

The Theatre at Delphi

The ancient theatre at Delphi was built up the hill in a short distance from the Temple of Apollo offering a view of the entire sanctuary and the valley below. It was originally built in the 4th century BC but has been remodeled many times since then. Its 35 rows can seat 5,000 spectators.

This is where the musical contests (song and instrumental music) of the Pythian games and other religious festivals took place, which made this theatre the intellectual and artistic equivalent to the athletic stadium at Olympia.



Drama history

The Greek theatre history began with festivals honoring their gods. Dionysus, was honored with a festival called by "City Dionysia". In Athens, during this festival, men used to perform songs to welcome Dionysus. Athenians spread these festivals to allies in order to promote a common identity.



In the early years the actor, director, and dramatist were all the same

person. After some time three actors were allowed to perform in each play. Later few non-speaking roles were allowed to perform on-stage. Due to limited number of actors allowed on-stage, the chorus evolved into a very active part of Greek theatre. Music was often played during the chorus' delivery of its lines.

Tragedy, comedy, and satyr plays were the theatrical forms. Tragedy and comedy were completely separate genres. Satyr plays dealt with the mythological subject in comic manner.



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Dive into Greek Drama



Great theatres to visit

The Epidaurus Theatre



The **Epidaurus Theatre** located on the north eastern side of Peloponnese is the most beautiful and best preserved among all the ancient theatres. It was designed by Polykleitos in the 4th century BC. The original Theatre had 34 rows of seats later extended in Roman times to 55 rows in total and could seat up to 14 thousand spectators.

Critics appreciate the quality of the sound, allowing the speech of the actors to be clearly heard in the representations. Tour guides demonstrate this by striking a match at the centre stage. The famous Epidauria Festival begun in 1954 and it is held every summer with famous ancient dramas or modern plays.

Odeon of Herodes Atticus

A stone theatre structure located on the south-west slope of the Acropolis of Athens. It was built in 161 AD by the Athenian magnate Herodes Atticus in memory of his wife. It was originally a steep-sloped theatre with a three-story stone front wall and a wooden roof made of expensive, cedar of Lebanon timber. It was used as a venue for music concerts with a capacity of 5,000. It was destroyed by the Heruli in 267 AD.

The audience stands and the *orchestra* (stage) were restored in the 1950s. Since then it has been the main venue of the Athens Festival, which runs from May through October each year, featuring a variety of acclaimed Greek as well as International performances.

