

## The Olympics

The Olympic Games began as a religious festival in ancient Greece, a demonstration of physical prowess to honour the gods. There were far fewer events, but many continue in the modern games, including running, wrestling, boxing, discus, and javelin. Not all the ancient sports are still included, however; there is no chariot racing, and the pankration – akin to mixed martial arts with no rules – would be unacceptable.

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The last ancient Olympics was in 393 BC, and the games did not return until 1896, when the first modern Olympics was held in Athens. Decidedly modern events were included that would not have been conceivable to the ancient Greeks, including shooting, cycling, and tennis. Curiously, arts were added in 1912, and, for the next 36 years, medals were awarded for events such as painting, sculpture, and town planning.

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The Olympics are now a spectacle that lasts two weeks, with 33 sports planned for the next summer Olympics and 15 for the winter. The games have only been cancelled three times – once during World War I and twice during World War II. However, it seems that the 2020 Olympics may join that list in the midst of a very different world war.

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Where was the first modern Olympic games held?

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What non-sports events have been part of the Olympics?

Before 2020, what was the cause of the cancellations of the Olympics?