

The Geography of Greece

The present-day country of Greece is located on the Balkan Peninsula in southern Europe. A **peninsula** is a piece of land mostly surrounded by water and connected to a larger part of land. The Balkan Peninsula is surrounded by three seas—the Aegean Sea on the east, the Ionian Sea on the west, and the Mediterranean Sea on the south.

To the east of Greece, beyond the Aegean Sea, is a part of Asia called Asia Minor, or “Little Asia.” Today the country of Turkey fills Asia Minor.

About 2,000 islands can be found in the seas all around Greece. One of the largest islands, Crete, lays southeast of Greece.

The southern part of Greece is called the Peloponnese (peh•luh•puh•NEE•suhs). The Ionian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea almost cut off the Peloponnese from the rest of Greece. Only a small strip of land, or **isthmus** (IS•muhs), keeps the Peloponnese connected to the mainland of Greece.

The land of Greece is rocky and mountainous. In fact, nearly three-fourths of Greece is covered by mountains. Scattered throughout this rugged land are valleys and small plains.

Long ago, the Balkan Peninsula and much of the land around it was home to the ancient Greeks. These early people farmed the rocky land and fished in the nearby seas.



Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What is a peninsula?
2. What are the three seas that surround Greece?

THINK CRITICALLY

3. How do you think the geography of Greece affected the people who lived there long ago?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Internet Search Activity Write a list of five things that you would like to know about Greece and its geography. From this list, create key words that could help you do a search on the Internet.