

UNVEILING THE LABYRINTH

There are many things we know about labyrinths. Here are just a few.

- Labyrinths have been known to the human race for over 4,000 years.
- They are found in almost all religious traditions in the world.
- The oldest European labyrinth on record is the Cretan labyrinth, also called the classical seven-circuit labyrinth.
- The oldest surviving labyrinth is found in a rock carving at Luzzanas in Sardinia, and dates from 2500-2000 BCE.
- Cretan labyrinths have been found on coins, pottery, and other artifacts.
- Early civilizations were isolated from each other, yet the same 7 circuit classical labyrinth emerged over thousands of years in most cultures.
- Labyrinths have been made from many materials. Some have been fashioned with stone pathways, while others are carved in stone. The early Roman labyrinths were made of mosaic tile. Turf labyrinths are found throughout Europe, made from mounds of earth covered in grass or moss. The well-known hedge mazes and labyrinths are found throughout Europe.
- In recent times there has been a major labyrinth revival.
- They are now appearing in churches, hospitals, therapy centers, retreat centers, public parks, and on private land and estates.
- People are still making labyrinths in the ancient ways as well as painting them on canvas and carpets for indoor use. Outdoors they can be made using lawn mowers in the summer, mounded leaves in the autumn, mounded snow in the winter and in spring drawing them on sand at beaches.
- The labyrinth has a single path leading to the center, whereas mazes have many directional choices, some of which are dead ends.
- The labyrinth as a symbol represents the cosmos, the world, the temple, the town, the womb of the earth, convolutions of the brain, the heart, and the journey through life.
- *"It (the labyrinth) reduces stress, quiets the mind, and opens the heart. It is a walking meditation, a path of prayer, and a blueprint where psyche meets Spirit"* says Dr Lauren Artress, author of [Walking a Sacred Path, Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Sacred Tool](#).
- The labyrinth can be walked as a meditation or prayer, asking or pondering a life question, as a means to mark or celebrate a life shift (such as a birthday, graduation, or any other completion), or in open curiosity. Every thought and every observation, both inner and outer, can speak to us in the labyrinth.
- The labyrinth can be walked, skipped, run, or, in the old custom, danced.

BENEFITS OF A LABYRINTH

- Relieve stress
- Comfort in mourning
- Deepen spirituality
- Improve relationships
- Connection to one's soul
- Access to intuition
- Enhanced creativity
- Satisfies inner need for simplicity
- Mind and body integration
- Greater sense of community
- Accelerated healing
- A path of, and to, prayer
- Achieving wholeness
- Engages body and soul in prayer
- Reflective time in a busy schedule
- Mirrors one's inner self
- Concentrates attention
- Sparks imagination
- Cathartic emotional release
- Concrete expression of spirituality
- Deepened meditation
- Quiet sanctum
- Enhanced awareness
- Right and left brain balancing
- Enhanced lateral thinking
- Ease life transitions
- Facilitate reconciliations
- Builds sense of relationship
- A sacred place to be

Types of Labyrinths



Classical 7-circuit labyrinth
The oldest and most common design



Chartres Cathedral pattern
Eleven circuit variety with four quadrants



Santa Rosa labyrinth
This incorporates features of the two styles above