

FEASTING AND FUN

For the ancient Greeks, dinner was the most important meal of the day, and it was always eaten late in the evening. For people who could afford it, it was also an opportunity to entertain friends.

This Greek plate shows the sort of fish that would have been eaten at dinner parties.



A GREEK DINNER PARTY

Greek dinner parties were generally all male-affairs. Women were forbidden to join in, except at family gatherings, although male guests could bring female companions, called *hetairai*.

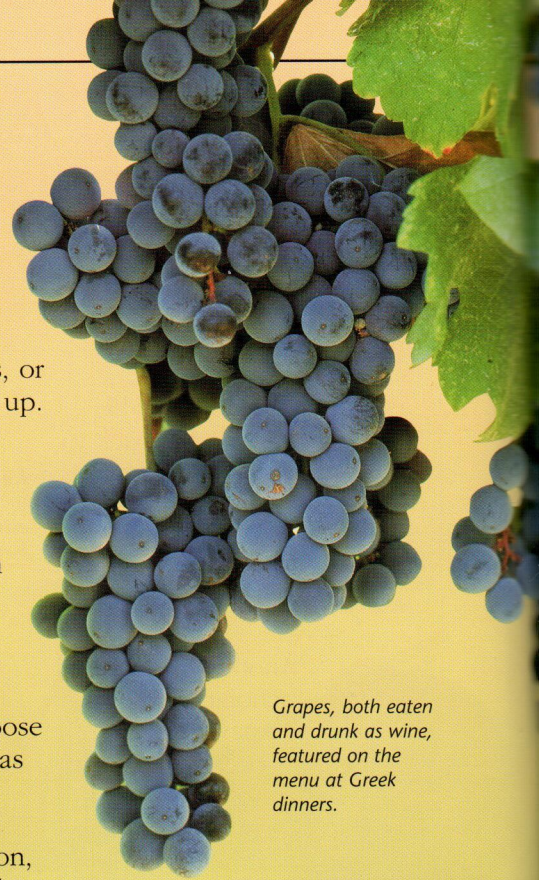
Guests were met at the front door of the house by slaves, who washed their hands and feet, and put garlands of leaves or flowers on their heads. Then they were led into the dining room, where they reclined on couches.

THE FOOD

The food was served by slaves from small tables. There were no forks, so the guests used their fingers, or pieces of bread, to scoop it up.

However, table manners were important, and they were sometimes written down to help people. Each course had several dishes to choose from. There was probably a fish dish, followed by a

meat course, such as mutton, beef, pork or small birds. The meal finished with fruit, such as figs, grapes, pears and apples, and sweet cakes made of honey and nuts.



Grapes, both eaten and drunk as wine, featured on the menu at Greek dinners.

