



KATAKOLON

GREECE

The small, relaxed seaside village of Katakolon is situated on the western coast of the Peloponnese, Greece's largest peninsula. Best known for its dockside tavernas and small souvenir shops, Katakolon also serves as the gateway to one of ancient Greece's most notable historic landmarks, ancient Olympia.

Archeologists theorize that the first Olympiad took place at the site in 776 BC; afterwards every four years panhellenic contests were held attracting athletes from all the Greek city-states. The Games also inspired the Olympic Truce, a time period when all hostilities were temporarily suspended in honor of the games.

The festivities lasted five days and early competitions included wrestling, running, chariot racing, horse racing, and the pentathlon (wrestling, discus and javelin throwing, long jump, and running). Only Greek-born males were allowed to participate, but Romans were later permitted. The event inspired writers and poets to read their works to the large audiences, while businessmen used the games as a networking platform.

Located in a lush green valley the 5,000-acre archaeological site was revived as a national park in the 1970's. Also known as the "Grove of the Sacred Altis", the landmark is the kick-off point of today's modern Olympic games, where the Olympic flame is lit and carried by a series of runners to the hosting city.

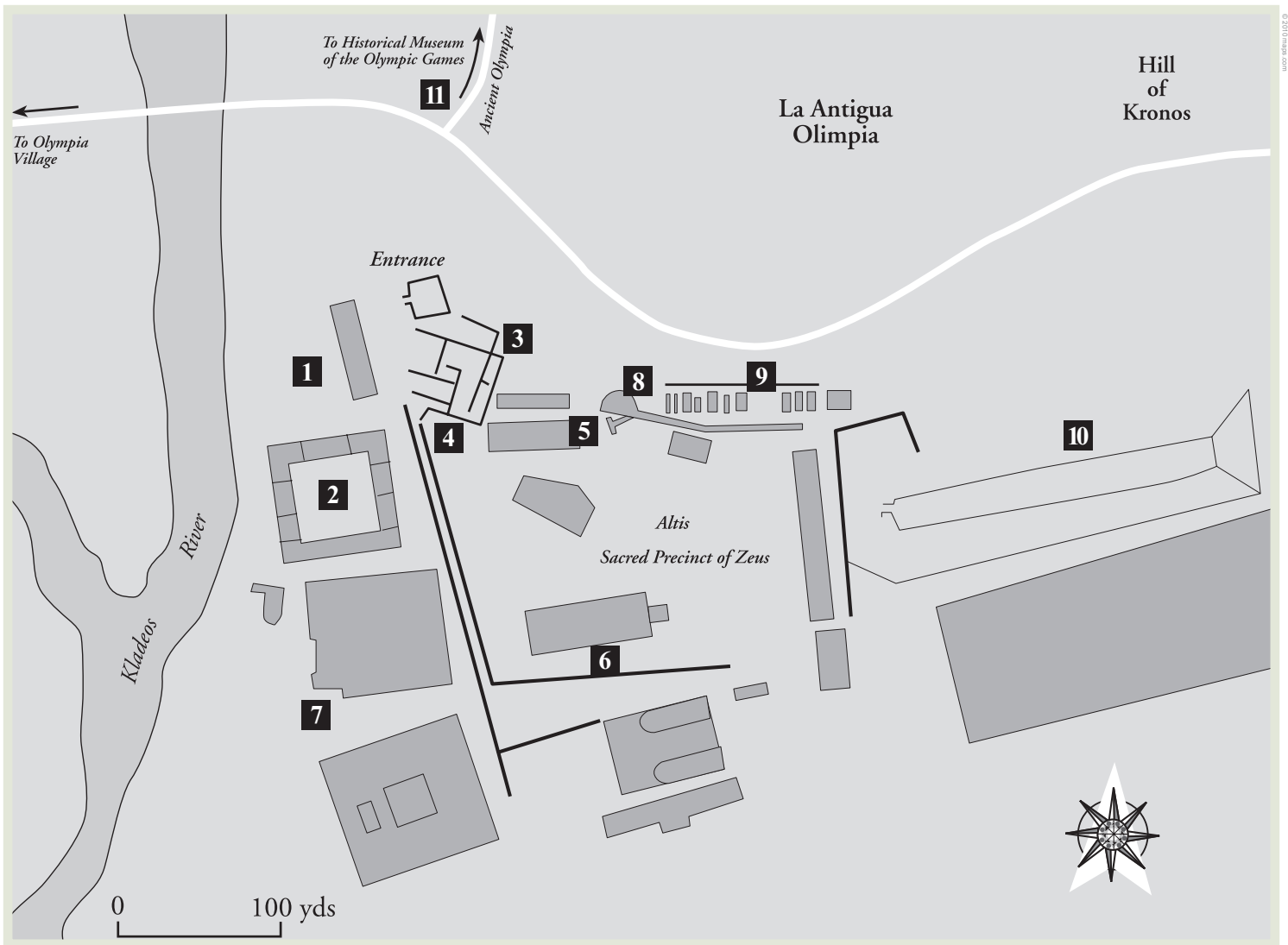
HISTORY

Mycenaean civilization dates back to 2000 BC, a people rivaled by their closest neighbors the Minoans of Crete. After a devastating volcanic eruption that reformed the island of Santorini and wiped out the Minoan people the Mycenaeans thrived. The Dorians arrived in the 12th-century BC, overrunning Mycenaea and destroying much of the geopolitical systems in place. The people of the Peloponnese began forming city-states in the 10th-century BC. The Golden Age of Classical Greek civilization was highlighted by the formation of the first Olympiad in 776 BC.

Over the next few centuries the Persians, Spartans, and Romans invaded Greece. In the 2nd-century BC Greece became a province of Rome. With the decline of the Roman Empire, Greece fell under Byzantine rule in the 4th-century. Invading Barbarian tribes and Norman aggressors spent the next few centuries attacking the Peloponnese. Later, during the 13th-century, the Venetians and Turks controlled many Greek ports, with the Turks occupying all of the Peloponnese from the 14th-century through the 19th-century.

The Greek War of Independence began in the 19th-century and in 1827 Ioannis Capodistria was named the country's first president. Following a Presidential assassination, the country was declared a Monarchy under the rule of Otto of Bavaria. Two World Wars and a German occupation were followed by civil war. Democracy was restored in 1974, and a socialist government was elected. Greece joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981.





OLYMPIA PLACES OF INTEREST

Ancient Olympia is one of the best-known archeological sites of ancient Greece. Although famous as the location of the first Olympiad, legend dictates that the Pisans, lead by King Oinomaus, began the games around 1000 BC in honor of his daughter Hippodameia and her husband Pelops.

King Iphitos of Elis declared the opening of the first official Olympic Games in 776 BC, in honor of Zeus. The games reached their pinnacle of prestige during the 6th-century BC but were later prohibited in 394 AD under the edict of Theodosios I, in an attempt to purge all pagan festivities.

Fifteen centuries later French historian Pier de Coubertin revived the games, again in Greece. Since 1896 a torchbearer starts out from Olympia bearing the sacred flame every four years, and takes it to the place where the Games are held.

Although mostly in ruins, ancient Olympia was once a complex gathering of temples, workshops, training facilities, and statues.

Near the entrance to the site's leafy setting is the . . .

- 1 **Gymnasium**, dating back to the 2nd century BC and boasting remnants of its original columns.
- 2 Next door is the Doric architecture of the **Palaestra**, the official wrestling school.
- 3 Nearby are the **Prytaneum**, where ceremonies honoring the winners took place; and the
- 4 **Philippeion**, a monument built by Philip of Macedon to honor himself and his victorious battles.
- 5 The **Heraion**, or Temple of Hera is one of the sites best preserved structures, it's Doric architecture dating from the 6th-century BC. Special running races were held in Hera's honor in which only virgins from the region could participate. Zeus, being the god for which the Games were founded, had his place at the center of ancient Olympia.
- 6 The **Doric Temple of Zeus** consisted of 25 columns, none of which are still standing. Inside sat the nearly 40-foot high gold and ivory statue of Zeus, created by Pheidias and considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It is thought that the statue was moved to Constantinople in the 5th century and later destroyed by fire. The great Temple

is flanked by a number of administrative buildings, workshops and altars.

7 Pheidias's Workshop is thought to be where the great statue of Zeus was created.

8 Nymphaeum, a monument built by Herodes Atticus during the 2nd-century, which not only paid homage to Herodes and his family, but also supplied Olympia with fresh spring water from Mt. Kronos.

9 Treasuries, stretching to the entrance to the stadium.

10 The Olympic Stadium was the largest of its kind, seating up to 30,000 spectators. Visitors are able to enter through the remains of its ancient archway and view the marble starting blocks still embedded in the dirt track.

11 The Olympia Archeological Museum houses many of the treasures found at the archeological site. Of special interest is the marble statue of Hermes of Praxiteles from the Temple of Hera, and the sculptured Head of Hera.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Katakolon and its surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Bargaining: Some shops may be prepared to bargain.

Tipping: When a service charge is not included in a restaurant bill, a 10 - 15% gratuity is suggested.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Fish and seafood feature prominently on Greek menus, as well as fruits and vegetables. In restaurants olive oil, garlic and herbs are used in traditional Greek dishes. Traditional tzadziki, a blend of yogurt, garlic and cucumber served with bread is a Greek favorite. Squid and Octopus, either sautéed or grilled, are considered specialties.

The most common drink in Greece is wine (either white or red). Greek drink specialties also include retsina (wine flavored with pine resin for improving the quality), and the local spirit ouzo, a licorice flavored liquor served with water. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING FACILITIES

The village of Katakolon is dotted with small souvenir shops and seaside restaurants. Although small, the area offers a number of interesting jewelry shops for tourists. Open hours are from 8:00 am – 2:30 am weekdays, however, most shops in town will remain open throughout the ship's stay. The modern city of Olympia is also home to a number of tourist shops.

A Value Added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid. Check with the individual shops for details. Regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change, and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.® cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in this port of call is the euro. There are 8 euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cent pieces. Every euro coin carries a common European face. On the obverse, each Member State decorates the coins with their own motifs. No matter which motif is on the coins they can be used anywhere inside the Member States. There are 7 euro notes. In different colors and sizes, they are denominated in 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euros. The notes are uniform throughout the euro area; unlike coins, they have no national side. All euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the euro area.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES

The main post office is located along Katakolon's main street, Archaia Olympia. International telephone calls can be made from street kiosks equipped with meters and from public phone card booths. Telephone cards can be purchased directly from kiosks and the local post office. Some phones may require a telephone card or coin to access the following numbers:

AT&T: 00.800.1311

MCI: 00.800.1211

