

# Painting in Greece

submitted by Leona Brown



Leona in Santorini

Going back to the island of Mykonos after four years was like visiting an old friend again. The great hospitality and beautiful gardens surrounding our pool gave us ample opportunity to gain our painting momentum after an arduous trip to Greece.

With so much to see and do in Mykonos we were overcome with choices: swim, shop, eat, drink, paint? We all painted in the morning till 1pm and then chose what delicacies we wanted to partake in. Most chose to continue painting because they wanted works to show at critique nights!

Our luggage was lost for the first few days. Luckily, I had given everyone some blank Artist Trading Cards at the airport before we left, because they turned out to be the only paper we had for two days. To capture the warmth and colour of the area, we used pens and what little paints we had. We also glued on leaves, shells, cork from wine bot-

tles, and great labels to make collage creations. What fun to paint with almost nothing...the name of our first day's lesson.

Our critique nights found us sipping ouzo and reminiscing about the adventures of the day as well as learning valuable lessons about colour, composition and design.

Travelling a week later to our next island of Santorini again gave us another adventure as the seas were stormy and some became ill. Finally arriving at the beautiful island at night we zig-zagged our way to the top to our grand hotel. We had planned on side trips to the quaint town of Oia to hunt out the famous blue-domed church. Much to our delight the infamous building was just behind our hotel! We had demonstrations and many photo opportunities there.



"It's All Greek to Me"  
- watercolour by Leona

A bus tour to some beautiful small and less touristy places on the island gave us loads of painting opportunities. Shopping was a must as the shops of Santorini welcomed Canadians with open arms.

We were clever enough to fly back to Athens instead of travelling by sea, and enjoyed three days of sightseeing and painting in the old Plaka area of Athens. A knowledgeable tour guide gave us excellent history talks and sightseeing tours of the ancient ruins. Our sketchbooks filled quickly.

Painting in foreign countries provides us with the chance to see and meet the locals. People are always stopping and talking to artists, and it also allows one to sit and soak up the ambience of the area. To smell the sweetness of fresh vegetables, fruit, flowers, and the savoury aromas of the country's

cooking will always provoke beautiful memories and paintings.

When packing for art trips, remember to pack light. Scale down the number of paints you take, and think about the size of paper that will fit in your suitcase. Blocks of watercolour paper are heavy, so make your own block on chloroplast board. If your palette is large, scale that down too, or fill weekly pill containers with your favourite colours. Take a backpack as your carry-on luggage so you can use it for your art treks. It will also come in handy if you carry an extra set of clothing and medications in case the luggage does get lost. A hard lesson to learn because I didn't take a backpack this time.

I have travelled and painted with artists now for 11 years and am always fine tuning the process of packing. Hopefully I will have mastered the art of packing for my trip to Southern Spain in April. In 2010 we will be venturing back to Tuscany, Italy, where we will again be learning some Italian cuisine as well as painting the people and the luscious countryside!

*Leona Brown is an artist living and painting in Winnipeg, Manitoba. To see more of her work visit: [www.leonabrown.com](http://www.leonabrown.com)*