.com

☎ +30 6931831530



Other Museums

1. Museum of Ancient Greek Musical Instruments and Toys & Games

KATAKOLON

This fascinating museum, located next to the **Katakolon** church, houses a number of ancient **Greek musical instruments and toys**. The visitor may admire the ancient Greek instruments and observe the harp of Sappho who played as she recited her renowned poems. Also, he will learn all about the myth



of Hermes' lyre and witness the grandeur of Appollo's guitar. A Having a rich audio visual material, the museum is a unique experience for everyone.

Good to know:

Location:

Port of Katakolon

Admission:

It varies as it is a private collection –It is necessary to contact the museum prior to visit.

Contact:

Konstantinos Kotsanas

✉ kkotsanas@hotmail.com

☎ +30 6931831530

Other Museums

2. Archaeological Museum of Pyrgos

PYRGOS

The **Archaeological Museum of Pyrgos** is one of the best-preserved examples of **Neoclassical architecture** in the western Peloponnese. It used to be the city's marketplace.

Therefore, it is recommended to enjoy a walk around before entering since only a pedestrian street separates it from the main square of the city. It was one of **Ernst Ziller's** architectural accomplishments and now houses many impressive finds from this prefecture.



The exhibition is arranged in themes with rich visual explanatory material. Up to 1,000 artefacts dating from 3,000 BC to the 19th century, are exhibited in the galleries of the museum.

Other Museums

2. Archaeological Museum of Pyrgos

Good to know:

Admission: Regular: 4€, Reduced: 2€

Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors.

Opening Hours:

Daily: 08:00-15:00 - Winter season

Daily: 08:00-20:00 – Summer season

Disabled: The Archaeological Museum of Pyrgos is accessible for disabled.

Contact

Ephorate of Antiquities of Ilia

☎ +30 2621 020475



Other Museums

3. Archaeological Museum of Ancient Elis

AMALIADA

The **Archaeological Museum of Ancient Elis** was built in the early 2000, a few hundred meters away from the main archaeological site. Its location, on top of a low hill, enjoys a beautiful view over the fertile **valley of Elis** and underlines the significance of the area in the ancient times.

The exhibition of the museum reveals to public vases, statues, sculptures, tombstones, figurines, which were kept in storage rooms for decades. Its architectural approach is very interesting as it is fully harmonized with the exterior landscape.

Combine with:

Combine your visit with the **archaeological site of Elis** in the outskirts of the town of Amaliada.

Ancient Elis was the organizer city of the Olympics in ancient times throughout their long history and hosted the athletes during their preparation.

Nowadays, unfortunately there are only sparse remains of the ancient **city of Elis** which lies in the heart of the fertile valley of Ilia. Until a few decades ago, due to the extensive cultivation of the area the archaeological site was severely damaged.

.However, the continuous efforts of the locals, led to the systematic excavations of the site which have revealed an



important part of the **city of Elis** and its beautiful **theater**; one of the must-see!

Other Museums

3. Archaeological Museum of Ancient Elis

The small **open-air theater** lies very close to the archaeological site, and In the summer time hosts a festival.

Drive further up and enjoy a walk to the **dam** and the **artificial lake of the mythical Pineios river**.

Wrap up your tour in ancient Elis with a stop at the small village of **Augeion**. According to the Greek mythology, one of the **labors of Hercules** took place in that small village; **the Augean Stables**. Don't miss the opportunity to strike a pose next to the life-sized statue of Hercules, placed at the village!



Good to know:

Admission: Regular: 2€, Reduced: 1€

Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors.

Opening hours:

Daily 08:00-15:00 - Winter season

Daily 08:00-20:00 - Summer season

Disabled: The Archaeological Museum of Elis and the water closets (W/C) are accessible for disabled.

Contact:

Ephorate of Antiquities of Ilia

☎ +30 2622 041501

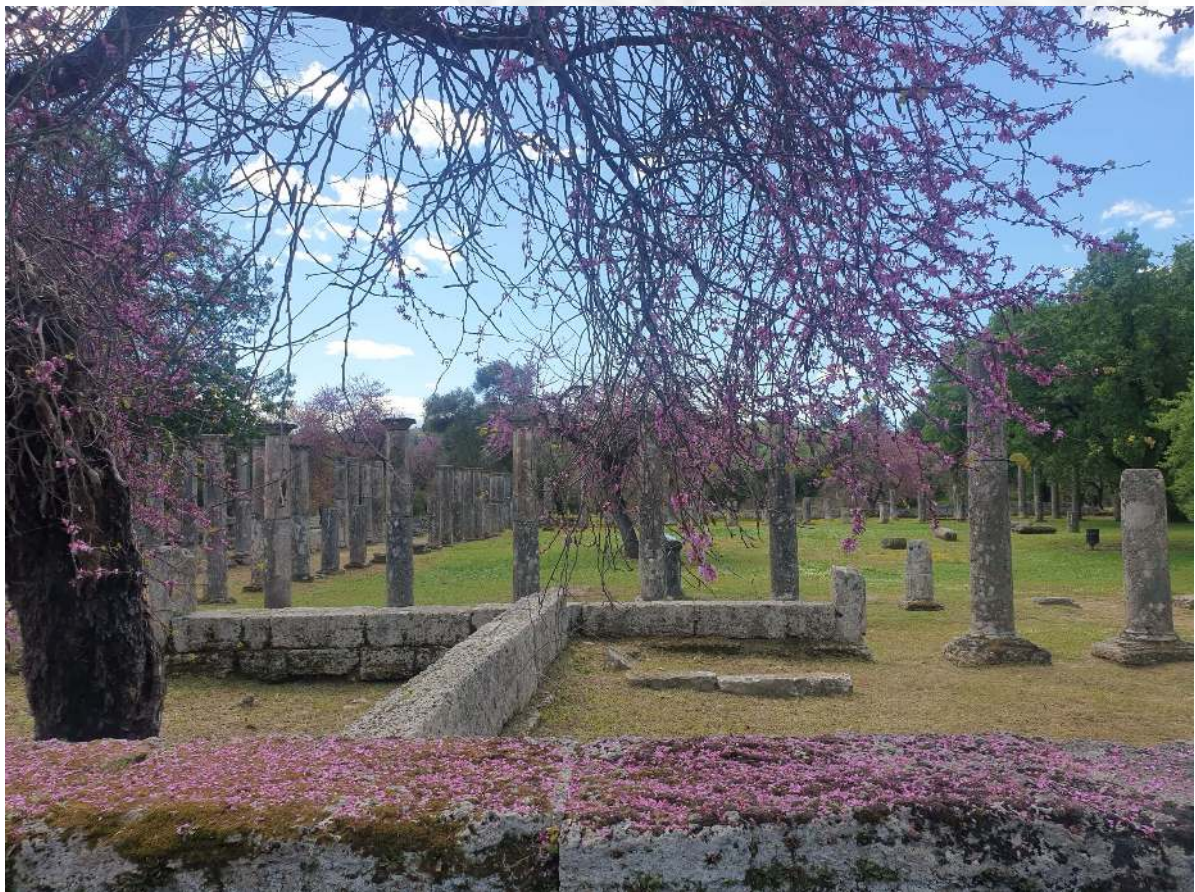
FAQ'S about Ancient Olympia

Where is ancient Olympia?

Ancient Olympia lies in western Peloponnese, in the beautiful valley formed by the river Alpheios and Kladeos. The rivers form its natural boundaries and for many centuries one of them, river Alpheios was navigable.

Is Olympia a UNESCO HERITAGE monument?

Ancient Olympia is one of the most important archaeological sites in Greece, listed in the **UNESCO HERITAGE** monuments since the late 1980's and looks like an open-air archaeological park, covered by shady trees.



FAQ'S about Ancient Olympia

Where does the name Olympia come from?

The tradition has it that the name Olympia, among many other theories, is related to the Mount Olympus, in Northern Greece, the house of the Gods. According to another theory, the name is related to a prehistoric Goddess, named Olympia, worshipped in the area.

Was Olympia the organizer city of the ancient Olympics?

Unlike what many people believe, **Ancient Olympia** was never a city, therefore, the **organization of the Olympic Games** was never under its jurisdiction. It was and remained a venerated sanctuary in honor of the Olympian god Zeus, the father of the gods, throughout its long history. It was the site where the Olympic Games were conducted every four (4) years in honor of the Olympian god Zeus.

The city which was responsible for the organization of the ancient **Olympic Games** and hosted the athletes for their preparation was **Ancient Elis**, approximately 60km north of **Olympia**.

When did the Olympic Games begin?

The first recorded Ancient Olympics were held in the 776 BC. However, according to ancient finds and settlements located on the southern foot of the hill of Kronos, there was human activity in the area since the 3rd millennium BC.

At what time of the year were the ancient Olympics organized?

The Ancient Olympics were always held in the summertime, somewhere between July and August. Even though, the Ancient Greeks did not have a fixed date to celebrate them, they adopted a precise way to count the time. The Games would begin after the second full moon after the summer solstice!

FAQ'S about Ancient Olympia

Were the Olympic athletes professionals?

For a long time, the athletes maintained an amateur status. However, slowly, professional level was introduced to the Olympics, especially after the 4th cent. BC.

What was the prize in the ancient Olympics?

The prize offered to the Olympic victors was a symbolic one; an olive wreath. Did you know that the olive trees were considered as the sacred trees of Zeus? No wonder Olympia is full of wild olive trees. However, only the first one of each event would enjoy this honor!



What was the purpose of the Olympic Games?

The Olympic Games always maintained a religious character; the purpose was simple but crucial; to honor Zeus! They never had a mere athletic character. Moreover, a political perspective was added to the objectives as soon as the quadrennial festival acquired a national character, and the Olympic Truce was established.

FAQ'S about Ancient Olympia

What was the Olympic Truce about and when was it established?

the **sacred truce** or ekecheiria was a powerful institution which was established by the kings **Iphitos**, **Kleosthenes** and **Lykourgos**. According to it, all hostilities had to cease for the **Olympic Games**. Furthermore, the weapons were forbidden within the Olympic site. This remains the essence of the Olympic spirit till the present day. The sense of unity of peace!

When and why did the Olympic Games stop?

The last Olympics were held in 393 AD. It was the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius abolished them. They were characterized as a pagan event, offending the Christian values.

Who gives us information about the history of the ancient Olympics?

As Olympia was a **Panhellenic** center, it attracted the most powerful and prestigious figures of the antiquity. Therefore, there is an abundance of information regarding the history of the **ancient Olympics**. However, one of the most precised one, comes from **Pausanias**, a geographer who lived in the 2nd cent. AD. His detailed descriptions are an invaluable source for the study of the history of the **ancient Olympics**.

When did the excavations begin at the Olympic site ?

A few centuries after the Olympic games came to an end, Olympia was abandoned and slowly covered in mud and silt by the rivers. There were several attempts by travelers of the Medieval Times to unearth the site, however, it was the French Scientific Expedition of the Peloponnese in 1829 that partially excavated the Temple of Zeus. Systematic excavations began a little later, in the late 19th cent. by the German Archaeological Institute in collaboration with the Greek State and they continue till the present.

FAQ'S about Ancient Olympia

When & where did the modern Olympics begin?

The first Olympic Games revived in 1896 and were held in the Panathenaic Stadium of Athens, after the initiative of the French Pierre de Coubertin.

When & Where is the Olympic flame lit?

The ceremony of the **Lighting of the Olympic Torch** is a modern event and it never occurred in Ancient times. It was established for the first time in 1936, for the **Olympics** in **Berlin**. Since then, regardless of where the Olympics are hosted nowadays, the ceremony of the Lighting of the Olympic Torch is always held in **Ancient Olympia**, at the altar of the temple Hera.



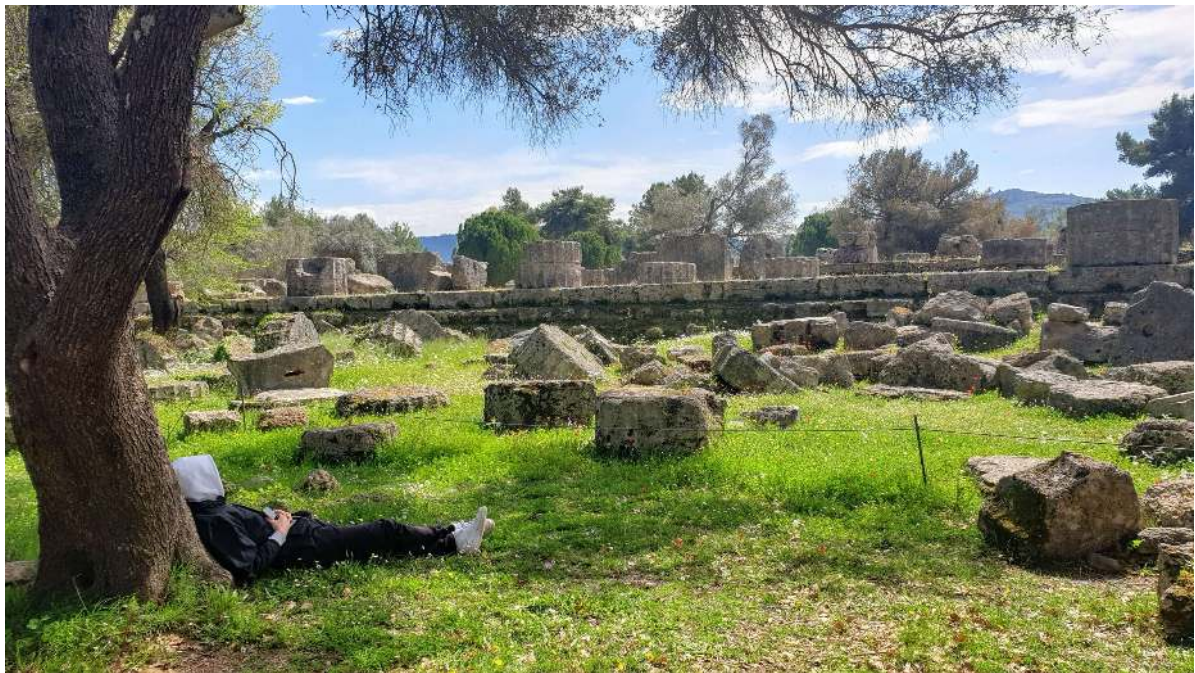
There is not a fixed date where the ceremony is held. The time is subject to the date of the beginning of the **Olympics**. However, the event is open to public and it is held both for the Winter and Summer Olympics, as well.

FAQ'S about Ancient Olympia

When is the best time to visit Olympia?

Ancient Olympia is an **all-year-round destination** and can be very crowded during the busy months of the summer (June, July, August), the weekends, and the public holidays. Also, you should expect herds of tourists in days where cruise ships dock to the port of Katakolon.

However, there is a way to avoid the crowds and get the most of your time in Olympia hassle free. Prefer an **afternoon visit** where it is much less crowded, it is cooler, and the sun light is ideal to capture great pictures!



Plan your visit to Ancient Olympia

How to get to Olympia:

Olympia is an easily accessible site whether you are staying at one of the seaside or mountain hotels of the region or driving from another city.

It is less than 4 hours' drive from **Athens**, following the national highway and approximately 1 ½ hour from the city of **Patras**, or **Kalamata**.

Furthermore, it is close to the **airport** of **Kalamata** as well as the airport of **Araxos** where there is a connection to mostly European and Balkan countries in the summertime.

If you prefer to visit Olympia by **bus**, there are numerous daily buses connected to Olympia.

Another option for getting to Olympia is to book a **private tour sightseeing tour** that provide both transportation and guiding services.

For more information, you may contact [The Travel Insiders](#), a local tour operator, that offers private sightseeing tours and shore excursions in Olympia and the surrounding areas.

Plan your visit to Ancient Olympia

What to bring to Olympia:

Once in **Olympia**, it is good to have with you a bottle of water, sunscreen, and a hat, even though there are plenty of shady trees in the Olympic site. It is also recommended to wear comfy walking shoes, as the surface is quite uneven and there are pebbles on the ground.



Extra tip: Have a packet of tissues – there are two (2) water closets (WC) at the site and one (1) more at the museum, which are clean and free to the public. However, the tissue is not a guarantee always.

Plan your visit to Ancient Olympia

Where to park in Olympia:

There are two (2) public parking lots in **ancient Olympia** where visitors are free to vehicle their vehicle without any charge. One is close to the Olympic site and the second one, close to the archaeological museum. Both the archaeological site and museum are within walking distance from the parking lots and the modern town, Olympia.



Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia

Where to buy the entry tickets in Olympia:

You can purchase your **entry ticket** either from the Olympic site or at any of the two (2) museums of **ancient Olympia**. It is a **combined ticket** that grants entry to the **Olympic site**, archaeological museum, and the museum of the history of the **ancient Olympic Games**.

All credit card cards are accepted however, ticket reservation or online purchase is not available for the time being.

Important info: It is highly recommended to keep the ticket throughout the visit.

Ancient Olympia Restrictions:

Ancient Olympia looks like an open-air park. However, as a **WORLD HERITAGE UNESCO monument**, there are certain restrictions that all visitors are required to comply with:

- **Pets are not allowed within the Olympic site nor in any of the museums**
- **Vehicles are not permitted within the Olympic park which includes the Olympic site and the archaeological museum.**
- **Smoking is forbidden within the monuments**
- **Pictures are allowed; however, the flash needs to be deactivated during the visit in the museums.**
- **Disrespectful posing is not allowed nor does the standing on top of the ruins**
- **Food, drinks, and refreshments are forbidden within the monuments of Ancient Olympia, except water.**

Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia

Rest areas - Caf  s:

Make the most of your visit in Olympia by resting and enjoying a picnic under the shade of the poplars in the rest area between the Olympic site and the archaeological museum.

The former parking lot of Olympia was converted into a beautiful rest area with a small caf  , usually open during the summer season.

Further up, you may explore the native flora by enjoying a walk in the small **Olympic Botanical Garden**. It was created after the devastating fires of 2007 and all the herbs, flowers, and trees planted in the garden, were chosen following the descriptions of the ancient traveler Pausanias.

Have a thorough look on the descriptive signs that offer valuable information about the local flora of **Ancient Olympia** and experience the history of the site from another perspective.



Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia

Alternatively, a stroll at the small nearby **modern village of Olympia** will certainly reward you. At the modern village of Olympia there is an abundance of gift shops, cafe's and cute little taverns where you enjoy a lunch or just a snack. If you are an art lover, a stop at the bookstore "GALLERY ORPHEE" is a must!

How much time to spend in Olympia:

Ancient Olympia is like an open-air archaeological park where vehicles are not allowed. Therefore, if you wish to explore both the Olympic site and the museums, make sure to have enough time ahead as three (3) hours is the average time required to cover all the highlights of Olympia.

Getting around Ancient Olympia:

The easiest way to start your tour is by visiting first the **archaeological museum**. There, you may purchase your ticket which is valid for the whole area. Also, the **model** at the entrance of the museum will help you imagine how the Olympic site looked like in the ancient times and help you while in the Olympic site.

Then, you may continue to the **Olympic site** which is a 5-minute walk. There, you may follow a circular route to cover all the highlights of the Olympic site.

AVAILABLE OLYMPIC SITE MAP BELOW- p.52

It is very impressive to be able to walk through the ruins of the **Olympic site** and see from up close the efforts of the archaeologists regarding the maintenance and the restoration of the monuments.

Also, don't hesitate to visit the **museum of the History of the ancient Olympic Games**, lying next to the parking lot of the site. As it is a small museum, your visit should not exceed the 30'.

Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia

Olympic site map:



1. Gymnasium - No 20
2. Palestra - No 21
3. Workshop of Pheidias - No 24
4. Temple of Zeus - No 15
5. Stadium - No 10
6. Treasuries - No 8
7. Temple of Hera - No 4
8. Philippeion - No 3

Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia

Ancient Olympia & Children:

If you are visiting ancient Olympia with your family, make sure to spend enough time at the Olympic stadium and run in the ancient Olympic track! Imagine the ancient athletes training and performing in the same stadium 3000 years ago! Crown your children Olympic victors by making olive wreaths and strike beautiful poses at the podium of the stadium!



You may contact the [local tour guide](#), Mrs. Elena Aggeli for more information about a kid-friendly guided tour in ancient Olympia.

Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia

Touring Ancient Olympia:

Ancient Olympia is an exciting area for everyone, and it is considered as a bucket list destination. **The sites are well signed** in three (3) different languages; Greek, English, German. Also, you may find an information leaflet about Ancient Olympia at the ticket kiosks.

In addition, **private guided tours** are offered in multiple languages by **the local certified tourist guides**.

Hiring **a certified tourist guide** is the only way to enjoy the experience of a guided tour within the Olympic site, as in Greece, only **certified tour guides by the Greek Ministry of Tourism** are authorized to conduct tours within archaeological sites and museums.

Also, if you need to choose between the two (2) museums of Ancient Olympia, spend more time at the **museum of the History of the Ancient Olympics**. The thematic arrangement of the exhibits of the **museum of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games** will make the visit for the children far more entertaining and educational!

Furthermore, a **private tourist guide** will offer you the opportunity to learn about the local history and culture in-depth and in a fun way. Especially if you are **travelling with young children** or have **limited time**, then a local tour guide can be a valuable ally!

You may contact the local tour guide, Ms. Elena Aggeli, [Olympia Insider](#), for more information about a private guided tour in ancient Olympia.

Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia - Admission

Ticket Admission:

Regular: 12€

Reduced: 6€

- Citizens within the EU over 65 years old (Required: ID card or passport)
- Non-EU citizens up to 25 years old (Required: ID card or passport)

Free:

- EU citizens up to 25 years old (Required: ID card or passport)
- Non-EU citizens under the age of 5 years old (Required: Passport)

Valid for: Archaeological Museum of Olympia, Olympic Games Site, Museum of the History of the Olympic Games.

Free admission days:

- March 6th (in memory of Melina Mercouri)
- June 5th (International Environment Day)
- April 18th (International Monuments Day)
- May 18th (International Museums Day)
- The last weekend of September annually (European Heritage Days)
- Every first Sunday from November 1st to March 31st

National Holidays - Closed to the public:

- January 1st
- March 25th
- Good Friday: 12.00 - 17.00
- May 1st
- Easter Sunday
- December 25th
- December 26th



Plan your Visit to Ancient Olympia - Useful Contacts

Useful Contacts:

- Town Hall of ancient Olympia:

☎ +30 26240 22250

- Olympic site:

☎ +30 26240 22517

- Health Center:

☎ +30 2624022222

- Police Station:

☎ +30 2624022100

- Taxi Station:

☎ +30 2624022555

Travel Agency:

The Travel Insiders - High Standard Travel Services in Greece

☎ +30 6972 297 477

✉ info@the-travel-insiders.com

🌐 www.the-travel-insiders.com

Guiding services:

Olympia Insider - Your local tourguide in Ancient Olympia & beyond

☎ +30 6972 297 477 (WhatsApp)

✉ elena@olympiainsider.com

🌐 www.olympiainsider.com

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

A. The Ultimate Olympia Experience - Olympic site & museum private tour

Pick-up/Drop-off: Available upon request

Destination: Ancient Olympia

Duration: Half day

Guiding services: Included

Type of tour: Private Tours

Minimum participation: -

Theme: Kid Friendly, Sightseeing, Walking tour

Transportation: Available upon request – VIP vehicles, fully a/c

In a Nutshell:

Explore Ancient Olympia like never before! Come along on a trip back in time to the myths and legends of the site that gave birth the Olympics!

A scenic drive through the Greek countryside will take you to Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games throughout ancient times. Olympia, one of the monuments of the world heritage of UNESCO, has the appearance of a park. Along with your local tour guide, visit the highlights of the site, such as the athletic facilities, the temples, and the Olympic stadium.



Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

A. The Ultimate Olympia Experience - Olympic site & museum private tour

The Highlights:

- Share your thoughts about the wonders of the ancient world under the shady trees – one of them was here!!! The golden and ivory statue of Zeus was once housed in the Temple.
- Admire the ancient training facilities.
- Don't miss out on seeing the place where the Olympic flame is lit.
- Grasp the opportunity to run the Olympic track!
- The museum is a real revelation. Situated at a 5-minute walking distance from the archeological site, it houses the antiquities found during the excavations of the site. Everything is ORIGINAL

Inclusions:

- Guided tour by a certified tourist guide by the Greek Ministry of Tourism
- Sanitizers, non-surgical masks

Exclusions:

- Entrance fees of the Olympic site/museum
- lunch
- Gratuities

Admission:

General : 12€ per person

Reduced: 6€ per person

Free: EU citizens under 25yo / Non-EU citizens under 5yo

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

A. The Ultimate Olympia Experience - Olympic site & museum private tour

⚠ Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors.

GALLERY:



Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

B. A visit to a world-awarded Olive Oil Press & Olive Oil Workshop – Hands-on Experience

Pick-up/Drop-off: Available upon request

Destination: Ancient Olympia

Duration: Half day

Type of tour: Private Tours

Guiding services: Included

Theme: Culinary Experience, Kid Friendly, Sightseeing

⚠ Minimum participation: 4 persons (For smaller or larger groups, please contact)

Transportation: Available upon request – VIP vehicles, fully a/c

In a Nutshell:

Olive oil, or "liquid gold" as Homer described it, is one of the main secrets of longevity and a significant part of the Greek culture.

On your Olympia Olive-Oil Workshop Experience you will be introduced to the **cultivation** of olive trees and **olive oil production** in Greece by visiting local olive grove and a world awarded olive press.

Learn to identify flavors, aromas and quality olive oil through discussions and a **hands-on tasting experience** in a local olive oil press under the guidance of a local olive oil producer.

Recognize what qualities make olive oil perfect in a manner of appearance and tasting balance; then, practice your new skills on a wide variety of premium extra-virgin olive oil and olives.

We guarantee you will never look at olive oil the same again!

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

B. A visit to a world-awarded Olive Oil Press & Olive Oil Workshop – Hands-on Experience

The Highlights:

- A visit to an olive grove
- A visit to an olive grove
- Guided tour through the facilities
- Olive oil workshop
- Olive oil tasting/ Different local varieties, accompanied by a platter of local
- appetizers

Inclusions:

- Hands-on experience
- Guided tour throughout the program
- Sanitizers, non-surgical masks
- Drinks, snacks, appetizers (as mentioned on the above description)
- A "SURPRISE" gift bag exclusively for our guests

Exclusions:

- Gratuities

Combine this local Experience with:

Combine this authentic urban experience with a visit to the **unique Olympic site**, once the most important religious and athletic center in Greece. Ancient Olympia was once the home of Zeus' most magnificent sanctuaries which has earned its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Olympic site admission:

General : 12€ per person

Reduced: 6€ per person

Free: EU citizens under 25yo / Non-EU citizens under 5yo

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

B. A visit to a world-awarded Olive Oil Press & Olive Oil Workshop – Hands-on Experience

⚠ Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors

Good to know:

The harvesting of the olives and the production of the fresh extra virgin olive oil takes place between November and January of each year, however, if you are visiting the area in a different period, you will get the chance to learn all about the procedure and see the machinery used.

GALLERY



Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

C. Olympic site & Marble Workshop – From the workshop of Phidias to a modern sculptor's studio - Hands-on Experience

Pick-up/Drop-off: Available upon request

Destination: Ancient Olympia

Duration: Half day

Guiding services: Included

Type of tour: Private Tours

Minimum participation: -

Theme: Sightseeing, kid-friendly, local crafts

Transportation: Available upon request – VIP vehicles, fully a/c

In a Nutshell:

The best way to experience Olympia is by combining a visit to the ancient Olympic site, once the most important religious and athletic center in Greece, and then veering off the beaten path to the workshop of one of the conservators of the Olympic site for a hands-on marble experience. Walk through the impressive ruins which gave birth to the most important athletic event of all times - the Olympic Games – and now the only place where the Olympic Flame is lit for each Olympiad.

Pay attention to the hard work of the people working on the restoration project of the site and the best part of the program; Meet one in person and learn all about the exciting secrets of the art of sculpture. Enjoy a private tour by the artist and see his personal collection of tools and equipment.

You will have the opportunity to meet the man who was behind some of the major restoration projects in Greece, such as the Acropolis and the Olympic site.

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

C. Olympic site & Marble Workshop – From the workshop of Phidias to a modern sculptor's studio - Hands-on Experience

The Highlights:

- A Visit to the Archaeological Site of Olympia where the Olympic Idea was born.
- A guided tour by a certified tourist guide to discover the land where the Olympic torch is lit. and the Olympic stadium.
- An opportunity to run the Olympic track where Hercules first participated and make an olive wreath.
- A visit to a modern marble workshop, hosted in historical building.
- An opportunity to practice on a piece of stone or clay to create your own souvenir.

Inclusions:

- Guided tour within the Olympic site by a certified tourist guide by the Greek Ministry of Tourism
- A visit to a marble workshop
- Guided tour through the facilities and the personal collection of the artist
- Welcome drink
- Sanitizers, non-surgical masks
- Hand-on experience
- A "SURPRISE" gift bag exclusively for our guests

Exclusions:

- Entrance fees of the Olympic site/museum workshop
- Fees for the Marble workshop
- Gratuities

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

C. Olympic site & Marble Workshop – From the workshop of Phidias to a modern sculptor's studio - Hands-on Experience

Olympic site Admission:

General : 12€ per person

Reduced: 6€ per person

Free: EU citizens under 25yo / Non-EU citizens under the age of 5yo

⚠ Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors

Gallery:



Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

D. Become an Archaeologist for a Day – Olympic site & Educational program - Hands-on Experience

Pick-up/Drop-off: Available upon request

Destination: Ancient Olympia

Duration: Half day

Type of tour: Private Tours

Theme: Kid Friendly Tours, Sightseeing

Transportation: Available upon request – VIP vehicles, fully a/c

In a Nutshell:

What is archaeology? Do archaeologists dig for dinosaurs?

Looking for a fun, educational tour and combine it with an activity for the whole family?

This fun filled half day **private tour**, will initiate us into the magical world of **Archaeology** by visiting not only the **Olympic site** but also by participating in a hands-on experience.



Ancient Olympia is one of the most important sites in Greece and a **UNESCO** monument. When the "Big expedition" begun, as archaeologists called the excavations of the 19th cent., another fascinating chapter of the **Olympic site** opened.

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

D. Become an Archaeologist for a Day – Olympic site & Educational program Hands-on Experience.

Follow your local **archaeologist/tourist guide** on a walk through the impressive ruins of the **Olympic site** and try to spot together the missing parts of the ancient columns, many of which still lay on site!

Try to imagine how all the huge pieces of the temples were lifted as your **private tour guide** unfolds the secrets of the ancient architects.



learn how time and weather affected **Ancient Olympia** and enjoy a **living puzzle** opening before your eyes!

Then getting off the beaten path but very close to **Ancient Olympia** for a **hands-on archaeology experience**. We will visit a workshop where you will have the chance to **become a real archaeologist** and excavate a house of the 5th century B.C., the Ancient Gymnasium. So, grab your trowel, follow a real-life **archaeologist**, and uncover the ancient artefacts! You will learn their history and everything about the world of **archaeology**.

The Highlights:

- Experience a remarkable **archaeological adventure** and have lots of fun!
- Embark on a journey through time that takes off with an insight discussion with an **archaeologist** about archaeology and excavation practices in **ancient Olympia**.
- Feel like Indiana Jones on a treasure hunt as you discover about the past and about how people in antiquity lived.

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

D. Become an Archaeologist for a Day – Olympic site & Educational program Hands-on Experience.

- Learn how to uncover and record ancient artefacts as you have tons of dirt-digging, storytelling and mystery-solving fun!
- A local **archaeologist/tourist guide** will be next to you explaining, answering your questions, and helping you put your findings together.
- Dig up a **take-home gift** to remember!



Inclusions:

- Hands-on experience at an archaeologist's workshop.
- Guided tour by certified tourist guide by the Greek Ministry of Tourism within the Olympic site.
- A "SURPRISE" gift bag exclusively for our guests.

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

D. Become an Archaeologist for a Day – Olympic site & Educational program Hands-on Experience.

Exclusions:

- Entrance fees
- Drinks, snacks, appetizers, lunch
- Gratuities

Olympic site Admission:

General: 12€ per person

Reduced: 6€ per person

Free: EU citizens under 25yo / Non-EU citizens under the age of 5yo

Archaeology Experience Admission:

Variable (contact person: **Ms Elena Aggeli** +30 6972297477)

▲Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors

Gallery:



Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

E. Virtual Reality Guided Audio Tour in Olympia

Pick-up/Drop-off: Available upon request

Destination: Ancient Olympia

Duration: Half day

Type of tour: Private Tours

Theme: Kid Friendly Tours, Sightseeing, VR

Transportation: Available upon request – VIP vehicles, fully a/c

In a Nutshell:

Put on your **VR mask** and travel to the glory years of the Olympic Games. Follow your tourist guide and explore all the ancient monuments at Olympia like never before!

The **Ancient Olympia VR tour** offers a feel-like-real journey through the holy shrine of Olympia as it was in the 2nd century AD. The **Temple of Zeus**, the Gymnasium, the Palaestra, the



Leonidaion are but of a few of the monuments that come to life through the tour. Whether you're on a **family visit** in Olympia, studying Greek history, or simply keen on venturing into the wonderful world of virtual reality, our **Ancient Olympia Virtual Reality Tour** is the best way to turn back time and understand the history of the site where the **Olympic Games** were born.

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

E. Virtual Reality Guided Audio Tour in Olympia

Far from a typical tour, the **virtual reality** walk through the open-air archaeological park of **Olympia** is a most exciting learning experience for visitors of all ages!

The Highlights:

- Hands-on experience at an archaeologist's workshop.
- Guided tour by certified tourist guide by the Greek Ministry of Tourism within the Olympic site.
- VR Mask (1 per couple of 2 persons) & detailed map of the Olympic site.
- Brief training by our expert on site.
- A "SURPRISE" gift bag exclusively for our guests.

Inclusions:

- Guided tour by certified tourist guide by the Greek Ministry of Tourism within the Olympic site.
- VR Mask (1 per couple of 2 persons) & detailed map of the Olympic site
- Brief training by our expert on site.
- A "SURPRISE" gift bag exclusively for our guests.

Exclusions:

- Entrance fees
- Drinks, snacks, appetizers, lunch
- Gratuities
- Entrance fees of the Olympic site/museum
- Gratuities

Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

E. Virtual Reality Guided Audio Tour in Olympia

Olympic site Admission:

General: 12€ per person

Reduced: 6€ per person

Free: EU citizens under 25yo / Non-EU citizens under the age of 5yo

VR rental:

Variable (contact person: **Ms Elena Aggeli** +30 6972297477)

⚠ Please consult "Plan your visit - Admission" section for special discounts or free entrance applied to specific categories of visitors

Gallery:



Ancient Olympia - Guided Tours & Local Experiences

E. Virtual Reality Guided Audio Tour in Olympia



Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

1. Katakolo (-n)

Location: city of Pyrgos

Distance from Ancient Olympia: 38km (24 miles)

About:

It is hard to imagine how a small town with approx. 600 residents could be of such vital importance for the local economy. However, the seaside town of **Katakolon**, or **Katakolo** with its important strategic position, played a leading role in the area since the antiquity.

Katakolon lies 15 km west of the capital of the region, Pyrgos, and nowadays is the port of that hosts many **cruise ships** as it is the **gateway to ancient Olympia**.



Related post: [How to get to Ancient Olympia from Katakolon Port?](#)

1. Katakolon - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

In a Nutshell:

In **ancient times** Katakolo was a great stronghold of powerful city states, such as **ancient Ilis** and ancient **Pheia** ensuring direct and safe access to the sea. The ruins of the latter are located on the beach of today's popular beach of **Agios Andreas**.

During the **Byzantine and Medieval times**, the low hills that surround Katakolon hosted the majestic **Pontikokastro / Beauvoir castle**, built with the remnants of the ancient Acropolis.

Nowadays, only ruins remain from that **castle**, however, don't hesitate to climb to the top of the hill

and enjoy the breathtaking

view over the Ionian Sea from the castle.

The most important chapter of the history of **Katakolon** was



written in the late **19th - early 20th cent.** during which **Katakolon** became one of the most important ports of the country.

The port was entirely reconstructed by the local authorities to facilitate the transportation export of goods and especially the **currant**, Greece's most important export product. In 1881 the **Pyrgos- Katakolon rail link** was a great addition to the development of the area and a decade later, was extended to **ancient Olympia**.

1. Katakolon - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

The old **warehouse buildings** where the products were kept can still be seen some of which have been nicely restored.

In 2018, the port was renamed to "John Latsis" as a tribute to the shipowner and benefactor **John S. Latsis** who was born in 1910 in Katakolon.

Related post: [Katakolon – The Idyllic Cruise Port Destination](#)

Local Experience:

Katakolon offers an excellent opportunity to experience authentic Greek culture. Stroll around the quiet fishing village and enjoy a coffee or your lunch at one of small **fish taverna's** with a view to the sea. Walk to the **lighthouse of Katakolon**, built in 1865 and climb to the hill where it is full olive groves and pine trees to enjoy the view from above.

Combine with:

Visit the **Museum of Ancient Greek Musical Instruments and Toys & Games** which is right next to the church of **Saint Nicolas**, at the family house of **Ioannis (John) Latsis**.

Finally, enjoy a dip in the crystal-clear waters of the Ionian Sea at the nearby beaches of **Agios Andreas** and **Skafidia** and visit the **monastery of Skafidia**.



Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

2. Temple of Apollo Epikurios

Location: Vasses, Figaleia, Region of Ilia

Distance from Ancient Olympia: 63 km (39 miles)

Opening hours:

Low Season: Daily 08:00 – 20:00

High Season: Daily 8:30 – 15:30

Admission: General: €6, Reduced: €3

Contact: +30 2626 022275

Email: efahle@culture.gr



2. Temple of Apollo Epikourios - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

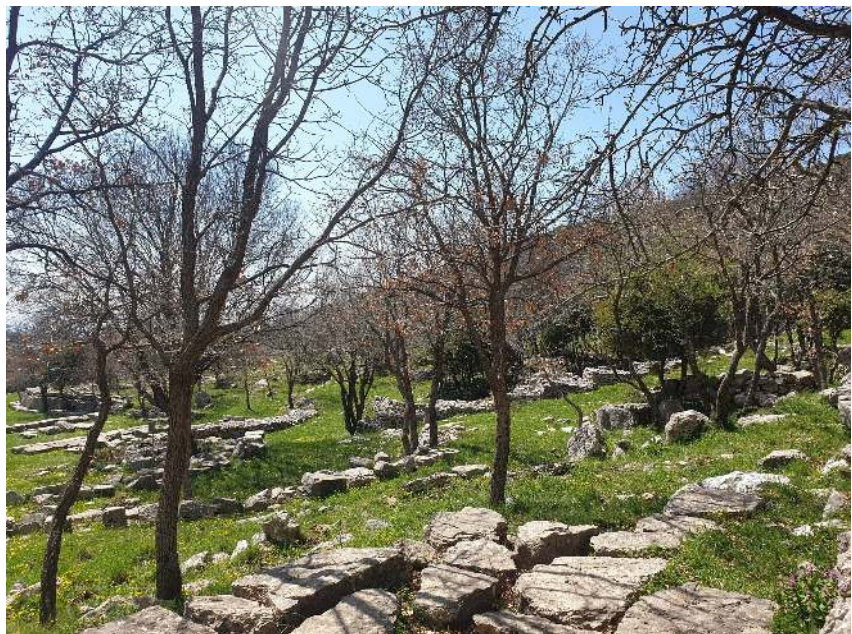
About:

The long drive into the wilds of the region of **Ilia** is not a reason to miss visiting one of the best-preserved temples in Greece; the temple of **Apollo Epikourios**! Characterized as the **Parthenon of the Peloponnese**, the temple of **Apollo Epikourios**, a 2,500-year-old monument, will travel you into the essence of the ancient Greek architecture, being the only temple combining all three (3) ancient architectural styles; **Doric; Ionic; Corinthian**.

Location:

The temple of **Apollo Epikourios or Epicourious**, is one of the most imposing temples of antiquity. It stands in the bare and rocky landscape of **Bassae** in ancient **Phigaleia**, on the slopes of **Mount Kotylion** at around 1100 meters high.

Bassae which means "rocky valley" was always a sacred place, as it was the passage to all the important city-states of the antiquity, such as **Megalopolis**. It hosted numerous temples in honor of Pan, Aphrodite,



Athena, Artemis, Apollo and slowly became one of the greatest religious centers of the entire of Hellenic world.

The temple can be approached both from **Ilia**, **Messenia**, and **Arcadia** underlining its significance to the locals since the antiquity.

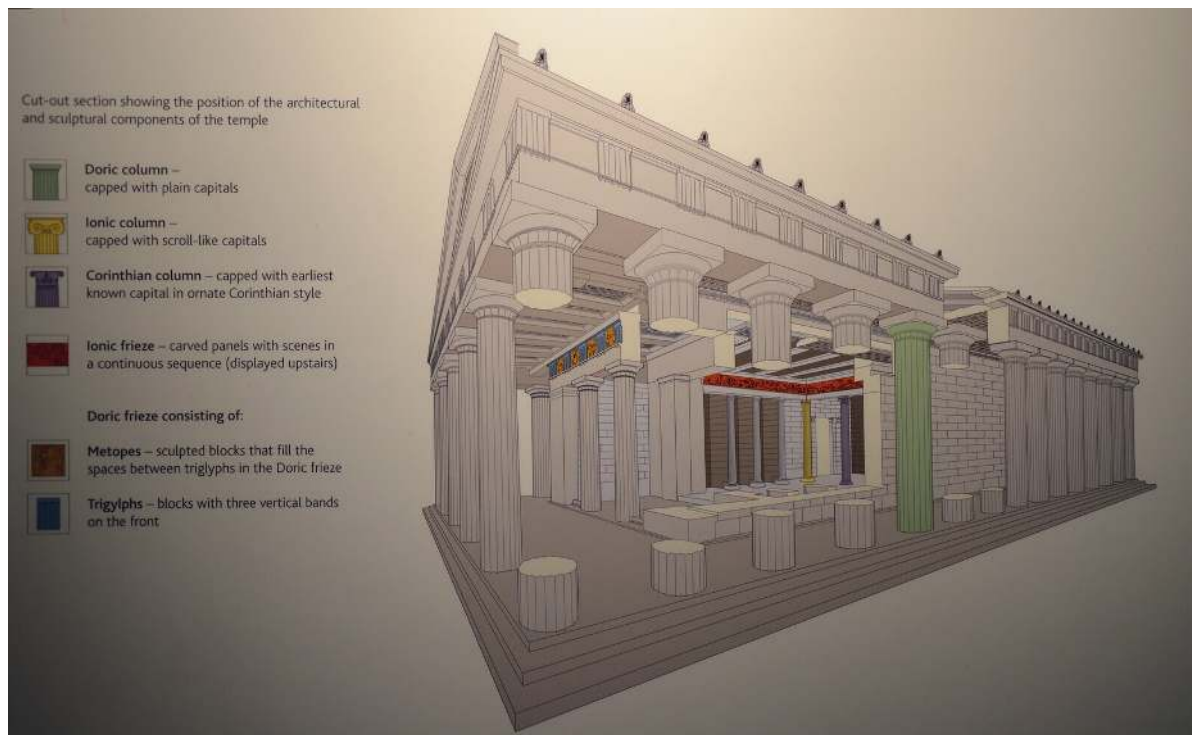
2. Temple of Apollo Epikurios - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

Name:

According to **Pausanias** who visited the temple in the 2nd cent. AD, a long time after the temple was constructed, the name **Epikourios** was given to Apollo by the citizens of nearby **Phigaleia**. It means "the Helper" since the locals attributed their savor from the plague of 429-427 BC. to Apollo.

In a Nutshell:

The majestic temple of Apollo **Epikourios (or Epicurius)**, was built between 450 and 400 BC. Following the descriptions of **Pausanias**, the temple was designed by **Iktinos**, one of the two (2) architects of the Parthenon and was described as one of the finest temples in the **Peloponnese** in terms of beauty and harmony. The temple has a characteristic elongated shape adapting a rather unusual ratio 6 x 15 and it was exclusively made by local grey limestone. It was beautifully decorated with a marble frieze and metopes, depicting mythological battles.



2. Temple of Apollo Epikurios - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

Novelties:

- The temple is very interesting, as it features a series of innovative architectural concepts both inside and out.
- It is the only temple of Antiquity to combine three architectural orders: the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian style.
- It does not follow the typical East to West orientation of the ancient Greek temples.
- The central column of the temple was Corinthian and there is a speculation that it was designed in such way to reflect the first rays of the sun symbolizing god Apollo, the god of light.

Excavations:

Despite the altitude, the temple of Apollo Epikourios, is well-preserved thanks



to its remote location. It was discovered by chance by the French travelers in the 19th century. However, some of the site's architectural artifacts, including the frieze, were removed by the British with the

permission of the local Ottoman ruler, Veli Pasha. These can still be seen at the British Museum. Systematic excavations were carried out in the early 20th century by the Greek Archaeological Society.

2. Temple of Apollo Epikourios - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

Restoration project:

The temple of **Apollo Epikourios** was the first ancient temple inscribed in the **UNESCO** World heritage list in 1986 along with the Parthenon in Athens, there is full restoration program carried out. Today, the temple is covered under a white canopy, protecting it from its exposure, however it will be removed once the restoration work will be completed.

Related post: [UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Greece Tour Series](#)

Despite its remote location, it attracts thousands of visitors every year.

Local Experience:

Enjoy the opportunity to veer off the beaten track and spend a day on the mountains of the region of Ilia with its lush vegetation and beautiful gorges. Climb to an altitude of 1100 meters to admire the majestic temple dedicated to **Apollo Epikourios**, described as the Parthenon of the Peloponnese. Then, enjoy a stop to an 11th century **monastery of Sepeto**, lying on a steep rock over the Tritona River with its unique view and architecture.

Finally, travel on the road surrounded by lush mountain vegetation to find yourself in **Andritsaina**, "the Lady of Ilia", which combines unique architectural beauty and imposing natural landscape.

Admire the beautiful mansions, traditional cafés, pretty taverns that serve unique dishes. Follow the paved alleys that lead to the library of the village, the **PUBLIC HISTORICAL LIBRARY OF ANDRITSAINA**, one of the most important ones in Greece.

[Book your private tour - Epicurius Apollo Temple - Monastery of Sepeto & Andritsaina Village](#)

2. Temple of Apollo Epikourios - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

Combine with:

Make the most of your time on the mountains by visiting the picturesque small villages and one of the most beautiful rivers of Peloponnese, Neda.

Neda is the natural border between Ilia and Messinia and it is perfect for hiking and diving in the crystal-clear waters of its waterfalls.

Furthermore, dare yourself to follow one the hiking paths of the **APOLLO TRAILS** network which runs across the region between the Temple of Apollo Epicurus, the Mount Lykaion, and the River Neda.

For more information about the Apollo Trails and Neda waterfalls, please consult the "Nature - Outdoor Activities" section.



Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

3. Chlemoutsi castle

Location: City of Andravida-Kyllini Kastro

Distance from Ancient Olympia: 60 km (38 miles)

Admission: General: €4, Reduced: €2

Opening Hours: Monday - Sunday: 08.00 - 15.00

Contact: +302623095033



About:

Feel the atmosphere of the **Medieval times** as you wander around within the huge stone walls of the **Chlemoutsi castle**. Built by the **Franks** in 1220, it ranks among the most impressive and well-preserved castles.

Just an hour drive from Ancient Olympia, and very close to the **port of Killini**, stands the impressive **Chlemoutsi castle** with a breathtaking view to the plain of Elis and the Ionian Sea.

Its strategic position made it considered one of the strongest fortresses of the Franks, converting the area into a crossroad of different civilizations.

3. Chlemoutsi castle - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

Location:

The castle was built just 2 miles away from the sea, on a hilltop of 220 m high and it impressed by its size and its heptagonal shape.

Name:

The Greek name "**Chlemoutsi**" is the corruption of its original Frankish name **Clairmont** but, there are also many other exciting stories about its name. As tradition has it that the castle was used as a mint, minting tornesian" coins, it was also called by the Venetians. as **Castel Tornese**.

In a Nutshell:

The castle was the center of interest of different Empires, such as the **Franks**, the **Catalans**, the **Venetians**, the **Ottoman Turks**. It was also used by Constantine Paleologus, the last **Byzantine emperor** as the seat of the Domain of Morea. in 1427.



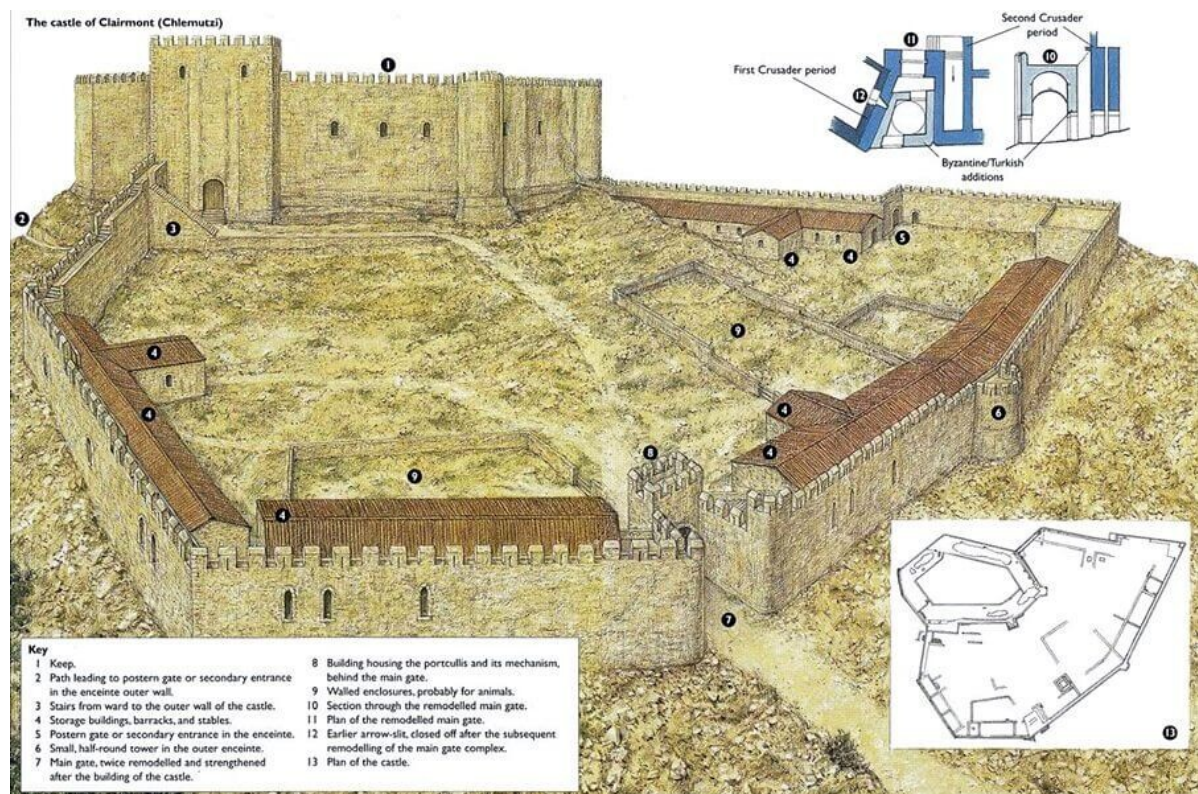
3. Chlemoutsí castle - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

However, after a long period of growth under the **Frankish** rule, an era of wars begun. The castle changed hands several times between the **Turks** and the **Venetians** until the 1826 where it was bombarded and suffered severe damages by **Ibrahim** during the Greek -Turkish war.

Layout:

Once you enter the huge stone gate, the internal yard opens before your eyes. There, you may find ruins of the majestic rooms, the prince's palace with private apartments, kitchens, a chapel, and the bedrooms.

Admire the unique fortification which covers an area of 4000 sq.m. and see from up close the stone cannonballs piled together across the courtyard.



Museum:

Explore the **princess' bedroom** which has been converted into a beautiful **museum** and learn all about the lives of the **knights** in the Peloponnese!

3. Chlemoutsí Castle - Other Attractions - Beyond Olympia

Local Experience:

A visit to the Medieval castle of **Chlemoutsí** is the ideal escape for families with young children. Standing on the summit of a hill and visible from miles away, the **castle** will travel you back to the medieval times as you wander around within its huge stone walls. The children may live a fairytale experience as they imagine the princesses and knights living in the castle.

Book your private tour: [Chlemoutsí Castle & Beach eascape - Kid Friendly Tour \(full day\)](#)

Combine with:

Wrap up your day at the **castle of Chlemoutsí** with a stop at the golden sandy beache of **Arcoudi** for lunch or coffee and of course a refreshing dip. Their crystal-clear waters have been awarded with the **Blue Flag**, a voluntary Eco-label given to clean beaches that are also safe.

Related posts: [The Legendary Castles of the Peloponnese - A](#)
[The Legendary Castles of the Peloponnese - B](#)



Nature - Outdoor Activities

Introduction:

Make the most of your time while in Olympia with our hand-picked outdoor activities. Escape to the unique countryside of ancient Olympia and interact with the locals like an insider.

After all, you can't go wrong when you mingle with the locals!

1. Foloi (Pholoe) Forest - Walking -Trekking Activity

Location: Municipality of ancient Olympia

Distance from ancient Olympia: 20 km (12miles)

Estimated driving time: 1,5 hours

A forest that seems to touch the sky! With approximately five (5) million trees to surround it, the escape to the **forest of Foloi** is a magical journey, full of fascinating myths and tales about **Centaurs**, fairies, and superheroes!



About:

The **Foloi** oak forest is situated at an altitude of 688m. It is an ecosystem unique in the Balkan peninsula, considered the biggest one. It is a self-planted forest of huge oaks and beeches that sometimes reach the height of 40 m. The **Foloi** forest covers an area of 40,000 m² and it is protected by **NATURA 2000**.

Nature - Outdoor Activities

1. Foloi (Pholoe) Forest - Walking -Trekking Activity

Name:

the forest of **Foloi** is called often by the locals "**Kapel**", which means dense or abundant forest, whilst the name **Foloi** relates to **Centaur Folos**.

The **Centaurs** were mythological creatures, half-men, half-horses, and they were habitats of the forests, just like the fairies of the oak forests; the **Dryads**.

Mythology:

Folos, unlike the typical **Centaurs** who had uncontrolled behavior, was very kind and well-mannered and lived in the forest of **Foloi**. Tradition has it that **Herakles** met Folos in the forest during his hunt for the **Erymanthian Boar**. When Folos opened a jar of wine to welcome his friend, the pleasant smell drove the nearby Centaurs mad and attracted them to his location. **Herakles** fought and killed all the centaurs, including Folos, accidentally. To make up for his mistake, he called the forest after his friend's name; **Foloi**!

The best time to visit the forest of Foloi:

The forest of **Foloi** can be easily described as an **all-year-around-destination** with unique beauty in each season, including the winter. Even though the oak trees lose their leaves during winter, it is wonderful to explore the bare and very often, snowy terrain. For most visitors however, the most extraordinary time for the forest, is spring and autumn; a golden red leaf carpet creates a magical scenery!

Local Experience:

Explore one of the best kept secrets in the Peloponnese. Either on foot or by bike, the forest of **Foloi** has several **routes** for all ages and activity levels. Among the most popular ones are:

Nature - Outdoor Activities

1. Foloji (Pholoe) Forest - Walking -Trekking Activity

- **The path of Heracles (M3)– 12km** - The route starts from the **Environmental Museum of Foloji**, at the entrance of the forest and follows the path to the Erymanthus Gorge.
- **The "neck-tie path" - 8km**. The route takes you through the heart of the forest and it is easy for anyone to participate.
- Alternatively, the forest of **Foloji** can be easily crossed by car.

The environmental museum of Foloji:

The environmental museum of the oak forest of **Foloji** is an Information center which is situated close to the forest, in Loutsa, Koumani. The exhibition is arranged in a spacious wooden building, perfectly harmonized with the landscape and its goal is to raise awareness about the unique flora and fauna of the area.

Books – Video Games about Foloji:

- **Harry Potter series**
- **Percy Jackson & the Olympians series**
- [Assassin's Creed - Odyssey](#)

Combine with:

The plateau of Ilia offers a unique opportunity to explore the traditional mountainous villages, such as **Lampia** (Divri). **Lambia village** is just 12 kilometers away from **Foloji** forest, and it is one of the most beautiful villages of Ilia with little stone houses and paved alleys. It lies at an altitude of 900 meters, on the slopes of **mount Erymanthus** where according to **Greek mythology**, the fourth **labor of Hercules** was conducted; **the Erymanthian boar**.

Nature - Outdoor Activities

1. Foloi (Pholoe) Forest - Walking -Trekking Activity

Inside tip:

- Try the local sausages, one of the delicacies of the village at the local taverna's and take some home.
- Explore the fountains of **Lampeia**, gushing out crystal clear, fresh water. There are over 100 fountains in the entire village!

For more information about the Foloi Forest activity, please contact: Ms.

Elena Aggeli:

[Learn more](#)

Nature - Outdoor Activities

2. Nemouta Waterfalls – Walking - Trekking Activity

2. Nemouta Waterfalls – Walking - Trekking Activity

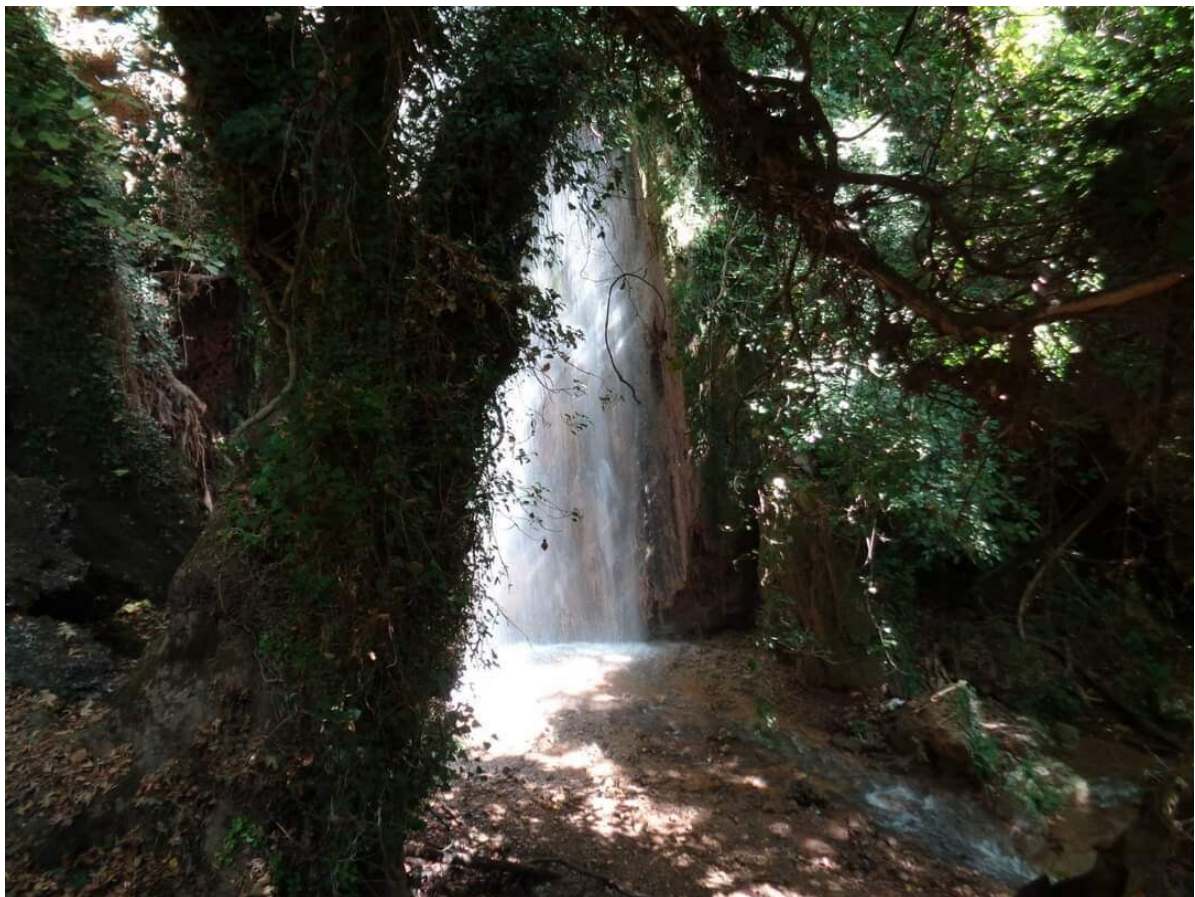
Location: Municipality of ancient Olympia

Distance from ancient Olympia: 26km (16miles)

Estimated driving time: 40 min.

Veer off-the-beaten-track and explore the **natural wonders** of the region of **Ilia**.

The **Nemouta waterfalls** are one of the best kept secrets of the area, despite the fact they are very close to ancient Olympia!



Nature - Outdoor Activities

2. Nemouta Waterfalls – Walking – Trekking Activity

Name:

The **waterfalls of Nemouta** are named after the small village which lies at an altitude of 560 meters (1837 feet). Below the village, flows the legendary river **Erymanthos** with its tributaries. No wonder the **Nemouta** area, features over thirty (30) waterfalls!

The main square of the village of **Nemouta** is also the pick-up point from where visitors have the opportunity to be transferred to the waterfalls. Locals work as tour guides, as the route to the waterfalls is not signed and therefore, it is highly recommended to go with a guide.

About:

The waterfalls are located inside the gorge of Haratsari, formed by mountain **Erimanthos** with its steep and high slopes. Thanks to its tributaries, are formed streams and waterfalls, creating a breathtaking scenery with beautiful cascades of falls.

Finally, the waters of the river flow into the river **Alpheios** (Alfios), which is the largest one in the Peloponnese and continue their journey until the Ionia Sea.

Local Experience:

Come aboard an adventure to the "**Gate to Paradise**" as the locals often call one of the numerous **waterfalls of Nemouta** and live a once-in-a-lifetime experience in nature.

The landscape is magical as you descend the gorge and the whole scenery and route remind you of a tropical forest with secret caves behind the waterfalls.

Nature - Outdoor Activities

2. Nemouta Waterfalls – Walking - Trecking Activity

As the **trail is not signed**, it is highly recommended to have a tour guide throughout the experience; especially if you travel with young children. Feel the fun and the excitement of a 30' drive by a 4x4 or a pick-up vehicle used to approach the path and then get ready for a 3 to 4-hour walk downhill into the wild!

Extra tip:

- Challenge yourself and your friends for a dip into the crystal clear and frozen waters of the river.
- Feel the excitement of "taking a shower" under a waterfall.

Nemouta Waterfalls activity:

[Learn more](#)



Nature - Outdoor Activities

3. Neda Waterfalls – Walking - Trecking Activity

3. Neda Waterfalls – Walking - Trecking Activity

Location: Neda, Region of Messinia

Distance from ancient Olympia: 64km (40miles)

Estimated driving time: 1,5 hours

Follow the descriptions of the ancient traveler Pausanias, and explore **Neda**, the only female Greek river! Connect to your roots and escape to an unspoiled paradise; the **Neda waterfalls**.

About:

The **river of Neda**, is the natural border between Ilia and Messinia and has a total length of 32 km. The springs of the river are located at the foot of Mt Lycaeon, near the village of Petra of Messinia where after a long journey, they meet with tributaries and streams, and together flow into the Kiparissia Gulf.

In ancient times, **Neda** was navigable according to Pausanias, something which has been confirmed by the various marks of anchorages in the surrounding area.

No wonder there are many important ancient settlements and temples spread all over the area. The temple of Apollo Epikourios and the altar of Zeus on the summit of mount Lykeon are the most renowned.



Nature - Outdoor Activities

3. Neda Waterfalls – Walking - Trecking Activity

Mythology:

Neda, according to Greek mythology, was the nymph that Rhea, the wife of Kronos, entrusted the care of her child, Zeus, after she gave birth to him on mount Lycaion. **Neda**, along with her sisters Thissoa and Agno, raised the child and provided refuge away from his father. Some believed that when **Neda** transformed into a river to help Zeus wash his hair, her long braids became wonderful waterfalls!

Local Experience:

There are various options to explore the Neda waterfalls. You may either start the exploration from the village of Platania. Alternatively, you may drive further down and leave your vehicle at the single-arch bridge of Jouloucha. The most exciting part of the trail starts from there. The distance you will cover is approximately 5 - 7km



Getting around:

Even if you're a beginner hiker, the route to Neda is accessible. The trail however is not signed, but it is easy to get around in case you wish to explore the waterfalls by yourself.

The path is mostly covered with dirt and at some parts rocky with steep stairs. In about 15 to 20 minutes of hiking later you reach the first waterfall. A little higher up, a small stone chapel dedicated to Virgin Mary, stands hidden in the rocks.

Nature - Outdoor Activities

3. Neda Waterfalls – Walking - Trecking Activity

Continue to the second waterfall, which stands higher up and there, get ready to capture breathtaking photos of the waterfalls! There is an option to cross the entire gorge, passing by the archaeological site of Ancient Figaleia that is located half hidden in the depths of the gorge.

However, if you wish to cross the gorge of Neda, it is highly recommended to contact a local guide. The route is impressive, and quite long (about 4-5 hours, depending on how fast you walk), while in some parts you'll need to swim in the cold waters of the river.

Signs:

The way to the waterfalls is well signed and accessible for conventional vehicles. However, keep in mind that the area gets very busy in the summertime, therefore, it is recommended not to leave your car close to the trail.

Inside tips:

bring a towel and snacks. Even though there is a cantina during the summertime, it is recommended to have a bottle of water and some energy snacks during hiking.

Combine the Neda waterfalls experience with:

Temple of Apollo Epikourios:

Feel adventurous and combine the Neda escape with an exploration of the nearby villages and sites such as the

Also, visit the small mountainous village of Ambeliona, which was the hometown of Greek film director **Theo Angelopoulos**. From there, you may explore more hiking routes, enlisted in the **Apollo trails**.

Nature - Outdoor Activities

3. Neda Waterfalls – Walking - Trecking Activity

Finally, don't miss out stopping at the village of **Figaleia**. This little mountainous village is ideal either for a quick coffee, enjoying the breathtaking view towards the Ionia Sea or for a walk to the ruins of the ancient city of Phigaleia from where many hiking routes start, as well.

Apollo Trails:

For more information about the APollo Trails, please foloow the link below:

[Learn more](#)

Nature - Outdoor Activities

4. Kaiafas Lake – Hot Springs & Water Sports Activities

4. Kaiafas Lake – Hot Springs & Water Sports Activities

Location: Lake Kaifas, Region of Ilia

Distance from ancient Olympia: 24km (15miles)

Estimated driving time: 30 min.

Feel suspended in time as you visit the **Kaiafas area with its lake, the pine forest, the thermal springs and the endless sandy beach**. Spend a day isolated in nature, unwound under the Greek sun, or set your adrenaline high by trying some **water sports** and activities organized in the lake!

Location:

Kaiafas lies between the small town of Zacharo and Krestena. It is just a stone's throw away from ancient Olympia and the capital of the region, Pyrgos, following the old national highway of Pyrgos-Kyparissia.



It forms a unique natural landscape, lying between the plain of Xirochori-Zacharo and the mountain range of the mythical mountain Lapithas.

Nature - Outdoor Activities

4. Kaiafas Lake – Hot Springs & Water sports Activities

About:

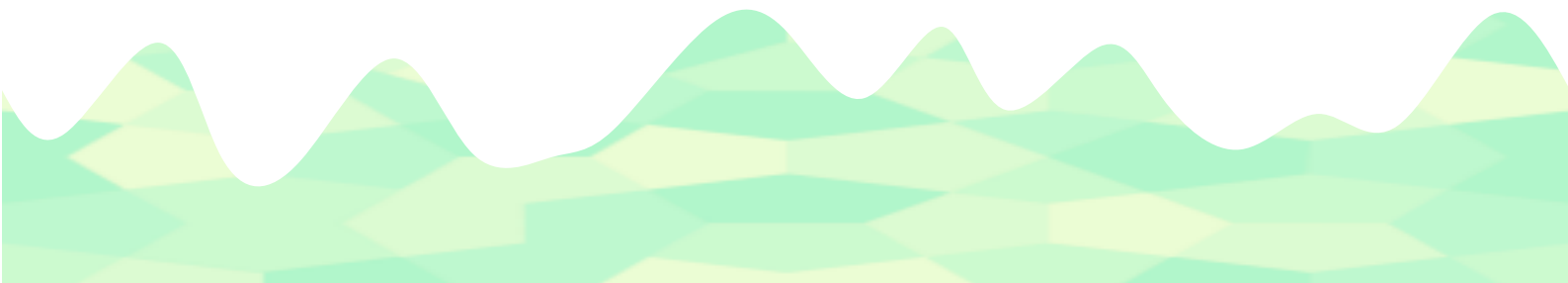
The **Kaiafas lake** became a very popular destination among the Greeks the past years mostly because of the **hot springs** and the **healing waters** of the lake, suitable for skin conditions, rheumatism and various conditions of the liver and asthma.

Name:

The name **Kaiafas** is related to many myths and local legends. According to one of them, Kaifas was the name of a priest from Judea. During a journey to Rome, his ship encountered a storm, and he was washed ashore. There, he decided to enjoy a bath in the hot springs of the mountain. However, the waters became smelly since according to the legend, the priest was cursed because of his participation to Jesus Christ's conviction!

Nowadays, the visitors of the **Kaiafas lake** have an abundance of choices in the area. The unique natural landscape, protected by the **NATURA 2000**, is the perfect setting for long walks at the lush pine forest that surround the lake or for sunbathing in the **sandy beach** with the dunes laying above it with a length of approximately 4 km!

The locals, however, attribute the name **Kaiafas** to the **Nymph Kalliafeia**, who inhabited the caves with her sisters. Whereas its smelly waters are related to the **Centaur Nessos** who washed his wounds in the waters of **Kaiafas** after he was hit by the poisonous arrows of Heracles.



Nature - Outdoor Activities

4. Kaiafas Lake – Hot Springs & Water sports Activities

In a Nutshell:

Kaiafas was very famous since the antiquity thanks to a small river, called Anigros and the cult of the Nymphs. The waters of the river formed a natural cave with **hot springs** gushing out water from mount Lapithas and they had healing properties as they contained sulfur. According to the ancient Greeks, the waters owed their healing properties to the nymphs, Kalliafeia, Pigaia and Iasis (Anigrades) who lived in the area.

In Pausanias' descriptions about **Kaiafas**, we read about the smelly waters and the ritual which the faithful had to follow in order to find cure for "alphos or leuke" (skin diseases).

The faithful, among other things, had first to pray to the Nymphs and to promise some animal sacrifice. Then, swimming through the river was necessary to "leave his old uncleanness in its water" *Pausanias, Description of Greece 5. 5. 11.*

It is unknown when the river became a lake. However, it is believed that after a strong earthquake in the region, the area took the shape we come across nowadays.

The **Kaiafas lake** has a length of 3 km, it is 500-600 meters wide, and over 2 meters deep. A narrow stone bridge connects the **Kaiafas lake** to a small islet which is just a strip of land.

There, slowly since the early 20th cent. were erected facilities and hotels used by the visitors of the **hot springs** and thermal spa. However, the modern visitor comes across the signs of abandonment of the place as sadly the facilities are not used any longer.

Nature - Outdoor Activities

4. Kaiafas Lake – Hot Springs & Water sports Activities

On the other side of the **Kaiafas lake** there is a huge, sandy coast in the bay of Kyparissia, with dunes and a small cantina in the old train station which is not in use anymore. At the beach of Kaiafas the sea turtles, **Caretta Caretta**, lay their eggs therefore, the beach is not organized.

Between the lake of **Kaiafas** and the sandy coast, the visitor can enjoy the beautiful pine tree forest a part of which was burnt down on the lethal fires of 2007. Fortunately thanks to the efforts of the locals and the state no one could tell!

Local Experience:

Indulge yourself in the **spa** of the hot springs with a special treatment. The water that gushes out the cave of the Anigrid Nymphs is in some cases hot, in others cool. The waters mix and form a natural spa.

In addition you may enjoy the services of the **Kaiafas Thermal Spa** which is one of the most important thermal spring facilities in the country. The premises of the hydrotherapy center include:

- Thermal bath pool Individual
- hydrotherapy baths
- Outdoor heated pool with open roof

Good to know:

It is required to contact prior to visit.
Swimming in the Kaiafas lake is not recommended.

[Learn more](#)

Nature - Outdoor Activities

4. Kaiafas Lake – Hot Springs & Water sports Activities

Combine with:

Set off your experience at **Kaiafas lake** by trying one of the outdoor sports activities organized in the lake! A true blust for the whole family, including the young children.

Kaiafas Water Ski Resort:

The **Kaiafas Water Ski Resort** is a paradise for everyone who wishes to experience the joy of the lake. The coaches, George and Tassos Hatzis, are both European champions and very experienced with all levels of skiers.

Get ready to learn slalom, tricks, and wakeboard in a lake the temperature of which stays warm all year round. In the wintertime you should expect temperatures around the 14° degrees C which makes the Kaiafas lake skiable all year around!

Water Ski activity in Kaiafas lake:

For more information about water Ski activity in Kaiafas lake please follow the link below.

Contact now

Nature - Outdoor Activities

5. Alpheios (Alfios) River - Rafting Experience

5. Alpheios (Alfios) River - Rafting Experience

Location: Alpheios (Alfios) river, ancient Olympia, Region of Ilia

Distance from ancient Olympia: -

Estimated driving time: 15 min.

Follow the footsteps of an ancient visitor and enjoy a rafting experience in the **river Alpheios**, the longest river in the Peloponnese and just a stone's throw away from Ancient Olympia!

Location:

The **Alpheios (Alfios) river** is the longest one in the Peloponnese, having a length of approximately 110 km.

Its source is in the highlands of the mountainous region of Arcadia and flows into the Ionian Sea along with its tributaries after having made a journey through Arcadia and Elis.



Nature - Outdoor Activities

5. Alpheios (Alfios) River - Rafting Experience

About:

The Alpheios (Alfios) river, known in the mythology as a river God, formed one of the two natural borders of the Olympic site. In ancient times, the river was navigable, which made the access to **ancient Olympia** very easy. Thousands of pilgrims would sail through the river to reach the sanctuary of **Olympia** and watch the **Olympic Games**.

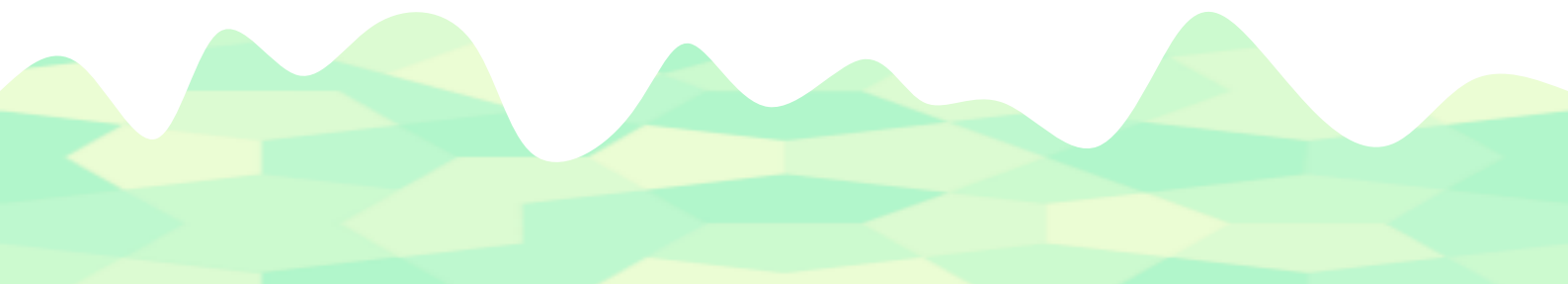
Nowadays, one may admire the irrigation **dam** constructed in the river of **Alpheios (Alfios)**. It is very close to ancient Olympia, lying between the villages of Floka and Alpheiousa.

The **Alpheios river dam** is 315 long and there is a metallic bridge crossing it. It was constructed in the late 1960's and provides a steady flow of fresh water and electric power.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to walk on the bridge and admire the river from above!

Name:

The tradition has it that the name **Alpheios (Alfios)** is related to the Greek word *alphos* (a skin disease) and the healing properties of the river. The ones swimming in its waters would have the opportunity to be healed from the disease!



Nature - Outdoor Activities

5. Alpheios (Alfios) River - Rafting Experience

Mythology:

Through the descriptions of **Pausanias**, we learn that **Alpheios**, was a young boy and a passionate hunter. He fell in love with the nymph Arethusa when he saw her bathing in the waters of a river in Arcadia. However, his love found no response from her that terrified as she was by the love of the young man, she asked from Artemis to change her into a well, which flowed under the earth to the island of Ortygia near Syracuse.

Alpheios, desperately in love with the nymph, became a river, flowing from the Peloponnese under the sea to Ortygia, to unite its waters with those of the well Arethusa.

The **Alpheios river** appears also at the fifth labor of **Heracles**. The hero used the waters of the river **Alpheios** along with the waters of the nearby **Peneios** to clean the stables of Augeias! **Heracles** diverted the flow of both rivers and had their waters flow through the stables of the king to clean them from the impurities of his animals! Peneios river is located close to the archaeological site of ancient Elis.

Please consult the "other museums – Ancient Elis" section for more information.

Video Games about Alpheios river:

- [Assassin's Creed - Odyssey](#)



Nature - Outdoor Activities

5. Alpheios (Alfios) River - Rafting Experience

Local experience:

Experience a fun-filled family **rafting activity** in the **Alpheios (Alfios) river**, easy and suitable for everyone.

Just 10-minutes-drive from ancient Olympia, at the small village, Mouria, lies the small camp where you will meet your local instructors.

There, by the banks of the river **Alpheios (Alfios)**, you will learn the basic canoe-y commands as you try your equipment. Once aboard, you will follow a route of 8km in the river with several stops to opt for a swim in the crystal-clear water of the **Alpheios river**! A unique scenery with lush vegetation, olive and orange groves, birds is only a small hint of what you will experience on this 2-hour activity!

Good to know:

- Experienced local guide is included in the activity
- activity equipment (life jackets, paddles, helmets, uniforms) is provided
- Swimsuit, towel, second pair of shoes, sunscreen and hat are required.

The Alpheios (Alfios) Rafting Experience:

For more information about the Alpheios (Alfios) Rafting Experience, please follow the link below:

[Contact now](#)

Nature - Outdoor Activities

5. Alpheios (Alfios) River - Rafting Experience

Combine the Alpheios (Alfios) Rafting activity with:

Feel like an ancient visitor by wrapping up your rafting experience with a visit at the nearby **archaeological site of ancient Olympia**.

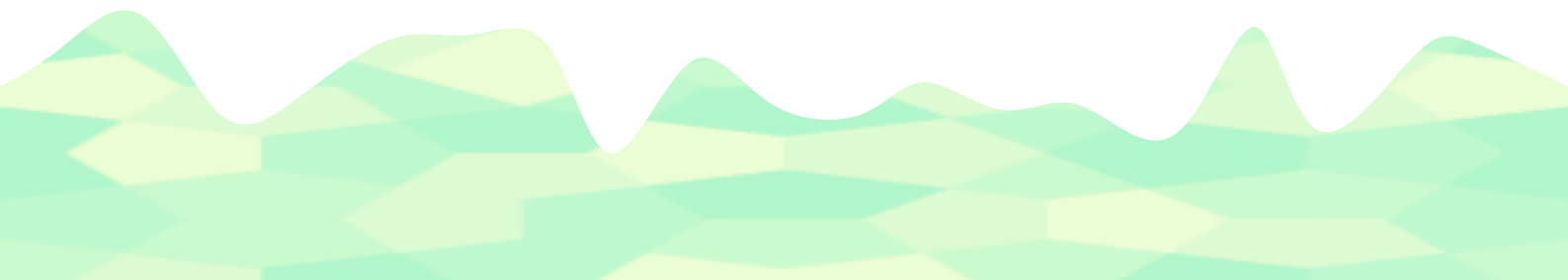
Olympia was once the most important religious and athletic center in Greece in honor of Zeus. Thousands of visitors from all over the ancient Greek world would sail the Alpheios river to the **Olympic site** due to a pilgrimage.

Good to Know:

- Duration: 1,5 hours
- Admission: 12€ per person
- Private tour guide: Available upon request

Book your guided tour in ancient Olympia by following the link below.

Contact



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COLLABORATIONS:

I would be more than happy to collaborate with others who have the same passion about ancient Olympia as I and to offer together an overall experience about the area.

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You think something is missing?

As a professional tourist guide and a local, I believe the information in this travel guide is accurate.

However, to avoid confusion, i have provided contact numbers for each area, where available. I encourage you to use the contact information while planning your vacation.

However, if you find that something is missing from the **Olympia Insider's travel guide**, feel free to contact me at any time!

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Why feedback is important to Olympia Insider's travel guide:

Your feedback is very important as it will help me make the necessary corrections and, therefore, improve your experience by producing the best **Olympia travel guide!**

Please, tell your friends and post a reference to my **Olympia Insider's travel guide** and website on the blogs and social media by using the following **hashtags**:

#olympiainsider #olympiatravelguide #tourguideolympia

You are also welcomed to send me your email address to keep you posted about new travel experiences in the area.

Editor's note:

My Olympia Insider's travel guide is an all-you-need-to-know travel guide which was designed to help visitors to make the most of their time while in Olympia, Katakolon and the surrounding areas.

As a professional tourist guide and an experienced traveler, i know that the best way to plan your time and budget when travelling away, is to gather inside tips from the locals!

Feel free to contact me at any time and together we may build the perfect itinerary for you and your loved ones.



Support a young entrepreneur from ancient Olympia and thus contribute to the local community!



Spread the word about my Olympia Insider's travel guide and together we can eliminate the "I wish I knew about it before my holidays"!

See you all in
Olympia!

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