



Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
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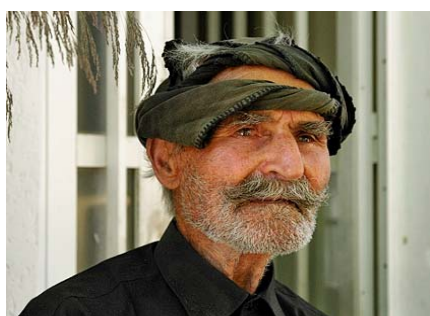
Cretan handcraft – Spoon carver in Zenia

(An article from our member *Maria Eleftheria*, *Agios Nektarios* / South Crete)



Additionally to the short info about the „*Spoon maker of Zenia*“ in our Info-bulletin 186-06 [<http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter/186-06%20-%20Handspinnerei%20-%20Loeffelmacher.pdf>] in the following a detailed, revised info-bulletin (with new pictures) to the subject area “*Cretan Handcraft*” and the “*Spoon carver of Zenia*”.

It occurred in the past that a village was specialized in a certain handcraft and became generally known by its outstanding products. If you follow the less used road from *Neapoli*, in the northwest of *Agios Nikolaos*, towards the *Lassithi* Plateau, you will arrive at the village *Zenia*. Even today you will find here some older “Spoon makers” who carve out from hard olive wood and offer all the things needed in the household, like spoons, forks, plates, cutting boards, mortars and dishes (Picture right). *Manolis* holds a special position under the spoon makers of *Zenia*. Day by day he sits proudly and upright in the shade in front of his house besides his work bench, a stump, on which he manufactures his unique pieces. Although he looks out below his bushy eyebrows with already 102 years life experience into the world, his face is amazingly smooth, almost free from creases. When we step into the yard, his wife *Eleni* comes out of the house with chairs, invites us to take place and with a smile on her face she places fruits and sweet pastry on the table. With her 86 years the lively *Eleni* looks older than her husband but it is to be felt that she is the energy bundle within this long-standing and sworn community (Pictures below).



Eleni shows us her husband’s work, robust spoons and forks, that will certainly last forever. “You must know that in former times *Manolis* hands were very skilful, they emblazed things with artful carvings and even built music instruments” she explains and leads me into the house where still some of these small works of art hang on the walls (Picture left). In the meantime his hands and eyes are much too weak for such fine work” she says with quiet regret in her voice.

I am full of admiration for the mental and physical fitness of the couple and purchase two of the large, original olive wooden spoons; however they require a little work with sandpaper before the first use.

While we sit together around the small blue metal table and the two alternate telling stories of past days, I ask *Eleni* if she would tell me the secret of their vitality. Looking at me deeply with her clear eyes and she replies: "There is no secret. For as far as I can remember, we eat what is in season given to us by the earth and our clothes and utensils are made from natural products. We had cheeks like that when we were young." taking a bright red Mirabelle and she holds it to her face. "And the young creations today?" She sorrowfully shakes her head and holds up a pale-yellow fruit. "People eat their food from plastic and poison their food with chemistry. This deprives the body its power".



Eleni is a wise woman and *Manolis* an impressive man. When we leave we wish still many healthy and happy years for the couple.

On our way towards the *Lassithi Plateau*, after a few kilometers, we stop in *Mesa Potami* to strengthen ourselves in the cosy tavern from *Marianna* and *Onassis*. *Marianna* is *Manolis* and *Elenis* daughter. In her neatly-clean kitchen she prepares excellent meals from fresh ingredients out of her own garden and from their own slaughtering. So the next generation leads the tradition of their parents in regards to healthy nutrition.

Translated by Michael Bloechinger-Daeumling

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