



## **POCKET GUIDE TO SANTORINI**



**Santorini is a volcanic island located in the south-east Aegean. To be precise, it is a group of 5 islands and the word Santorni usually refers to Thira, which is the biggest and also the most famous of the islands. The most impressive sunset, the most romantic place to get married, the most photogenic villages and many more superlatives are connected with this small piece of land.**

## Getting There

**By plane:** The fastest way to get to Santorini from Athens is by plane. The journey itself takes less than 45 minutes and there are several flights daily organized by Aegean Airlines or Olympic Air. Thira airport (JTR) is situated on the east coast of the island, just next to the famous summer spot Kamari. It is about 7 minutes by car from Fira, the capital of the island, and approximately 30 minutes from Oia, the northern most village of the island. After your arrival it is the best to take a bus to Fira town or go with a taxi directly to your accommodation. Depending on the distance, the price for the taxi will be somewhere between 7 to 30 Euro.

**By boat:** All year long there are ships connecting Santorini with Athens, and during the summer season, with many surrounding islands. The duration of the journey depends on the type of the ship and can be anywhere between 5 to 11 hours. The cost for a one way ticket ranges from 25 to 50 Euro. Athinios is the main port on the island and it is accessible from Fira town by bus in about 15 minutes. The bus ticket will cost you up to 2 Euro.

## Getting Around

**On foot:** The island is small but to move around on foot can be tiring. An easy walk is from Fira town to nearby villages such as Kartherados, Imerovigli, Vourvoulos and Firostephani. There is also a hiking route from Fira to Oia that many people take.

**By car, ATV or a motorbike:** This is the best way to discover the island. Prices for a car during the off-season (October- April) start from 25 euro/day, during the summer season from 30/day, motorbikes are half price.

**By bus:** The bus connects Fira town with most of the local villages. A popular route is Fira to Oia which takes 25 minutes, costs 1.8 euro and during the summer season there are at least 2 busses every hour.

**By Bicycle:** The roads on the island can be steep and there is not much respect for cyclists, so the bicycle

is not the safest or most recommended way of transport.

## Useful Phrases

Hello: Geia sou  
Goodbye: Antio  
Please: Parakalw  
Thank you: Eyxaristw  
You're welcome: Parakalw  
Yes: Nai  
No: Oxi

## Climate

Santorini has 300 days of sunshine a year. High season for the beaches is from mid May until the end of September, with average 26- 30 degrees. The Spring season (March/April/May), when the island is really green, is ideal for hikes and island discoveries. In January there are typically 3 weeks of halcyon summer with temperatures of 16, sometimes even 20 C. The winter can be windy and rainy.

## Good to know...

Language: Greek  
Currency: Euro  
Island group and the capital: Cyclades; Fira town  
Islands: Thira, Volcano, Thirassia, Nea Kameni and Palia Kameni  
Electricity: 220 Volts, 50 cycles  
Country Code: 30 (Greece), Santorini: 22860  
Time Zone: GMT + 2  
Central Post Offices: ELTA, main post offices in Fira (tel.: 2286022238), Oia and Kamari,  
Health Center (Fira) tel.: 2286360300-4

## Embassies

USA: +30 210 721 2951  
UK: +30 210 727 2600  
Canada: +30 210 727 3400  
Australia: +30 210 870 4000  
South Africa: +30 210 610 6645  
Ireland: +30 210 723 2771  
Germany: +30 210 728 5111  
Spain: +30 210 921 3123  
Italy: +30 210 361 7260  
New Zealand: +30 210 6924 136\*  
France: +30 210 339 1000

## Cheap Eats



**Lucky Souvlakis/Poldo.** The most typical of Greek fast foods are gyros (chicken or pork meat wrap) or souvlaki (chicken or pork meat sticks). There are plenty of these eateries all over the island, but in Fira town, the following two places offer the best quality, size and price: Poldo is on the main road when coming to Fira from the South, Lucky Souvlakis is near Fira Town's main square. Open also during the winter. Gyros go for 2-2.5 euro.

**Taverna Akropolis** is located on the Perissa/Perivollos beach. Despite its cheesy look and predominantly tourist guests, this place surprises with its prices and quality. Plate for two with a lamb, French fries, Greek salad and wine goes for 16.50 Euro. Locals often eat there too, and Santorini old timers must go at least once during their stay.

**Chatiri** is a small tavern in almost abandoned "ghost village" called Messagonia. The food is cooked by the owner's mother and only a few people know about this hidden gem of Santorini. Ask for today's specials. You will find it just at the entrance to the village. Also open during the winter. Dinner for 2, with wine, is about 25 Euros.

**Ouzerie** is in Greece a place where locals drink an anise alcohol called ouzo and eat with it a small meze (starter). This place offers more than that. Great selection of food and a chef who studied in the best French culinary school! Dinner for 2 with wine is around 35 Euro. Fira town, Fabrica.

## After Dark

**Kira Thira** is a cool place to start your night, gets busy after 10pm. They have daily a live DJ playing jazz and popular music. Small but cozy, friendly and decorated with style. In the winter sometimes closed Mondays-Wednesdays. Fira Town.

**Crystal** is a stylish bar with a great night view of Fira town and the caldera. It attracts beautiful people and generally can be considered a place to see and to be seen. Drinks starting from 9 euro.

**Tropical** is an Australian owned bar overlooking the caldera and it is probably the most popular place by travelers and also some laid back locals. Expect some dancing around midnight. Drinks are for 5 Euro, DJ plays mostly popular summer tunes. Fira town.

**Cassablanca** is a place that fills up after 1am. This is the place where during the summer you can hear some of the World famous DJs playing live. Locals and some foreigners, drinks starting from 8 euro, sometimes during the summer entrance fee.

**Enigma** is usually for the locals the last stop during their "weekend" bar tour. They play mainly Greek music interrupted by few international summer hits. Top place for Greeks. Entrance fee: 10 Euro. Fira town.

**Afternoon beach parties on Perissa/Perivollos beach.** If you happen to be on the island in August, weekends are the time for the beach parties. Young beautiful crowds and live DJs in Jojo or Chili bar right on the beach!

## Gay / Lesbian Santorini

*The island is very LGBT friendly. You will not find any specialized bars or clubs though. The crowds of all types mingle in every major club or a bar in Fira town. From the beaches Koloumbo on north-east coast is considered very gay friendly.*

## Don't Miss

**Oia** is perhaps the most photographed village in Greece. Churches with blue domes, whitewashed cave houses, small cafes, restaurants and shops, and stunning views of the caldera and the sunset.

**Caldera by boat.** The boat trip is the best way to discover the 5 Santorini islands. Swim at the hot springs at Palea Kameni, stopover at Volcano and tourist-untouched Thirassia island are usually part of the program. 20 -30 euro/person depending on the duration.

**Prehistoric museum** is the best way to discover the ancient past. Price: 3 Euro; Open daily (except Mondays)

**Ancient Thira** is a former capital of the island situated on the hill overlooking Kamari and Perissa. Open daily until 2.30pm (except Mondays). Price: 3 Euro.

**Akrotiri** is a buried ancient city, devastated by a massive volcanic eruption. It should be re-opened during Summer 2011.

**Donkey ride** from Fira down to the old port is a must, especially if you came just for a day with a cruise ship. 5 euro is the cost for the ride and it takes 588 steps downhill.

## Sunset in Santorini

*Sunset in Santorini is supposed to be one of the most impressive in the World. The famous sunset spot in Fira is Franco's bar. They play classical music and they have sun beds facing caldera. Be ready to pay though, the coffee starts from 3.50 Euro.*



## Budget tips

**Fira to Oia hike** is the best way to discover beauties of Caldera, volcanic layers of the island and to see some great views. Hike is easy, takes 3 hours and the best time to do it is during the spring.

**Black sand beaches** all over the island are great for summer relax. Visit Kartherados or Pori along the north-east coast. Nice beaches on the south-east coast are Messapigadia or Capitan Markos.

**Views from Profit Illias.** This is the highest peak of the island and you can get there using a steep dirt path from Pyrgos village

**Sunset from Skaros.** This is an unusual location to watch the sunset. It is a rocky hill at Immerovigli. Start your walk in Fira town, follow the path along Caldera to Imerovigli and then follow a dirt path up to Skaros. There is a bit of a climb towards the end.

## Neighborhood watch

**Pyrgos village** is one of the most picturesque local villages. It is famous for its whitewashed houses, tiny shops with local products, old men riding their donkeys or locals having their coffee in local cafés. Authentic Greece is presented here to its fullest.

**Kartherados** is a tourist-unspoilt village just next to Fira with traditional cave houses dug into volcanic layers of the island. During your walk here take some pictures of colorful local houses and churches.

**Katharos** is one of the few beaches that directly face the sunset. It is just under Oia. It is a great place for swimming, snorkeling and sunbathing. Small laid back canteen on the hill is good for a sunset drink.

**Koloumbo and Vlyhada** are famous to be the nudist beaches of the island. Koloumbo is situated along north-east coast and is named after a submarine volcano nearby. Vlyhada is on the south-east coast with some good fish taverns nearby.

**Faros**, or in English, a lighthouse, is a place on the southern point of the island. Great spot for watching the sunset, easy access by car or a motorbike.

## Mark your calendar

### *Greek Panagiri*

*Panigiri in Greece is a religious festival which is connected with a name day of a Saint to whom is dedicated a particular local church. Greeks love their panigiria (festivals) which are usually celebrated on the main square next to the church with a flow of wine, food, live local musicians and dancing all night long. The most impressive are the festivals on the islands.*

**January:** 1<sup>st</sup> January Greek families cut traditional cheese pie called vasilopita and look for a lucky coin hidden inside.

**February:** On 2<sup>nd</sup> February there is an impressive festival in the gorge of Vothonas village. Here you find a church of Panagia Tripiti. It is dug into the volcanic hill and it used to be a shelter for locals hiding from the pirates. Free flow of wine, local food and music all night long will definitely keep you entertained.

**March:** 25<sup>th</sup> March is a Greek Independence day and dates back to the year 1821 and Ottoman times. School kids march along the main squares in the villages with the best student carrying the flag in front.

**April:** Easter for Greeks is the most important religious celebration of the year. Don't miss on Good Friday a lantern festival in Pyrgos village.

**May:** The summer season starts. Local festival around mid May in Akrotiri.

**June- September:** Numerous music concerts of local Greek artists. Watch the trees and walls around the island for posters with dates and other details.

**August:** 15<sup>th</sup> of August is after Easter and Christmas the most important Greek celebration. It is a celebration of Virgin Mary and traditionally it is celebrated with church services and festivals. In the middle of August there is a firework display "Ifaistia" on the volcano.

**September:** International music festival at Nomikos Conference Center, Fira town.

**October:** On 20<sup>th</sup> October the island celebrates the end of a grape harvest with a festival in Finikia village.

**November:** On 8<sup>th</sup> November there is an impressive festival on Santorini Nea Kameni island. The celebration is dedicated to the Archangels. The boat to Nea Kameni from Thira is for free, since it is also a day when a Union of boatmen celebrates.

**December:** As everywhere in Greece, also in Santorini 25<sup>th</sup> December is a Christmas day.

## Retail Therapy

### *Local wine*

*Santorini is famous for its local wine varieties. The wine grows in little circular nests close to the ground. There are plenty of the wineries on the island, but perhaps the most interesting is Art & Space with a permanent art exhibition inside or Koutsogiannopoulos winery with a wine museum introducing the traditional wine production on the island. Both are on the way from the airport to Kamari.*

Strolling narrow streets of Fira and Oia, you will find many jewellery shops. Typical for Santorini are accessories made from lava stones.

Santorini is famous for its wine production. Most typical is a dry white wine or a desert wine called Vinsanto. Visit some of the local wineries where you can taste the wine first.

Atlantis bookshop is a place you should not miss when in Oia. This place has a great collection of modern and classical literature in English, German, Spanish, French and Greek. According to Lonely Planet it is one of the top 10 bookshops in the World.

If you are looking for art, there are several galleries in Fira and Oia. Perhaps one of the most impressive is an art gallery Mati in Fira town with amazing modern sculptures of glass and metal.

## Day in Santorini

**9am:** Start your day as Greeks do- with a strong coffee.

**10am:** Explore the 2 most impressive places on the island- capital Fira and the most photographed village on the north- Oia. If the weather is not too hot, do the 3 hours hike that is connecting both places. Otherwise take a bus or rent an ATV or a car.

**2pm:** Buy your lunch in some of the local bakeries. Combination of a spinach or cheese pie with chocolate milk called Milko is the most famous option in Greece. If you are a meat lover, then buy gyros in some of the Greek “fast-foods”.

**3pm:** Head to some of the black sand beaches along the east coast- Perivolos being the most vivid in the summer. During the winter or spring, instead of the beach, see some local villages. Pyrgos or Kartherados are perhaps the most impressive.

**7pm:** See the sunset. Depending where on the island you are, the best places are Faros, Skaros, Katharos, Oia or Fira and then end your day with a traditional meal accompanied by local wine.

**10pm:** Head to Kira Thira in Fira Town for a drink and continue your night in some of the local clubs.

