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## Olympic Legacy of Ancient Greece in Olympic National Park USA

by

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Series of seven articles compares Olympic games of ancient Greece 3000 years ago to their legacy on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State USA, where Mount Olympus, *Home of the Gods*, casts its spell across majestic Olympic National Park, sole UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Great Pacific Northwest.

### Part 6

### Festivals For Mind and Body

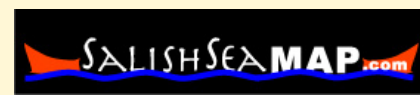
The ancient Greek games were all about enriching the mind and training the body. Alongside the physical games were games which were called *musical* and which encouraged the practice of the Muse's arts – not only music but also poetry and drama. Participants played the flute and cithara. They held competitions in music, literature, tragedy, comedy and poetry to the pleasure of the actors and the spectators.

People gathered in a desire for peace and conviviality. In early Greek games the aim was not the victory of one team over another, but the manifestation of Greek culture and the demonstration of Greek world view through the perpetuation of art, movement and social interaction.

This is radically different from the values of the modern Olympic Games, which glorify the super human powers of the individual and demand victory at all cost, with success measured by the number of medals won, the amount of sponsorship money banked and the size of the global viewing audience.

In the United States, festivals and community events held in the halo of Olympic National Park are more reflective of the divinely inspired Olympic festivals begun three thousand years ago. Washington State's Olympic festivals are held in the cities and towns protected by the parthenon of gods atop nearby Mt. Olympus. Festivals are celebrated each summer, when the days are longer, the weather is warmer and more visitors are enjoying vacations in the pretty ports strung like pearls around Olympic National Park.

Chamber music bows from a barn near Center on summer weekend afternoons at the Olympic Music Festival. Fiddle tunes and jazz jump from festivals in a fort near a Victorian port. Festivals on ocean shores and sandy straits serenade the sunsets. Gallery walks, fairs, art shows and concerts tack their welcome signs on blog posts and light posts. There are parades for marchers, marathons for runners, contests for car collectors and prizes for builders of sand castles and wooden boats.





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## Olympic Games and Recreation

Athletic events that took place during the festivals in the early days of the Greek festivals consisted mainly of foot races and tests of physical strength and endurance. The winner of the track and field events was judged also on the skills demonstrated in the arts of music, drama and poetry. The well rounded winner, adept at speed, elocution and playing the flute was crowned with the single olive wreath as the Olympic champion.

Pilgrims to Washington's venues in Olympic National Park are searching for a personal experience in the Elysian forests that cover the Olympic Peninsula. The ultimate triumph is a climb to the glacier-covered summit of Mt. Olympus to touch the gods. Most are content to hike the temple-like trails of Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest. Enthusiasts arrive from near and far to fish for salmon at native villages in La Push and Neah Bay. They fish the Hoh, Queets and Quinault rivers, floating beneath the verdant canopies of the rare Olympic rain forests to catch steelhead and salmon.

### End of Part 6 – Festivals for Mind and Body

#### Seven Articles in Olympic Legacy Series

- Part 1 – **Olympic Games from Zeus to Whistler**
- Part 2 – **Home of The Gods in The New World**
- Part 3 – **Tribute to the Gods and to Nature**
- Part 4 – **Sacred Festival Sites**
- Part 5 – **Pilgrims Attend Olympic Festivals**
- Part 6 – **Festivals For Mind and Body**
- Part 7 – **Success of Ancient and Modern Olympic Events**

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