

Jo Jakeaways “From Abu Dhabi to Epidavros August 2021”

As a Classics Teacher on a very extended maternity leave and living in the middle east, I leapt at the chance of giving my young family (kids aged 7, 4 and 2) the classic tour of ancient Greece. When Covid restrictions demanded that it would be difficult to return to the UK for the summer without hotel quarantine, I nervously contacted Sarah to ask for assistance! With miraculous e-mail speed and positivity, a plan was crafted and my husband and I had a mass of hotel/travel suggestions to mull over.

To my delight, the **Bacchae** was being performed at the modern-day festival at **Epidaurus**. Whilst sad to have left my family behind at the pool in the beautiful **Atalia Hotel** in **Nafplio**, the collective experience of watching the show and then driving the 20-30km back through the mountainous moon-lit landscape in a convoy of cars was massively energizing. I am especially grateful to Sarah for her firm nudges that without fail, I must go to this!!!



How could listening to the ancient Greek and watching a fervent chorus in the magnificent open-air theatre ever disappoint?



Earlier in the day as a family we took a trip to the village of **Palea Epidauros** which lies a winding drive away from the ancient site right next to the sea. A modern-art reflection on Covid restrictions had recently opened in the little theatre. Perhaps ironically, my children were told off for roaming a little too freely! Please enjoy the photos of both theatres - a real highlight of the trip.



Of all the places visited, I would return to Nafplio. The town itself was lively at night and very kid-friendly. There was lots to do - one morning climbing up the citadel steps; an afternoon rock-jumping into the sea; a morning at **Mycenae/Epidauros** and so on. Also, countless trips to the famous gelato.

En route to **Kefalonia** from the beautiful and tranquil island of **Kithara**, we treated ourselves to a night at the **5* Kyniska Palace**, just outside of **Sparta** and very close to **Mystras**. It was wonderful, and we were so exhausted from all the travelling, we couldn't resist staying a second night. If you can, and want time to relax, splash out there!

On the plane back home to **Abu Dhabi**, most of all I felt relieved (like any School trip!) to have escaped coming into contact with Covid, despite the risks that such travel pose. Thankfully, Greece was on the UAE's Green List of countries, which meant no home-quarantine on our return, just two PCR tests. The kids could go straight back to School and my 'holiday' could start...