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## **Why the Athens Marathon is on So Many Runners' Bucket Lists**

**Athens, Greece:** While the Battle of Marathon is world famous as the inspiration for the Marathon race, many historians and philosophers consider it as the most significant battles in human history.

In order to understand its importance, we go back to 508 B.C. Athens when the idea of democracy (*dēmokratía*) was a revolutionary new concept. This idea gave the individual certain freedoms, a voice in how the power of rule would apply. At this point democracy had not been tested or fully established.

Then, in 490 B.C at the Battle of Marathon near Athens, Greece, free men fought with the new concept of freedom against suppression and slavery as their battle cry. Paul Samaras, born in Greece and owner of Apostolos Greek Tours, Inc. is very familiar with this history. "The battle became significant because it allowed democracy to develop and establish itself" says Paul, "If the battle had been lost, this new idea of democracy would have vanished and would not have been documented in history."

After the victory of the Battle of Marathon, Athens reached prosperous new heights. The victory inspired Greek society and culture – biology, geometry, philosophy, physics, forms of epic and lyric poetry, theater, tragedy, and comedy emerged. Democracy blossomed and became the foundation of Western Civilization.

Legend has it that the Greek messenger Pheidippides ran from the battlefield at Marathon to Athens in order to relay news of the victory. That run inspired the Olympic Marathon event, introduced at the 1896 Modern Olympics.

The original epic run of Pheidippides continues to inspire runners today. However, when they run the original historical course set for Nov. 9 this year, they run not only in the footsteps of ancient Greek heroes and legends, they also run in the birthplace of democracy. You can learn more about the Battle of Marathon and the history of this epic race on Apostolos Greek Tour's website at [athensmarathon.com](http://athensmarathon.com).

**About Apostolos Greek Tours, Inc.:** Paul Samaras of Apostolos Greek Tours, Inc. has been hosting groups of dedicated athletes to run the original Athens Marathon course since 1994. Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, Apostolos Greek Tours, Inc. provides full runner support and has been designated by S.E.G.A.S, the marathon's organizing authority, as the official North American agent for the Athens Classic Marathon.

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