

Trip to Greece
by Karen Scheske, assistant professor of math

On December 26 2006, I set out on a Grecian odyssey along with forty-one others comprised of faculty, students, and friends of Roberts. History Professor RJ Stansbury organized and led the trip to Greece working through the tour company EF Tours. Phil Cullum, Jessica Rebstein, and Ginger Williams, all students from the math/science division, and chemistry professor David Roll with his wife Peggy and three of their children were a part of this memorable trip to Greece.

After many, many hours on airplanes and in airports, we all arrived in Athens, a bustling city with an amazing presence, where nearly half the population of Greece lives. From the Acropolis and the Parthenon, to the ruins of the Temple of Zeus, to Mars Hill where the apostle Paul preached, to the National Gardens and the Parliament building (where you can watch the changing of the guard), to many other fascinating sites, Athens has so much to offer. You really have to walk around the city to fully appreciate life in Athens, but be careful as you stroll through the streets because there are cars, motorcycles, and scooters everywhere! The subway is so accessible and inexpensive, that it is a great alternate means of transportation for longer distances.



Approaching the Parthenon on the Acropolis



The harbor of Poros

A one-day cruise on the Saronic Gulf to the islands of Poros, Hydra, and Aegina provided another view of life in Greece. These were beautiful islands with rich character and culture (and many “touristy” attractions) with a seemingly simpler approach to life than that found in Athens.

Excursions to Delphi, Olympia, and Corinth brought history alive. The sites were phenomenal – one of my favorite stops was the ancient site of Delphi. The mountains, the theater, the ruins of the temple of Apollo offered up amazing views.

The grounds at Olympia seemed to transport you back in time; I could almost hear the roar of the crowds as I walked through the arched entry into the stadium.



The ruins of the temple of Apollo at ancient Delphi

Because we also traveled on New Year's Day, when many sites are closed, visiting ancient Mycenae (one of the major centers of Greek civilization in the second millennium BC) and the amphitheater at Epidaurus left more to the imagination but were inspiring nonetheless.

As we traveled by bus from one site to another winding along the coast and over mountains, we often passed by, and sometimes through, large groves of olive, pistachio, orange, or lemon trees; giving a glimpse of Greece outside busy city life and heavy traffic. Our guide, Michael, constantly provided us with historical/mythical information along with a modern day look at Greece. He helped us better understand and appreciate Greek culture, the Greek people, and even helped us learn a little Greek as well!

On our last day, we traveled to Cape Sounion, south of Athens, to see the Temple of Poseidon.



The Temple of Poseidon

Here we saw where Lord Byron carved his name into one of the columns of the temple (something that today, of course, people would very much frown upon). To stand there with the island dotted sea before you and the mountains behind you, it is easy to see what Byron found captivating about this place.

Terrific travel companions, unusually beautiful winter weather, and taking in awe-inspiring surroundings made traveling to the birthplace of western civilization absolutely unforgettable.