Cultural routes of Greece,

some examples:

- Walking tours of the unified archaeological sites of Athens
- In the footsteps of Paul the Apostle in Greece
- Ancient theatres, a work in progress…

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Walking tours of the unified archaeological sites of Athens
Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens

Background

- Over the past 50-60 years Athens and Piraeus expanded gradually in concentric circles around their centres, until they covered the entire Attika Basin.
- Portions of the city from previous time periods, “fragments” of Athenian public space from the Ancient Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman occupation eras etc., constitute major urban voids of the contemporary capital. These were included in the modern urban web, as that developed around them and de facto encircled them, without, however, showcasing them or creating any substantial connection to them.

→ Project: regeneration of the historical centre and unification of archaeological sites of Athens so that they can be functionally included into the life of the historic centre of the city.

The term “unification” means the creation of a continuous fabric of public spaces, parks, and facilities for culture and recreation, which will incorporate and link all the significant cultural landmarks of Athens, including its principal monuments and archaeological sites. → creation of an open air museum, where the past meets the present
Planning and implementing the Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens

1997: foundation of EAXA (Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens S.A.), the implementation agency of the project

- owned entirely by the Greek ministry of Culture, and the ministry of the Environment, Planning and Public Works.

- 10 years operation

- **Main goals:**
  - Restoration of the historic continuity of the city
  - Creation of poles of attraction for its residents,
  - Better quality of life in an overall space with upgraded environment and functions, including culture
  - Harmonious coexistence of various city elements associated with its cultural history but also with its modern growth will highlight the historic physiognomy of Athens.

http://www.astynet.gr
Completed projects

• Creation of an upgraded *network of pedestrian roads* linking the archaeological zones of Athens, *restoring the patterns of ancient pedestrian traffic*, to the extent possible.
• Creation of public plazas and planted parks → *increase of the public and green spaces* along the pedestrian roads and new pathways created
• *Restoration and maintenance of monuments and buildings* (restoration of facades, elimination of billboards, etc.)
• *Reduction of building density* in districts that affect the character of the zones unified.
Grand promenade of Athens under the Rock of the Acropolis....

- **Pedestrianisation of the major access roads** – Dionysiou Areopagitou Street and Apostolou Pavlou Street– to 6 of the most important archaeological sites in Athens (Temple of Olympio, Acropolis, Filopappou hill, Ancient Agora, Roman Agora, Cemetery of Ceramic)
  
  **3kms long roads, previously utilised by approximately 50,000 cars per day**

- Pedestrianisation later extended through Ermou Street towards the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Athens; Technopolis, Gazi area; and towards Monastiraki via Adrianou Street (which lies along one side of the Ancient Agora and the Stoa of Attalos).

- **The efforts of EAXA S.A. were, from the very start, "against the post-card city"**
  
  - The main intervention was directly linked to the public space of the contemporary city, with areas for social interaction, or simple walking paths.
  
  - The goal was the **creation of an escape space** for a walk, for relaxation, or for places to meet other people: where the citizens of Athens could coexist harmoniously with visitors.

  - Constant communication was sought with those involved and all potential users: archaeologists, locals, inhabitants of nearby areas, shopkeepers, the associations of all those involved in every part of the project, tourist agents, guides, visitors.

- **End result:** Creation of connector zones surrounding the archaeological sites, defined by the antiquities themselves but also by desirable travel paths and by the points that offer best views to the monuments – **creation of a large radiant cultural park, projecting both the ancient and the modern image of Athens**
Grand promenade of Athens under the Rock of the Acropolis.

Main Interventions:

focusing not only on the restoration of the antiquities, but also on reviving the historical centre of Athens

- **Creation of green areas** and special-construction stabilised slopes, areas with benches and outdoor lighting
- **Installation of new fencing at the archaeological sites**, and a new entrance to the Ancient Agora, at the Areios Pagos.
- Adjustment of the entrances of old buildings to the height of the new roadway or **reconstruction of buildings** for aesthetic purposes.
- **Creation of new plazas** - new points of reference, spots for stopping and meeting other people: the open area before the new Acropolis Museum, and the Parthenis triangle.
- Unification of the triangular plaza between Roberto Galli Street and Dionissiou Areopagitou Street house with the hill, **forming a small park with seating** offering views of the Acropolis and served by pedestrian paths.
Dionisiou Aeropagitou Street under construction.
Dionisiou Aeropagitou Street after
Apostolou Pavlou Street (before and after)
Keramikos square
Keramikos Square

2005 2006
Points to remember

• Both residents and visitors of Athens are now able to fit a work through history into their every-day life.

➔ The archaeological sites and monuments finally assume their true importance, dominating the landscape, as they become part of everyday life.

• The Grand promenade of Athens was the location of almost all the non-athletic events of the Olympic Games.

• The pedestrianised zone hosts cultural events, including an annual summer Book Fair and art exhibitions. The Theatre of Herodus Atticus is also an important venue for theatrical, musical and dance performances.

➔ Visitors have the opportunity to experience a unique blend of ancient and modern civilisation.

• The project won 3rd prize (Diploma) in the ‘Conservation of Cultural Landscapes’ category of the annual European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards in 2005.

Future projects: many other cities (including Thebes, Piraeus, Patras, Sparta etc.) are interested into following Athens’s example.
In the footsteps of Paul the Apostle in Greece
Footsteps of apostle Paul

- Among the countries he visited to spread Christianity, Apostle Paul came also to **Greece**, preaching the Holy Gospel & teaching people about Jesus’ mission.

- His journey in Greece is a route that can touch not only the believers but also everybody who loves history.

“The Route that Apostle Paul Followed in Greece” passes through all places where the Apostle preached and constitutes an ideal combination of **pilgrimage** and **sightseeing** in some of the most beautiful places in Greece.

- His journey in Greece created a path:

  **Samothrace, Kavala (Neapoli), Philippi, Amphipolis-Apollonia, Thessaloniki, Veria, Athens, Corinth**
Footsteps of apostle Paul: the project

- A project carried out jointly by the Greek National Tourism Organisation, the Ministry of Development and the Church of Greece, aiming to promote the areas the Apostle toured through and preached at.
  - It was funded under the umbrella of an EU project.

- The project included mild innervations, projecting the areas where the Apostle passed:
  - Small scale constructions – signposts – reconstruction of pathways – construction of shops and areas of recreational activities

- After its completion, a trilingual (English, Italian, Russian) booklet was issued (available online via https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.131124253591168.14114.130888106948116&type=3)
Footsteps of apostle Paul: the call in Veroia (Macedonia)
Baptism pond in Phillipoi (Macedonia)
Fencing of the ancient port Cenchreae in Corinth (Peloponnese)
Semi marathon, following the steps of apostle Paul in Kavala area (Macedonia)

- Organised during the last 8 years in Kavala
- It is a 20kms route starting from Kavala and finishing in Phillipoi, where Greek and foreign athletes are welcome to participate
Points to remember

- In recent years there were many visitors from different countries, who following the footsteps of Apostle Paul in Greece and often didn’t find there a reference point.

- The project “Footsteps of apostle Paul” signals a journey to the lands of ancient treasures and Christian history where Paul travelled.

- Tourists have the opportunity to share apostle Paul’s journey, visiting his most important stops, while enjoying what the surrounding areas have to offer.

- Combining religious and sports tourism via the organisation of a semi-marathon following Apostle Paul’s footsteps offers a new dimension in the project and attracts other tourists.
Ancient theatres… a work in progress
"DIAZOMA" association
Citizens for the Greek Ancient Theatres

- Established in 2008, as an association of:
  - archaeologists/restorers,
  - artists/intellectuals, and
  - local communities (mayors, regional governors, citizens)
- Focus: restoration of ancient venues for spectators and audiences and finding the resources necessary for their rehabilitation.

150 ancient venues for spectators and audiences are scattered all across Greece, some in good conditions and some rescued fragmented.

Diazoma: an ancient Greek word referring to the wide horizontal walkway between the lower and upper tiers of seats in a theatre

http://www.diazoma.gr
Creation of a virtual “park” of ancient theatres and an interactive map of Greece with all the ancient theatres marked on it.

“Diazoma” experts are designing a tour of ancient theatres, and are working on marketing them as a complete package.

_visitor will have the chance to relax in the comfort of modern transportation and call at several theatres, receiving guided tours to them, without having to arrange and combine multiple single visits on their own!_
Other activities of “Diazoma”

- Guided tours in ancient theatres
- Organisation of concerts and other events in ancient theaters
- Developing two smart phone-based digital tours (“EasyGuideApp”)
- Raising money for restoration
- Commissioning studies to assist in geophysical surveys, expropriations and excavations
- Collaborating with the the non-profit organisation ELIX is launching a series of voluntary service programmes, aiming at the restoration of ancient theatres
Guided tour in the theatre of ancient Messene
Concerts and artistic events
Creation of an archaeological park in Orchomenus in Boeotia... work in progress

The archaeological park will include:

- the ancient theater of Orchomenus
- the great Mycenaean Funerary monument (Treasury of Minyas), and
- a Byzantine church (Our Lady of Skripous).
Scale model of the archaeological park in Boeotia
Voluntary service programme to help restore the ancient theatre of Megalopolis

- 25 volunteers from across the globe
- Goals:
  - the restoration of the Orchestra and the infrastructure for waste management,
  - the preparation of the site for future excavations
  - the construction of pathways for visitors,
  - the removal of plant growth and
  - the restoration of the area surrounding the theatre.
Points to remember

- Greeks and foreigners have the opportunity to enjoy and participate in “Diazoma”’s effort to project ancient theatres as centres of culture, both in the past and in the present.

- “Diazoma” offers the chance to learn more on ancient theaters via
  - Guided tours
  - Online tours
  - Digital tours on your mobile phone
  - Participation in voluntary programs

- Tourists have the opportunity to feel that they serve a greater purpose, being able to enjoy the fruits of “Diazoma” and finance its goals.
Thank you!

Come and “walk” in Greece!

Follow Greece everywhere!

www.visitgreece.gr