

The Rotonda

Hey everyone! Today I'm talking about the Rotonda in Thessaloniki, Greece. This building is super old—like, built way back in the early 4th century AD! It's got this unique round shape (hence the name "Rotonda"), and it was initially part of the Roman Emperor Galerius' palace complex. We don't know exactly why it was built, but people think it might have been intended as a temple for gods like Zeus or even as Galerius' tomb, though he wasn't buried there.

What's really cool is that the Rotonda has been used by different religions over the centuries. At first, it was possibly for the 12 Olympian gods, then it became a Christian church and later, during the Ottoman period, a mosque. The minaret, or the tall tower used for calling people to prayer, is still standing—actually, it's the only one left from that era in the city.

After Thessaloniki was liberated, the Rotonda went back to being a Christian place, and today it's mainly a museum and a cultural monument. They finished restoring it in 2015, so now visitors can see awesome mosaics, old hagiographies (those are religious artworks), and other amazing parts of its architecture. It's even considered a "twin" to the Pantheon in Rome because they look so similar! So, the Rotonda is this fascinating mix of history, art, and culture—definitely worth a visit if you're into ancient history or just cool old buildings.