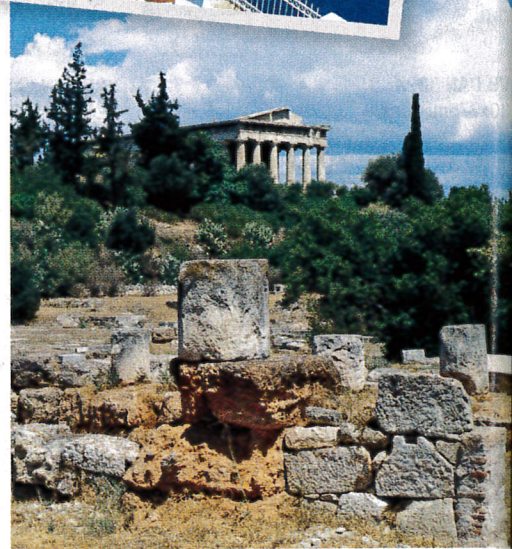


time out



'COME AND VISIT GREECE'

In celebration of the National Day of Greece on 25 March, the Ambassador of Greece to Australia, Haris D. Dafaranos, invites us to visit his homeland, famous for its rich history, culture, cuisine and sun-kissed islands set in sparkling emerald seas...

Greece, the land of gods, myths and demi-gods, is a country in the crossroads between Europe and the Middle East. It encompasses a landmass not more than one-third of New South Wales but with a beautiful archipelago in the Aegean, the Eastern Mediterranean, Crete and the Ionian islands in the West.

With an emerald sea, a picturesque coastline, a temperate climate for almost seven months a year (from April to October), it is an attractive destination for sportsmen and women as well as lovers of the sea.

But what makes Greece even more seducing is primarily her historic and cultural background with unique and well preserved monuments from Antiquity to Byzantium. Secondly, it is the beauty of her landscape, mountains, plains and islands alike. Thirdly, it is the beauty of the Greek psyche, the

strong sentiment for hospitality and lastly the famous Greek gastronomy.

For our Australian friends, there is something more to that. There is a special sentimental bond due to relatively recent shared historical sacrifices in 1941 during the Greek Campaign and the Battle of Crete. It is also the long presence of the large Greek-Australian diaspora in this hospitable country, too. We must not forget that Melbourne hosts around 300,000 Australians of Greek descent. Naturally, some call her the 'third biggest Greek city in the world'.

Till the 1990s, Greece was served with Olympic Airways. Nowadays, you can reach Greece via multiple international hubs such as Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, Doha or London. The most popular island destinations are Mykonos, Santorini, Ios, Crete, and Rhodes; on the mainland, Athens, Thessaloniki and the Peloponnese.

The spring to autumn period

starts from April and ends in October. During spring, visitors can enjoy a very temperate climate and the traditional festivities of the Greek Orthodox Easter on 5 May 2013. Summer is the best season to enjoy the emerald seas of the Aegean, the Ionian and the Sea of Crete. In early autumn, the temperatures become cooler and give the visitor the ideal opportunity to discover the plains and mountains of the mainland, where Antiquity blends with Byzantium. You can follow the footsteps of mythical heroes, trace historical battle fields, visit oracles, feel the heritage of Alexander and, at the same time, enjoy the famous Greek hospitality and cuisine. In Greece, every visitor is treated as a privileged guest following the age-old tradition of hospitality (xenia). This is why 16 million tourists from all over the world visited Greece last year.

Above left: Symi Island

Top: Santorini Island

Above: Ancient agora, Athens

Photos Greek National Tourism Office