

# Greece

## *An Epic Textile Odyssey Woven from the Threads of Mythology*

Come discover the island of Crete, birthplace of Zeus.

Resplendent in its mountainous landscape, turquoise waters, and a wealth of Venetian and Byzantine treasures, it has earned the name, the "Jewel of Greece."

Weave in a visit to Santorini, the most iconic and extraordinary island in the Aegean, and you have the perfect Greek Adventure.



[www.theoi.com](http://www.theoi.com)



**May 16 – 28, 2024**  
With an optional pre-trip extension  
to the historic city of Athens  
See Page 22



*"Uncommon Textile Journeys that Change Lives."*

## A Match Made in Heaven

### Loom Dancer Odysseys and Elissos Travelling Philosophy



Sometimes the stars just seem to align. That is exactly how we at Loom Dancer Odysseys felt when we discovered a kindred company to work with in Greece. We are so happy to collaborate with Elissos Traveling Philosophy based in Crete to present this epic journey to you. Fully in sync with the philosophy behind Loom Dancer Odysseys, Elissos thinks outside the box to offer an alternative, experiential and customized way of touring Crete and other parts of Greece. The experiences they design highlight the history, arts, traditions and mythology, combined with the unique Spirit of Crete, to delight the mind, body and spirit.



*“The human expression through art and ancient ritual practice has always been an infallible way of “speaking” about ideals, fears, joys, anxieties, therapies, life, and death. It speaks about life itself and how life is received through the eyes of whole generations.”*

~ Marilina Paters, Founder of Elissos Travelling Philosophy



Together, our two companies have created an incredibly special itinerary into the world of Cretan myths, legends and artistry which have been passed down through generations. On this journey, you will not be mere tourists, but rather curious travelers actively embodying all of your senses on an epic odyssey through time and tradition.

Now doesn't that just sound like a perfect fit with Loom Dancer Odysseys?

## The Woven Threads of Mythology in Greece



Penelope at her loom with Telemachus, featured on a *skyphos* from the 5th century BCE. (Perseus)  
©<https://womeninantiquity.wordpress.com/2017/04/02/spinning-and-weaving-in-ancient-greece/>

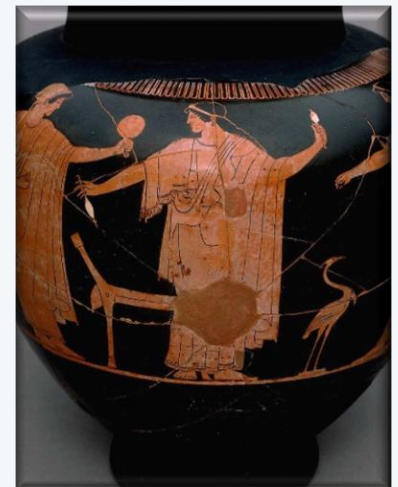
From Athens to the islands, fragments of ancient Greek textiles have been found dating back to the late Bronze Age. On Crete, textile art originates in Minoan traditions. Due to many excavations finding loom weights, we know that there were weaving workshops in Crete's Palaces. At Knossos, the most important palace on Crete, from 2000 - 1700 BC, there is evidence of more than 20 looms with 40-60 weavers. Textile art created on a Cretan loom has influenced many other civilizations since the dawn of time. These weaving structures have been preserved over time and thrive today with techniques passed down from mothers to daughters throughout history.

Weaving in mythology is ancient with many Greek stories featuring goddesses famous for their weaving abilities. It is told that in the beginning, the very thread of life was spun on the distaff by the *Moirai*, the three Fates or crones who controlled destiny. In Minoan Crete, Ariadne, wife of the god Dionysus, had possession of the thread that allowed Theseus to safely escape from the labyrinth in King Minos' Palace at Knossos. She secretly "gave him a ball of thread and told him to tie the end to the door of the labyrinth and unravel the ball of string as he traveled deeper inside. That way, once he had killed the Minotaur, he would be able to find his way back out," as quoted in an article written by Bethany Williams. <https://www.thecollector.com/ariadne-and-theseus-myth/>

Among the most famous, the goddess Athena is said to have been the protector of weavers, spinners, embroiderers, and all handicrafts. Arachne, also a skilled weaver, was turned into a spider by Athena after challenging her in a tapestry contest. Embroidery has also played a significant role of Greek arts.

Weaving heroines have held places of honor in the literary works of Homer, Apollodorus and Ovid. Dante mentions Arachne, and Philomela's beautiful singing has inspired poets throughout time including Keats and the Elizabethans. Weaving and threading are also depicted quite notably in Greek pottery. This Stamnos from Athens (mixing jar), 480-460 BC, depicts a woman spinning thread between two other female companions. (Right)

During the Ottoman occupation of Crete from approximately 1669 – 1898 AD, the art of weaving on a loom was an expression of freedom for the Cretan women. Their colors, shapes, patterns and motifs were often inspired by nature and daily activities and the finished products were therefore deeply meaningful for the weavers.



Above: Stamnos with a woman spinning, attributed to Syriskos (formerly the Copenhagen Painter), 480-470 BC, via the Art Institute Chicago  
<https://www.thecollector.com/weaving-stories-greek-mythology/>

Nowhere in Greece is the ancient tradition of weaving as alive and thriving as it is on the island of Crete where we will learn first-hand of its continued importance to today's culture.



## Thursday, May 16 Arrive Chania, Crete

Today you will travel to Chania, Crete. There are flights and ferries from Athens to the island as well as direct international flights from other airports within Europe. You can also fly into Heraklion. Either way, you make your way on your own to Chania. We will be happy to make recommendations for your travel.



Chania is the perfect introduction to the island of Crete. It is a picturesque city where Turkish and Venetian architecture blends with traditional and modern Greek design in charming harmony. The city is a fantastical crossroads of Western and Eastern civilizations. From 3,000-2,800 B.C, the historic harbor was utilized by ancient Minoans and was truly a crossroad for all five continents. Archeological research shows that Chania was built on the ruins of ancient Kydonia. In mythology, the important city of Kydonia was founded by King Kydon and was considered one of the most important cities on Crete. Its inhabitants are thought to be a pre-Hellenic tribe.



We will spend three nights here allowing us to explore not only the city of Chania, but also its charming surroundings. Here we can enjoy delicious Greek food, an old historic harbor, museums, churches and amazing craft shops.

For our accommodations, we kick off our trip with a hotel located right on the Old Venetian Harbor. Location, location, location... This evening, we will meet in the hotel bar for a for an orientation to our Greek adventure followed by a group dinner in the hotel's restaurant. Overnight at Porto Veneziano Hotel. (D).

Friday, May 17

## Exploring Chania and a Weaving Experience



We begin the day exploring beautiful Chania, beginning at its Venetian Port. We'll visit the old town of Chania on a walking tour with our private guide strolling through the colorful, meandering lanes. Delving into the history and archeology of Venetian and Ottoman Chania, we visit the most important monuments of the old section, such as the Firkas Fortress, the Franciscan Monastery of San Salvador, the Venetian church of Ag Rockos, Gialli Tzamissi and the Ottoman district of Splanzia and many other sights. We'll also explore the Jewish district with the famous Hayilm Synagogue which is the only surviving one in Crete. We wind up our tour at the open-air leather market which is unique in all of Crete.

In the afternoon, after our tour of Chania, we drive to a nearby small village where we will partake in an interactive weaving workshop led by a local weaver. In her workshop, she will tell us about the traditional techniques of weaving and dyeing that she employs. We'll then gather seasonal herbs and flowers and dye our own threads that we will weave on looms in groups with traditional Cretan weaving techniques.

This evening, dinner is on your own to discover the many charming and authentic restaurants. While the city and harbor can be bustling, you can wander just a few streets away from the harbor to have a totally different experience. There you will likely encounter only locals and cozy small streets. Overnight at Porto Veneziano Hotel. (B).





3,000-year-old olive tree

**Saturday, May 18**

## Discovering the Amazing Olive Oil and Wines of Crete

Today we discover why Greece is so famous for their olive oil and wine. Olive oil continues to be a staple in Greek life. Perhaps to fully understand the significance of the olive tree to the culture of Greece, one must have a bit of context.

Going back to the Minoan period, olives played a crucial role in Greek society. They served as a symbol of peace, fertility and abundance. The olive tree has been considered one of the most sacred trees since these ancient times and played a key role in Greek mythology. In fact, it is estimated that 55-65% of all cultivated land on Crete is the habitat of olive groves, home to approximately 30 million trees.



Today we will learn all about current olive oil production, its health benefits and its importance in the culture of Greece. We'll travel through the enchanting countryside with its picturesque villages to a local olive oil factory and winery. Here we have a special tour that introduces us to the process and stages of the production and bottling. We'll learn about the pre-wine making process, the varieties of local grapes and explore the winery cellar. An olive oil tasting comes next, with the aim to try and distinguish the various qualities of the Cretan extra virgin oil. So, we are not just tasting olive oil, but we'll savor a bit of history and tradition as well.

At the nearby village of Vouves, we'll visit a hidden gem that has captivated travelers for centuries, the Olive Tree of Vouves. These trees are thought to be over 3,000 years old and considered to be some of the oldest olive trees in the world. They "stand as a symbol of Greece's ancient



agricultural practices, highlighting the importance of olives and olive oil in the region's economy and cuisine. These majestic trees, with their twisted trunks and gnarled branches, create a serene and mystical atmosphere that invites visitors to explore the past and reconnect with nature. The Olive Trees of Vouves is a testament to the longevity of

Greek civilization. As you wander among these ancient trees, you can envision the generations of farmers who tended to them, and the rituals and traditions that have been passed down through the ages. It's a journey through time that offers a unique perspective on the ancient world." (Quoted from <https://olivemuseumvouves.com>). We'll also visit the Olive Tree Museum here where we learn about the tools used for the cultivation of olives daily for millennia by the people of this land until the middle of the 1950's.

Our last stop today will be a local winery, where we will tour the facilities, the vineyards and enjoy a presentation on local wine making.

This is our chance to enjoy a wine tasting of four local labels, paired with a full meal of four Cretan courses to match your wine. Overnight at Porto Veneziano Hotel. (B,L).





**Sunday, May 19**

## Exploring Homeric West Crete and a Pottery Class

We begin our day by visiting the newly excavated ancient Greek City of Eleutherna. Founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C., it was inhabited for more than 2,000 years until its abandonment in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. This HellenicRoman city is now an impressive archeological site that offers us a deep understanding of Crete's ancient civilizations. An important center of culture and trade during the ancient Minoan civilization, it had many shrines and temples including one dedicated to the goddess, Artemis. Evidence suggests that it was also home to many craftsmen as well. Weavers, metal workers and potters appear to be among these talented artists.

Eleutherna also houses a necropolis containing more than 400 tombs dating from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD. These tombs teach us about the burial practices of the ancient Greeks as they contain a plethora of artifacts, including pottery, jewelry, and weapons. We will



*Interestingly, the dig also offers evidence that the women of this ancient city were not oppressed with limited value to society. Three pithos (large ceramic jars) burials have been unearthed which contained the remains of wealthy and important women dating from the late ninth to the early seventh century B.C. Anagnostis Agelarakis, a devoted member of the Eleutherna team, explains, "The women decided where they were placed to rest. They excluded any males to be buried with them... Females were the backbone of the society."*



enjoy a tour here discovering so many wonders from long ago that our imagination will run wild. We'll also visit the impressive Museum of ancient Eleutherna – Homer in Crete which is the first





archaeological site museum in Crete created to house the finds of the excavations that have been conducted for more than thirty years.

Once leaving here, we pass through beautiful small villages before arriving at the traditional village of Margarites renowned for its long history and tradition in pottery making as well as its local cuisine. Here we will visit a local pottery studio, where we will learn about the pottery techniques of the region. Then we will enjoy an interactive 2-hour workshop on pottery making by the local potter. We'll create our own art piece (a vase or other object of your choice) on the pottery table and on the wheel. A walk inside the village will follow, exploring its architecture. Lastly, we will enjoy a very special family style lunch at a local restaurant.

Our accommodations for the next three nights are in Rethymno, one of the best-preserved medieval cities in Greece built on a cape and close to a long sandy beach. Known as a "city with many faces," here we can stroll the charming labyrinth of streets of the Old Town. Mansions of Venetian architecture mingle with cobblestone lanes, orthodox churches, arches, and Ottoman mosques to create a fairytale setting and remind us of the city's tumultuous past. The Venetians ruled Rethymno for 436 years and made it into one of the most important cities in Crete and brought European culture to the island. We will be staying in a historic Venetian mansion located in the Old Town filled with charm and culture. (B,L)



*"Walking around is like travelling back in time, to the period of Venetian rule in Crete. The Fortezza (fortress) sits atop Rethymno's magical old town like a crown. And you can hear the echoes of the sea and as you walk along the Venetian port with its old lighthouse and get lost in the maze of alleyways, admiring the ornate doorways and the Venetian crests that decorate them. You'll also visit the mosques with their minarets and hop between the dozens of shops, restaurants and cafes that give Rethymno its special atmosphere. And as a final bonus, Crete's longest beach – all 12km of it – awaits just outside town."*

*~ [www.discovergreece.com](http://www.discovergreece.com)*



**Monday, May 20**

## **Knossos Palace and a Cretan Weaving Workshop**

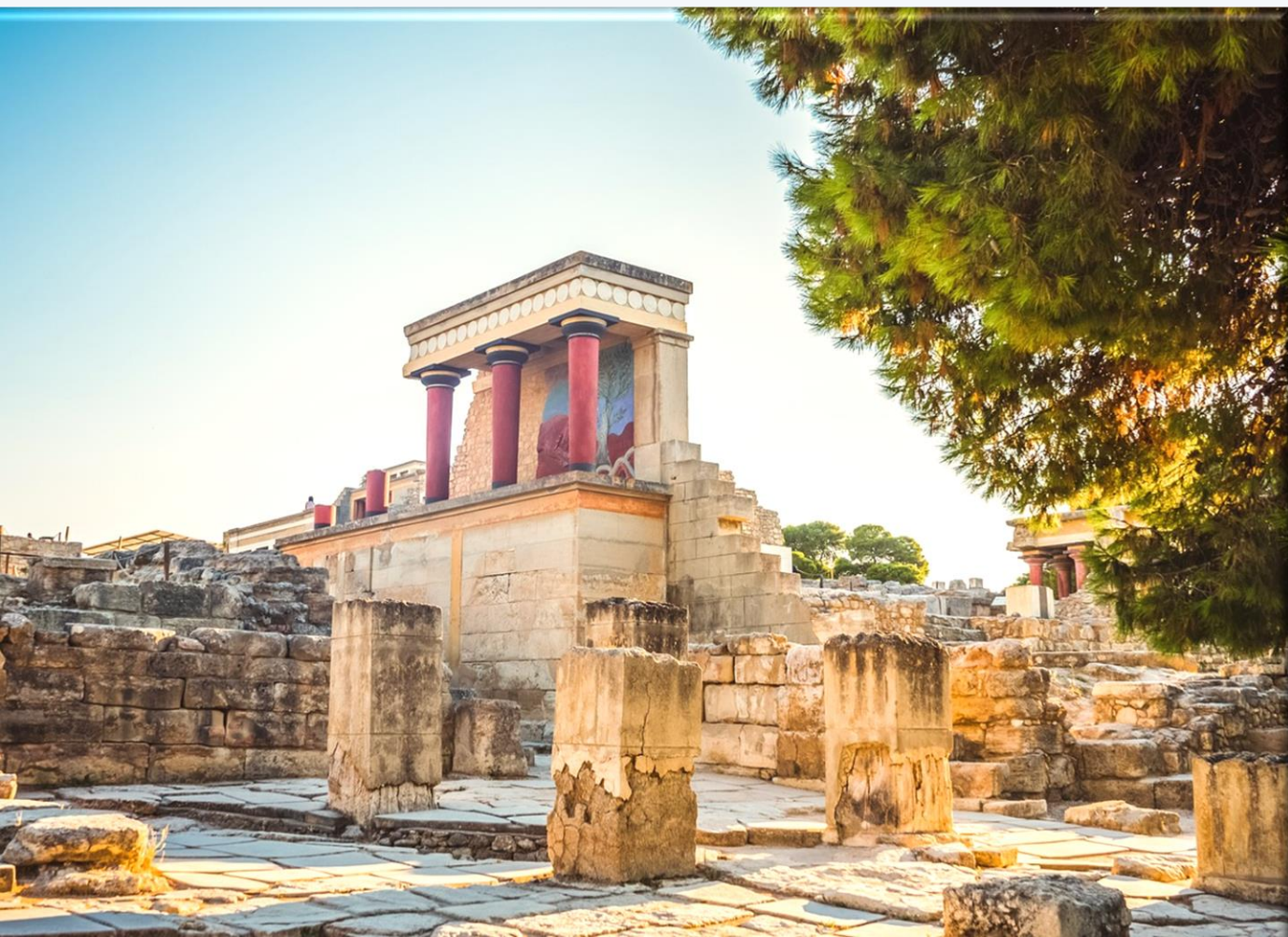
We begin this exciting day with a visit to the most important archaeological site of Crete and the second most visited archaeological site of the country. The palace of Knossos, home of the mythical Labyrinth of Homer, was



undeniably the capital of Minoan Crete. A prehistoric “city,” this is the place where the oldest European civilization started and flourished some 5,000 years ago. According to Greek mythology, Knossos Palace was designed by the famous architect Dedalos with unparalleled complexity so that no one would ever find its exit. King Minos, wishing that the secret of this 20,000-meter (65,616 feet) labyrinth remain intact, kept the architect a prisoner so that he could not ever reveal the palace “blueprint” to anyone.

The ruins of Knossos Palace are a marvel for several reasons. First, it is remarkably well preserved, offering an amazing glimpse into the lives of the Minoans, a civilization that flourished for approximately 2,000 years. Further, the magnificent throne room

from the 15<sup>th</sup> century BC is believed to be the oldest room of this type in all of Europe. While its original discoverer thought it to be used by the Minoan King, other archaeologists believe that the throne room may have been a sanctuary of a female priestess that represented a female divinity here on earth. The palace is also thought to be the birthplace of Linear A writing. From 1800 to 1450 BD, this was a system of writing used by the Minoans of Crete to write the hypothesized Minoan languages and is still not entirely understood today. In addition to being a residence for the royal family, Knossos Palace also acted as the center of commerce, government and culture. It housed many craftsmen that produced a myriad of goods for trade throughout the Mediterranean.





In the afternoon, we travel about 15 minutes to the beautiful village of Archanes surrounded by rolling hills, olive groves and vineyards. Its narrow lanes, traditional and neoclassical houses, and atmospheric squares afford us the chance to experience the authentic Cretan way of life. Here we visit the Aretousa Weaving Workshop to learn about how these women are striving to keep Cretan traditional weaving alive by working on traditional antique wooden looms. In their words, “While attending weaving lessons, we took it upon ourselves to preserve the tradition of Cretan weaving. Gradually, we pulled the old looms out of the attics to reanimate them.”



They are also committed to creating one-of-kind items modern by using weft from old, recycled clothes along with wool and cotton to create rugs, totes, placemats, pillow covers, laptop bags, etc. We will have a chance to weave with them in a workshop. Overnight in a Rethymno mansion. (B)



### The Song of the Grandmother’s Loom Calls Out

*“We, the weavers of the Aretousa weaving workshop grew up on the heritage of the loom. We grew up surrounded by yarn, and we were lulled by the rhythm of the shuttles and the song of the shafts’ rumblings.”*

~Masters of Aretousa Workshop



Tuesday, May 21

Free Day to Relax and Explore Rethymno



You deserve a break from our wandering adventures, so today is at your leisure to discover the many hidden gems of Rethymno on your own. Besides the delight of just meandering through the Old Town, we highly recommend a visit to the Fortezza, a Venetian fortress built between 1540 and 1570 to act as a bastion against Turkish pirates. It took more than 40,000 pack animals and over 100,000 Cretans to construct the mighty fortress. You can see the Fortezza from all parts of Rethymno. However, a visit to the hilltop offers amazing panoramic views of the town below.

Rethymno is full of museums. You might opt to visit the Historical and Folklore Museum located in a 17<sup>th</sup> century manor house. The Paleontology Museum housed in Veli Pahsa mosque offers a plethora of exhibits of Crete's history from up to 300 million years ago. If archeology is of interest, you could choose to visit the Archaeological Museum near the gate of the Fortezza which offers the opportunity to learn about the history of the area from the paleolithic until the Roman times. Nearby, a 16<sup>th</sup> century building, the Venetian Loggia, was once a meeting place for Venetian nobility in medieval times. Elegant and classical Rimondi Fountain, built in 1626, is also close by. For music lovers, the Museum of Cretan Lyra showcases the history of the tradition and music of Crete.

If some down time on a beach sounds like just what your soul needs, there is a great long sandy beach that stretches from the Main Marina to the suburbs. If you fancy a seaside sunset, you can walk by the sea beneath the fortified walls that enclose the town square in the neighborhood of Toube. Overnight in a Rethymno mansion. (B)



**Wednesday, May 22**

## **A Day at a Traditional Cretan Farm**

Today we immerse ourselves in a breathtaking landscape and the lives of the Cretan locals at a traditional Cretan biological farm learning about the traditions of the area that have been practiced from ancient times to the present. Located in a small village in the mountains, our day will begin with learning to bake bread in their wood oven the way that people have done since ancient times. We'll also learn to cook the traditional Cretan "tyrozouli" cheese made from the farm goat's milk and curdled with fig sap, along with the King of Weast Crete's culinary tradition, the Cretan Pies.



We will also have the opportunity to interact with the animals, feeding them, milking the goats and collecting the hen's eggs. As we have already learned, Cretan olive oil is alive and present in every traditional Cretan household. We'll get to see an old traditional olive oil mill followed by learning about make "raki," a local spirit made from grapes in an ancient still, that has been produced in Cretan households since antiquity.

All of this will be followed by an amazing 3 course lunch with our hosts that will include all the traditional specialties that we prepared, as well as unique Minoan-style dishes that are cooked on the hearth fire.

From here we carry on to the east of Crete and to the beautiful seaside town of Agios Nikolaos surrounded on all three sides by water. It offers an eclectic mixture of an arty, leisurely, sleepy, and at the same time, bustling vibe. We will spend the next three nights here. Because we will have enjoyed a big, delicious lunch, dinner is on your own tonight. There are many options to choose from! Overnight at Niko Seaside Resort. (B,L)



## Thursday, May 23 History, Tradition and Folk Arts

For centuries, the small villages of Crete were the lifeblood of Cretan life. We will get to experience this firsthand today. In the typical Cretan village of Assites, with only about 400 inhabitants, we will have the opportunity to experience the traditional architecture, culture and lifestyle of Crete. This is a hamlet of narrow and winding lanes, a charming village square and welcoming locals. Here we explore some of the most ancient folk arts and rural crafts of the island still practiced in the most authentic rural areas of Crete. We will also learn about the Orthodox religion and Byzantine church architecture with a visit to one of the oldest 16<sup>th</sup> century churches in Crete.

All of this is followed by a visit to the Folk Art Museum along with the studios and workshops of local traditional artists including the making of sheep bells and basket weaving. Another delight will be to visit a local honey workshop and local dairy to learn about the honey and cheese production of Crete. Here we can taste the local thyme honey and local cheese.

Now we have a chance to truly interact with the local people. A delicious and authentic lunch will follow at a local's house where we can enjoy a 3-course traditional meal prepared by the housewife from their family's own organic products. Wine and "raki" from their own production will also be served. Overnight at Niko seaside resort. (B,L)

Photo right:  
© <https://www.photosofcrete.com/post/ano-asites-cultural-cretan-village>



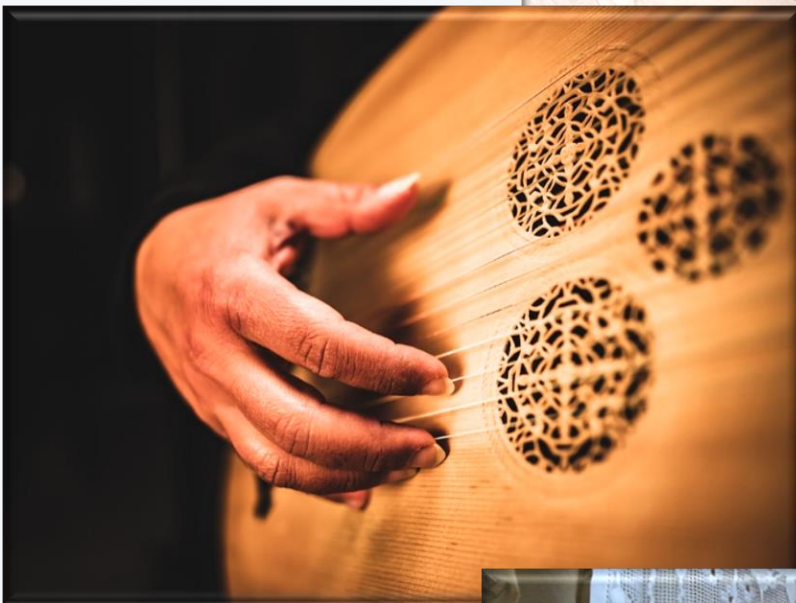
Photo left:  
©<https://www.travel-crete.gr/en/tour/a-day-in-and-around-ano-asites-village>



Friday, May 24

## A Cooking Class, a Feast, Traditional Music, Dance and a Lace Workshop

Today's activities make for a grand finale of our time here on the island of Crete. At the beginning of the last century, the great-grandfather of today's hosts planted thirty citrus trees in their garden with centuries-old olive trees to provide wealth and quality to his family's nutrition. Today, the grandchildren who have been nourished and raised under the shade of these very trees, which they consider blessed, invite you to experience an authentic cooking class and feast at their home. Our local chef and hosts will be pleased to share with us all about the Cretan cuisine and its secrets in a hands-on



cooking class with organic ingredients from their garden.

Then, we will enjoy a wonderful meal, accompanied by local live music and Cretan dancers. After our meal, we'll learn about traditional Cretan tatting and lace techniques from local artisans in a workshop where we will create our own art piece to take home. What a special day! We'll return to our seaside town for our last night in Crete where we may gather for a drink or light snack/dinner. Overnight at Niko Seaside Resort. (B,L)





**Saturday, May 25**

## Travel to Enchanting Santorini

This morning, we take the morning ferry to the island of Santorini, a world apart from Crete. Sailing into Santorini is a spectacular and awe-inspiring sight! (You may also opt to fly to the island. There are no direct flights, but you can connect through Athens.) The rest of the day is yours to simply soak up the iconic views, stunning atmosphere and magic of the most extraordinary island in the Aegean. We will gather for a group dinner tonight so that we can collectively “ooh and ahh” together over our incredulity at actually being here. Overnight at a seaside hotel with iconic panoramic views. **(B,D)**

**Sunday-Monday, May 26 – 27**

## Exploring the Sights of the Island ~ North and South

We will spend a portion of each of these two days exploring as a group the amazing sights of Santorini on a private guided tour covering much of the island. But we also want to allow enough “private time” on your own to explore and relax. Our various interesting points of interest will begin with an introduction to the wild geography, landscape and history of the iconic Santorini Caldera. Up north, we’ll visit Oia. Perched on the northern part of the Caldera rim at the tip of the island, it might just be one of the most beautiful villages in all the world and is a favorite spot to watch the sunrise or sunset. The town of Imerovigli is known as the “Balcony of Santorini,” boasting jaw-dropping views of the caldera. We’ll have a photo stop in Firostefani, the subject of so many postcards, where the famous, blue-domed is

located.







On the southern end of Santorini, Akrotiri's

archeological site is filled with myths and legends and a reminder of the widespread contributions of the Minoan civilization that we learned about on Crete. The site is also Santorini's version of Pompei. It was destroyed, and preserved, by a massive volcanic eruption in 1450 BC. We can see various artifacts of the lives lived here before the volcano erupted. The beaches in this area feature colorful sands including Red Beach with its multi-colored pebbles and red sand (pictured above).

Who can visit Santorini without tasting the island's fine wines? It is said that on Santorini, there is more wine than water. We'll have the chance to visit several of the island's many



wineries to try them for ourselves. In the evening, you may wish to do a sunset cruise for a unique experience (optional at an extra cost). However, we fill our time, our island adventure will be certain to provide spectacular, cherished memories and the perfect grand finale to our time in Greece. We'll gather for dinner tonight as a group (cost not included). Overnight at a seaside hotel with iconic panoramic views. (B daily)



Photo above: ©<https://www.santorini-view.com/museums/excavations-of-akrotiri/>

## Tuesday, May 28

## Travel Homeward

This morning, you will transfer on your own to the airport or ferry terminal for your travel arrangements home. (B)

## Land Costs Include:

- 12 Nights, double occupancy (all in individually atmospheric accommodation - no large impersonal chain hotels!). Single accommodations available at additional cost (see below)
- Private tours and museum visits
- Fiber arts workshops including all materials (all workshops are optional – you need not participate in all of them)
- Private coach and local expert guide
- Private visits and demonstrations with talented artisans
- Meals as described.

## Land Costs Exclude:

- Any air transportation nor airport transfers
- Meals not designated on the itinerary
- Any item not specifically included in your program including snacks, extra personal beverages & bottled water, etc. other than during designated meals, alcoholic beverages
- Tips for your guide, drivers, hotel porters and other service staff
- Additional insurance of any kind

**Cost:** \$4,995 USD Per Person Based on Double Occupancy

If you prefer a single room, there is a single supplement of \$1,495\*\*

\*\*Accommodations for this tour charge basically the same rate whether there are one or two people sharing the room. Thus, the Single Supplement is rather costly. Please contact us with any questions.  
Single accommodations limited to 7 travelers. Shared accommodations (unless by a couple) limited to 6 travelers.



### Loom Dancer Odysseys

does not believe in large group, bargain, or “ordinary” tours. Instead, we strive to immerse the creative and adventurous traveler into the wondrous world of global fiber arts with quality cultural encounters. Our typical group size is limited to 12-16 participants to allow for a more hands-on, intimate travel experience.

Be a creative traveler, not a tourist.



**Save Your Spot!**

**Please call our office for details or questions!**  
**800.369.3033 (from US Only) ~ 970.728.6743**



**PO Box 2154, Telluride, CO 81435 ~ loomdance@aol.com ~ www.loomdancerodysseys.com**  
**800.369.3033 (US only) ~ 970.728.6743 ~ Fax 970.728.7081 ~ 970.708.1181 (cell)**

## Optional Pre-Trip Extension

# Athens

## The Cradle of Western Civilization and the Birthplace of Democracy



May 13 – 16, 2024

**“Earth proudly wears the Parthenon as the best gem upon her zone.”**

– Ralph Waldo Emerson



Home to gods and goddesses, storytellers and philosophers, Athens is one of the world's oldest and most mysterious cities. How can mere mortals adequately describe its mythological wonders?

Whatever words are chosen, it is arguably one of the most beautiful cities in all of Europe boasting over 3,000 years of history. Visiting Athens is a journey through time.

It is famous throughout the world for its phenomenal architecture, rich history, and lively culture. Here we can follow in the footsteps of Plato and Aristotle who wandered its streets thousands of years ago and stroll through its modern neighborhoods – all side by side.





## Monday, May 13 Arrive Athens

Today you arrive in the exciting and historic city of Athens, the birthplace of Western Civilization. Upon arrival, you will transfer on your own to our hotel via taxi. We will meet in the hotel lobby at 5:30PM for a drink and orientation to our adventure ahead followed by a group dinner. Our 4-star Athens hotel has a fabulous rooftop restaurant with spectacular views of the Acropolis and within walking distance of most of the main sites! Overnight at The Athens Gate Hotel. (D)

## Tuesday, May 14 Exploring Ancient Athens

Today we have a great historical adventure in store. We begin our half day guided tour with a visit to the glorious Acropolis Hill of Athens which is considered the ultimate symbol of the ancient Greek civilization, art and culture. Here we will see the Parthenon, the ancient Temple of the Goddess Athena, created and dedicated to the Goddess of Wisdom and protectress of the city of Athens. We will also explore the elegant and mystical Temple of Erechtheion erected in 420-406 BC. The name is derived from Erechtheus, the mythical king of Athens, who was worshipped there. It is said to have served several different cults. The western part of the building served the cult of Poseidon-Erechtheus which according to myth, is where Athena's sacred snake lived. The eastern part was dedicated to Athena Polias.



The view from our Athens hotel.  
Photo © The Athens Gate Hotel

Another stop of interest will be the temple of Athena Nike, the smallest of the temples of the Acropolis. This diminutive structure, completed in the year 420 BC., was built of beautiful white Pentelic Marble. Next, we stop at the Acropolis

Museum which houses all the Acropolis Hills treasures. Here we delve into the ancient classical art of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Our historical sojourn will continue with a lovely stroll along the old streets of the historic heart of Athens, Plaka where we get a glimpse of Athen's past. Due to its proximity to the famous Athenian citadel, its unique beauty and all its religious sanctuaries, this section of Athens has earned the nickname of "Neighborhood of the Gods." Not much is different in Plaka than it was 100 years ago. It is the only part of sprawling Athens that remains untouched and unspoiled by modern urban development. Its picturesque, narrow cobblestone streets, lined with neoclassical buildings, are filled with tiny shops where we can find local ceramics, artist's studios, weavings, jewelry and more.

The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to continue to immerse yourself in the Plaka district on your own or visit any other of Athen's neighborhoods and museums that are of interest to you. Overnight at The Athens Gate Hotel. (B)

## **Wednesday, May 15      Discovering the Arts and Crafts of Athens and a Sunset Visit to Sounion and the Temple of Poseidon**

This morning is at your leisure to explore on your own. You may wish to discover the arts of crafts of Athens especially in the area below Syntagma Square, between Ermou, Kolokotroni, Kalamiotou and Aioulou streets, where you can find many fabric and textile shops. You might opt for a visit to the Athens Museum of Folk Art between the Acropolis and the Ancient Agora. There are three shops/galleries of particular interest to weavers nearby which include The Loom, 3 Quarters and IFENIN.

In the late afternoon, we will gather as a group for another



private guided tour. This time, we'll travel in our private van south of the city on a scenic drive to the Sounion Peninsula. Here sits the Temple of Poseidon perched on the edge of Cape Sounion on the southern coast of Attica. It was built entirely of white marble in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to honor the Olympian God of the Sea, Poseidon. From here we can admire breathtaking views of the Aegean Sea. It is truly a magical site and Athen's most favorite sunset spot. Overnight at The Athens Gate Hotel. (B)

## **Thursday, May 16      Travel to Crete to Begin our Textile Tour**

Today you will travel by air or ferry to the island of Crete to begin our mythological textile odysseys. We will be happy to make some travel recommendations. (B)

## Land Costs Include:

- 3 Nights, double occupancy Single accommodations available at additional cost (see below)
- Museum and historic sites entrance fees
- Private coach and local expert guide
- Meals as described

## Land Costs Exclude:

- Any air transportation nor airport transfers
- Meals not designated on the itinerary
- Tips for your guide, drivers, hotel porters and other service staff
- Additional insurance of any kind



### Loom Dancer Odysseys

does not believe in large group, bargain, or "ordinary" tours. Instead, we strive to immerse the creative and adventurous traveler into the wondrous world of global fiber arts with quality cultural encounters. Our typical group size is limited to 12-16 participants to allow for a more hands-on, intimate travel experience.

Be a creative traveler, not a tourist.



## Extension Cost Based on a Minimum of 8 Travelers:

\$1,095 USD Per Person Double Occupancy Based on 10 Travelers

\$1,195 USD Per Person Double Occupancy Based on 8-9 Travelers

If you prefer a single room, there is a single supplement of \$395\*

\*Single accommodations limited to 6 travelers. Shared accommodations (unless by a couple) limited to 8 travelers.

**Save Your Spot!**

**Please call our office for details or questions!**

**800.369.3033 (from US Only) ~ 970.728.6743**



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