

Shamanism in Prehistoric Crete: Experiencing the Evidence

Spiritual Retreat and Archaeological Tour

with Robinette Kennedy, Ph.D. and Christine Morris, Ph.D.

May 1 to 12, 2015 Crete, Greece

Join archaeologist, Christine Morris, and clinical anthropologist/shamanic practitioner, Robinette Kennedy, as we take you into worlds on Crete that few people even know exist.

Drawing from our extensive years of original research (in different disciplines) about shamanistic practices in the first European civilization (7,800-900 BCE), we are offering a unique tour this spring.

As a member of our group, you will:

- Enjoy lectures and lively discussions as we see the material evidence that links prehistoric Crete to shamanism.
- Learn how to perform and experience a reconstructed Minoan shamanistic technique during a two and a half day spiritual retreat.
- Enjoy lectures and lively discussions as we see the compelling material evidence that links prehistoric Crete to shamanism.
- Explore several off-the-beaten-path Bronze Age ritual sites; a small but significant museum; the magnificent temple of Knossos; a 4,400-year-old funerary town; and the extraordinary, recently renovated, Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, Crete.
- Immerse yourself in the daily life of an ancient mountain village where you'll enjoy delicious meals and boundless hospitality.

The Setting

Our tour begins with five nights in a 5,000-year old village in the mountains of eastern Crete that I've been visiting regularly since 1975.

While staying in the village, you'll have time to slow down and absorb the rhythm and character of Crete's distinctive culture that has not strayed too far from its traditional roots.

For example, around the corner from your accommodations (the only tourist home in the village), you'll find a lively Internet café. As you check your email, it's not unusual to see: women on donkeys leaving the village to tend their organic vegetable gardens; pickup trucks whizzing down the mountain, their beds full of fresh artichokes, passing the village priest with his long beard and flowing black robe, on his rounds to visit the sick and elderly.

Just a few doors away are several chapels dating from the 13th to 15th century, with stunning Byzantine frescoes. As you explore the narrow streets of the village, your senses encounter the aroma of pungent, wild herbs foraged from surrounding hillsides and used in almost every dish you will eat on Crete.

And just an hour's walk from the village, through gardens and groves of olive, almond, and apple trees, enlivened by the sounds of the roosters, donkeys and goats that live there, is an archaeological treasure: massive stonewalls of a former Hellenistic city state (500 BCE), one of the most thoroughly excavated towns of its period. At the center of the site is a public hearth, dedicated to the spirit known as Hestia, and the remains of an altar where rituals to the Minoan spirit of birth, Eileithyia, may have been enacted.

Meeting the People

Since 1975, whenever I am living and working on Crete, I am sustained by strong, mutually respectful relationships with my friends, all local people who will greet you as an honored guest.

These relationships, along with my knowledge of Crete's traditions, customs and language, will open doors to you, as a visitor, that are richer than anything encountered by most tourists.

An Overview of Our Itinerary

After settling in and exploring the village, we'll spend two and a half days in an experiential seminar in a private retreat center in the countryside near the village. In the retreat, you'll learn to perform some of prehistoric Crete's most powerful shamanic poses identified in figurines, and depicted on the faces of gold rings and frescoes, many of which were found in the island's oldest sacred caves, tombs, outdoor sanctuaries, and other sites.

The day after the retreat ends, we'll say our goodbyes to the village of Kritsa and begin a day long excursion by mini-bus to one of Crete's few extensively excavated Minoan towns. Work on the site began in 1901 and was led by the first woman archaeologist to finance and run her own dig site. What choice did she have? None of the male archaeologists would allow her to join theirs! We'll take in a few urban pleasures in a small, bustling port town on the Gulf of Mirabello, with good shops and great restaurants, and then travel over the high mountains and down onto Crete's largest fertile plateau, where it's said that Minoan mystery schools once flourished.

There, we'll spend two nights in restored, 17th century stone cottages. Our hosts promise us amazing traditional meals featuring dishes prepared by home cooks using only locally grown, often organic, ingredients and recipes they learned from their grandmothers.

The next day, Christine and Robinette are joined by licensed archaeological guide, Giorgos Spirdakis, who will be with us for the remainder of the tour. Together, we'll hike the highest mountain in Eastern Crete (1100 meters), to an archaeological dig where, the descendants of the original residents of Crete fled the cultural upheaval that was taking over the island, taking with them their sacred figurines of humans in unusual poses. Here, at the site of a former outdoor sanctuary, thousands of people created a settlement where they continued to practice the old shamanic ways for 300-400 years after Minoan culture fell.

After morning free time or exploring on foot other sites in the area, we'll travel by private coach to one of Europe's most beautifully preserved towns, Arkhanes. We'll look around town and have a delightful lunch in one of our favorite tavernas. However, our true destination is the nearby 4,400-year-old Fourni cemetery, where we will see for ourselves the shamanic features of one of the most significant archaeological discoveries in Greece.

From there we'll go to the island's modern, bustling capital city, Heraklion (sometimes spelled, Heraklion), to a boutique hotel with all the modern amenities and arguably the best view of the Sea of Crete.

We'll tour the sprawling archeological site of Knossos, truly one of the most impressive sites in Greece, where the tour leaders will point out the evidence of the shamanic dimensions of life in what is widely considered to be the economic, architectural, social and spiritual center of Minoan culture. Later in the day, we'll have time to enjoy free time and do a bit of shopping and people-watching in Heraklion.

Our grand finale on the last day of the tour, we'll visit one of Europe's most important museums: the recently renovated Archaeological Museum of Heraklion, rightly considered the museum of Minoan art and culture.

And, as if your experiences throughout the tour were not enough, in this museum you will see hundreds of prehistoric sacred objects that will leave no doubt in your mind that the first European civilization had strong ties to shamanism.

CAVEAT

Actually, I must confess that all the above planned activities are only a springboard—the places you'll take off from—for your inner adventures among Crete's landscape, architecture, culture and visionary realities.

Other countries offer the lure of landscape and lore, but Greece offers something more: the discovery of one's self.

Lawrence Durrell

The Invisible Journey

Above all, this spiritual retreat, experiential workshop and travel seminar is also designed to:

- Help you identify and experience shamanic characteristics of the first European culture.
- Facilitate the excavation of your inner landscapes.
- Strengthen your connection with your Ancestors, spirit guides and teachers.
- Increase your ability to recognize, listen to and express your true self.
- Find practical ways to integrate your visionary experiences, understandings and insights into your everyday life, work and spiritual practices.

Be assured that, as your awareness changes throughout this tour, you will be supported by my skilled, experienced, yet subtle, facilitation.

One of my intentions for our group is that we will create a safe, respectful atmosphere to support and encourage each other in our individual processes of clarifying and integrating the meaning of our experiences.

Tour Details

Tour Price € 2,700

Tour Price Includes:

- Two and one half day experiential seminar: “Shamanic Poses from Prehistoric Crete,” with Robinette Kennedy.
- Six day traveling seminar: “Spiritual Archaeology of Prehistoric Crete” with Robinette Kennedy, Christine Morris, Giorgos Spiridakis and other local experts.
- Five nights’ accommodations (double occupancy) in a small, traditional inn.
- Two nights’ accommodations (double occupancy) in a stone cottage with kitchen and bath.
- Four nights’ accommodations (double occupancy) in a modern boutique hotel with Internet, laundry service, room service, concierge and other amenities.
- 11 breakfasts
- Four lunches
- Six dinners, with wine.
- All tour excursions described above.
- Guided tours of four Bronze Age archaeological sites and two museums.
- Entrance fees to all archaeological sites and museums.

Not Included:

- Airfare to Greece
- Airfare to and from Crete
- Items of a personal nature (such as: laundry services, bottled water, medical supplies, optional excursions and other items not cited above.)
- Additional alcoholic beverages, snacks, meals or food items you may choose to have during the tour, at your expense.
- Gratuities for archaeological guides, drivers, and hotel staff (estimated total: 80-100 euros)
- Any costs resulting from transportation delays and/or lost or delayed luggage while traveling in Crete or to and from Crete.

Group size is limited to 12 guests.

€ REGISTRATION

To register for the 2015 Spiritual Archaeology Tour on Crete, [contact us](#) for a registration form. A deposit of €1000 per person is required with your registration. The balance of your payment (€1,700) is due February 15th, 2015. Before registering, please read our **Cancellation and Refund Policy**.

After you have registered for the tour, we will send you detailed materials to help you plan your trip.

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY

Deposits may be refunded, less \$50.00 administrative fee, if we receive a written request no later than February 15, 2015. Please allow 30 days for refund requests to be processed. The price of this tour includes

only the items, services and activities listed above. After February 15, 2015, no refunds of any kind will be issued.

No price discounts will be issued for portions of the tour in which you choose not to participate for any reason, either before or during the tour. We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance before purchasing your plane tickets or submitting your final payment to Wild Crete Tours, LLC.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Breakfast is included in the tour price. Accommodations for the first five nights of the tour (May 1-6, 2015) are in a small, family-run guesthouse in a rural mountain village, with ample hot water, heat or air conditioning and WiFi.

Two nights' accommodations (May 6-8, 2015) are in restored, 17th c. stone cottages, with kitchens. WiFi is available in the café associated with the cottages.

The last four nights of the tour (May 8-12), accommodations are in a boutique hotel in the heart of Heraklion: Crete's bustling, cosmopolitan capital on the Sea of Crete. The hotel offers room service, a spa, two restaurants, a rooftop bar with the best view in town, and 24-hour front desk services. Guest rooms have WiFi, daily maid service and phones.

DOUBLE AND SINGLE OCCUPANCY

All accommodations are double occupancy. Unless two people request each other as roommates, roommates of the same gender will be randomly assigned. If we are unable to provide you with a roommate (due to the number of people in the tour group or late registration), you are responsible for paying an additional fee for a single supplement. Single supplements for the entire tour may be purchased for an additional fee of \$450.00.

If for any reason, at any time, you decide not to share a room with your assigned or requested roommate, and another single room is available, you will be responsible for paying all additional fees for the cost difference between one double occupancy room and two single rooms. Room upgrades may also be available at the hotel in Heraklion, [contact us](#) for details.

AIR TRAVEL DETAILS

The price of this tour does not include airfare. As of January 2015, round-trip airfare from New York (JFK) to Athens, Greece, costs around \$1100. A flight on Norwegian Air, which flies out of JFK (possibly with a layover in Oslo) to Athens costs \$700.00. There are no direct flights to Crete from airports in the USA.

Transatlantic travelers should depart North America on Thursday, April 30, 2015 on flight that arrives in Athens on the morning of May 1, 2015. You will then need to book a separate flight to travel from Athens to Heraklion, Crete so that you arrive by 12:00 noon, Friday May 1, 2015. (Heraklion airport code: HER).

The flight from Athens to the Nikos Kazantzakis International Airport in Heraklion, Crete (Airport code: HER) must be booked on Olympic Airlines. Flight time from Athens to Heraklion is 45 minutes. Cost is about €55 one-way.

You must arrive at the Heraklion airport by 12:00 noon on Friday, May 1, where you'll be met by Robinette Kennedy. Guests arriving after 12:00 noon will be responsible for the cost of a taxi transfer from the airport to the village of Kritsa (approximately €100 one way.)

Please contact us before booking your travel arrangements, so that we may help you determine if your arrival and departure plans conform to our planned travel schedule.

ATHENS, SANTORINI AND BEYOND

If you would like to visit Athens, or any of the many other beautiful places Greece has to offer (1000 islands in the Aegean), we would be happy to help with your travel arrangements. Let's talk!

IS THIS THE TRIP FOR YOU?

If you are culturally flexible and enjoy delicious and possibly unfamiliar foods, meeting fascinating and hospitable people, experiencing new customs and visiting amazing, out of the way places, this is the tour for you. We welcome anyone who sincerely enjoys group travel with all its inherent benefits and challenges.

Except for the spiritual retreat, most of our days will be spent out of doors. A major part of each day's activities will involve walking, and, on one occasion, hiking. Participation in this trip requires the ability to walk at least two miles (or more) at a moderate pace, without physical discomfort, sometimes on unpaved paths or steep terrain, in all kinds of weather.

To ensure that you'll be welcomed into worlds on Crete that few tourists even know exist, we ask our guests to be open minded, flexible and willing to follow our suggestions for appropriate wardrobe choices and behavior that recognize and respect local customs.

Because we want to introduce you to the Cretan way of life, you should be ready to live like a temporary resident of Crete. Your accommodations for the first seven nights of the tour are in small villages, where you will be immersed in the sounds and sites of active village life.

For the last four nights, you'll experience urban life in the heart of Heraklion, the bustling capital of Crete.

As is the custom in Crete, we'll enjoy many of our meals at small family taverns and restaurants that don't rely on menus. Most meals are based on traditional recipes, using the freshest seasonal ingredients available from the family's own gardens. Meals included in the tour price are served family style, which is the custom in most non-tourist-oriented restaurants in Greece.

THIS TOUR IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

For example, the tour content is not designed to help fulfill lifelong dreams that many people have of lying in the sun on a white sand beach, on a small Greek island like the one in the film, Mamma Mia. For more than half the tour, we'll be in the mountains, surrounded by hard-working people in an agrarian setting, where temperatures in May are typically cool, as Crete's climate in springtime is similar to the Balkans and Washington, D.C.

We will not be performing any rituals inside archaeological sites

However, we also offer custom tours for individuals and small groups, and we will gladly help you make arrangements to pursue your fantasies of Greece before or after the tour. [Contact us](#) for details.