



## Visit Olympia: our complete guide

By Floriane

During our 3-month [motorhome tour of Southern Europe](#), we explored Greece and took the opportunity to discover **the archaeological site of Olympia**, one of the most emblematic sites of our time in Greece.

With its thousand-year-old ruins and treasures of the past, Olympia offers a unique journey into the heart of history. Here you'll find **all the advice you need to organize your visit** and make the most of this mythical site.

## **Visit and tickets to Olympia**

### **Address and access**

Ancient Olympia, 270 65 Olympia

Small parking lot at the archaeological museum and parking spaces in town.

[\*Rent a car on Discovercars\*](#)

## Tickets

**Adult ticket:** €20

**Reduced ticket:** 10 € (November to March rates, non-EU students, senior citizens with proof of age, etc.)

**Free ticket:** -EU citizens under 25

**Combined ticket including:**

- the archaeological site
- the Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games
- the archaeological museum

[Booking tickets for Olympia](#)

We recommend that you also take a 3D headset, even 1 for 2 or per family, for a **more immersive experience** of the archaeological site (more on this below).

## Opening hours

- April to end of October: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm
- November to March: 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Free admission:** March 6, April 18, May 18, last weekend of September, October 28, and 1st Sundays from November to the end of March.

## Visiting time

Approx. 3 to 4 hours for site + museums

□ Our recommendation for a 10-minute walk from Olympia: [Hotel Europa Olympia](#)

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## What to expect when visiting ancient Olympia

### A mythical birthplace of the Olympic Games

Olympia isn't just a collection of ruins.

This is **THE birthplace of the ancient Olympic Games**, the exact location where sacred competitions in honor of Zeus were held every four years **from 776 BC onwards**.

The heart of the sanctuary, **called the Altis**, formed a sacred space surrounded by olive trees, bringing together temples, civil buildings and sports facilities.

A complete visit to Olympia revolves around **3 distinct sites**, all within a short distance of each other. They complement each other perfectly, providing an understanding of the Games, religion, architecture and daily life.

The whole complex is a [World Heritage site](#), an exceptional testimony to Greek history.

## The archaeological site of Olympia

This is the most symbolically impressive part, but also the least explicit from an educational point of view.

On site, there are very **few explanatory panels**, hardly any contextualization, and when we started our visit we had **the sensation of seeing a vast field of stones** whose original shape was hard to imagine.

With a little imagination and a tour of the archaeological site, we gradually discovered the **various monuments that structured the sanctuary of Olympia**.

- The **Temple of Zeus**, once one of the largest temples in Greece, whose collapsed columns give an idea of the scale of the building.
- The **Temple of Hera**, one of the oldest buildings in the sanctuary, where **the**

**Olympic flame lighting ceremony** took place.

- The **Philippeion**, a circular building erected by Philip II of Macedonia in honor of his family.
- The foundations of the **Gymnasium** and the **Palestra**, training areas where athletes prepared for their trials.
- The vaulted entrance to the **Stadium**, a monumental passageway leading to the ancient arena.
- The fully accessible **stadium track**, where you can walk or even run like the athletes of yesteryear. This was our daughter's favorite part, and she loved running around the track.

## Is visiting Olympia with 3D glasses worth it?

△ We were surprised to find that many of the monuments remain only **as foundations**. This is precisely why we highly recommend adding an **augmented reality** tour.

The cost may seem **a little high at first**, but a visit with a 3D headset will allow you to visualize the buildings as they were two millennia ago, to understand the organization of the sanctuary and even to follow the various events of the Games.

### Our tip for saving money when visiting Olympia:

- **A single helmet for two visitors** is more than enough, or **two helmets for a family, ideally 1 per child to avoid arguments...**
- Other travelers have told us that **the French-language comments are excellent**, clear and very well done.

This virtual reality immersion seems to change everything!

□ [Infos and reservation of your 3D helmet](#). Allow **1h30 to 2h** to explore the ruins of Olympia. We recommend using **Get Your Guide**, a **practical online platform that offers flexible cancellation conditions**, with refunds possible up to 24 hours before the activity.

## Map of the archaeological site

## Olympia Archaeological Museum

The small **archaeological museum** is a veritable Ali Baba's cave of the Greek past, with some of the most famous works of antiquity.

□ It's located at the entrance to the archaeological site, and we recommend that you **start quickly with this museum**, to get a good idea of the site before you go there **thanks to the models and view of the buildings**.

Among the **must-have pieces**:

- The **statue of Hermes carrying the infant Dionysus**, traditionally attributed to Praxiteles, is one of the most famous sculptures of Antiquity. Discovered in the sanctuary, it is a remarkable example of classical Greek art.
- The **Nike statue of Paionios** (Victory of Paionios), another major work on display at the museum, is a symbol of victory and Greek aesthetics.
- **Numerous sculptures, bronze objects, ceramics, weapons, vases, pediment sculptures and metopes** from the sanctuary and temple of Zeus. These objects illustrate the art, religion, daily life and ritual practices of the site.

□ *Allow 45 minutes to 1 hour to cover all 3 rooms.*

## **The Museum of the History of the Ancient Olympic Games**

This smaller but highly instructive museum is dedicated to **the history of the Games themselves**. It allows visitors to discover not only the sporting, but also the religious and social dimensions of ancient competitions.

It's within easy walking distance of the archaeological site.

Here's what you'll find:

- Objects, statues, painted vases, inscriptions and artifacts from the sanctuary, **tracing the evolution of the Games**, their origins, rituals and the preparation of athletes.
- Elements illustrating **ancient disciplines**: the texts and objects on display evoke the program of the Games: foot races, wrestling, javelin, discus throwing, jumping, and other combined events such as the pentathlon (an ancient Greek sporting discipline consisting of five events), or more spectacular competitions such as chariot and horse races, like those held on the ancient hippodrome at Olympia.

It's particularly interesting if, like us, you've enjoyed discovering ancient sporting practices.

□ *Allow 30 to 45 minutes to explore the museum.*

## Is Olympia worth it?

The [site of Olympia](#) is a **must-see at least once in a lifetime** to appreciate the scale of the Olympic Games in Greek times.

The only negative point is the lack of reconstruction and signage on the archaeological site. This makes it difficult to understand without the immersive experience / 3D glasses.

We also recommend [Delphi](#), further north, another must-see sanctuary with its own Olympic stadium.

## Where to stay in Olympia?

We have no hesitation in recommending the [Europa Olympia hotel](#):

- Located a 10-minute walk from the Olympic Games Museum and Olympia archaeological site
- Large outdoor pool with panoramic view (perfect after a day of sightseeing especially in summer the heat can quickly be overwhelming)
- Incredible view of the valley and surrounding mountains
- Restaurant on site with Greek specialties, salad, pita, tzatziki sauce...
- Free parking.

□ [Info and booking for Europa Olympia hotel](#)

## Our tips for your visit

Here are our recommendations for making the most of the site:

- **Arrive early in the morning or late in the afternoon** to avoid the heat, especially in summer, and enjoy the site in a more serene atmosphere.
- For good Greek food, we recommend **Symposio tavern**, just a stone's throw from Olympia's archaeological site.
- **Bring good shoes** as the terrain is uneven and there are several outdoor areas to cover.
- △ **Few on-site explanations:** without an audioguide or augmented reality, it can be difficult to understand what you're seeing.
- **Remember water and a hat**, there's little shade, especially around the stadium track.

Book your tickets online to avoid long queues during school vacations.

## How to get to Olympia

Located in the north-western Peloponnese, Olympia can be reached by car or bus, making it an ideal stopover on a Greek road trip.

### By vehicle

This is the easiest and most flexible option. From Patras, allow around 1h45 driving time. From Kalamata, about 1h50. The roads in the Peloponnese are generally good, and the parking lots around the site are easy to access.

- [O \*ur complete guide to renting a car for your road trip in Greece\*](#)

Regional buses serve Olympia from Pyrgos or Krestena, with connections to Patras, Kalamata or even Corinth. Journeys are a little long, but convenient if you don't drive.

## Olympia from Athens

Several options are available to you.

- **[Renting a car](#)** Driving time: around 3h30 to 4h for 260 km, taking the freeway along the coast of the Gulf of Corinth before entering the Peloponnese.

□ [Compare Athens airport deals on Discover Cars](#)

- **By bus:** the **intercity** bus company offers regular services from Athens via Pyrgos to Olympia. The journey generally takes between 5 and 6 hours, depending on connections.
- **Organized excursions:** this is the easiest option if you want to visit Olympia without worrying about transport. An excursion departing from Athens allows you to take advantage of the journey, the guided tour and a turnkey program. You can easily insert a link to your recommended excursion [here](#).

## Where is Olympia located?

Ancient Olympia is located in the Elidian region, in the northwest of the Peloponnese. The archaeological site and two museums are located right next to the modern village of Olympia, providing easy access on foot to all points of interest.

The area is green, surrounded by hills and olive groves, and the setting is particularly pleasant, as is the [Meteyora site](#).

Olympia is one of the heartlands of Greek civilization, but there are also treasures to be found in southern Italy, such as the [Paestum site](#) near Naples.

## Video

We recommend you watch this short video before your visit, to better understand the site once you're there.

Feel free to leave us a **note** below to let us know if you are planning this trip, **ask** any questions or **share** on social networks([our Instagram](#)) we will answer you with great pleasure!

Visit Olympia: our complete guide

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0 avis (0/5)

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