

## **Greece**

Greece consists of the mainland and over 1500 islands. Greek history began about 3500 BC and Athens became the centre of Greek culture. 1000 BC is chosen as the beginning of the distinctive civilised traditions that took shape in Greece, India, Middle East and China. At that time Greek philosophers began a tradition of scientific thinking.

Modern Greece emerged in 1832 when the country established monarchy after 400 years of Turkish domination. Despite the poor soil and rugged terrain Greece is almost self-sufficient. The warm climate, unspoilt beaches and ancient historical sites attract more than ten million tourists each year.

Greece has a population of ten and a half million people and most of them follow the Orthodox Church of Greece.

## Fofo Souvaliotis

I was born on 3.11.1945 in a little village near Patra, which is the third largest city in Greece. The government employed my father as the guard of the fruit trees. Greece has a warm Mediterranean climate and the fruit trees grow well. My mother looked after my two sisters and me.

Greece was very poor after the war. Some Greeks migrated to Australia and they wrote home about the good life in Australia. I wanted to go but my parents begged me to stay. I promised to return home soon because I only intended to stay in Australia until I saved some money.

I was very young and did not like the restrictions my parents put on me. I wasn't allowed to go anywhere or to talk to boys. That's how it was for everybody in those days. I wanted to see the world.

I wasn't eighteen yet when in February 1963 I landed in Perth. I began working in a fruit-canning factory Berry. I worked there for three months before the government sent me to Sydney to work in the glass factory making cardboard packing.

I did not know English when I arrived. I met a Greek man who came to Australia four years before me. We got married and have two children, Mimi and Ana.

My husband heard from a friend about Coober Pedy opal and he went to mine there for a few months. Later he wanted to go opal mining in Lightning Ridge. I did not want to go because I made friends in Sydney and have settled down. In 1972 we moved to Lightning Ridge and bought a camp in the bush. We had no water and no electricity. I felt miserable. My husband promised that we will return to Sydney next year. And next year and the year after that. Four years later we bought a house in town and I settled down. I have been happy ever since. I have no reason to be unhappy. My two children are married and have two children each. I baby sit for them and keep the home for everybody. I have everything I need.

My children and I went to Greece for a holiday; they love the country but only for holidays. Their home is in Australia. I can not return to Greece for good ever again.

My sisters have a very good life in Greece. They live better than I do. The social life is so much better, there are places to go and things to see and friends to visit.

The moral restrictions I rebelled against are a thing of the past. People are very happy now; they go out all the time and enjoy themselves.

I can not read and write English. We Greeks have Elinika script. I read Elinika books. It was hard for me to learn English because I was always very busy. I worked and associated mainly with Greeks.

I go to Greek Orthodox Church when I am in Sydney and my children have been baptised and married there.