

JOURNEY TO THE GODDESS

A Women's Pilgrimage in Crete

Saturday, May 23 – Sunday, June 7, 2026



**Experience deep ritual work
and women gathering in
Sacred Space**

**Relax in a beautiful and
dramatic setting with the sea
and hills of olive trees**

**Explore Goddess caves in this
ancient and powerful land**

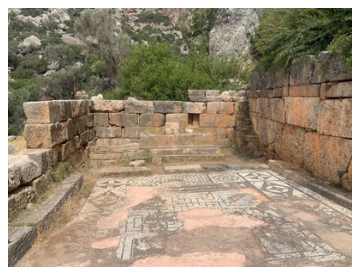
**Celebrate Women's Mysteries,
the Goddess and Yourself**

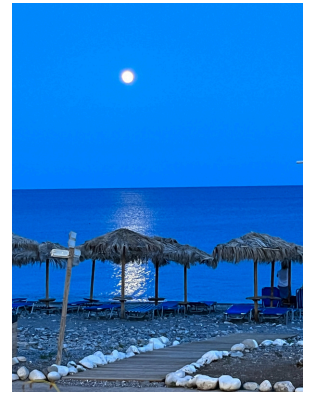
**Facilitated by
Ruth Barrett & Catherine Ridder**

Price: \$3,250

Space is limited to 14 women on a first-come basis*

**Please Note: You need to arrive in Heraklion, Crete, May 22nd
Your return flight needs to depart from Chania, Crete, June 7th**





THE JOURNEY

☉ Enjoy the sacred pilgrimage to the Goddess and to your deepest self.

☉ Experience the Archeological Museum in Heraklion, home to the Cretan snake Goddess, the labrys, Phaestos disk, and many sacred Goddess objects from Minoan Crete (2,000-300 BC).

☉ Explore the Palace of Knossos, the original ruins of “the labyrinth” thought to be only a myth, discovered in 1878. These ruins are the source of the labyrinth of Ariadne, King Minos and the Minotaur.

☉ Follow the pilgrimage path to the Minoan Peak Sanctuary at Mt. Juktas.

☉ Encounter the sacred Goddess caves of Artemis and Eilythia, Hike up to the Diktian Cave - “birthplace of Zeus” - but really the home to the Great Mother as well as other sacred caves used for centuries in the worship of Goddess. Her power remains!

☉ Envelop yourself in the warm, blue dazzling Aegean and Libyan Seas. Enjoy a massage on the beach by a certified massage therapist in a private grass hut.

☉ See the new Archeological Museum of Ancient Eleftherna with 15,000 items from the necropolis dating back to 3,000 BCE.

☉ Entertain ourselves with spontaneous stops for olive oil, fresh fruit, honey, and hand-made Cretan products.

☉ Hike to Minoan ruins on the stunning Lassithi Plateau where Poppy Goddess statues were found.

☉ Refresh at our beautiful and relaxing retreat center outside Palaeochora on the southwest side of Crete. The retreat center, set in an olive grove valley, is ecologically designed with natural stone and hand-made straw-bale construction, active and passive solar, and mountain spring water. There is a central kitchen for our use, as well as a washing machine. We awake to the sound of goat bells tinkling and sheep calling.

☉ During our stay at the retreat center, we will be in sacred space in a nearby cave, hike to the ancient healing site of Lissos, with its sacred water, snake pit and mosaic floor. In the round room of the retreat center, (the temple) and beehive room, we will have our simple rituals. We will have plenty of free time between adventures to play and enjoy the charming town of Paleochora.

☉ Ocean blessing ritual at the Libyan sea.

- ☉ Explore Loutro, a small village down the southern coast from our retreat center that can only be reached by boat. Enjoy day hikes, idyllic beaches and swimming through caves in this off-the-beaten-path paradise.
- ☉ Enjoy the wonderful old city of Chania, with its Venetian harbor, lots of interesting alleys and the new Archeological Museum, as well as “shop ‘til you drop” opportunities.



CRETE DETAILS

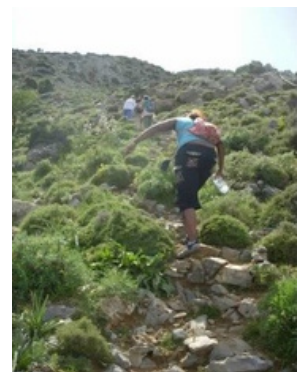
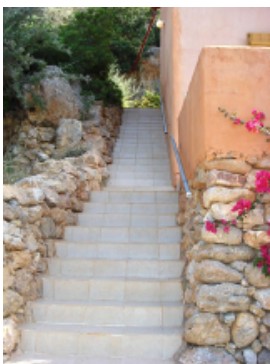
Dining in Crete is often outdoors and relaxed. Enjoying the cafes will certainly be a part of our retreat together. The Cretan diet is reputed to be the healthiest in the world. The Mediterranean food is healthful, fresh, and just delicious. If you are a “foodie” or a “foodie in training”, this is the trip for you!

Past participants have experienced the Goddess in deep, tangible and powerful ways in Crete. The land is ancient! The ancient Cretan civilization flourished at the same time as the Egyptian culture 5,000 years ago. Egypt is only 250 miles from the southern shores of the island.

The cave rituals have been transformative for women because of the visceral experience of being in the womb of the Great Mother. The Goddess culture on Crete is ancient; and She is powerful, accessible and sensual. A delightful side effect of time in Crete seems to be a radiant, healing, sensual, and enlivening energy for women, as they embody the Goddess in a deeper way.

To fully participate in the retreat YOU MUST BE PHYSICALLY FIT !!!

This doesn't mean you have to be an athlete, however activities and rituals involve hiking, walking, exploring caves, and hauling your luggage up flights of stairs. This is a mountainous country. So please be realistic in evaluating your fitness ability. This trip is not designed for women with physical disabilities. You will have choices for some of the activities that are optional.



This trip is for women experienced in psychological, spiritual, and/or ritual work; who wish to go deeper and live more fully.

If you are currently under the care of a psychiatric professional, please discuss your attendance with them. Participants should be in a stable period of mental well-being and have adequate self-regulatory resources to fully participate.

***Organizer's reserve the right of final approval of participants based on assessment of traveler's compatibility to maintain physical safety and group dynamics.**

Price: \$3,250

Includes: All rituals/activities, entrance fees, lodging, transportation, and breakfasts.

Lodging - Sixteen nights, shared double occupancy, twin beds. **No single rooms.**

All transportation in Crete - taxi, car rental, gas, ferries/boats. Drivers for our vehicles are volunteers from our own group of travelers and must be experienced with standard stick shift.

Not Included: Airfare to Crete, lunches and dinners (estimate \$40 per day to be very generous) and personal spending. **Bring a KN95 face mask to wear if needed.**

NOTE: you need to arrive at our hotel in Heraklion, Crete, Friday, May 22nd

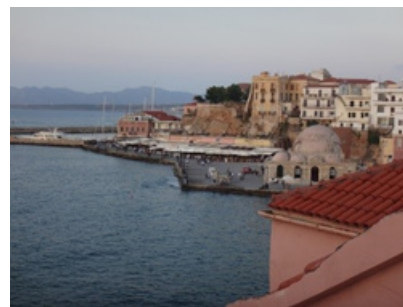
(Arrive anytime on Friday in Heraklion, so we can begin our adventures after breakfast on Saturday, May 23rd).

Note: You may need about \$20 Euros to take a taxi from the Heraklion airport to the hotel and we will reimburse you.

Disclaimer: Crete moves to its own rhythm and time. **Be flexible;** there is always a chance that we won't know what we will find until we get there. Museums can be unexpectedly closed without notice or internet updates. No matter what, we will have an adventure exploring what calls us, or we may even find a new cave.

Payment Details:

To register mail payments via check,
payable to: Catherine Ridder
595 E. Colorado Boulevard #618
Pasadena, CA 91101
or Payment via Venmo app link
@catherine-ridder



or Payment via Zelle to 626-485-2829 (no added fee)
Paying by Credit Card add 3.5% fee

Payment Deadlines:

\$500 non-refundable deposit due
to secure your spot
\$1,000 due by October 15th, 2025
\$1,750 balance by January 15, 2026



Cancellation policy:

\$500 deposit is non-refundable.
No refunds for cancellations after
January 15, 2026

TRIP INSURANCE RECOMMENDED

Contact:

Catherine Ridder
Tel: 626-793-7520 (office)
Tel: 626-485-2829 (cell)
Email: caridder2@gmail.com



“Crete’s mystery is extremely deep. Whoever sets foot on this island senses a mysterious force branching warmly and beneficially through (her) veins, senses (her) soul begin to grow.” – Nicholas Kazantzakis

Land of the Never Emptying Honey Pot-Mehli - by Alaina Zipp, 2013

Crete, your land and food seduces any body.

We leave a burbling hive of hominess and then step into a hubbub of joy. We gather regularly for the foodgasms to begin.

Tsisiki, souvlaki, mushroom pies and fritters, cheese pies and crepes, greens and beets and aubergine, caves, trees and stones with endless jewelry sky and sea.

Crete, the Altar of your fleshly pleasures awaits us, but you have more than met your match.

We know how to use 10 fingers plus 6 senses in order to enjoy your fruits.

Slurping honey and chocolate, we can relearn to ecstatically feed our heart’s flesh.

Honey in pouches, jars and bags, honey with bread, chicken and tea, honey oozes from the walls of caves, sweet nectar of the Mother, and honey seeps from a womb in love.

All painstaking, intimately timed and cooked miracles That leave you forever changed.

WHAT OUR TRAVELERS HAD TO SAY



“Stepping onto the Island of Crete is like greeting a long, lost loved one. The land has not forgotten Her and Her presence fills your every pore. You leave with a full heart and an aching longing to return, again and again.”

- Nicki

“One of the greatest experiences of my life was my trip to Crete with the amazing teachers and leaders of women, Ruth Barrett and Catherine Ridder. They took us to places seen and felt by very few in the world... what a privilege.

They were organized, brilliant, and our accommodations were lovely. The entire experience was just beyond beyond!” - Ava (presiding Priestess of the Goddess Temple of Orange County, CA)

“A juicy journey of deep personal transformation with amazing women, through a land rich with herstory and sensory pleasures. All arrangements are beautifully coordinated, and magic unfolds in every daily adventure.”

- Aimee

“The trip to Crete was more than just an amazing vacation, it was a sacred pilgrimage. The time I spent with these incredible women exploring ancient caves, looking out on picturesque ocean views, eating delicious food, and discovering the divine feminine on this sacred land is forever etched in my mind and heart. The trip of a lifetime!” -

Sara

RECOMMENDED READING

(We also send out lots of articles about Crete to our travelers)

THE MYTH OF THE GODDESS – Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, Chapter 3:

“Crete, The Goddess of Life, Death and Regeneration”

THE ONCE AND FUTURE GODDESS – Elinor Gadon, Chapter 7: “Crete: Fulfillment and Flowering,”

SHAKTI WOMAN – Vicki Noble

THE KING MUST DIE – Mary Renault



ABOUT YOUR FACILITATORS

Catherine Ridder, M. Div, MFT, CMT

Catherine Ridder has co-facilitated ritual retreats in Crete since 1995. She is initiated in the Dianic tradition, and has been a ritual drummer since 1996 for Circle of Aradia. She is a marriage and family therapist in a private practice in Pasadena, CA, as well as a certified massage therapist. She has practiced yoga since 1998. She is a passionate nature-lover and engages in wilderness adventures of all sorts.



Ruth Barrett

Ruth Barrett is an ordained Dianic high priestess, seasoned ritualist, and author of *WOMEN'S RITES, WOMEN'S MYSTERIES: Intuitive Ritual Creation* as well as anthology publisher for *FEMALE ERASURE: What You Need To Know About Gender Politics' War On Women, the Female Sex and Human Rights*. She has taught ritual and magickal arts nationally and internationally since 1980. She is also a mountain dulcimer recording artist, singer, and songwriter whose numerous recordings have been among the pioneering musical works in the Goddess Spirituality Movement. Ruth and Falcon River co-founded Temple of Diana, Inc. in 2000, a national Dianic temple dedicated to the celebration of women's magick and mysteries.