Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

TOURISM, GREECE G8

The ancient history and natural beauty of Greece holds a special fascination and attracts millions of tourists each year. The objects in this box represent what you might see on holiday in different parts of Greece.



Flag of Greece



Map of Greece

Icon from Arkadi Monastery, Crete



The wooden icon was made by monks from the Arkadi Monastery on the island of Crete. Arkadi is shown on the map below, just south of Rethymno. The monastery played a very important part in the Cretan War of Independence against Turkey, who had occupied the island from 1669. In 1866 a rebellion started at Arkadi, but, it was not strong enough to hold off the Turkish Army. 15,000 soldiers attacked the area forcing about 1,000 monks, women, men and children to take shelter in the monastery. Soon the monastery was surrounded and the soldiers ordered everyone to surrender. Nobody obeyed the command. Instead, they went to the gun-powder store and blew themselves up. Arkadi Monastery is now seen as a symbol of national independence and the anniversary of the explosion is a national holiday. The Turkish occupation of Greece finally ended in 1898 and by 1913 the island had become part of Greece.





Today the monastery is open to visitors and there is a museum, which records its turbulent history. Monks still live in the monastery, although in recent years the numbers have dropped to just two. The photograph on the left shows a view of the monastery as it looks today.

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Heritage Lottery Fund

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Worry Beads



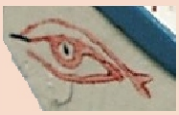




Worry beads are used to relieve stress and anxiety. Their Greek name is kombolói. There are usually an odd number of beads on the chain or rope, which can be moved around in the hands to provide a calming effect. The beads can be made from many different materials, including amber, stone, plastic, glass and coral. Bunches of brightly coloured beads can be seen hanging up in tourist shops all over Greece, as shown on the right.

Pendant with the evil eye

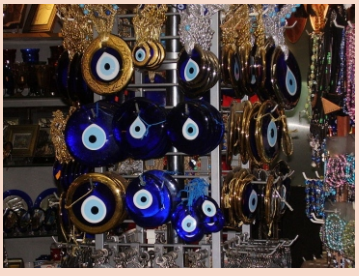






Wearing jewellery or trinkets with an eye emblem is believed to keep away evil spirits and bad luck. This belief is particularly strong in Mediterranean countries where you will see eyes on lots of different objects, such as doors, cars and even pets! In Portugal they can be found on fishing boats and in Turkey they are painted on aeroplanes. You can see both of these in the pictures on the right.

Greek shops sell pendants alongside worry beads, as you can see in this picture:



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Replica Lamp



Oil lamps like this were widely used in the Ancient World to provide lighting in homes, shrines and on stage. Simple oil lamps are known to have been in use from at least 3500 BC, but pottery versions came into common use around the eighth and seventh centuries BC. The earlier lamps were very basic wheel-spun saucers with a wick at the edge; these developed into pottery lamps with enclosed bodies, like the replica in this box.

The fuel, which was normally vegetable oil (often olive oil), was poured into the lamp through the hole in the centre and a wick made of fibre ran through the oil and out through the spout. The part of the wick that poked out through the spout could then be lit to provide a small flame. A tablespoon of oil would burn for about two hours. Keeping the oil filled up would have been a very important job.

The Ancient Greeks were the largest producers of these lamps, adding handles and eventually a glaze to the surface, which helped to stop the oil seeping into the clay. During the Hellenistic Period (third century BC to first century AD), moulds were used to make the lamps, making it much easier and cheaper to produce large quantities of them. The clay was hand pressed into the mould in two halves that were then put together and fired in a kiln. Some of the plainer, mass-produced lamps are known as firmalamps or factory lamps, whereas others are called picture lamps and are decorated with mythical characters, floral or animal designs.

This is a replica of a lamp from Corinth (shown on the map to the right) dating from 620 BC. Replica lamps, vases and other ancient objects are very popular souvenirs for tourists to take home from their holiday.



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Costumed figures



The shepherd figure is wearing a traditional pleated skirt called a foustanella, which is worn by men across Greece and neighbouring countries as part of the national costume. The length and style of the foustanella identifies where the man comes from. This style of clothing is normally only worn for ceremonies and special occasions, although you might see some older men wearing them in everyday life. The figure is also wearing a white shirt with wide, flowing sleeves and a waistcoat, which varies in colour depending on the area. His shoes are decorated with large pompoms (although one has fallen off).

A large area of Greece is mountainous and shepherds working in this area would have needed to wear a heavy cloak with a hood - like the figure.



Milk produced by the sheep is used to make Feta, a traditional cheese of Greece that can be traced back to ancient times. A block of feta is shown in the picture on the right.

Sheep were also very important for producing wool to make clothing. Traditionally, the women would spin the wool by hand - as the female figure is doing. She has a big ball of fleece under her left arm and is using a spindle to wind the fleece around and turn it into thread. The spindle is the wooden stick in her right hand. She is wearing a thick coat and a headscarf for warmth. Like the man, the colour and style of dress depends on the region.

Bread charm



This lucky charm is made from pieces of bread, which have been carefully moulded into shapes and then stuck together. The charm can be hung on the wall for good luck. One piece of bread has been made into the shape of a bird, although its head has unfortunately fallen off. This particular one comes from Crete.

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Clay Pigeon



The clay pigeon is a replica of one discovered in Boeotia - a region in the north of Greece. The original dates from the fifth century BC.

Boeotia was one of the most important ancient places in Greece and many other artefacts have been found in this area, including this terracotta figure made in 450 BC and this painted cup also from about 450 BC.





Blouse



Lose fitting clothing made from pale coloured fabrics are very popular in Mediterranean countries where the temperature can reach 30 to 40 °. The front is embroidered with a floral pattern, which is repeated on the sleeves. The cuffs and neckline have a pattern sewn into the material with bright blue wool. These bold colours are seen all over Greece, as you can see from these pictures:





