

Greek Myths

The [Greek mythology](#) is a sum of fables told by the ancient Greeks to explain the existence of the world, some natural phenomena or just for pleasure, to intrigue the imagination of people. Most of these Ancient Greek myths survive till our days because they have been included in the works of famous ancient writers and historians. They are, of course, not based on rationalism but on the unbelievable and the supernatural. Some of the ancient Greek myths are shocking, but all are bound to captivate you.

Discover the most famous ancient Greek myths

You will find below 29 Greek myths: Odysseus, Jason and the Argonauts, Theseus, the Amazons, Persphone and many more myths.



[Myth of the legendary Odysseus](#)

Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, is probably the most famous hero of all times. His story is a myth with monsters, bad luck and much adventure. The story of Odysseus is actually the long trip of a man who has only one aim, to go back to his beloved homeland and his family. Odysseus left Troy after ten years of war and started his journey to his home on Ithaca. However, this journey was long and adventurous.



[Myth of Jason and the Argonauts](#)

The myth of Jason, his fellow Argonauts and the trip to get the Golden Fleece has enthralled the world. This is a story of excitement, danger and adventure. Jason, the legitimate king of Iolcus, sets the voyage on his ship Argo to the foreign land of Colchis to get the Golden Fleece and prove that he is worth to become king. On the way, he encounters many troubles and delays. Even when he arrives in Colchis, he has to confront the deceptions of the local king.



[Myth of Theseus, the legendary king of Athens](#)

Theseus was a semi-mythical, semi-historical figure. The myth says that he had two fathers, king Aegeus of Athens and god Poseidon. As he descended from a god, he had super-natural powers. The most famous labor of Theseus was the killing of the

Minotaur in Crete Greece to relieve Athens from the burden to sacrifice seven young men and seven young women to this monstrous figure. After the death of king Aegeus, Theseus became king of Athens and legend says that his first wife was an Amazon.



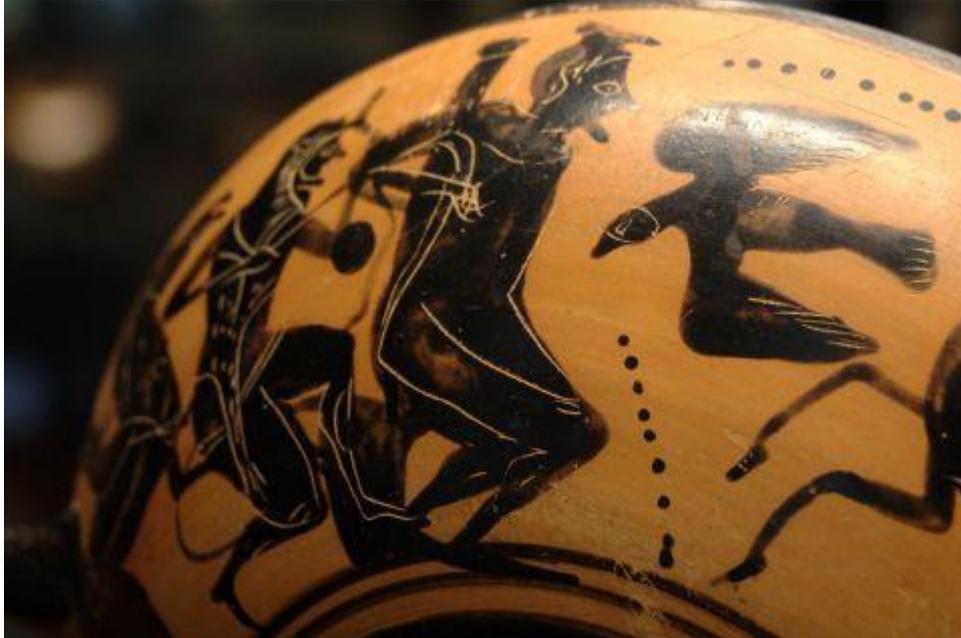
[The Amazons](#)

The myth says that the Amazons were a tribe of independent, mighty women who had rebelled against the male-dominated society and the atrocities of men. They used to live in isolate places, exclude men from their society and make wars against them. Although there are no clear outcomes whether the Amazons really existed or not, they are frequently referred into myths and legends.



[Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld](#)

The myth of Persephone, the sweet daughter of Greek goddess Demeter who was kidnapped by Hades and later became the Queen of the Underworld, is known all over the world. This is actually the myth of the ancient Greeks to explain the change of the seasons, the eternal cycle of nature's death and rebirth. Persephone is understood as a naïve little girl who flows between the protection of the mother and the love of her husband. The myth of Persephone was very popular in the ancient times and it is said that her story was represented in the Eleusinian Mysteries, the most secret celebrations of ancient Greece.



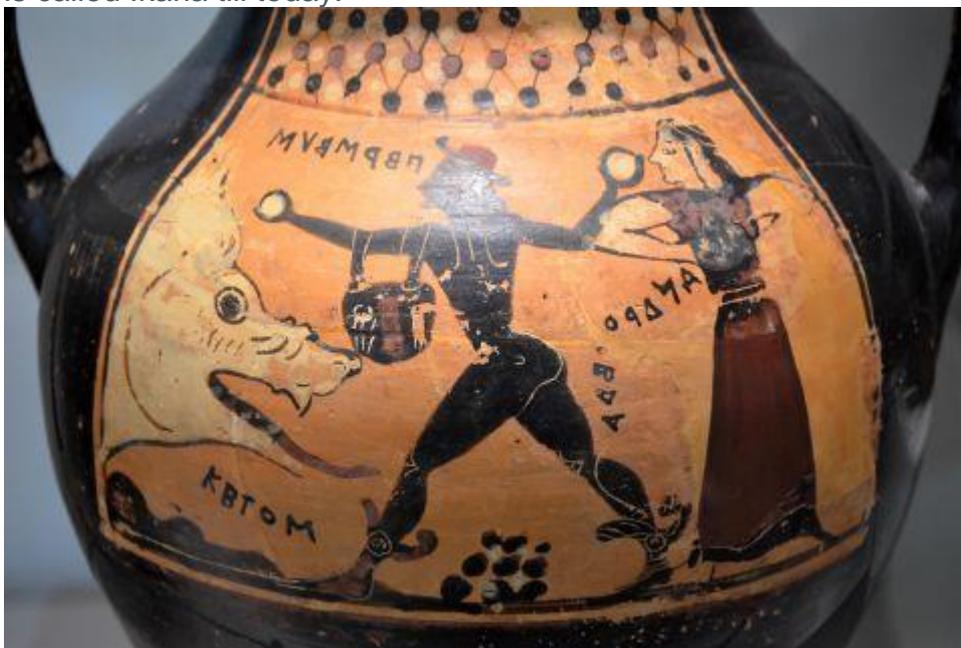
[Prometheus, the friend of man](#)

The myth of Prometheus holds a special place in Greek mythology. This son of a Titan was regarded as a great benefactor of humankind, the bringer of fire and the original teacher of technology and useful arts to the mankind. The great love he had for humans would often bring Prometheus into a dangerous conflict with Zeus. In fact, it was Zeus who punished Prometheus into eternal torture for stealing fire from the gods and giving it to the people.



[Myth of the fall of Icarus](#)

The myth of Daedalus and Icarus shows us that the power of man has no limits but also that we should be very careful how to use this power. Icarus could fly with his wings, however when he flew too close to the sun, his wings were burnt and he fell to the sea. The closest island where Icarus fell and got drowned took its name and it is called Ikaria till today.



[Perseus and Andromeda](#)

The myth of Perseus and Andromeda contains very deep wisdom on the interactions of male and female energy. Perseus is one of the greatest heroes of Mythology of Greece. He was the son of mighty Zeus and mortal woman Danae. He is best known

as the slayer of the Gorgon Medusa, a fearsome monster, and as the rescuer of the Ethiopian princess Andromeda.



[Orpheus and Eurydice](#)

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is a great tragic myth. Orpheus gets in love with nymph Eurydice and when she dies, right after their wedding, he descends to the Underworld. There he convinces the God of the Dead, Pluto, to allow his wife to come back to Earth so that they could lead a normal life. This tragic story has inspired many painters and it is the basic concept for many operas and songs.



[Pygmalion and Galatea](#)

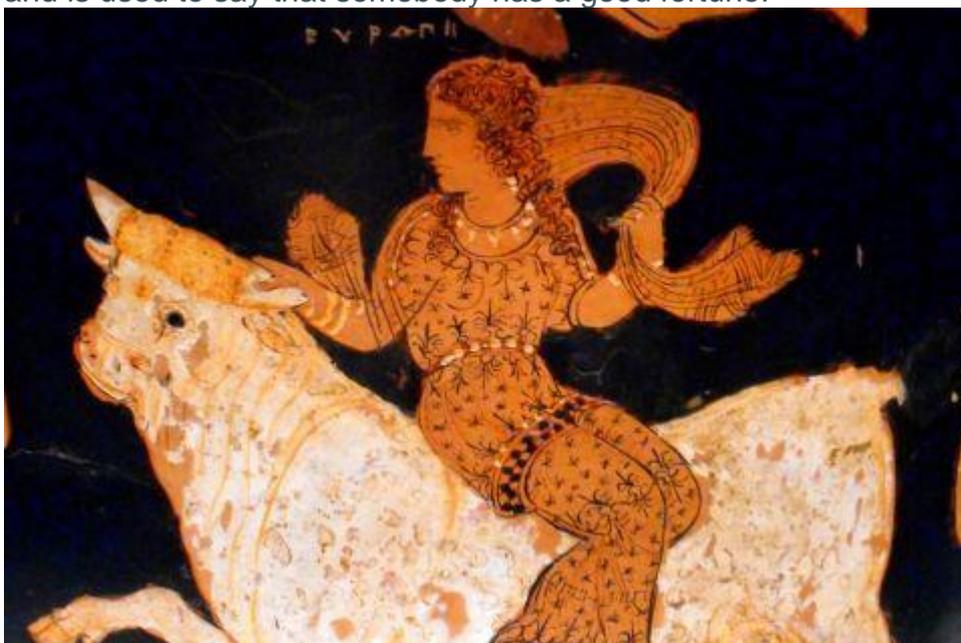
The myth of Pygmalion and Galatea is very popular till today. Pygmalion, a famous sculptor, falls in love with his own creation and wishes to give life to his statue. This

simple and imaginary concept is actually the basis for a psychological understanding of male behaviour and wish. This nice myth is considered as the depiction of the masculine need to rule over a certain woman and to inanimate his ideas into a female living creature.



[King Midas and his golden touch](#)

The myth of King Midas is a myth about the tragedy of avarice and narrates what happens when true happiness is not recognized. Midas wished that everything he touched would turn into gold. However, he had not thought that this wish was not actually a blessing, but a curse. The phrase “the Midas touch” comes from this myth and is used to say that somebody has a good fortune.



[Europa, the godmother of a whole continent](#)

This myth is about a beautiful girl that was abducted and then seduced by Zeus, the chief of the Greek Gods. This concept is pretty usual in Greek mythology. The remarkable thing is that this girl became queen of Crete and gave her name to the entire continent of Europe. Her story has been particularly popular since the ancient times and has been depicted in many ancient pieces of ceramics and coins.



[Io and Zeus](#)

Io was the beautiful princess of Argos in Peloponnese, who was seduced by god Zeus disguised into a cloud. However, his jealous wife, Hera, learned about this relationship and turned Io into a cow to keep her away from her husband. Io was to suffer many misfortunes until she was finally turned into a woman again and have a normal life.



Eros and Psyche

The myth of Eros and Psyche is probably one of the dearest love stories in classical Greek mythology. Eros was the personification of intense love desire. Psyche, a beautiful maiden, personifies the human soul. In fact, she is the symbol of the soul purified by passions and misfortunes and who is, from now on, prepared to enjoy eternal happiness.



Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis

Leto in ancient myths of Greece was the representation of motherhood. Like every mother, she suffered a lot to give birth to her children and then to protect and raise them up in the proper way. Leto suffered many misfortunes because of her relationship with Zeus, which caused Hera's jealousy and cursed Leto not to find a stable place on Earth to deliver her children. That is how Delos emerged, which was believed to be a floating island. Leto gave birth to Artemis and Apollo there and since then Delos became the sacred place of god Apollo.



[Pandora, the first woman on Earth](#)

The story of Pandora came into prominence in "Theogony", the epic poem of Hesiod, written circa 800 BC. The myth dates back to the first centuries of humanity, just after the Titanomachy, the Great War between the Titans and the Olympians. It is the story of a woman who opened the box where all the evils of the world were kept inside and thus she released every mischief for humans.



[Callisto, the constellation Ursa Major](#)

The ancient people of Greece used to explain things they couldn't understand with myths. That is how they explained the creation of the world, natural phenomena or destructions or the existence of powers that could surpass human nature. That way, when they were looking at the sky and were observing all these stars, they would

wonder what had caused these stars and constellations to exist. In fact, many myths have been created to explain the existence of stars. The story of Callisto is such a myth, created for the sake of two beautiful constellations, the Ursa Major and the Ursa Minor.



[Adonis and Aphrodite](#)

Adonis was the deity of plants and rebirth. He is known as a god who was for ever youthful, the one who would live and die only to be reborn again. The cult of Adonis comprised of women, as it is evident from the 2,600-year-old remains found on the island of Lesbos. The Athenian women planted the "gardens of Adonis" where the seeds would spring to life and then die to be reborn a few months later. The Festival of Adonis was celebrated in mid-summer when fennel and lettuce were harvested.



[Phaethon and the Sun Chariot](#)

According to the ancient myths, the Sun was put in a chariot and everyday God Helios would drive the chariot all along the sky. That is how the Sun would rise and set. Phaethon was the son the god Helios who secretly took the chariot one day to drive it. However, as he was young and inexperienced, he lost control of the horses and got killed.



[Asclepius, the god of medicine](#)

Asclepius was originally a mortal and later became the god of medicine and healing, according to the ancient Greeks. The myth of Asclepius is connected to the origins of medical science and the healing arts. His cult was particularly popular all over Greece and people from all Mediterranean countries used to come to his temples, named Asclepieion, to be cured. Remains of these temples can be seen till today. His story is pretty interesting and is actually a story of punishment.



[Apollo and Daphne](#)

This charming myth talks about the platonic love of god Apollo for the beautiful nymph Daphne. It is said that Daphne was the first love of Apollo but unfortunately the girl never responded to his love. She prayed to be turned into a tree, so that god could not seduce her. Indeed, she was turned into a laurel tree. Since then, Apollo didn't forget his lost love and made laurel his sacred plant. Note that Pythia, the priestess in the oracle of Delphi, was chewing leaves of laurel to communicate with Apollo and give her prophecies to people.



[Alcyone and Ceyx](#)

The touching story of Alcyone and Ceyx has given a common phrase, the Halcyon Days. This is the story of a couple who were punished for their arrogance towards the gods but in the end they didn't let their love fade. The Halcyon Days are some warm days in the middle of winter, in January.



[Arachne, the spider woman](#)

Arachne, her name meaning spider in Greek, was a beautiful woman that had a great talent in weaving. Everyone was amazed at her work and one day, Arachne boasted that she had a greater talent than goddess Athena herself. This was an offense towards the gods, which was a very serious and even deadly sin for the ancient Greeks. That is why goddess Athena transformed her into a spider to wave for all her life long.



[Cadmus, the founder of Thebes](#)

Cadmus is known as the founder and the first king of Thebes, a powerful town in the ancient times, close to Athens. He is also known as the man who brought the written alphabet from the Phoenicians to the Greeks, and through the Greeks to the whole

world. According to mythology, his life was long and adventurous. Everything started when his sister Europa was abducted by Zeus, the chief of the gods. That is when he left his country to look for her. Although he probably didn't find her at the end, the Fates had planned a great life for him.



[Deucalion and Pyrrha](#)

The story of Deucalion and Pyrrha resembles a lot to the Biblical story of Noah's Ark. This is the version of the ancient Greeks in their attempt to purify the old world from sins and give birth to a new race of human. The amazing thing is the similarities between the two stories, as both of them use a disastrous flood to make the humankind extinct. The few people that are saved from the flood have managed to do so in a boat and many days after the rain stopped did they manage to step on land.



[Idas and Marpessa](#)

The story of Idas and Marpessa is a myth of love. These two characters proved that love and eternal devotion cannot be conquered by sword, power, beauty or glory. Marpessa was a young maiden who some time in her life found herself in the need to choose her husband between a mortal and a god. What was her decision?



[The Danaides](#)

The myth of Danaides is the story of fifty women who committed a horrible act: guided by their father, they all killed their husbands on their wedding night! This great massacre was unbelievable, even for the bloody ancient Greek myths. It was a crime that both people and gods would punish. Indeed, the Danaides were punished for this after their death with a horrible and eternal torment.



[The tragic myth of Niobe](#)

The tragic tale of Niobe is one of the most memorable Greek myths, for Niobe's story features a striking example of the consequences of hybris, a Greek term defined as arrogance or excessive pride. This myth was popular in ancient literature, poetry and art. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the legend of Niobe appears in one of our oldest and best sources for Greek myths, the Iliad of Homer.



[The name giving of Athens](#)

It is well-known that Athens was the most powerful and glorious town of ancient Greece. Its residents managed to develop a wonderful civilization that is admired till today. It is also known that the city got its name from Athena, the goddess of wisdom and courage. But how did Athens got its name? Here is a charming little story about the origin of the city's name.