

25th March Information Sheet

The 25th of March each year holds dual significance for Greek People

1. Greek National Independence Day

- This day marks the freedom and independence of Turkish rule and the end of the 400 year Ottoman Empire in Greece. The Greek people fought for independence from 1821-1829. This day marked the end of oppression and deprivation of basic human rights from the Turkish rule and return of the land which is now modern Greece.



2. Annunciation of the Theotokos (Virgin Mary)

Holy day in the church calendar

- When Archangel Gabriel came to Mary with a message from the Father (God) that she would conceive the son of God
- The names of Evangelos, Vangelis, Evan, Angelo, Angela, Eva, Angie, are celebrated on this day.
- Many elderly Greek people will fast the day before the 25th of March and will attend church

In Greece, this day is celebrated as a public holiday. Many people will attend church in the morning to celebrate the Annunciation of Christ's birth and then attend a memorial service for Greek Independence Day. In the villages, towns and cities of Greece, there are parades of flags, people dressed in traditional dress and marching bands in the streets to celebrate the day.



Political and Religious values are intertwined and recognised on this day as it was during the Ottoman rule that the Greek Orthodox Church helped many enslaved Greeks to retain their faith, culture and language.

Some interesting Facts you may or may not have known:

- The image and characteristic costume of pom pom shoes, white leggings and white pleated skirt (400 pleats representing each year of the 400 year Ottoman occupation) was the traditional military uniform that the men war during battle against the Turks. This costume is called an Evzone. Today these costumes are worn in traditional dancing performances
- The nine stripes on the Greek flag represent each letter of the Greek word for "freedom", (Ελευθερία- Eleftheria)
- The Greek national anthem was originally a famous poem by Dionysios Solomos called 'Hymn to Freedom' and originally had 158 verses by which the first 24 were used for the anthem.



Sources: Zigos, Anthony. G. (2002). "March 25th- Celebration of Greek Independence Day", The Merrimac Journal. www.helleniccomserve.com/greekindependence.

Greek Care Website: "Religion: Religious Dates". Fronditha Care. www.greekecare.org.au