

Spiritual Archaeology on Crete with Robinette Kennedy, PhD

June 4–15, 2008
Itinerary

Day 1, Wednesday, June 4

Arrive in Athens, Greece and continue on to Heraklion, Crete.

Tour Begins in Heraklion, Crete

At the Heraklion airport, you'll be greeted by Robinette Kennedy and naturalist Patricia Kyritisi Howell for a ten-minute drive to your hotel overlooking Heraklion's Venetian harbor. After lunch at a seaside café, you'll enjoy time for an afternoon rest before dinner and formal introductions. Overnight in Heraklion.

Day 2, Thursday, June 5: Heraklion to Eastern Crete

After a leisurely breakfast in the hotel, depart Heraklion for a two hour drive eastward along the coastline of northern Crete, turning inward and climbing to the mountain village of Kritsa. Meet your innkeepers and check into your room. A low key introduction to the culture and cuisine of Crete will be presented while you enjoy a home cooked lunch at the inn, followed by an afternoon at leisure for unpacking and rest. Early evening stroll to the home of Robinette Kennedy and Patricia Kyritisi Howell for *mezethes* (Greek appetizers) and another short stroll to dinner at a favorite café. Overnight in the village of Kritsa.

Day 3, Friday, June 6: The Village of Kritsa and the Olive and Almond Grove

After breakfast at the inn, we'll amble through Kritsa's ancient winding streets, absorbing sights and sounds of morning life in Crete's largest village—known for its weaving—as we meander into the countryside to a secluded olive grove where we'll perform our first ritual pose, with a panorama of the sparkling Gulf of Mirabello as the backdrop. Dinner and overnight in Kritsa.

Day 4, Saturday, June 7: The High Plain of Katharo

After breakfast, we'll drive toward the high mountains above Kritsa to a shepherding region whose style of stone huts hasn't changed since Neolithic times. We'll pause in a wonderfully wild spot for a picnic lunch and another shamanic ritual that will deepen your journey into Crete's powerful landscape and lore. As twilight falls, we'll drive across the mountains for a tavern dinner in a neighboring village. Overnight in Kritsa.

Day 5, Sunday, June 8:

The Byzantine Chapel of Panagia Kera, and the Iron Age Town of Lato

Noted archaeological guide Yorgos Spiridakis introduces us to two remarkable historic sites just outside the village of Kritsa. First is a small 14th century church with some of the most significant frescoed images in Greece, one of which depicts the Second Coming as a woman representing Mother Earth feeding a snake from her hand. Then,

we'll hike to the magnificent ruins of a 2,700-year-old town where artifacts indicate that its original settlers venerated the spirit of the Divine Midwife-Shaman. In late afternoon, we'll drive to a sophisticated restaurant that puts a creative twist on traditional Mediterranean cuisine. Overnight in Kritsa.

Day 6, Monday, June 9: The Early Bronze Age Town of Gournia and the Remote Mountain Settlements of Kavousi

In 1901–04, American archaeologist Harriet Boyd Hawes excavated the extensive remains of an early Bronze Age town now known as Gournia, where Yorgos Spiridakis will bring everyday life in Minoan Crete to life. We continue along the northeastern shoreline of Crete to the Kavousi area where inhabitants of Gournia, in retreat from the fall of Crete's extraordinary culture around 1000 BCE, established remote mountain outposts and continued to perform their old religion. After a picnic and rest beneath the branches of a 2,500-year-old olive tree, we will enjoy dinner in an outdoor café on the Sea of Crete. Overnight in Kritsa.

Day 7, Tuesday, June 10: The Archaeological Museum of Aghios Nikolaos

The compact harbor town of Aghios Nikolaos is beautifully tucked into the Bay of Mirabello. Its archaeological museum houses objects from many of the sites our group will have just toured. After a mid-morning tour of the museum and lunch overlooking a volcanic crater lake where water spirits and mermaids are said to dwell, you'll have the rest of the day and evening free to explore one of Crete's most charming urban areas, dip into bookstores and shops, people watch at an outdoor café, or go for a swim. Dinner on your own in Aghios Nikolaos or Kritsa. Overnight in Kritsa.

Day 8, Wednesday, June 11: Depart Kritsa for Knossos and the Tomb of Isopata

Early morning departure from Kritsa for a three-hour drive to Knossos, the temple/administrative center of Crete from the Neolithic era through the Bronze Age. Following the paths where ritual processions once flowed, Yorgos Spiridakis leads a walking seminar about the relationship of ritual and architecture at Knossos. After lunch, we will visit a Bronze Age tomb that contained the burial goods and the remains of a woman of high degree. Late afternoon arrival in the 4,400-year-old town of Arkhanes. Dinner and overnight in Arkhanes.

Day 9, Thursday, June 12: Arkhanes Museum and Phourni Cemetery

After a leisurely breakfast, Yorgos Spiridakis guides us through the Arkhanes Museum, which displays finds from the 4,400-year-old cemetery of Phourni, one of the foremost archaeological sites in Greece because it traverses all stages of Crete's prehistoric cultures. After touring Phourni cemetery and experiencing the haunting beauty of this sacred place, we'll perform a ritual pose that was discovered inside an intact, unlooted tholos tomb at Phourni. Late lunch and rest time before dinner and overnight in Arkhanes.

Day 10, Friday, June 13: Depart Heraklion Archaeological Museum

Morning departure from Arkhanes to Heraklion for a guided tour of the Archaeological Museum, one of the few museums in the world that houses breathtaking ritual objects

spanning 8,500 years of one culture's history. After lunch at one of our favorite outdoor cafés that specializes in modern interpretations of Crete's traditional fare, you'll have the afternoon and evening at leisure for dinner on your own. Overnight in Arkhanes.

Day 11, Saturday, June 14

Morning free for packing. Lunch and afternoon in the countryside near Arkhanes. Farewell dinner and overnight in Arkhanes. Trip ends after dinner.

Day 12, Sunday, June 15

Early morning departure from Arkhanes to the Heraklion Airport and home cities.

I hope to see you on Crete!

Robinette Kennedy



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