



Torches and Torch Relays of the Olympic Summer Games from Berlin 1936 to Rio 2016

22.05.2017

Torches and Torch Relays of the Olympic Summer Games from Berlin 1936 to Rio 2016

> OSC REFERENCE COLLECTION

The “OSC Reference collection” is published by The Olympic Studies Centre. It gathers a series of documents providing key historical facts and figures related to different aspects of the Olympic Games and the IOC.

In the same collection:

- > [Olympic Summer Games Villages](#)
- > [Torches and torch relays of the Olympic Summer Games](#)
- > [Torches and torch relays of the Olympic Winter Games](#)
- > [History of the sports at the Summer Olympic Games](#)
- > [History of sports at the Winter Olympic Games](#)
- > [Olympic Summer Games medals](#)
- > [Olympic Winter Games medals](#)
- > [Youth Olympic Games medals](#)
- > [Olympic Winter Games posters](#)
- > [Olympic Summer Games posters](#)
- > [Olympic Summer Games mascots](#)
- > [Olympic Winter Games mascots](#)
- > [Youth Olympic Games mascots](#)
- > [The sports pictograms of the Olympic Summer Games](#)
- > [The sports pictograms of the Olympic Winter Games](#)
- > [Elections of the Presidents of the International Olympic Committee : candidates and voting results](#)

All reference documents, as well as the full collection of digital and printed publications of The Olympic Studies Centre are available on The Olympic World Library (OWL), our library catalogue entirely devoted to Olympic knowledge: www.olympic.org/library

This content (the “Content”) is made available to you (“You”) by the International Olympic Committee (the “IOC”) for non-commercial, educational, research, analysis, review or reporting purposes only. The Content shall not be re-distributed, as made available to you by the IOC, in part or in whole, except to the extent that such content is a derivative work created by You. Re-distribution of compilations of the Content made available to you is expressly excluded. You must give appropriate credit, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the IOC and its affiliated entities including The Olympic Studies Centre (“OSC”) endorses you or your use. The IOC by means of the OSC endeavours to provide you with accurate and up-to-date information. The IOC and the OSC make no warranties or representations about and assumes no liability for the information included in the Content, neither its accuracy nor completeness.

© 2017 International Olympic Committee

> CONTENT

Introduction	5
Berlin 1936	7
London 1948	12
Helsinki 1952	16
Melbourne/Stockholm 1956	21
Rome 1960	27
Tokyo 1964	31
Mexico 1968	36
Munich 1972	41
Montreal 1976	45
Moscow 1980	49
Los Angeles 1984	53
Seoul 1988	57
Barcelona 1992	62
Atlanta 1996	67
Sydney 2000	72
Athens 2004	77
Beijing 2008	82
London 2012	88
Rio 2016	93
Credits	97

> INTRODUCTION

The torch relay is an integral part of the modern Olympic Games. The numerous festivities organised along the relay route announce the coming of the Games and allow the general public to share the Olympic spirit. The first Olympic torch relay was held for the 1936 Summer Games in Berlin. For the Winter Games, it was not until 1952 in Oslo that the first relay was held. Since then, the tradition has been continued for each edition of the Games.

Although the flame is traditionally transported on foot (e.g. Berlin 1936 and London 1948), the means of transport have become increasingly varied, not just for practical reasons but also to adapt to the characteristics of the regions crossed. Gondola, snowmobile, dogsled, tractor, horse, camel and even undersea diver: every conceivable means of transport has been tried out for the flame.

To maintain the link with ancient tradition, the flame is lit in Olympia in Greece using the ancient method, namely a parabolic mirror which concentrates the sun's rays. Of all the Games featuring a torch relay, only the first three relays organised for the Winter Games did not begin in Olympia: Oslo 1952, Cortina d'Ampezzo 1956 and Squaw Valley 1960.

On Greek territory, responsibility for the flame lies with the Hellenic Olympic Committee, which organises the lighting ceremony in Olympia and usually the part of the relay as far as Athens. At a special ceremony in the city, usually at the Panathenaic Stadium, the flame is handed to representatives of the Organising Committee, who then arrange for it to be transported to the host city via a route determined by the theme of the relay. The aim is also to bring the flame to as many people as possible. Today, the relay theme is also reflected in the logistics and visual identity, from the torchbearers' outfits to the community celebration cauldrons at each city stage. In this way, while remaining true to tradition, the relay is constantly renewed and reinterpreted.

One of the most emblematic elements of the relay is naturally the torch used to pass the flame from one runner to the next. Each torch has a unique design born from the imagination of its creators. The first torches had a classical feel, but gradually, with the arrival of designers like Pedro Ramirez Vazquez (Mexico 1968), they have evolved towards more modern concepts. The torch is not just a work of art; it is also a technological instrument, as its designers must also ensure that the flame continues to burn whatever the weather conditions.

Although less symbolic than the torch, the safety lamps contains a back-up of the Olympic flame and are generally similar to miners' lamps.

The relay ends with the lighting of the main cauldron in the stadium at the Opening Ceremony. The scenario for the lighting and the identity of the final torchbearers are a closely guarded secret until the last moment.

This document presents the torches and the relays for each edition of the Summer Games, with visuals and route maps.



The first Olympic torchbearer, Konstantin KONDYLIS, setting out from Olympia (Greece) ahead of the Olympic Games Berlin 1936.

> BERLIN 1936



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The relay route and the Olympic rings topped by a German eagle are engraved on the handle, as is the inscription <i>Fackel Staffel Lauf Olympia Berlin 1936</i> . The platform bears the inscription <i>Organisations-Komitee für die XI. Olympiade Berlin 1936 Als Dank dem Träger.</i>
Colour:	Silver
Length:	28cm (support), ~70cm in total
Composition:	Steel
Fuel:	Magnesium tube, flammable paste. The combustion time is at least 10 minutes.
Designer / Manufacturer:	Carl Diem, Walter E. Lemcke / Friedrich Krupp AG
Did you know?	– The idea to use a torch to transport the flame was not immediately imperative. The Organising Committee, being inspired by ancient

methods, first thought to conserve the flame in fagots of narthex stalks, taken from a Mediterranean tree whose combustion is renowned for being slow. For practical reasons, the use of torches was finally favoured. As no torch on the market met the required criteria, the Organising Committee set about producing a specific torch.

- A lantern was used to carry a back-up flame, which followed the relay by car.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

In May 1934, the International Olympic Committee gave its approval to the idea of transporting a flame from Greece to Berlin. The idea came from Carl Diem, Secretary General of the Organising Committee of the Games of the XI Olympiad.

The route passed through the capitals of each of the countries visited.

On 20 July 1936 in Olympia, for this first Olympic torch relay, it was already a parabolic mirror which concentrated the rays of the sun that was used to light the flame. In attendance, Baron Pierre de Coubertin gave a message to the torchbearers, wishing them an enjoyable run. At the same time as the ceremony in Olympia, festivities were also staged in front of the Town Hall in Berlin.

Along the flame's route to Berlin, ceremonies and festivities were held in its honour in the stopover cities. In Athens, for example, a ceremony attended by the King was held in the Panathenaic Stadium, a sports arena that was used for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. In Budapest, it was on Heroes' Square, in front of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, that the flame was celebrated. The relay reached Berlin on 1 August 1936. Before joining the Opening Ceremony, the flame was used to light a cauldron that burned for the whole of the Games in the Lustgarten, in the city centre.

On 2 August, a flame was lit from that in the Olympic Stadium. It arrived in Kiel the next day, following a relay of 347km with 347 torchbearers. It burned on a boat in the city's bay, where the sailing events were held.

On 7 August, another flame was lit from the cauldron in the Olympic Stadium and carried to Grünau, the site of the rowing and canoe events. One hundred and ninety one groups of runners consisting of one torchbearer and two supporters each ran one after the other over 37km.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

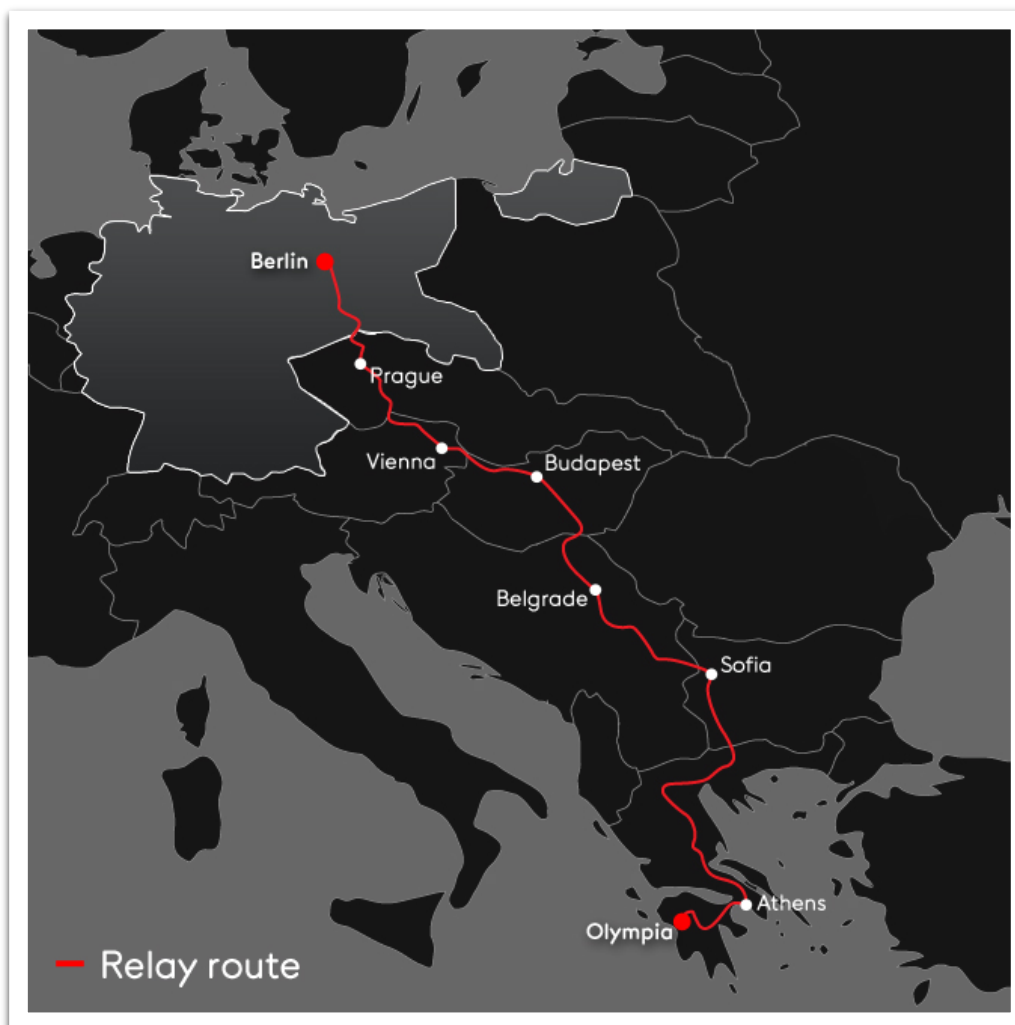
Start date:	20 July 1936, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	1 August 1936, Olympic Stadium, Berlin (Germany)
First torchbearer:	Konstantinos Kondylis
Last torchbearer:	Fritz Schilgen
Number of	3,075 (Berlin-Kiel and Berlin-Grünau relays excluded).

torchbearers: 1,108 in Greece, 238 in Bulgaria, 575 in Yugoslavia, 386 in Hungary, 219 in Austria, 282 in Czechoslovakia, 267 in Germany.

Recruitment of torchbearers: Each National Olympic Committee of the countries crossed was responsible for selecting the torchbearers in its respective territory.

Distance: 3,075km (Berlin-Kiel and Berlin-Grünau relays excluded).
1,108km in Greece, 238km in Bulgaria, 575km in Yugoslavia, 386km in Hungary, 219km in Austria, 282km in Czechoslovakia, 267km in Germany.

Countries visited: Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany



DID YOU KNOW?

- In Yugoslavia, over approximately 25km, certain torches showed signs of weakness and threatened to go out before the end of the foreseen combustion duration. In order not to take any risks, the torchbearers were taken to the next stage more quickly by car. The flame arrived without any problems and in advance in Jagodina, where it was kept burning before resuming its journey at the scheduled time.
- The cauldron in the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, in the shape of a tripod, was inspired by an Ancient Greek pattern, and was approximately 2.20 metres high.
- This first relay was a popular success and the object of media coverage by the press, radio and the team shooting the Official Film of the Games.
- Prior to the first Olympic torch relay, a symbolic fire burned at the top of a tower for the Amsterdam 1928 and Los Angeles 1932 Summer Games. However, these fires were not lit in Olympia or carried in a relay.

SOURCES

- Victor Kuron, *The messengers of peace from Olympia to Berlin*, Berlin: R. Hobbing, 1936, p.17.
- *The XIth Olympic Games Berlin, 1936: Official Report*, Berlin: W. Limpert, 1937, [vol. 1, pp.119-121, 512-536](#).



John MARK carrying the Olympic torch in Wembley Stadium during the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games London 1948.

> LONDON 1948



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	On the upper part, the torch bears the inscription <i>Olympia to London with thanks to the bearer XIVth Olympiad 1948</i> , as well as the carved and traced Olympic symbol.
Colour:	Silver
Length:	40.5cm
Composition:	Steel, aluminium
Fuel:	Hexamine tablets with 6% naphthalene
Designer / Manufacturer:	Ralph Lavers / E.M.I. Factories Ltd, High Dury Alloys Ltd.
Did you know?	– To burn for the total duration of its transport by boat from Greece to Italy, a special burner fed by butane with a 48-hour burn time was designed for the flame.

- A special torch (the second displayed above) was made for the last torchbearer. So that the flame would be brighter in the Stadium, a magnesium flare was used. The burner was of stainless steel. The combustion duration of the wick was 10 minutes.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

To recall the truce during the ancient Games, the first torchbearer, soldier Konstantinos Dimitrelis, symbolically removed his uniform, put down his weapons and began the relay in sportswear.

Owing the Civil War in Greece, the relay initially planned from Olympia to Athens was cancelled and diverted to Katakolon, on the coast near Olympia. From there, the flame sailed to Italy, via the island of Corfu, where a relay was also held.

24 July 1948: In Lausanne, the relay stopped off at the Bois de Vaux cemetery, where the grave of Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, is located.

The flame reached England on 28 July at Dover and arrived at Wembley Stadium the following day, during the Opening Ceremony, during which the cauldron was lit.

The day after the Opening Ceremony, a flame was lit from the cauldron in Wembley Stadium, and a 330-km relay involving 107 runners kicked off, heading to the town of Torquay, where another cauldron was lit and burned during the sailing events.

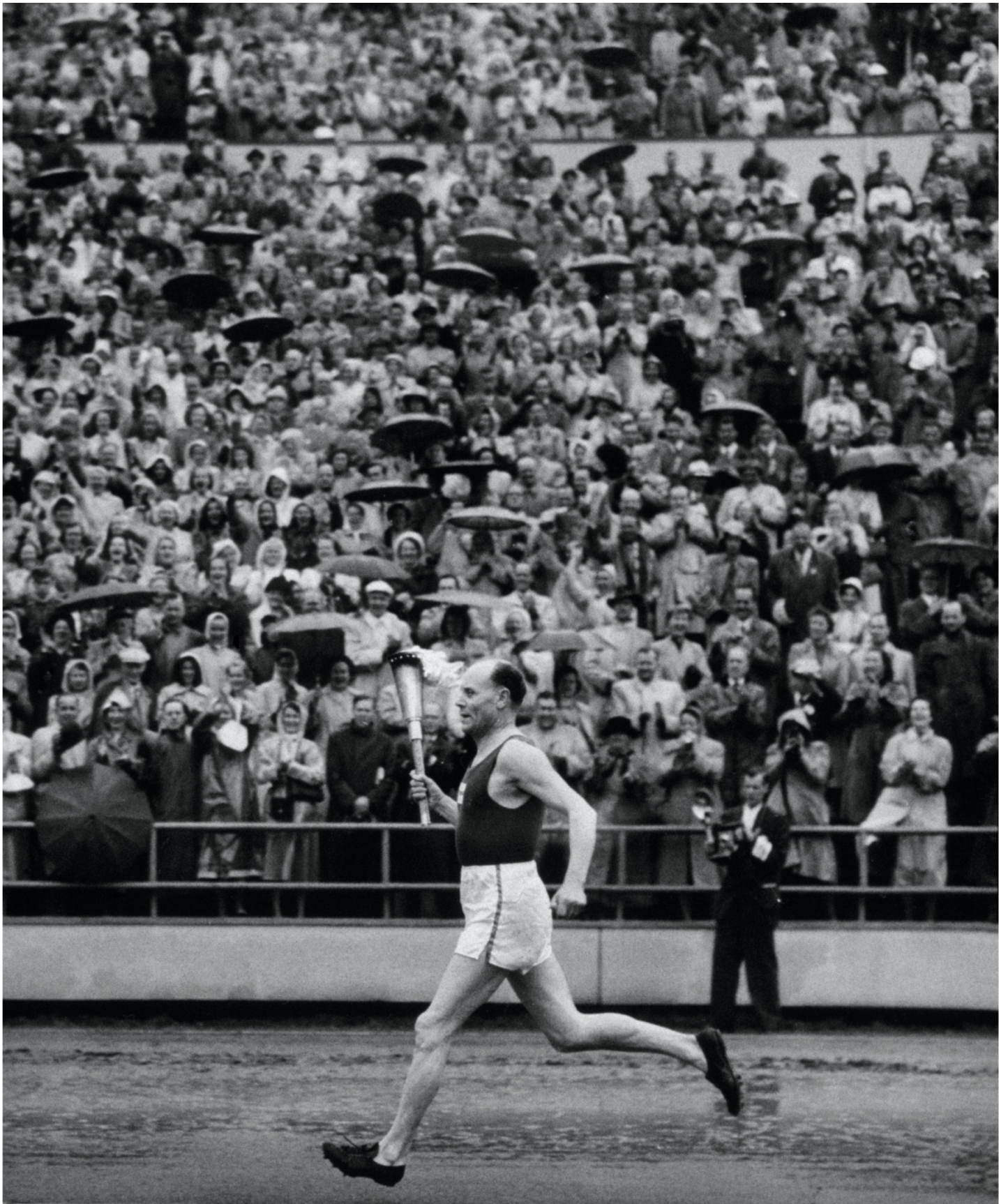
THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	17 July 1948, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	29 July 1948, Wembley Stadium, London (United Kingdom)
First torchbearer:	Konstantinos Dimitrelis
Last torchbearer:	John Mark
Number of torchbearers:	1,416 (London-Torquay relay excluded). 30 in Greece, 762 in Italy, 135 in Switzerland, 270 in France, 38 in Luxembourg, 108 in Belgium, 73 in England.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	For Italy, the torchbearers came from the army. In England, the torchbearers were chosen from amongst runners from clubs affiliated with the County Amateur Athletic Associations. Preference was given to clubs located in the area through which the torch relay route passed.
Distance:	3,365km (London-Torquay relay excluded). 700km by boat of which 250km was between Katakolon and Corfu, and 2,665km on land of which ~ 35km was in Greece.
Countries visited:	Greece, Italy, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, United Kingdom



SOURCE

- *The official report of the Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad*, London: the Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad, 1951, [pp. 209-220](#).



During the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Helsinki 1952, Paavo NURMI carries the Olympic torch in the stadium.

> HELSINKI 1952



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	On the upper metal part, the torch bears the inscriptions <i>XV Olympia Helsinki 1952 and Helsinki Helsingfors</i> , the Olympic rings and a wreath. The handle is made of lacquered birch wood.
Colour:	Brown, silver, beige
Length:	59cm
Composition:	Silver, metal, wood
Fuel:	Liquid gas. The combustion time of the cartridge is at least 21 minutes.
Designer / Manufacturer:	Aukusti Tuhka / Kultakeskus Oy
Did you know?	– The fuel cartridge of the torch is quickly detachable and replacable. Because of this, the organisers produced only 22 torches and 1,600 cartridges. The torches were re-used along the route.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

From Olympia, the flame was carried on foot to Athens. It flew to Aalborg, Denmark with two stops in Munich and Düsseldorf, Germany. In Denmark, Sweden and Finland, it was carried on foot and by other modes of transport.

4 July 1952: The flame reached Stockholm and entered the Olympic Stadium of the 1912 Games where it burned throughout the night.

17 July: The flame reached the city of Hämeenlinna, Finland, the site of the modern pentathlon events of the 1952 Games. From the Town Hall, it moved to the competition venue and burned there throughout the event.

19 July: At the Opening Ceremony, Paavo Nurmi, the famous runner who won nine gold medals and three silver medals at three Summer Olympic Games (1920, 1924 and 1928), lit a temporary two-metre high cauldron in the stadium. Four Helsinki footballers then took the flame to the top of the Stadium's tower, where Hannes Kolehmainen, another famous Finnish runner, then lit the main cauldron.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	25 June 1952, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	19 July 1952, Olympic Stadium, Helsinki (Finland)
First torchbearer:	Christos Panagopoulos
Last torchbearer:	Hannes Kolehmainen, Olympic participant in athletics (1912, 1920, 1924), three time gold medallist and silver medallist in Stockholm 1912, and gold medallist in Antwerp 1920.
Number of torchbearers:	3,042. 342 in Greece, 650 in Denmark, 700 in Sweden, 1,350 in Finland.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	-
Distance:	7,492km (non-Olympic relay excluded). 342km in Greece, 505km in Denmark (including a 55km Copenhagen-Malmö leg by boat), 2,392km in Sweden, 1,128km in Finland. 3,125km Athens-Aalborg flight.
Countries visited:	Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Finland



DID YOU KNOW?

- The flame that was 1.5m wide and up to 4m high burned at the top of the Olympic Stadium tower 72m above the ground.
- It was for the relay for the Games in Helsinki in 1952 that the Olympic flame made its first trip by plane, flying from Athens to Aalborg. It was preserved in a safety lamp.
- On 6 July 1952, a non-Olympic relay kicked off in the Pallastunturi fells in Lapland, using a flame that was lit on the Taivaskero summit from the midnight sun's rays. It was carried by 330 runners over 378km to Tornio, a border city close to Sweden. There, on 8 July, it merged with the Olympic torch relay flame, which had just entered Finland carried by Olympic gold medallist in the discus at Antwerp 1920, and silver medallist in the hammer event at Los Angeles 1932, Ville Pörhölä. The meeting of the two flames symbolised the coming together of southern and northern countries at the Games.

SOURCES

- *The Olympic Torch Relay*, Factsheet, IOC/Olympic Studies Centre, April 2016, [p. 4](#).

- *The official report of the Organising Committee for the Games of the XV Olympiad*, Porvoo, Helsinki: W. Söderström, 1955, [pp. 103-105, 205-219](#).
- “The route of the Olympic Flame from Olympie to Helsinki”, *Bulletin du CIO*, September 1952, n. 34-35, [p. 51](#).



During the torch relay for the Olympic Games Melbourne 1956, soldiers wearing ancient uniforms of the Battle of Marathon warriors allow the torch to enter the Acropolis in Athens.

> MELBOURNE/STOCKHOLM 1956



MELBOURNE - TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description: The torch was modelled on that of London 1948. The handle ends in a ring, and the upper part in the shape of a cauldron presents the Olympic rings three times. It bears the inscription *XVI Olympiad 1956: Olympia Melbourne*.

Colour: Silver

Length: 47cm with burner, 40.5cm without

Composition: Metal, aluminium

Fuel: Hexamine in tablet form with additional naphthalene and a special igniting material. The combustion duration is 15 minutes.

Designer / Manufacturer: Ralph Lavers / Waco Ltd

Did you know? – Another torch (the second displayed above) was specially made for

the Opening Ceremony in Melbourne and carried by the last torchbearer when it entered the Stadium. It is made of aluminium with a grooved handle, an openwork cauldron featuring the Olympic symbol and the inscription *XVI Olympiad Melbourne 1956*. So that the flame would be brighter in the Stadium, magnesium flares were used. It is 42 centimetres high.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

Following its lighting in Olympia and a relay on Greek soil to Athens, the flame travelled by air to Australia, with stopovers along the way in Istanbul, Basra, Karachi, Calcutta, Bangkok, Singapore, Jakarta and Darwin.

From Darwin, where a reception was held, the flame was then sent by plane to Cairns, in Queensland, north-eastern Australia. After a risky landing due to low-lying clouds which made visibility difficult, the relay on the ground in Australia started on 9 November. The first torchbearer was an Australian-born individual of Greek heritage, while the second torchbearer, Anthony Mark, was an Aboriginal Australian. The relay covered the East Coast, passing through cities such as Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and finally Melbourne.

21 November: Before arriving in Melbourne, the flame passed through Ballarat, the city hosting the rowing and canoe events. Using the torch, the Mayor kindled a flame in a miniature replica of the Main Stadium's cauldron. It burned until the closing of the Games.

The next day, the flame arrived in Melbourne, and the last torchbearer, after having done a lap of the Main Stadium, climbed the 85 steps that led up to the cauldron and lit it at 4.20 p.m during the Opening Ceremony.

MELBOURNE – THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	2 November 1956, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	22 November 1956, Main Stadium, Melbourne (Australia)
First torchbearer:	Dionyssios Papathanassopoulos
Last torchbearer:	Ronald William "Ron" Clarke, Olympic participant in athletics (1964, 1968), bronze medallist in Tokyo 1964.
Number of torchbearers:	3,181. 350 in Greece, 2,831 in Australia.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	To qualify, the participants had to be able to run 1 mile (1.61km) in 7.5 minutes. For the Organising Committee, one athlete from each sport had to participate. The relay was not open to women or professional sportsmen.
Distance:	~20,470km in total, air travel included. 4,912km by land, including 354km in Greece.

Countries visited: Greece, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia



DID YOU KNOW?

- The organisers had to face numerous unexpected climate challenges and readapt the route, mainly owing to flooding in the north of Australia. However, the flame arrived in one piece and on time, thanks in particular to the fact that the relay was run day and night with few stops.
- The flame crossed the southern hemisphere for the first time on 6 November 1956, during the flight between Singapore and Jakarta.
- After being put on display for various charity events following the Games the cauldron was thought to be lost until 30 years later when it was discovered in a city council warehouse to the west of Melbourne and then given to the Australian Gallery of Sport.

STOCKHOLM - TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

A similar torch to Melbourne, but shorter, was used for the Stockholm relay

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

With the exception of the Opening Ceremony, in Denmark and Sweden, the relay took place entirely on horseback as a reminder that only the equestrian events were being staged in Stockholm.

The flame was lit in Olympia then relayed to Athens. It then flew to Kastrup airport, near Copenhagen, where a relay was staged to the capital. It then headed for Malmö in Sweden. There it was carried into the city. It continued its journey to Sörentorp and finally to Stockholm.

At the Opening Ceremony, Swedish cavalry captain Hans Wikne entered the Stadium at a gallop, saluted the King, the IOC members and the Games participants, and lit the cauldron, which burned throughout the Games. The flame was then passed to Karin Lindberg, a gold medallist in gymnastics in Helsinki in 1952, who then passed on part of the flame to Swedish runner and gold medallist in the 1,500 metres at the London 1948 Games, Henry Eriksson. Both ran, torch in hand, around the Stadium forming the shape of a horse shoe, one on each side, to arrive at the two towers and light the summit of each with a flame.

STOCKHOLM - THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	2 June 1956, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	10 June 1956, Olympic Stadium, Stockholm (Sweden)
First torchbearer:	Takis Constantinidis
Last torchbearer:	Hans Wikne, Olympic participant in equestrian sports (1964)
Number of torchbearers:	330 in Greece and ~160 in Denmark and Sweden
Recruitment of torchbearers:	In Sweden, the horse riders were chosen through equestrian clubs.
Distance:	325km in Greece (aerial transport and Denmark-Sweden relay excluded).
Countries visited:	Greece, Denmark, Sweden



DID YOU KNOW?

- Due to the fact that the equestrian events could not be held in Melbourne because of Australian quarantine regulations, an additional relay took place between Olympia and Stockholm where these events were staged in June 1956. This was the only time that for the same edition of the Summer Games, two Olympic flames were lit in the same year.

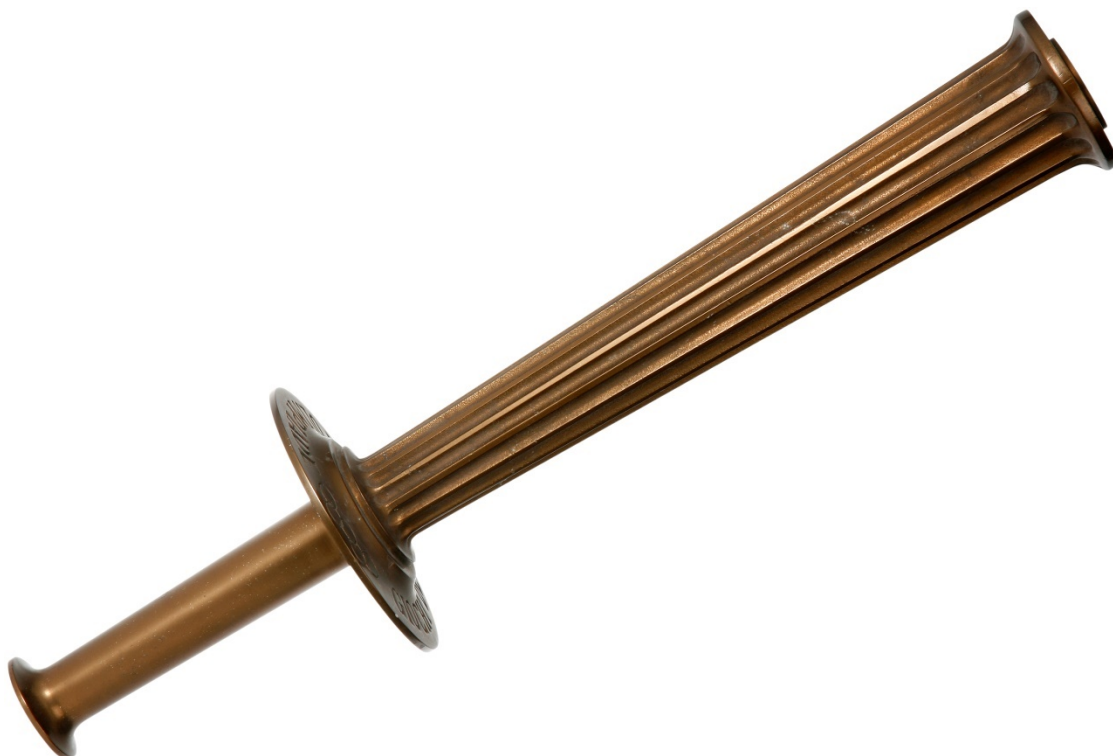
SOURCES

- Marcus A. H. Marsden, *Carrying the Torch: 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games*, Fitzroy: Marsden Publishing, 2006.
- Richard Cashman, "Olympic Scholars and Olympic Records: Access and management of the Records of an Olympic Games", in *Bridging Three Centuries: Intellectual Crossroads and the Modern Olympic Movement: Fifth International Symposium for Olympic Research*, September 2000, [pp. 207-214](#).
- *The Equestrian Games of the XVth Olympiad : a retrospective survey in text and pictures*, Organising Committee of the Summer Olympic Games Melbourne 1956, Stockholm: [s.n.], [pp. 35-38, 66-69](#).
- *The official report of the Organising Committee for the Games of the XVI Olympiad Melbourne 1956*, Melbourne: Organising Committee for the Games of the XVI Olympiad, 1958, [pp. 24, 92, 206-223, 227, 230](#).



The first Olympic torchbearer for the torch relay at the Olympic Games Rome 1960, Panayotis EPITROPOULOS, in Olympia (Greece).

> ROME 1960



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description: Reflecting the classical touch which characterised this edition of the Games, the shape of the torch was inspired by those featured on ancient monuments. Slender grooves decorate and refine the body of the torch. It bears the inscription *Giochi della XVII Olimpiade*.

Colour: Bronze

Length: 39.5cm

Composition: Aluminium

Fuel: Capsule of resinous material

**Designer /
Manufacturer:** Amedeo Maiuri / Curtisa

Did you know? – The torch designer, Amedeo Maiuri, was an archaeologist famous for his studies of the Roman site of Pompeii.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

The relay highlighted Athens and Rome, the two poles of classical civilisation. In order to recall the relationship between the ancient and modern Games, it passed through numerous ancient sites and birthplaces of athletes who excelled at the ancient Olympic Games.

Notably, the relay travelled through the coastal region of Italy in the south, known in Antiquity as *Great Greece* (Magna Graecia), where Greek colonies such as Metapontum and Tarento were located.

13 August 1960: After a relay in Greece via Pyrgos, Patras, Corinth, Megara and Eleusis, the flame reached Athens at the end of the day. The same evening it set sail on the *Amerigo Vespucci*, an Italian navy training ship.

18 August: The flame reached Italian soil in Syracuse near the Arethusa fountain, a monument that refers to an ancient legend. En route for Rome, a flame was left in Naples, where the sailing competitions were held, and in Castel Gandolfo, host of the rowing and canoe events.

24 August: The relay entered the province of Rome on the *Via Appia Nuova*. That evening, the flame was welcomed with great pomp on the Capitoline Hill where it spent the night and, the next day it was taken to the Opening Ceremony at the Olympic Stadium.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	12 August 1960, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	25 August 1960, Olympic Stadium, Rome (Italy)
First torchbearer:	Panayotis "Takis" Epitropoulos, Olympic participant in athletics (1960)
Last torchbearer:	Giancarlo Peris
Number of torchbearers:	1,529. 330 in Greece, 1,199 in Italy.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	The Ministries of the Interior, Education and Defence collaborated with the provincial sub-committees of the Italian National Olympic Committee to select the torchbearers from among young men aged 18 to 23 of all social classes. To do this, tests were carried out in schools and sports clubs.
Distance:	1,863km (leg by boat from Athens to Syracuse excluded). 330km in Greece, 1,533 in Italy.
Countries visited:	Greece, Italy



DID YOU KNOW?

- It was for the Rome 1960 Games that the relay was televised for the first time.

SOURCES

- *The Games of the XVII Olympiad Rome, 1960: the official report of the Organising Committee*, Organising Committee for the Games of the XVII Olympiad, Rome: 1963, [vol. 2, pp.197-222](#).
- "The New Olympic Torch Model", *Bulletin Officiel: Games of the XVII Olympiad*, Jan.-Feb. 1959, p.17.
- "The Olympic Torch", *Bulletin Officiel: Games of the XVII Olympiad*, September, 1960, p. 20.
- *The Olympic Torch Relay*, Factsheet, IOC/Olympic Studies Centre, April 2016, [p. 2](#).



Yoshinori SAKAI lights the Olympic cauldron at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Tokyo 1964.

> TOKYO 1964



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The torch bears the inscription <i>XVIII Olympiad Tokyo 1964</i> and the Olympic rings. The combustion tube is covered in stainless steel.
Colour:	Black, silver
Length:	72cm
Composition:	Aluminium, steel
Fuel:	Gunpowder and smoke. The combustion duration is 12 minutes.
Designer / Manufacturer:	Munemichi Yanagi / Nippon Light Metal Company, Ltd

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

After the flame was lit in Olympia and had been carried by relay to Athens, the flame took to the air on 23 August 1964 to travel via Istanbul, Beirut, Tehran, Lahore, New Delhi, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Hong Kong and Taipei, cities in each of which a relay took place.

At the request of the Nepalese Olympic Committee, when the relay stopped off in New Delhi, a second flame was lit from the main flame and from there was taken to Kathmandu, where a ceremony took place. The flame was then transported by plane to Calcutta where it was reunited with the main flame.

On 7 September, the flame landed on the island of Okinawa. The first runner was Isamu Miyagi, who carried the torch to the Okutakeyama Stadium, where a welcome ceremony was held. To make up the delay owing to a typhoon in Hong Kong, a part of the flame was sent to the Japanese mainland in Kagoshima on 9 September, while the Okinawa relay continued. On 11 September, the two flames were once again reunited in Fukuoka.

The flame crossed Japan by taking four different paths, leaving respectively from Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Chitose and Aomori. From Chitose, the flame travelled to the prefecture of Aomori, where the route split into two: one headed for the south towards the Sea of Japan, and the other also went southwards but on the Pacific Ocean side.

On 9 October in Tokyo, in the square outside the Imperial Palace, the four flames were reunited in one cauldron on the occasion of a ceremony.

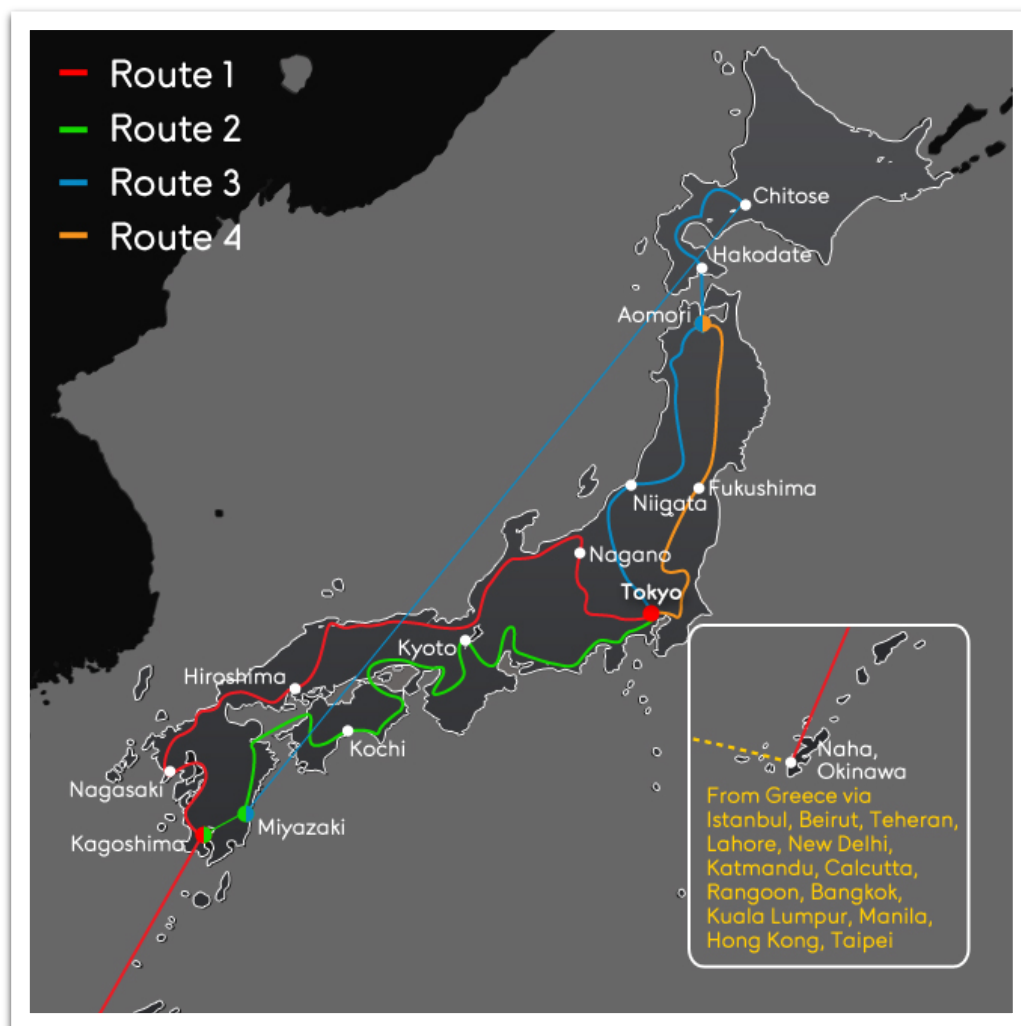
On the following day, the final relay stage during which the route went from the Imperial Palace to the National Stadium, the flame was carried by five men and two women before being handed to the final runner, Yoshinori Sakai, at the Opening Ceremony. He climbed the 163 steps that led up to the cauldron and lit it exactly three hours and three seconds after noon.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	21 August 1964, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	10 October 1964, National Stadium, Tokyo (Japan)
First torchbearer:	George Marsellos, Olympic participant in athletics (1960, 1964)
Last torchbearer:	Yoshinori Sakai
Number of torchbearers:	870 outside Japan, including 366 in Greece. For Japan, the only known figure is the total number of runners, including the reserve runners and their support runners, which could be up to 20 people at a time. This figure is 100,603.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	On Japanese soil, the torchbearers were aged 16 to 20, and were not necessarily athletes.
Distance:	26,065km, including: – Outside Japan: 16,240km in total of which 732km was on the

- ground (including 350km in Greece), and 15,508km by air.
- In Japan: 9,825km in total of which 2,692km was by plane, 6,755km on land and 378km by sea.

Countries visited: Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Iran, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong (then a British colony), Taipei, Okinawa (then under US administration), Japan.



DID YOU KNOW?

- In Hong Kong, the relay was slightly disrupted due to a typhoon that struck the city on 4 September at midnight and damaged the special plane transporting the flame. Another plane was made available which allowed the relay to continue to Taipei with only one day's delay.
- Lit by the flame taken from the cauldron at the main stadium, a single auxiliary cauldron per competition venue allowed the flame to also burn at Komazawa Sport Park, Enoshima Yacht Harbour, Toda Rowing Course, Kemigawa Playing Grounds and Karuizawa.

- Yoshinori Sakai, was known as *Hiroshima Baby* as he was born on 6 August 1945 in Hiroshima, the day of the atomic explosion. He was chosen as last torchbearer to symbolise peace and hope.

SOURCE

- *The games of the XVIII olympiad, Tokyo 1964: the official report of the Organising Committee*, Tokyo: The Organising Committee for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad, 1966, [vol. 1, pp. 245-268](#).



In Mexico City in 1968, Enriqueta BASILIO climbs the steps in the stadium to light the Olympic cauldron during the Games Opening Ceremony.

> MEXICO 1968



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	<p>Type 1: Vertical grooves present on the whole body of the torch. The top bears the caption <i>Mexico 68</i> carved and traced twice in the metal.</p> <p>Type 2: Similar to type 1 except for the bottom part of the body of the torch constituted by a black leather handle.</p> <p>Type 3: A part of the handle is wooden. A motif featuring a dove is repeated on the upper part. The caption <i>Mexico</i> is reproduced twice at the base of the handle.</p> <p>Type 4: A silver ring with repeated dove motifs decorates the top of the torch. The caption <i>Mexico</i> was reproduced twice at the base of the handle</p>
Colour:	<p>Type 1: Silver Type 2: Silver, black Type 3: Silver, brown Type 4: Silver, black, brown</p>
Length:	<p>Type 1: 45cm Type 2: 45cm Type 3: 52.5cm Type 4: 53cm</p>
Composition:	<p>Type 1: Steel Type 2: Steel, leather Type 3: Metal, wood Type 4: Steel, wood</p>

Fuel: Solid mix of nitrates, sulphurs, alkaline metal carbonates, resins and silicones. No precision if this fuel was used for all of the torch types.

Designer /
Manufacturer: Pedro Ramirez Vazquez, Eduardo Terrazas, Lance Wyman, Manuel Villazon and Peter Murdoch et al / Productos Victor S.A. et al. No precision on which torch type(s) each designer/manufacturer worked on.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

The relay symbolised the link between the Mediterranean and American civilisations and retraced the first voyage of Christopher Columbus to the New World. It evoked the events and places associated with this voyage, notably travelling through the three key places of Genoa, the birthplace of Columbus; Palos in Spain, from where he set sail; and San Salvador, the first land he reached on the other side of the Atlantic.

After its lighting in Olympia, the flame travelled by relay in Greece to Athens, from where it set sail for Italy on 25 August.

The 27th of August, the flame disembarked in Genoa, Italy where a ceremony was held in front of the house where Christophe Columbus is said to have lived. It left the next day, again by sea, for Spain.

The 30th of August, the flame reached Barcelona, the city where Columbus had arrived on his return from America. On land, it travelled across Spain via Madrid to Palos. The last relay leg was run by Cristóbal Colón Carbajal, a direct descendant of Christopher Columbus.

The flame left the south coast of Spain on 12 September, reaching the Canary Islands on 14 September and, a fortnight later, San Salvador, Bahamas in the same place that Columbus landed in the New World in 1492.

The 6th of October, the flame disembarked in Veracruz in Mexico, transported by a relay of 17 swimmers who carried it to the shore. It was then brought to Teotihuacan, 38km from Mexico City. There, on the evening of 11 October, under the watchful eye of 50,000 spectators, a majestic ceremony symbolising the fusion of mythologies from the Old and New Worlds took place on the site of pre-Columbian pyramids.

When the flame arrived in Mexico City on the morning of the Opening Ceremony on 12 October two torches were lit from it. One torch was taken to the National Museum of Anthropology, one of the Cultural Olympiad sites. A second torch was taken by plane to the site of the sailing competitions in Acapulco. In both places a cauldron was lit and kept burning for the duration of the Games.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date: 23 August 1968, Olympia (Greece)

End date: 12 October 1968, Olympic Stadium, Mexico (Mexico)

First torchbearer: Haris Aivaliotis

Last torchbearer:	Enriqueta Basilio Sotelo, Olympic participant in athletics (1968)
Number of torchbearers:	2,778 of which 360 were in Greece and 816 from the Veracruz shore to Mexico City.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	The torchbearers came from the various countries crossed.
Distance:	13,536km in total from Olympia to Mexico City, including sea travel and 350km in Greece (Mexico City to Acapulco relay excluded).
Countries visited:	Greece, Italy, Spain, Bahamas, Mexico



DID YOU KNOW?

- Enriqueta Basilio Sotelo became the first woman to light the main cauldron at an Olympic Games Opening Ceremony.

- In honour of the flame, 2,500 craftsmen created a multi-coloured motif over three kilometres long made up of flowers, sawdust and white sand on the main street in the village of Huamantla, Mexico.

SOURCE

- *Mexico 68*, Organising Committee of the Games of the XIX Olympiad, Mexico: 1969, [vol. 2, pp. 246-265](#), [vol. 4, pp. 627-630](#).



Gunther ZAHN lights the Olympic cauldron at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Munich 1972.

> MUNICH 1972



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The torch bears the inscription <i>Spiele der XX Olympiad München 1972</i> and the Olympic rings on its handle. On a platform at the base of the combustion tube is the emblem of the Games.
Colour:	Silver
Length:	72cm
Composition:	Metal, steel
Fuel:	Liquid gas composed of 24% propane and 76% butane, contained in an aluminium cartridge. The combustion duration is 15 to 22 minutes.
Designer / Manufacturer:	Friedrich Krupp AG / Olympiagas, Hagri
Did you know?	– The Krupp company also produced the torch for the Berlin 1936 Games.

- Two pilot lights were produced. They are fed by propane gas and can burn uninterrupted for at least six weeks.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

Once lit in Olympia, the flame visited Athens then crossed the country via Delphi, Larisa, Thessaloniki and Kavala. En route to Munich, the relay notably passed through Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Federal Republic of Germany and Innsbruck, Austria, cities which had hosted the Olympic Winter Games in the past.

Upon its arrival in Munich, the flame was welcomed at a reception held on the Königsplatz, attended by 20,000 spectators. The flame was taken to the Maximilianeum, headquarters of the Bavarian parliament, where it was kept in a brazier until the day of the Opening Ceremony.

At the Opening Ceremony, the last torchbearer, European Günther Zahn, was accompanied by runners from the other four continents: Kipchoge Keino (Africa), Jim Ryun (America), Kenji Kimihara (Asia) and Derek Clayton (Oceania).

A flame was lit from the principal one to be taken on a relay from Munich to Kiel, where the sailing events were held. This two-day relay covered 933km and saw the participation of 1,280 torchbearers on foot, 90 cyclists and 34 horse riders.

On 27 August, the day after the Opening Ceremony, a flame was also lit and taken on a 104km relay from Munich to Augsburg, where the canoe events were being held.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	28 July 1972, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	26 August 1972, Olympic Stadium, Munich, (Federal Republic of Germany)
First torchbearer:	Yiannis Kirkilessis. He was also the first torchbearer in Greece for the relay of the 1972 Winter Games in Sapporo.
Last torchbearer:	Günther Zahn
Number of torchbearers:	~6,200 (Munich-Kiel and Munich-Augsburg relays excluded) of which ~1,300 were in Greece.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	The German NOC delegated this task to local sport organizations in Bavaria, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Schleswig- Holstein.
Distance:	5,532km (Munich-Kiel and Munich-Augsburg relays excluded) 1,819km in Greece, 507km in Turkey, 726km in Bulgaria, 763km in Romania, 340km in Yugoslavia, 379km in Hungary, 541km in Austria, 457km in Federal Republic of Germany.
Countries visited:	Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria and Federal Republic of Germany.



DID YOU KNOW?

- So that the flame could travel the distance from Munich to Kiel in exactly 49 hours, all of the torchbearers were requested, whether they were on foot, on a bike, on horseback, motorcycle or in a rowing boat, to go at their maximum speed and to continue the relay both day and night.
- The cauldron for this edition of the Games was formed by a burner made up of two concentric rings of fire each with 21 gas jets. Two metres in diameter, the burner was set on a four-metre-high column made of pipe. Two years of development were necessary for the realisation of the cauldron.

SOURCE

- *Die Spiele: the official report of the Organising Committee for the Games of the XXth Olympiad Munich 1972*, Munich: Prosport, 1974, [vol. 1, pp. 72-75](#).



Sandra HENDERSON and Stéphane PREFONTAINE carry the torch in the stadium during the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Montreal 1976.

> MONTREAL 1976



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The emblem of the Games features in white on the red handle. Through its conception, the head of the torch supplied the combustion necessary for the natural absorbent cotton impregnated with the fuel that was housed inside. Its black colour was aimed at highlighting the flame.
Colour:	Red, black, white
Length:	67.5cm
Composition:	Aluminium
Fuel:	Olive oil, adjuvant and smoke cartridge. The choice of fuel evoked Ancient Greece. The minimum combustion duration is 10 minutes.
Designer / Manufacturer:	Georges Huel & Michel Dallaire / -

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

After its lighting in Olympia, the flame was transported by relay in Greece to Athens, reaching there on 15 July. The organisers worked out a special system to transmit the Olympic flame from Greece to Canada. On the same evening that the flame arrived in Athens, at a ceremony at the Panathenaic Stadium, the Olympic flame was placed next to a sensor, which captured the ionised particles. Transformed into coded impulses, they were then relayed by satellite to Ottawa.

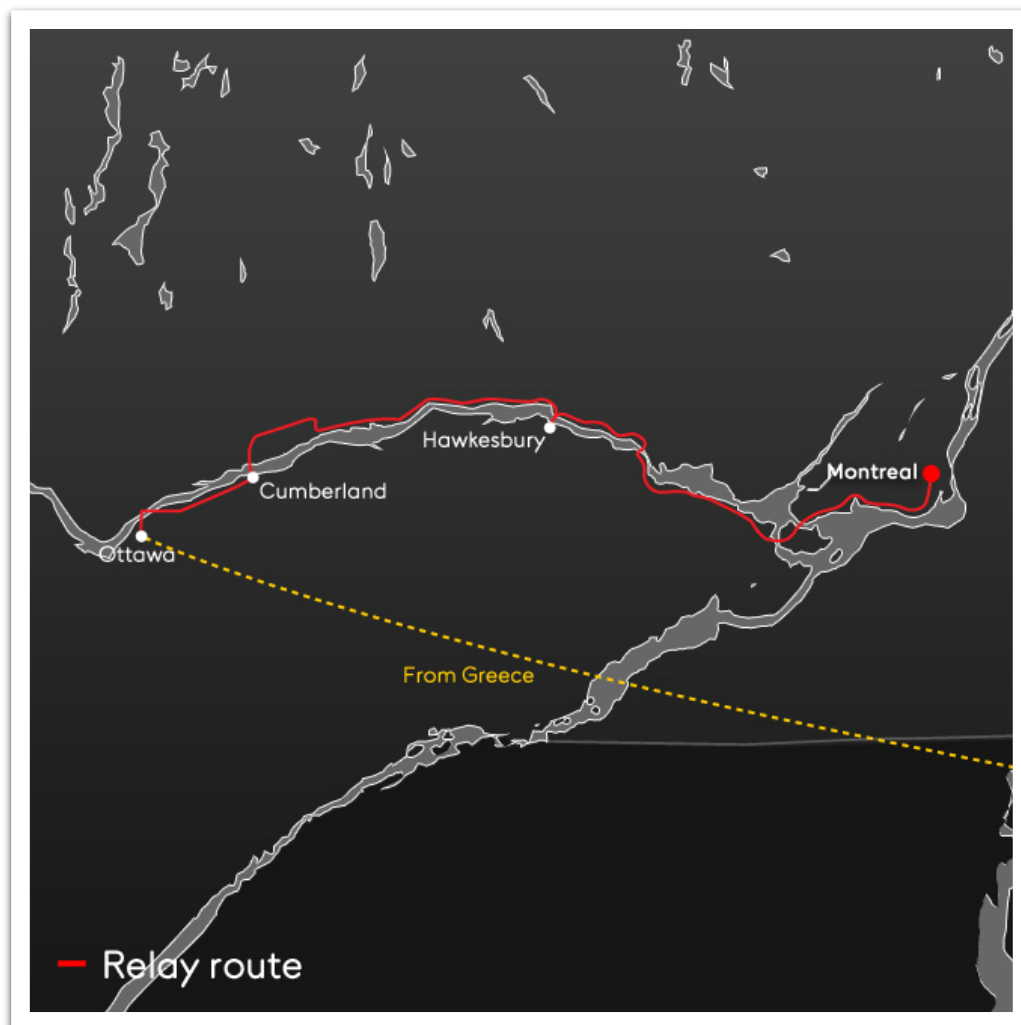
In Ottawa, the time difference meant that it was only early afternoon when a laser beam reflected in a parabolic mirror gave back the flame its original form and lit a cauldron located on Parliament Hill. For the first kilometre on Canadian soil, 12 runners who represented the 10 provinces and two territories of Canada at that time each carried a torch with the flame. They came together at the same time as they passed it on the 13th torchbearer.

Between Ottawa and Montreal, the relay travelled along the Ottawa River passing successively from one bank to the other. The flame arrived in Montreal on 16 July and burned during the night in a cauldron at the top of Mount Royal.

On 16 July, on the road that took the flame to Montreal, a second convoy was formed in Pincourt to take a flame over a distance of about 300km to Kingston, venue for the sailing competitions. It was first taken by car to Cornwall where it spent the night and then, the next day it was conveyed by foot and various modes of transport, from bicycle to Native American canoes.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	13 July 1976, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	17 July 1976, Olympic Stadium, Montreal (Canada)
First torchbearer:	Tassos Psyllidis
Last torchbearers:	Sandra Henderson and Stéphane Préfontaine
Number of torchbearers:	500 in Greece, 261 in Canada (Pincourt-Kingston relay excluded)
Recruitment of torchbearers:	For the national relay, advertisements were distributed via sports and leisure associations in Canadian cities and regional town halls. The torchbearers had notably to be amateur athletes or fitness enthusiasts and be aged at least 15 on 15 July 1976, the start day of the relay on Canadian soil. Over 4,000 candidatures were received by the Organisers. A computer made the final selection of torchbearers.
Distance:	775km. 514km in Greece, 261km in Canada (Pincourt-Kingston relay excluded).
Countries visited:	Greece, Canada



DID YOU KNOW?

- For the first time, two people together lit the Olympic cauldron in the Stadium during the Opening Ceremony of the Games. Sandra Henderson from Toronto and Stéphane Préfontaine from Montreal were chosen to symbolise the Anglophone and Francophone communities. "It was the greatest experience I have ever had," said Préfontaine in 1986.
- The main cauldron was 1.80m in diameter and made of frosted aluminium. For its lighting during the Opening Ceremony, it was placed on a temporary platform in the centre of the field of play. Later it was moved to the most southerly point of the Stadium, where it burned for the duration of the Games.

SOURCES

- "Computer picks Torch Bearers", *Olympic Press* 1976, vol. 4, n. 2, April 1976, p. 9.
- "Gold Medals Engraved in Bronze": Montreal celebrates the 10th Anniversary of the Games, *Olympic Review*, n. 227, September 1986, [p. 514](#).
- *Montréal 1976: Games of the XXI Olympiad Montréal 1976: Official Report*, Ottawa, OCOG 1976, 1978, [vol.1, pp. 280-295](#), [vol. 2, pp. 300](#).



At the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Moscow 1980, Sergei BELOV runs up a pathway through the stands to light the Olympic cauldron.

> MOSCOW 1980



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The handle and upper part, which bears the inscription <i>МОСКВА – ОЛИМПИАДА - 1980</i> , are made of silver. Around the burner is a golden coloured cup formed of concentric circles. In the centre, on a gold coloured protective screen are the emblem of the Games and the Olympic rings.
Colour:	Silver, red, gold
Length:	56.5cm
Composition:	Aluminium
Fuel:	Mixture of propane and butane. The combustion duration is 8 to 10 minutes.
Designer / Manufacturer:	Valentin Ljubman, Boris Tuchin / Klimov Aircraft Engine Factory
Did you know?	– The safety lamp was specially designed by the same team of

engineers who worked on the design of the torch. Fuelled by kerosene or liquid gas, the flame could burn inside it for up to 48 hours.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

After the flame-lighting ceremony in Olympia, the flame was relayed night and day for a week across Greece. The relay in Bulgaria lasted six days, passing by the country's main historical and cultural monuments. During its passage through the city of Lovesh, the torch was taken to the residence of Georgi Ivanov, the first Bulgarian cosmonaut. The route through Romania went over the Friendship Bridge, which linked Bulgaria and Romania. Wrestler Dimitru Pirvulescu, a gold medallist in Rome in 1960, was the first Romanian torchbearer.

In Romania, the relay covered 89 cities and villages. In Bucharest, 40,000 people welcomed the flame in the Dynamo Stadium for the first stage of the relay in the country.

On 5 July, the flame arrived in the Soviet Union. It was handed to Soviet athletes on the bridge that separated Romania and the Soviet Union near the Moldovan village of Leuşeni.

On 18 July, the flame entered Moscow. An official ceremony was organised for the occasion on Sovietskaya Square where a cauldron was lit. From this cauldron other torches were lit on 20 July and taken by special railcars to the cities of Tallinn, Leningrad, Minsk and Kiev who were also hosting certain of the sports events.

On 19 July, for the Opening Ceremony, athletes took the flame to the Grand Arena of the Central Lenin Stadium, the main Stadium of the Games.

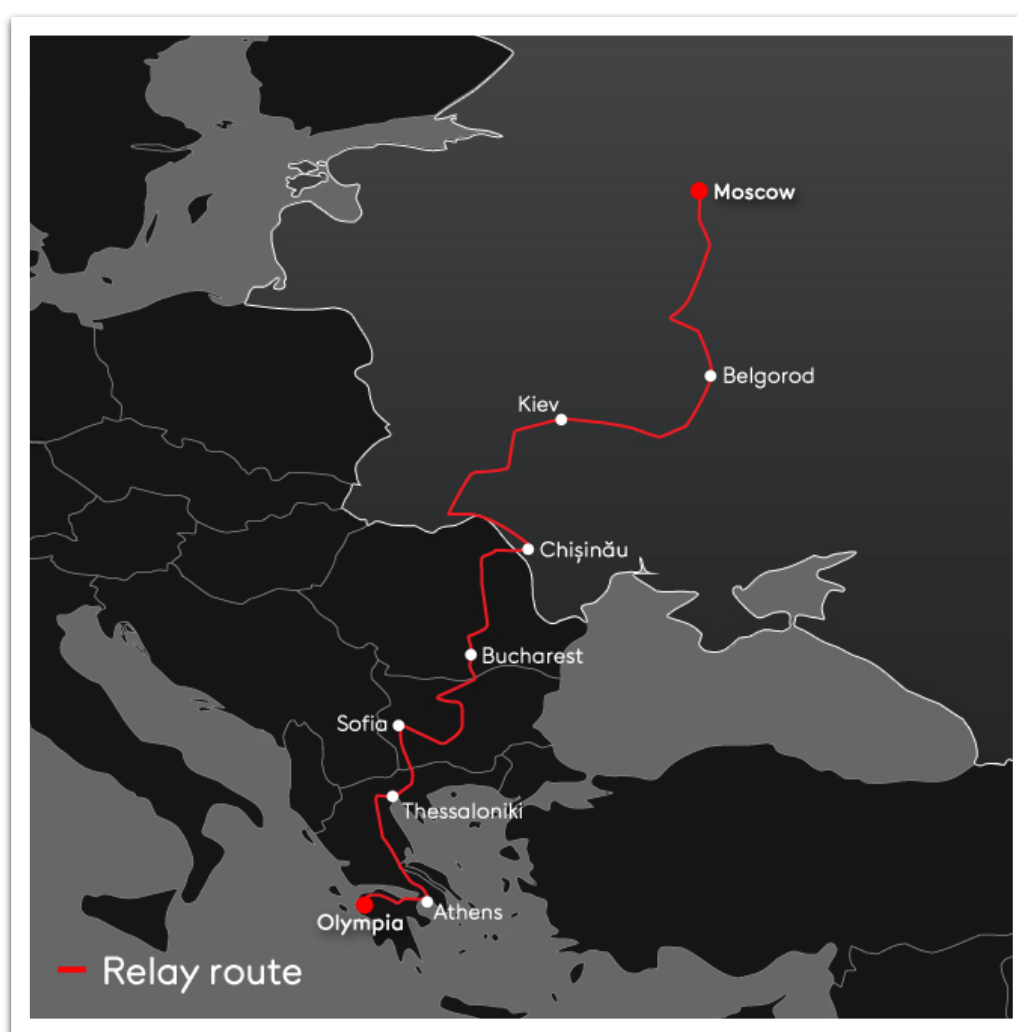
THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	19 June 1980, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	19 July 1980, Grand Arena of the Central Lenin Stadium, Moscow (Soviet Union).
First torchbearer:	Thanassis Kosmopoulos
Last torchbearer:	Sergei Belov, Olympic participant in basketball (1968, 1972, 1976, 1980), gold medallist in Munich 1972 and bronze medallist in Mexico 1968, Montreal 1976 and Moscow 1980.
Number of torchbearers:	~5,435. ~800 in Greece, 935 in Bulgaria, ~700 in Romania and ~3,000 in the Soviet Union.
Recruitment of torchbearers:	Generally, the torchbearers were chosen by sports and public organisations. The basic criteria for those that were considered was that they should have a personal sporting achievement to their name, be able to run 1,000 metres in under five minutes, have made a contribution to a sports organisation and had medical authorisation. In the Soviet Union, for example, the Moscow 1980 Games Organising Committee and the persons in charge of sports societies of the

Russian, Ukrainian and Moldovan Socialist Republics launched a competition to choose the torchbearers. 1.5 million people took part, with 3,000 people selected in the end.

Distance: 5,000km (transport from Moscow to Tallinn, Leningrad, Minsk and Kiev excluded).
1,170km in Greece, 935km in Bulgaria, 593km in Romania and 2,302km in the Soviet Union.

Countries visited: Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Soviet Union



SOURCES

- *Games of the XXII Olympiad: official report of the Organising Committee of the Games of the XXII Olympiad*, Moscow, 1980, Moscow: Fizkultura i Sport, 1981, [vol. 2, pp. 260-278](#).
- Oleg Vorontsov, "1980 Moscow Torch - The Unknown History", in *Journal of Olympic History*, vol. 10, num. 2, May 1980, [pp. 24-30](#).



An Olympic torchbearer carrying the Olympic flame during the torch relay at the Olympic Games Los Angeles 1984.

> LOS ANGELES 1984



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The body of the torch is in bronze tinted aluminium. The Olympic motto, <i>Citius Altius Fortius</i> , features at the top of the torch with a representation of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum peristyle below it. The leather-covered handle has a metal ring which bears the caption <i>Games of the XXIII Olympiad Los Angeles 1984</i> . The emblem of the Games features twice on the piece where the handle finishes at the base of the torch.
Colour:	Brown, bronze
Length:	58.5cm with burner
Composition:	Aluminium, bronze, leather
Fuel:	Propane
Designer / Manufacturer:	Turner Industries, Inc.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

The flame was lit in Olympia and transported by air to Athens. On 8 May 1984, it began its journey on American soil. In New York, opposite the United Nations headquarters, Gina Hemphill and Bill Thorpe Jr., respectively the granddaughter and grandson of two famous athletes, Jesse Owens and Jim Thorpe, ran the first kilometre together.

The relay crossed the United States from east to west, through 33 States and the District of Columbia.

On 28 July, in Los Angeles, Gina Hemphill was at the Games Opening Ceremony. She carried the flame inside the Stadium before passing it to decathlete Rafer Johnson. He then climbed up a staircase to a tube that he ignited. The flame then followed the tube to the cauldron, lighting up the Olympic rings on the way.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	7 May 1984, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	28 July 1984, Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles (United States)
First torchbearer:	Gina Hemphill and Bill Thorpe Jr.
Last torchbearer:	Rafer Johnson, Olympic participant in athletics (1956, 1960), gold medallist in Rome 1960 and silver medallist in Melbourne 1956.
Number of torchbearers:	3,636 in the United States
Recruitment of torchbearers:	3,436 torchbearers took part in the relay as part of the <i>Youth Legacy Kilometre Programme</i> . The torchbearers in this category were nominated by an individual, organisation or company that made a monetary donation that was then used to promote youth activities. The remaining kilometres were covered by a team of 200 runners from AT&T, a sponsor of the relay. They each ran with the torch several times, and also had the role of escorting the participants of the <i>Youth Legacy Kilometre Programme</i> .
Distance:	15,000km in the United States
Countries visited:	Greece, United States



DID YOU KNOW?

- The cauldron used was the same one used during the Los Angeles Games in 1932, when a symbolic fire was lit. Located at the top of the central arcade, it reaches over 45 metres above the ground.
- The last torchbearer faced a physically demanding performance as he had to be able to climb the 96 steps of the 50° inclined staircase. In training, Rafer Johnson suffered a serious leg cramp. Following this incident, a replacement was appointed to overcome a possible failure by Johnson the day of the Opening Ceremony. This was Bruce Jenner, Olympic decathlon champion in 1976 in Montreal. In case he had to intervene, Jenner, who was among the eight Olympic flag-bearers, wore sportswear underneath his Ceremony clothing.

SOURCE

- *Official report of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles 1984*, Los Angeles Olympic Organising Committee, Los Angeles 1985, [vol. 1, pp.72, 79, 202, 206, 214, 806-818](#).



Chun-Ae IM carries the Olympic torch in the stadium at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Seoul 1988.

> SEOUL 1988



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description: The torch bears the inscription *Games of the XXIV Olympiad Seoul 1988* on the edge of the ring. Its handle is made of leather. At the top of the torch is the Olympic emblem as well as traditional Korean designs representing two engraved dragons symbolising the harmony of East and West. In Chinese astrology, the dragon was also the sign for the year 1988.

Colour: Brown, bronze

Length: 51cm

Composition: Metal, copper, leather, plastic

Fuel: Manganese dioxide, barium chromate, magnesium and phosphorous

Designer / Manufacturer: Lee Woo-Sung / Korea Explosives Co. Ltd.

- Did you know?
- The safety lamp design was a scaled down version an ancient Korean astronomical observatory, Chomsongdae. A total of nine lamps measuring 35cm in height and 15cm in diameter were produced. Their composition of threefold steel plate and special aluminium was chosen in order to resist wind and pressure. Fuelled by kerosene they could burn for up to 140 hours.
-

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

After the lighting ceremony in Olympia, the flame travelled across Greece for three days and two nights to arrive in Athens. From there, following a stopover in Bangkok, it travelled to the Korean island of Cheju-do, which it reached on 27 August.

On Cheju Island, two young pupils from Cheju school, a boy and a girl, marked the start of the next stage of the relay, which crossed the island clockwise. On 28 August, the flame set sail on board the *Olympia 88* for Busan, where a cauldron was lit in Yongdusan Park. The following day, the main relay continued. The cauldron remained lit in the Park until 12 September when a secondary relay of 18.2km took the flame to the city's sailing club, where the sailing events were being hosted.

The main relay crossed the country from east to west, to symbolise harmony. In Kangnung, 12 young mothers carried the flame while pushing their children, all born in 1988.

On 16 September, the flame arrived in Seoul. It was taken to the City Hall, where it was received by the Mayor of the city. On the day of the Opening Ceremony, the flame was carried into the stadium by Kee Chung Sohn, the legendary marathon winner of the 1936 Games, then participating under the name Kitei Son. Then, young sprinter Chun-Ae Im passed the flame to the last three torchbearers, who lit the cauldron together.

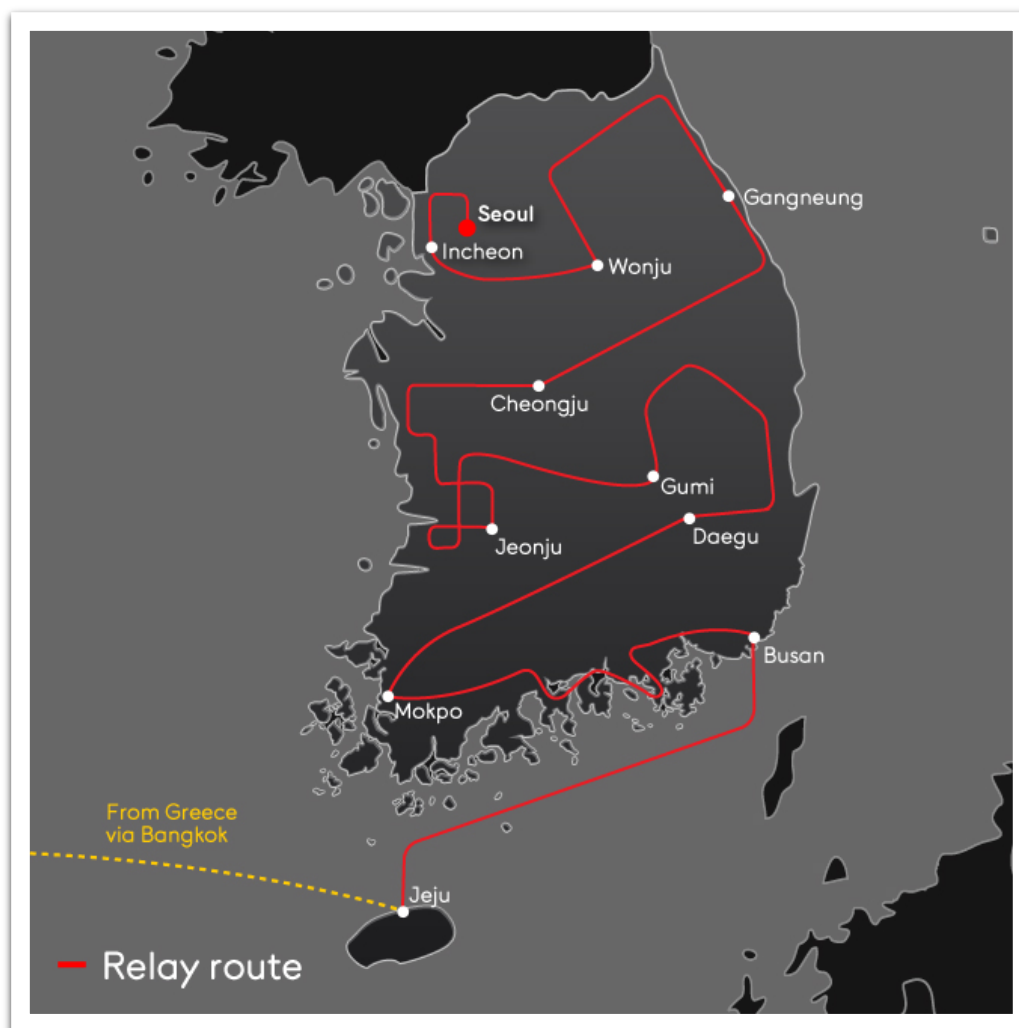
THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	23 August 1988, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	17 September 1988, Olympic Stadium, Seoul (Republic of Korea)
First torchbearer:	Athanassios "Thanassis" Kalogiannis, Olympic participant in athletics (1984, 1992).
Last torchbearers:	Won-Tak Kim, Olympic participant in athletics (1988), Sun-Man Chung and Mi-Chung Sohn.
Number of torchbearers:	380 in Greece, 1,467 in the Republic of Korea
Recruitment of torchbearers:	The Organising Committee chose torchbearers who lived in the cities crossed by the relay. Additionally, they also chose foreigners and Koreans living abroad based on the aim of promoting the relay internationally. 37,011 candidatures were received in total. Among the torchbearers, there were celebrities, athletes, artists, people who had contributed to the development of the community,

people with a disability, children, elderly people, religious people and representatives of various professions.

Distance: 358km in Greece, 4,168km in the Republic of Korea, of which 1,414km was on foot, 2,188km was by car, 493km by boat, ~60km by bike, ~5km by motorbike and 7km on horseback.

Countries visited: Greece, Thailand, Republic of Korea



DID YOU KNOW?

- To commemorate the arrival of the torch on the island of Cheju, the Organising Committee decided to erect a monument in Shinsan Park and plant olive and cypress trees around it. The sculpture was made up of a granite base and eight vertically oblique columns which symbolised the Games of '88 as well as a spiral in the centre which represented the five Olympic rings and the flame. It was unveiled, at noon, on 27 August 1988, when the torch arrived at the Park.

- The Olympic cauldron measured 5.5m in diameter and was perched on top of a slender, 22m octahedral post. To light it, the last three torchbearers were raised by an elevator placed around the central post.

SOURCE

- *Official report: Games of the XXIVth Olympiad Seoul 1988*, Seoul: Seoul Olympic Organising Committee, 1989, [vol. 1, pp. 366-383](#).



In Barcelona in 1992, Juan Antonio SAN EPIFANIO RUIZ carries the Olympic torch in the stadium during the Games Opening Ceremony.

> BARCELONA 1992



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description: The torch is asymmetrical, its axis pointing symbolically in the direction of Barcelona. On the flat part of the handle is the inscription *XXV Olimpiada Barcelona 1992* as well as the emblem of the Games. The circular shape of the upper part recalls that of a cauldron and also features the final destination of the flame. The conical and triangular shapes that appear in the design of the torch are inspired by the amphora and by the Latin sail, giving it a Mediterranean character.

Colour: Silver, gold

Length: 66cm

Composition: Aluminium, plastic

Fuel: Gaseous fuels

**Designer /
Manufacturer:** André Ricard / Vilagrassa

- Did you know?
- In addition to the torch for the Barcelona 1992 relay, André Ricard designed the safety lamp and the celebration cauldron for the stopover cities.
 - For The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, then IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch asked André Ricard to design the cauldron in front of the building where a permanent fire burns.
-

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

After the lighting ceremony in Olympia and a relay across Greece, the flame reached Athens, which it left on 9 June on board the *Cataluña* frigate.

On 13 June, the flame reached the Catalan coast in Empúries, a former Greek colony founded in around 600BC. It was welcomed by about 1,000 different boats and a crowd of 5,000 people who waited for it on the shore. It reached the coast in a typical Catalan boat, propelled by 10 rowers.

From Empúries, the relay travelled at first to Catalonia and then the rest of Spain. The relay passed through 652 localities, including the capitals of each of the 17 autonomous communities and the various Olympic sites. The route also included the Canary Islands, reached by plane. The crossing between Tenerife and Las Palmas was made by hydrofoil. On its approach to Barcelona, the relay travelled to the Balearics by boat.

On 24 June, the flame reached Barcelona and travelled through the city the whole night surrounded by an excited crowd. The following day, the last stage took it to the Olympic Stadium for the Opening Ceremony, where Paralympic archer Antonio Rebollo ignited the cauldron by shooting an arrow lit from the Olympic flame.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	5 June 1992, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	25 July 1992, Olympic Stadium, Barcelona (Spain)
First torchbearer:	Savvas Saritzoglou, Olympic participant in athletics (1992)
Last torchbearer:	Antonio Rebollo
Number of torchbearers:	365 in Greece, 9,484 in Spain of which 8,885 were on foot and 599 by bike
Recruitment of torchbearers:	The torchbearers came from the following categories: Olympic volunteers from various regions in Spain; torchbearers chosen by the town halls of cities crossed by the relay who could each choose one runner; the partner companies of the relay and the Organising Committee; people from among the general public who put forward their candidature.
Distance:	367km in Greece, 5,940km in Spain, of which 1,490km was by bicycle and 4,450km was on foot. Transport by ship between Greece and

Spain excluded.

Countries visited: Greece, Spain



DID YOU KNOW?

- The shape of the titanium cauldron in the Olympic Stadium was inspired by the mosaics of Antoni Gaudí. The cauldron rested on an imposing base of aluminium which recalled the rudder of a Mediterranean boat and was fixed to the outside wall of the Stadium. The flame, which burned at its top throughout the Games, was three metres high.
- The arrow used by Antonio Rebollo to light the cauldron during the Opening Ceremony was specially designed to support the flame and avoid the archer burning himself. It was made of tempered duralumin, weighed about 100 grams and was a little over a metre long. The arrow is now part of the collections of The Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

SOURCES

- "Eternal Flame for the Museum", *Olympic Review*, April 1993, n. 306, [pp. 135-136](#).
- "La Antorcha Olímpica de Barcelona'92", *Press - Rapport*, COOB'92, n. d., n. p.
- *La ceremonia de inauguración de los Juegos Olímpicos de Barcelona 1992: guía para la cobertura informativa de los Medios de Comunicación*, Barcelona: COOB '92, 1992, pp. 53-54.
- *Official report of the Games of the XXV Olympiad Barcelona 1992*, Barcelona: COOB'92, 1992, [vol. 3, pp. 35-39, 338-339](#), [vol. 4, pp. 37-48](#).
- "The Games leave a legacy and tradition of sports - James Easton, new IOC Member for the USA, talks to Randy Williams.", *Olympic Review*, n. 326, December 1994, [pp. 574-575](#).



Evander HOLYFIELD and Voula PATOULIDOU carry the Olympic torch in the stadium during the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Atlanta 1996.

> ATLANTA 1996



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description: On the wooden handle is engraved the list of Summer Games from 1896 to 1996, in reference to the centenary of the Olympic Games. The torch was inspired by simple ancient torches of bound reeds and the lines of classical Greek architecture. Its 22 aluminium "reeds" were representative of the total number of modern Olympic Games editions. The centre grip is made of Georgia pecan wood and there are two wide gold bands, one with the names of all Olympic Games host cities and, the other, with the emblem of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games and the Quilt of Leaves motif.

Colour: Silver, gold, brown

Length: 82cm

Composition: Aluminium, brass, pecan wood

Fuel: Propylene. The combustion duration is 20 minutes.

Designer / Manufacturer:	Peter Mastrogiannis, Malcolm Gear Designers / Georgia Institute of Technology
-----------------------------	---

Did you know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The safety lamps measured 30.5cm and had a burning capacity of 20 hours. They were fed by liquid paraffin. - The wood that forms the central part of the torch was a donation from local farmers and symbolised the connection between heaven, Earth and the Olympic flame.
---------------	--

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

After the flame-lighting ceremony in Olympia and its relay across Greece, the flame arrived in Athens on 6 April. To mark the Centennial of the Games, a special celebration was organised in the Panathenaic Stadium. Representatives of the 17 cities that had hosted the Summer Games before Atlanta were present. Each of them received a safety lamp, whose flame was lit from a main torch. During the next 21 days, these flames were celebrated in each of the former host cities, while the main flame burned in Athens. These flames were extinguished when the main flame left Athens to fly to Los Angeles.

On 27 April, the flame arrived in Los Angeles. The relay on American soil began at the Memorial Coliseum, the Stadium that hosted the Los Angeles Games in 1932 and 1984. The first torchbearer was Olympian Rafer Johnson, the last torchbearer of the 1984 Games. The relay notably passed through St Louis, host city of the Olympic Games in 1904.

On 19 July, the flame reached the city of Atlanta. In order to honour the origins of the modern Olympic Games, Evander Holyfield, originally from Atlanta, shared the torch with Greek athlete Voula Patoulidou for part of the leg in the Stadium during the Opening Ceremony. Swimmer Janet Evans took over the relay, doing a lap of the track before heading for a long ramp located at the top of the extreme north of the Stadium. She passed the torch to Muhammad Ali, who had the honour of lighting the cauldron.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	30 March 1996, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	19 July 1996, Olympic Stadium, Atlanta (United States)
First torchbearer:	Konstantinos "Kostas" Koukodimos, Olympic participant in athletics (1992, 1996, 2000).
Last torchbearer:	Muhammad Ali, Olympic participant under the name of Cassius Clay in boxing (1960), gold medallist in Rome 1960.
Number of torchbearers:	~800 in Greece, 12,467 in the United States
Recruitment of torchbearers:	To be able to carry the torch, torchbearers had to be aged 12 or over on 17 April 1996. The torchbearer categories included community heroes, Olympic athletes, Olympic Movement members, and members of the <i>Share the Spirit</i> national and international selection

programme run by Coca-Cola.

To be considered as a community hero individuals could either nominate themselves or be proposed by others. As part of the application process, an essay of 100 words or fewer describing the qualities of the nominated person was required. The Organising Committee's main criteria for defining a community hero included notable work as a volunteer, service as a community leader, role model, or mentor, acts of generosity or kindness and, extraordinary feats or accomplishments. Approximately 40,000 candidatures were received from which 5,500 community heroes were chosen.

Distance: 2,141km in Greece, 26,875km in the United States

Countries visited: Greece, United States



DID YOU KNOW?

- To announce the holding of the Olympic Games, the flame was carried by relay along the real Pony Express route, which was recreated over 875km between Julesburg, Colorado, and St Joseph, Missouri. Over 58 consecutive hours, riders travelling on horseback, just like the pioneers of this service, transported over 1,000 letters from the Organising Committee.
- On board the Space Shuttle Columbia, an unlit torch was taken into space for the very first time.
- The 6.4 metre-high cauldron formed the top of a metallic tower, which was over 35 metres high and linked to the Stadium by a 55-metre bridge. Originally, it was planned that the last torchbearer would cross the bridge and climb the tower to the cauldron to light it. However, in order to make the task simpler for Muhammad Ali and enhance visibility of this moment the flame instead travelled via a rope from the inside of the Stadium to the cauldron.

SOURCES

- *The Official Report of the Centennial Olympic Games: Atlanta 1996*, Atlanta: Peachtree publishers, 1997, [vol. 1 p. 134, 161-162, 362, 482-498](#), [vol. 2, pp. 14-53, 68](#).
- "The Olympic Flame Torch Relay", *Olympic Review*, June-July 1996, n. 9, vol. XXV, [pp. 16-19](#).



Cathy FREEMAN in front of the steps leading up to the Olympic cauldron at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Sydney 2000.

> SYDNEY 2000



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The torch took its inspiration from the Sydney Opera House, the blue of the Pacific Ocean and the boomerang. It is made of three layers of different materials. The inside layer is made of stainless steel and contains the fuel system. The blue middle layer is made of anodised aluminium and contained the fuel reservoir. The outer layer is made of treated aluminium. These three layers represented earth, water and fire. The emblem of the Games featured at the top of the torch.
Colour:	White, blue, silver
Length:	77.5cm
Composition:	Steel, aluminium
Fuel:	Mixture of propane and butane. The combustion duration is 20 min.
Designer / Manufacturer:	Blue Sky Design / GA & Harrington

- Did you know? – The torch was endowed with a safety system. If it was turned upside down or lay on the ground for more than 10 seconds, it would go out automatically.
-

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

Lit in Olympia, the flame was carried by relay for about 10 days in Greece.

The relay then visited 12 island countries and territories of Oceania, beginning with Guam, where the flame landed on 22 May. Due to political tension, the Organising Committee cancelled the originally scheduled Fiji stop between Tonga and New Zealand. In New Zealand, the last leg before Australia kicked off on 5 June in the snow of Coronet Peak, Queenstown on the South Island. It ended on 7 June in Auckland, on the North Island.

On 8 June, the flame reached Yulara in Australia and the relay began near the sacred rock of Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock. Nova Peris-Kneebone, a hockey gold medallist at the Atlanta 1996 Games, ran barefoot in the first leg of the relay on Australian soil as a mark of respect for the Aboriginal people, of whom she was one.

The flame travelled the country for 100 days in passing through over 1,000 towns and suburbs. Modes of transport included a section on camel back in Broome, a railway journey across the Nullarbor Plain on board the *Indian Pacific* and a trip by surfboat in the rollers of Bondi Beach in Sydney.

On 15 September, during the Games Opening Ceremony, the flame was carried into the Stadium by Betty Cuthbert who sat in a wheelchair, pushed by Raelene Boyle. Then, in turn, Dawn Fraser, Shirley Strickland, Shane Gould and Debbie Flintoff-King relayed the flame to Cathy Freeman. Freeman climbed a series of steps, positioning herself at the centre of a shallow circular pool and stood level with the water to light the 150 burner nozzles placed just below it. A circle of fire surrounded the athlete before the whole cauldron was raised to the top of the Stadium where it burned for the duration of the Games.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	10 May 2000, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	15 September 2000, Olympic Stadium, Sydney (Australia)
First torchbearer:	Lambros Papakostas, Olympic participant in athletics (1992, 1996)
Last torchbearer:	Cathy Freeman, Olympic participant in athletics (1992, 1996, 2000), gold medallist in Sydney 2000 and silver medallist in Atlanta 1996.
Number of torchbearers:	~900 in Greece, ~1,500 in Oceania, 11,000 in Australia
Recruitment of torchbearers:	In Australia, the <i>Community Torchbearers</i> programme allowed the Australian general public to nominate people who were notable for their achievements or worked for the common good. Through this programme, 6,000 torchbearers were selected from among a total of

over 43,000 nominations.

The rest of the torchbearers were either chosen through sponsors, media partners and the Organising Committee, or were Olympians. About 7 per cent of the torchbearers were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Distance: 1,696km on land and 463 nautical miles in Greece, ~17,000km in Oceania, 27,000km in Australia.

Countries visited: Greece, Guam, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, New Zealand, Australia.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Andy Thomas, a NASA astronaut from Australia, special version of the torch and a flag bearing the emblem of the Games was taken into space for about 10 days in May 2000 on the Atlantis space shuttle's trip to the International Space Station.
- On 27 June 2000, the flame was taken on an underwater journey of 2 minutes 40 seconds at the Great Barrier Reef, not far from Cairns. A flare system, burning at 2,000°C, maintained the flame and made it visible underwater.
- The concept for the Olympic cauldron and its lighting was already envisioned in 1993 when Sydney had just been elected host city of the Games of the XXVII Olympiad. Two years later, the concept was integrated in top secret into the architecture of the Stadium in order to put in place the structures that would allow the seven tonne cauldron to be raised to the top of the north stand.

SOURCES

- "Australians respond to call for Olympic Torchbearers", news, website of Sydney 2000, 25 November 1999.
- "Community Torchbearer numbers boosted", news, website of Sydney 2000, 25 January 2000.
- *Official report of the XXVII Olympiad: Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, 15 September - 1 October 2000*, Sydney: SOCOG, 2001, [vol.1, p. 334](#).
- "Olympic Torch ready to return to earth", news, website of Sydney 2000, 28 May 2000.
- *Opening ceremony of the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney, 15 September 2000: media guide*, Sydney: SOCOG, 2000, pp. 59-60.
- "Torch relay: Olympic torch to bypass Fiji", news, website of Sydney 2000, 29 May 2000.
- "Torch Relay – On the road" section, website of Sydney 2000, 1996-2000.
- "Torch Relay – Torch design" section, website of Sydney 2000, 1996-2000.



The final torchbearer, Nikolaos KAKLAMANAKIS, carries the Olympic torch in the stadium at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Athens 2004.

> ATHENS 2004



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The shape of the torch recalls the simple and harmonious lines of an olive tree leaf. Its two-tone aspect, linking the wood of an olive tree and metal, echoes the two sides of the leaf, the colours of which are different. Its ergonomic design represents the extension of the moving flame. On the metal part is the emblem of the Games.
Colour:	Brown, silver
Length:	65.5cm
Composition:	Olive wood, aluminium
Fuel:	Gas
Designer / Manufacturer:	Andreas Varotsos / GA & L Harrington
Did you know?	– The olive tree has a very strong symbolic connotation in Greece. It

has been the sacred tree of the Mediterranean people for thousands of years and was the ancient symbol of the Athenian City State. It evokes peace and freedom. Thus, the Athens torch, in the shape of an olive leaf, was intended to be the bearer of a peaceful message on the five continents.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

For the first time and to celebrate the return of the Olympic Games to their country of origin, a “global” torch relay was organised. Before returning to Greece, it travelled across the five continents in reference to the five Olympic rings. The flame passed by all the cities that had hosted the Games since 1896, as well as other cities in the world that occupied a significant place in terms of sport, history and culture.

After the lighting ceremony which was held in Olympia on 25 March, the day of the 108th anniversary of the revival of the modern Olympic Games, a seven-day relay began across Greece, the last stage being the celebration at the Panathenaic Stadium. The flame stayed there for 64 days, burning in a special cauldron. It was only on 2 June that it was taken to Athens International Airport to fly to Sydney, host of the Games four years earlier. Cathy Freeman, Australian 400m gold medallist, kicked off the international relay on 4 June in Sydney.

The flame then headed to Melbourne, Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, Delhi, Cairo and Cape Town, where it made its first journey on African soil. It then crossed the Atlantic to visit Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Los Angeles, St Louis, Atlanta and New York. After Montreal, the flame came back to Europe and visited Antwerp, Brussels, Amsterdam, Geneva, Lausanne, Paris, London, Barcelona, Rome, Munich, Berlin, Stockholm, Helsinki, and finally Moscow, Kiev, Istanbul, Sofia and Nicosia.

On 9 July, the flame returned to Greece to embark on the last phase of the relay from Heraklion in Crete. The second part of the Greek relay lasted 36 days, visiting 54 prefectures, 32 islands and 24 archaeological and historical sites. It ended on 13 August with the lighting of the cauldron during the Opening Ceremony of the Games held in the Athens Olympic Stadium.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	25 March 2004, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	13 August 2004, Olympic Stadium, Athens (Greece)
First torchbearer:	Kostas Gatsioudis, Olympic participant in athletics (1996, 2000)
Last torchbearer:	Nikolaos Kaklamanakis, Olympic participant in sailing (1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008), gold medallist in Atlanta 1996 and silver medallist in Athens in 2004.
Number of torchbearers:	~7,700 in Greece, ~3,600 for the international relay
Recruitment of	The selection criteria for the torchbearers was based on choosing

torchbearers: people who played an important role in their communities through sport, education and culture, who inspired others and who embodied the values of the Olympic Games and the ideals of the Olympic Movement.

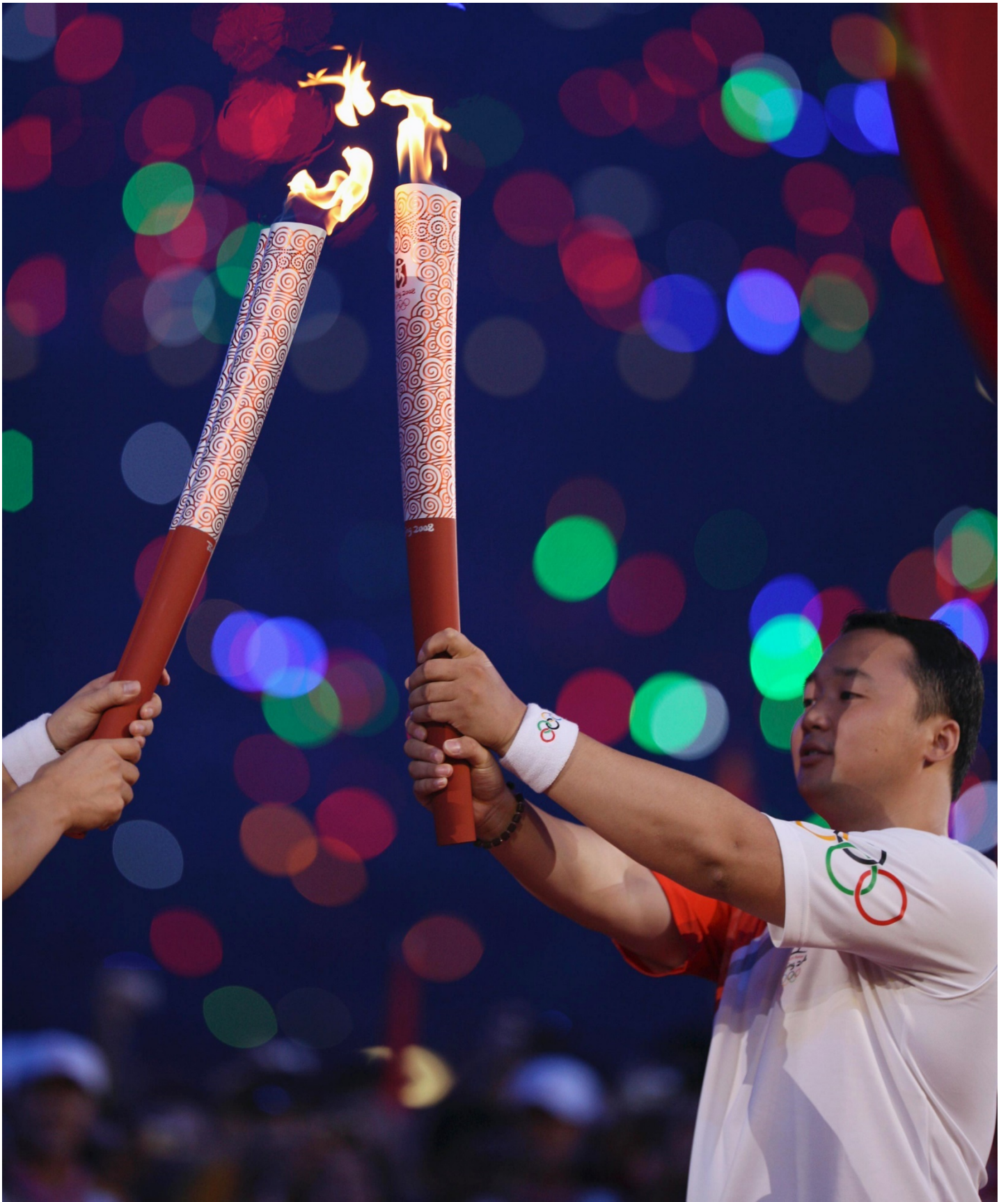
Distance: 6,600km in Greece of which 2,500km was on foot, 2,800km by convoy and 1,300km by helicopter.
78,000km by land, sea and air for the international relay.

Countries visited: Greece, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, People's Republic of China, India, Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, United States, Canada, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, France, United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Bulgaria, Cyprus.



SOURCES

- "[Celebrities at the Athens 2004 International Olympic Torch Relay](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 6 May 2004.
- "Light shines on 2004 Torch", *Olympic Review*, April-May-June 2003, vol. XXVIII, n. 47, [p. 18](#).
- *Official report of the XXVIII Olympiad: Athens 2004*, Athens: ATHOC, 2005, [vol. 1 p. 327-328](#), [vol. 2 pp. 97-157](#).
- "[The Olympic flame nears Athens](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 6 August 2004.



Jun ZHANG and the Olympic torch at the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Beijing 2008.

> BEIJING 2008



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description: The shape of the torch recalls that of a parchment scroll. Its curved body is made of anodised aluminium. A carved etched pattern representing lucky clouds covers the surface of the upper part of the torch. The two ends of the torch also have the shape of a cloud, a very old decorative element from Chinese art which can be found on buildings, sculptures and furniture. The red Chinese lacquer symbolises the spirit of celebration, enthusiasm and luck. A fine layer of rubber-based varnish covers the handle of the torch. It facilitates the grip and aims to imitate the contact of human skin as if the torchbearer were holding a friend's hand.

Colour: Silver, red

Length: 72cm

Composition: Aluminium, rubber

Fuel: Propane. Average burning time of about 15 minutes.

Designer /
Manufacturer: Lenovo China, Aerospace Science & Industry / Zhongshan Vatti Gas Appliance Stock Co., Ltd

- Did you know?
- The choice of a parchment scroll as the basic shape for the torch is due to chance. The idea arose in a meeting, when a staff member casually rolled up a piece of paper. It was at that moment that the designers realised that the shape which was formed resembled that of a torch.
 - The safety lamp was inspired by traditional lanterns used in ancient Chinese palaces. The round and square shapes found in the design symbolise the Chinese concept of *round sky and square Earth*. Like the torch, it bears the pattern of lucky clouds.
 - The height of 72cm was derived from 8 x 9: two figures that express luck and longevity in Chinese culture.
-

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

Once lit in Olympia, the flame reached Athens, where it was passed on to representatives of the Beijing Games Organising Committee on 30 March 2008 in the Panathenaic Stadium. On 31 March, the flame landed in Beijing. From there, it continued its journey around the world, which took it to 19 cities on the five continents before reaching Hong Kong, then Macao and, finally, Mainland China.

Part of the path of the relay was inspired by the Silk Road, with some of the cities crossed located on this ancient network of commercial roads between Asia and Europe. In addition to travelling to all the continents, the organisers' aim was to circulate the Olympic flame widely in Asia within the framework of the international relay.

In Mainland China, the relay crossed 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. It began on 4 May in Sanya, in the province of Hainan, with five-time Olympic speed skating medallist Yang Yang (A) as the first torchbearer. Arriving in Hangzhou on 18 May, the relay took a break of three days between the 19th and 21st of May to mark the national mourning for the victims of the dramatic earthquake which had struck the province of Sichuan a few days before, on 12 May. The organisers also decided to modify the relay route so that the flame visited the province of Sichuan at the end of its journey. Originally planned between 15 and 18 June, the journey through the ravaged province finally took place between 3 and 5 August, just before the flame reached Beijing.

On the morning of 6 August, the flame reached Beijing and travelled for three days through the capital. On 8 August, at the Opening Ceremony, the flame was carried by relay to the Stadium by seven famous Chinese athletes, one after the other: Haifeng Xu, Min Gao, Xiaoshuang Li, Xugang Zhan, Jun Zhang, Zhong Chen and Jinfang Sun. The torch was then entrusted to Ning Li, a six-time medallist in gymnastics at the Los Angeles 1984 Games. Lifted by cables, Ning Li took flight and moved in the air doing a lap along the edge of the Stadium roof, until he reached the cauldron, which he finally lit.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	24 March 2008, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	8 August 2008, National Stadium, Beijing (People's Republic of China)
First torchbearer:	Alexandros Nikolaidis, Olympic participant in taekwondo (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012), silver medallist in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008.
Last torchbearer:	Ning Li, Olympic participant in gymnastics (1984, 1988), three-time gold medallist, two-time silver and one-time bronze medallist in Los Angeles 1984.
Number of torchbearers:	21,800 in total of which ~630 were in Greece
Recruitment of torchbearers:	According to the principles of the recruitment programme communicated by the Organisers, the selection of torchbearers aimed to be representative of all social backgrounds. It was carried out through the following entities: 1) the governments of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities of the People's Republic of China; the Chinese Olympic Committee; the official partners of the torch relay and sponsors of the Games; the Olympic family; the cities of countries crossed by the international relay; the Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG). Each entity chose its torchbearers through a public and/or internal process.
Distance:	137,000km in total, of which 1,528km was in Greece and 97,000km in continental China.
Countries visited:	Greece, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, France, United States, Argentina, Tanzania, Oman, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vietnam, People's Republic of China.



DID YOU KNOW?

- In order to climb Mount Qomolangma (Everest), a second Olympic flame was lit and sent to Tibet from the flame which had arrived in Beijing on 31 March 2008. It reached the summit of the highest mountain in the world on 8 May. The safety lamp and torch were specially modified to allow the flame to burn at the high altitude. On 21 June in Lhasa, this flame then re-joined the one of the relay which travelled through China.
- The cauldron was 32 metres high and weighed 45 tonnes. At the Opening Ceremony, it was discreetly put in place using a system of rails while the crowds' attention was focused on the Athletes' Parade.

SOURCES

- "Beijing Olympic Torch designers strike it lucky", *China Daily*, reproduced in: news, website of the Torch Relay, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 28 April 2008.
- "[Builders reveal secrets of Beijing's giant Olympics cauldron](#)", Xinhua News Agency website, 28 August 2008.
- "Conception: la torche olympique des Jeux olympiques de 2008 à Beijing", website of the Torch Relay, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 18 April 2007.

- “Le revêtement du Flambeau olympique épouse la forme de la main”, nouvelles, website of the Torch Relay, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 26 April 2007.
- *Official report of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games*, Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, Beijing 2010, [vol. 2, pp. 25-75, p.120](#).
- “Olympic flames reunite as Lhasa leg concludes”, news, website of the Torch Relay, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 21 June 2008.
- “The Image and Look– Lantern”, website of the Torch Relay, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 16 January 2008.
- “Torchbearers” section, website of the Torch Relay, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.
- “Weather to be estimated as torch climbers waiting on Qomolangma”, Xinhua News Agency website, 5 May 2008.



The final torchbearers at the torch relay for the Olympic Games London 2012, in the stadium during the Opening Ceremony.

> LONDON 2012



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	The triangular shape of the torch refers to the multiples of three found in the Olympic Movement's values of excellence, friendship and respect, the Olympic motto <i>citius, altius, fortius</i> , and London's hosting of the Games for a third time. The torch is made from two envelopes of aluminium alloy. It is perforated by 8,000 circles in reference to the 8,000 torchbearers and the 8,000 miles of the relay in the United Kingdom.
Colour:	Gold
Length:	80cm
Composition:	Metal, aluminium
Fuel:	Mixture of propane and butane
Designer / Manufacturer:	Edward Barber, Jay Osgerby / The Premier Group (TPG), Tecosim

Did you know? – At a ceremony at London’s Design Museum, the torch won the Design of the Year award.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

After the lighting ceremony in Olympia, the flame embarked on an eight-day journey across Greece, travelling to Crete and the north of the country via Thessaloniki, Xanthi and Larissa, before arriving on 17 May in Athens to be officially handed over to the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games in London.

The flame then flew to the United Kingdom, where it arrived on 18 May. The British relay began the following day in Land’s End in Cornwall, with Ben Ainslie, triple Olympic champion in sailing from Britain as the first runner. The relay route was designed so that 95 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey would be a maximum of one hour from the route travelled by the flame. The flame stopped off in Much Wenlock, Stonehenge, Windsor Castle, the White Cliffs of Dover, Orkney and the Channel Islands.

On 21 July, the flame entered the city of London in spectacular fashion. Indeed, it was flown in by a Royal Navy Sea King helicopter. Hovering 20m above Tower Wharf, a Royal Marine Commando abseiled from the helicopter, carrying the flame in a lantern attached to him. The flame then travelled some 300km over the week in the British capital and was carried by 982 torchbearers, passing by the city’s most famous monuments.

On the day of the Opening Ceremony, the flame was transported from Tower Bridge to the Stadium by speedboat, carried by footballer David Beckham and young female footballer Jade Bailey. They passed the flame on to Steve Redgrave, a five-time Olympic gold medallist in rowing. Then, in order to symbolise the passing of the Olympic flame to the young generation, seven young athletes aged 16 to 19 had the honour of lighting the cauldron.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	10 May 2012, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	27 July 2012, Olympic Stadium, London (United Kingdom)
First torchbearer:	Spyridon “Spyros” Gianniotis, Olympic participant in aquatics (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012).
Last torchbearers:	Callum Airlie, Jordan Duckitt, Desiree Henry, Katie Kirk, Cameron MacRitchie, Aidan Reynolds and Adelle Tracey.
Number of torchbearers:	~500 in Greece, 8,000 in the United Kingdom
Recruitment of torchbearers:	The torchbearers were chosen in a public selection procedure launched by the Organising Committee and the relay’s partners, Coca-Cola, Lloyds TSB and Samsung.
Distance:	15,775km.

2,900km in Greece, 12,875km (8,000 miles) in the United Kingdom.

Countries visited: Greece, United Kingdom and Ireland.



DID YOU KNOW ?

- The cauldron, measuring 8.5 metres high, was made in the form of a flower made from copper petals. During the Opening Ceremony, each participating nation brought in one of the petals. After the Games, a petal was given to each participating country as a souvenir of the sporting achievements of their athletes. On the petal the name of the country was engraved.

SOURCES

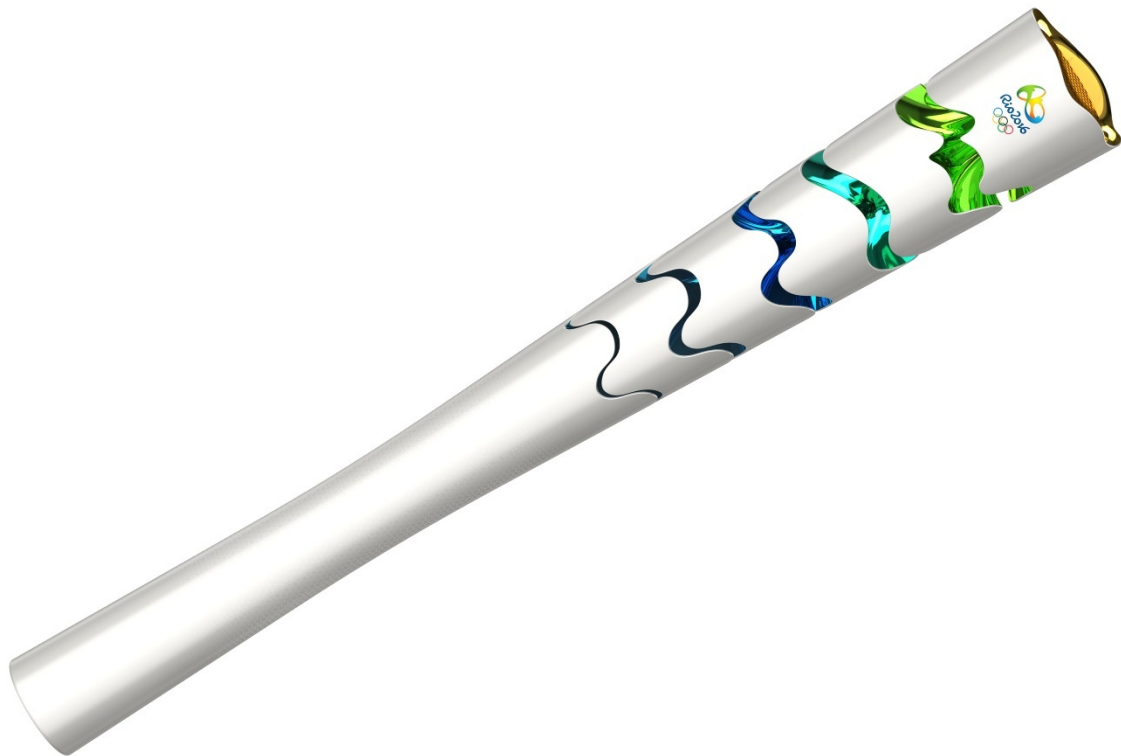
- "[Britain welcomes the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 19 May 2012.
- "[London 2012 - Olympic flame lit at Olympia](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 10 May 2012.

- "[London 2012 Olympic Games open in spectacular style](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 27 July 2012.
- *London 2012 Olympic Games: the official report*, London: LOCOG, 2013, [vol. 2, pp. 34-35, 43](#).
- "London 2012 Olympic Torch wins Design of the Year award", press release, website of London 2012, 24 April 2012.
- "[London receives Olympic Flame](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 18 May 2012.
- "Olympic and Paralympic cauldron 'petals' sent as gifts to competing nations", press release, website of London 2012, 7 November 2012.
- "[Olympic Flame arrives in London](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 21 July 2012.
- "[Olympic Torch Design For London 2012 Unveiled](#)", news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 8 June 2011.



In Olympia (Greece), at the torch lighting ceremony for the Olympic Games Rio 2016, Katerina LEHOU, playing the High Priestess, hands over the flame to the first torchbearer.

> RIO 2016



TORCH TECHNICAL DETAILS

Description:	<p>Movement, innovation and Brazilian flavour form the essence of the torch, whose design aims to reflect the meeting of the Olympic flame with the human warmth of the people of Brazil. The upper part of the torch is made of several segments, which open and expand vertically when the flame is passed from one torch to the next. These segments, with their floating effect, represent the athletes' effort. When they open, they reveal elements representing diversity, energy and the country's exuberant natural landscape with, from top to bottom and in the colours of the Brazilian flag:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The sky and its golden sun- The mountains and their green curves- The blue sea and its fluid ripples- The ground, with a pattern like that of the famous Copacabana promenade mosaics <p>The body of the torch where each runner holds it has a texture made of small triangles, as an allusion to the three Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect.</p>
---------------------	---

Colour:	White, green, blue
Length:	63.5cm (closed), 69cm (opened)
Composition:	Aluminium (recycled) and resin with a satin finish
Fuel:	-
Designer / Manufacturer:	Chelles & Hayashi Design / -
Did you know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After a call for tenders throughout Brazil, the Chelles & Hayashi Design studio was chosen from among 76 agencies by a multidisciplinary jury composed of 11 experts. The winning design was then refined in collaboration with the Organising Committee. - In a competition held among the schools taking part in the Rio 2016 education programme, young Brazilians have had the chance to create their own version of the Olympic torch. The 10 best designs were rewarded with a replica of the Rio 2016 torch.

ROUTE DESIGN AND DETAILS

From 21 to 27 April, the torch relay was staged on Greek soil. It began with the traditional lighting ceremony in Olympia and ended with the handover ceremony with the Rio 2016 Organising Committee, which brought together some 30,000 spectators in the Panathenaic Stadium.

On Friday 29 April, the Relay stopped off at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva in Switzerland for a ceremony attended by IOC President Thomas Bach and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The flame was then transported to The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, where it arrived by eight-man rowing boat. A cauldron was lit outside the building and the flame burned there over the following weekend.

On 3 May, the flame arrived in Brasilia, the Brazilian capital. In Brazil, the Relay route passed through the five regions of the country and took in some of the most impressive features, like the Fernando de Noronha archipelago, the Lençóis Maranhenses National Park and Iguaçu Falls. Stretching over 95 days, the Relay route aimed to take the Olympic flame within the reach of 90% of the population, visiting more than 300 cities and towns.

Arriving in Rio by boat on 3 August, the flame, after having visited the most symbolic sites in the city, such as Sugarloaf Mountain, entered the Stadium two days later at the Opening Ceremony.

THE RELAY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Start date:	21 April 2016, Olympia (Greece)
End date:	5 August 2016, Maracanã Stadium, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)
First torchbearer:	Eleftherios "Lefteris" Petrounias

Last torchbearer:	Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima
Number of torchbearers:	~450 in Greece, ~12, 500 in Brazil
Recruitment of torchbearers:	In Brazil, the torchbearers must be residents of the country. They are recommended by the general public as “everyday heroes” who represent the best of Brazil and who make a difference in their community. The nomination process is run by the Organising Committee and the firms partnering the Relay: Coca-Cola, Nissan and Bradesco.
Distance:	~2,235km in Greece, 26,000km in Brazil
Countries visited:	Greece, Switzerland and Brazil



DID YOU KNOW?

- To draw the world's attention to the plight of refugees, and at the initiative of the Greek NOC, the torch relay, during its journey in Greece, passed through the Eleonas camp for refugees and migrants in Athens.
- Modest in size, the Olympic cauldron unveiled in the Stadium during the Opening Ceremony aimed to draw attention to the need to save energy. It incorporated a kinetic sculpture designed by Anthony Howe, inspired by the sun and expressive shapes found in tropical areas such as coconut and palm trees. A second cauldron was lit in the city of Rio, and burned during the Games.

SOURCES

- “A moment of grace!: artist reveals inspiration behind Rio 2016 cauldron art”, news, website of Rio 2016, 8 August 2016.
- “Brazilian public to be stars of Rio 2016 Olympic Torch Relay”, news, website of Rio 2016, 22 September 2015.
- “Burning bright: cauldron the focal point of Olympic Boulevard”, news, website of Rio 2016, 6 August 2016.
- “[Greece bade farewell to the Olympic Flame](#)”, news, website of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, 27 April 2016.
- “Greeks reveal details of lighting of Olympic flame and handover to Rio 2016”, news, website of Rio 2016, 6 April 2016.
- “Greeted by smiles and samba, Olympic torch arrives in Rio under sail”, news, website of Rio 2016, 3 August 2016.
- “[IOC President visits refugees in Athens – sees sports facilities donated by the Olympic Movement](#)”, news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 28 January 2016.
- “Movement, innovation and Brazilian flavour – the Rio 2016 Olympic torch is revealed”, news, website of Rio 2016, 3 July 2015.
- “[Olympic flame brings message of hope and peace to UN headquarters, The Olympic Museum](#)”, news, website of the International Olympic Committee, 29 April 2016.
- “Ready to light up Rio 2016: Olympic flame ends its epic journey in host city”, news, website of Rio 2016, 5 August 2016.
- “Rio 2016 Olympic Torch Relay to showcase diverse beauty of Brazil”, news, website of Rio 2016, 24 February 2016.
- “[The Olympic Flame started its journey](#)”, news, website of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, 21 April 2016.
- “The Rio 2016 Olympic Torch... in human form, Lego, recycled materials and LED lights”, news, website of Rio 2016, 21 October 2015.
- “Torch Relay” section, website of Rio 2016.

> CREDITS

ABOUT THE OSC

The IOC Olympic Studies Centre is the source of reference for Olympic knowledge. We share this knowledge with professionals and researchers through providing information, giving access to our unique collections, enabling research and stimulating intellectual exchange. As an integral part of the IOC, we are uniquely placed to provide the most accurate, relevant and up-to-date information on Olympism. Our collections cover all the key themes related to the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement and their place within society. Discover all our collections in the [Olympic World Library](#) (OWL), a library catalogue and information portal entirely dedicated to Olympic knowledge. Among the resources you can find the official documentation of the IOC and the Organising Committees of the Olympic Games as well as publications from internationally renowned researchers.

To learn more on the Olympic Studies Centre, consult our webpage www.olympic.org/studies or write us at studies.centre@olympic.org.

GENERAL SOURCES

In addition to the specific sources listed at the end of each chapter, the following general sources have been used for this document:

- “The First Torchbearers at the Summer Olympic Games”, website of the Hellenic Olympic Committee (2014).
- Walter Borgers, *Olympic Torch Relays 1936-1994*, Kassel: Agon Sportverlag, 1996.

IMAGES

- Cover: © 2016 / International Olympic Committee (IOC) / JONES, Ian.
- Torches: © IOC, except Rio 2016 torch (p.93): © Rio 2016
- Full page: Page 6: © IOC. Page 11: © IOC. Page 15: © IOC / United Archives. Page 20: © IOC. Page 26: © IOC. Page 30: The Mainichi Newspapers. Page 35: © Kishimoto / IOC. Page 40: © 1972. Page 44: © EPA/DPA. Page 48: © IOC. Page 52: © Sipa Press / RAZLIKLI, Mété. Page 56: LOCATELLI, Giulio. Page 61: © CAMPAÑA, A. Page 66: © IOC. Page 71: © Allsport / SQUIRE, Jamie. Page 76: © Kishimoto / IOC / KISHIMOTO, Tsuyoshi. Page 81: © IOC / HUET, John. Page 87: © IOC / HUET, John. Page 92: © IOC / JONES, Ian.

Document produced in collaboration with the Artefacts section of the Heritage Management Unit, which preserves the posters and objects of The Olympic Museum Collections.

