

all about  
*Santorini island*

Villages  
Beaches  
History  
Sightseeing



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Santorini is situated at the Southern part of the Cyclades, South to Ios and Sikinos, South-East to Folegandros, West to Anafi and North to Crete, at a distance of 130 nautical miles from Piraeus and 70 nautical miles from Crete; along with Anafi, it is the closest to Crete Island of the Cyclades complex. Its extent is 96 square km, the coast line 69 km approximately, and it counts 11000 permanent residents. Officially it is called Thera, but Santorini is the common name used worldwide.

Santorini is unique both for its shape and its landscape. The whole island is a volcano, still active today and its actual shape is the result of volcanic eruptions in various periods. The most important of them seems to have taken place in 1500 b.C., when, all the western part of the island disappeared under the water which covered all the space left after the violent eruption, forming the walls of the “caldera”, the remains of the old crater of the volcano, a steep rock of volcanic material, 150 to 300 m. high.

At the opposite side, to the west, two smaller islands, Thirassia and Aspronissi (or Aspro), form a circle with the main island, giving an impression of the shape of the island before the eruption. Virtually, we can reconstruct a rather round island, as its very ancient Greek name – Strongyli (meaning “round”) - connotes. The caldera covers a space of 32 square km approximately and has a depth of 300 to 600 m. Nearly at the middle of this circle, two small islands made of volcanic material, appeared in more recent periods, Palaia Kammeni and Nea Kammeni, give evidence that the volcano even today, is not totally dormant.

The island owes to the caldera its fame and originality. The view the visitor sees when reaching Santorini by boat is breathtaking. A steep cliff, of various colours, ranging from purple to vivid red and from various tones of grey to pale yellow, without any vegetation, stands like threatening, discouraging anyone wishing to explore it. The rest of the island, hidden behind, is totally invisible. However, just at the feet of the cliff and at the very edge of its top, arise little white houses, small churches with blue domes, narrow paths and steps leading to the top. And, if you give a better look, you might distinguish the small doors of houses dug in the volcanic rock, a genius solution for dwellings, and an example of how man can take profit even of the most inhospitable environment.

The rest of the island is partly mountainous, but there are also flat areas, mainly at the eastern part. The volcanic soil is very fertile and Santorini used to produce high quality vegetables and wines with special taste.

Santorini has a very long history. It has been active since prehistoric times as it has been found from archaeological excavations. In the 2nd millennium B.C. a fascinating, wealthy civilisation flourished on the island, brutally interrupted by the volcano eruption which destroyed everything on the island. It seems that people had abandoned the island well ahead, warned by the strong earthquakes that anticipated the eruption. Thick layers of ashes, dust and volcanic material covered the entire island and all evidence of this high civilisation disappeared.

Excavations conducted since the 60's and still continuing, have brought to light a settlement with luxurious houses with beautiful frescoes on their walls, a system of water supply and drainage. Due to the ash, the whole environment was left intact for centuries; even the shape of wooden artefacts has been preserved and it has been possible to reconstruct furniture by making plaster casts. In fact, it is really the “Greek Pompeii”, as it is usually said. Many people, some scholars among them, also believe that this

prehistoric settlement is the legendary Atlantis, mentioned in ancient texts for its wealth and the peaceful character of its civilisation.

But it is not only archaeological interest that Santorini offers to its visitors. The volcano attracts the attention and curiosity of many people; at the Kammeni (meaning “burnt”), part of the crater; it is evident that the volcano is still active, as sulphur and vapours emerge from the hot, dry soil.

The island is full of original and scenic beaches. Deep clear blue water at the western part of the island, where the caldera, smoother beaches with black or red sand and polished black stones and pumice stones at the eastern part, most of them with full tourist facilities, offer a wide range of alternatives for swimming, sunbathing and sea sports.

Santorini is one of the most romantic places in the world. The sunset from Oia or Imerovigli is a spectacle not to miss. The sun sets directly to the sea bathing the whole landscape in colours ranging from blue and purple to red and yellow. The caldera looks like burning, evoking the real eruptions of the past.

And, as the dark falls on the island, the view from the caldera is still fascinating; and if there is full moon, the moon stream on the water looks like a road leading to unknown, interesting itineraries. Being so, it is not strange that many couples choose Santorini for their honey-moon, or even for their wedding ceremony. The island has 17 villages, both on the sea and in the interior. All of them have a particular character and almost all flourish today because of tourism.

Santorini is easily reached from Pireaus or Rafina by conventional or high speed ships or by flying dolphins. There is at least one ship per day in winter and more than two in summer. There is good connection with the islands of the line, Paros, Naxos, Ios all year round, as well as with Thessaloniki, while in summer it is also connected with Mykonos, the islands of Northern Aegean, the Dodecanese and Crete. The port is at Athinios bay, 9 km South of Fira, the capital of the island.

From the International airport of Athens El.Venizelos there is usually one or two flights to Santorini all year round, while in summer there are also charter flights.

The Santorini airport is at the eastern part of the island, close to Monolithos, 8 km far from Fira.

## the village of *Fira*



Clung at the rim of the steep cliff, actually at the middle of the crater of the volcano, Fira, officially Thera is the capital of the island with approximately 2100 permanent residents.

The town is not typically Cycladic. The long period of Venetian domination has left its influence in the architecture of the town and Cycladic and Venetian architectural features are found side by side in a quite interesting blend. We find here too, the narrow pebble paved streets, the white houses with arches and

vaults, small blue windows giving to the sea, the traditional Cycladic churches with their light blue cupolas, along with the Catholic cathedral and the women Dominican Monastery.

Fira is fully touristically developed. In summer, when the island “sinks” for the crowds of people, as the natives use to say, Fira is the spot of attraction of most visitors. Fully equipped with lodgings for all budgets, including a camping, with many taverns and restaurants of any taste, cafés, discos and bars, the town promises comfortable staying, good food and lots of amusement. Bank facilities, tourist agencies, stores of any kind, a medical centre and pharmacy, are also available.

Fira used to be one of the two ports of Santorini (the other was Oia) just a few decades ago. In fact it was not a real port; passengers disembarked in small boats, as the ship could not reach the coast, and arrived to the town on foot or on mules' back, following the zigzagged more or less 800 broad steps climbing the rock. Since the 80's a more comfortable way was founded: the cable car, more known as “teleferique” (the French name), has been installed, a gift of the ship owner Nomicos originated from Santorini (who actually holds some of the ships of the line).

The cable car running from early morning to late evening in summer has facilitated the life of the people, mainly of the tourists, but the mules are still an attraction and an original experience.

At the same period, the port has been transferred at the bay Athinios, some 12 km at the south of Fira in order to facilitate access to cars. Athinios is now the main port of Santorini; the ships of the line do not stop at Oia or Fira anymore. Today the old port of Fira is available for yachts, providing good facilities for them.

Three museums are located at Fira: The archaeological Museum lodges finds, mainly pottery from the excavations in ancient Thira, most of them of the Geometric period (800-700 b.C.). In the Museum of prehistoric Thera one can see prehistoric pottery from all prehistoric periods (Neolithic to late Cycladic) found at several parts of the island, Cycladic statuettes of marble, and various copper items. There are also plaster reconstructions of wooden furniture coming from the excavations at Akrotiri, as well as samples of plants fossils.

The Folk Museum hosts representations of small manufactures of the past, such as wine press, wine stores etc; a reconstruction of traditional folk houses, furniture and other equipment, give to the visitor an idea of the everyday life of the residents, before the invasion of technology and mass tourism.

Several buildings are also worth seeing: The two Cathedrals, Orthodox and Catholic, are interesting enough, as well as the Dominican Monastery. The Gisi Mansion, today hosting the Cultural centre of the town, has an interesting architecture; besides it hosts various artistic exhibitions in summer (painting, sculpture, photography etc), some of them worth seeing.

The most interesting and unique place the visitor must visit is New Kammeni, where one can observe the volcanic activity. Totally dry, with a hot soil and the smells of sulphur all around, with sulphur vapours emerging from the soil, it gives the impression of how it is like when you are ...in a volcano. The island is accessible by boat, mainly in summer, when many excursions are organised by the tourist offices at Fira. If you decide to visit Kammeni, don't forget to take water with you; it is more than necessary. Also, take care of your feet; do not wear sandals, sneakers are fully recommended.

Various cultural activities are organised in summer. A local feast (“panighyri”) in honour of Prophet’s Ilias takes place on the saint’s name day, 20th of July. Traditional musicians are coming to the island and play local folk songs; dance and amusement often last till the next morning.

The Municipality organises cultural and athletic activities, the “Hefaisteia” during August, whereas in September there is a music festival.

Access to the Fira is possible by public bus from Athinios, taxis and private or rented cars. The village is also connected with public buses with all the villages and tourist resorts of the island ([click here to view hotels in Fira by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the village of *Firostefani*



Built at the edge of the cliff facing the caldera, some 1 to 1,5 km from Fira at the North, Firostefani offers to the visitor a magnificent view, romantic walks and a sunset of unique beauty, less crowded than that of Oia. Due to the tourist development of last decades, Firostefani looks more like a quarter of Fira, than like a different village.

Access is possible by the public buses running to Imerovigli and Oia, by taxi and by car and motorbike (rented or private). However, being that close to Fira, walking is a very good choice, especially in spring and in summer evenings ([click here to view hotels in Firostefani by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the village of *Imerovigli*



Situated 3 km of Fira at the Northwest, Imerovigli is a typically Cycladic settlement, with traditional low, white washed houses with terraces, narrow pebble paved streets and numerous tiny churches found in every quarter. This settlement of 460 permanent residents has been declared preservable.

Built at the rim of the volcanic crater, 300 m. high, it has an extraordinary view to the caldera, fully justifying its name (in Greek “Imerovigli” means “day watch”) and its fame as “the balcony of the Aegean”.

The castle of Scaros is worth seeing. Never defeated during the 350 years of the Venetian domination, the castle is located at a strategic point, watching all the western part of the Aegean. It is in this castle that the Venetian dominant Marco Sanudo and his aristocracy (catholic bishops and military officers) were lodged.

Imerovigli is ideal for walking and taking photos. You choose to walk along the public road, or you prefer the old path at the edge of the rim, the view is outstanding, the landscape marvellous and the nature always

surprising. Spring and autumn are ideal for staying at Imerovigli, but it is also a good alternative for summer for those who would like to avoid the crowd and noise of Fira. Full facilities of lodging, eating and amusement are offered to the visitors who choose to stay in the village.

Access to the village is possible by public bus, taxi, private or rented car, but, being so close to Fira, walking is also a very good alternative ([click here to view hotels in Imerovigli by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the village of *Karterados*



Small inland village just 2 km far from Fira, at the South, Karterados is situated on the public road leading to Messaria. The village has an interesting architecture and it is surrounded by a mild landscape with vineyards. The church of Analipsi is worth visiting.

Karterados offers good lodging with sport facilities, taverns with traditional dishes and some cafes and bars. Don't miss to buy things from the traditional bakery of the village; apart from the tasteful cookies it is also a worth seeing place. It is accessible by public bus, taxi, rented or private car and walking from Fira ([click here to view hotels in Karterados by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the area of *Karterados Beach*



6 km far from Fira and 4 km far from Karterados it is found Karterados beach, known also as Exo Gialos. A quiet beach with black sand, clear blue water and excellent view. Accommodation is available as well as food and drink ([click here to view hotels in Karterados Beach by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the village and beach of *Monolithos*



Small village on the coast 9 km far from Fira at the East and very close to the airport, Monolithos has 405 residents. It is a typical Cycladic village with narrow streets and white washed houses, less crowded than Kamari or Perissa. Due to the shallow sandy beach it is suitable for families with children.

A local feast ("panighyri") takes place on the 24th of July in honour of St. John. There are a few hotels and rooms to let and taverns, cafes, and bars. It is accessible by bus running every hour in summer, taxi and car (rented or private).

Situated at the eastern part of the island, long enough, with dark sand, deep blue clear water, the beach of Monolithos is more quiet than the near by Kamari, but the landscape is the same beautiful.

In fact it is the same beach starting from Perissa at the South and ending to Monolithos. The beach offers some accommodation in the village and meals and snacks at the beach.

Access is easy by car; public buses run frequently in summer to the homonymous village ([click here to view hotels in Monolithos by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the village of *Vourvoulos*



2, 5 km far from Fira at the North and the same distance from Imerovigli at the East, just at the centre of the northern part of the island, it is situated Vourvoulos. Although a bit remote from the sea the village has exceptional view to the Aegean, traditional architecture and calmness.

In the taverns of the village it is offered good food with local dishes; you will also find a mini market, cafes and a swimming pool bar. Being that close to Fira and Imerovigli makes Vourvoulos ideal since it combines the peace and relaxation with the alternative of the intense and noisy life in Fira, just at a few minutes drive.

Vourvoulos can also be the base for jaunts to the northern braches of the island, less crowded, lonelier and always idyllic. Access to the village is possible by taxi, private or rented car and motorbike.

### the area of *Vourvoulos beach*



Two successive beaches, Pigadia beach & Vourvoulos beach some 7 km far from Fira at the Northeast. Sandy, with clear blue water, not very crowded.

Access is possible by car (rented or private) and motorbike. Walking from Vourvoulos is also an alternative.

### the village of *Oia (Ia)*



Situated 11 km far from Fira, at the northwest edge of the island, Oia shares the same landscape as Fira. Built at the rim of a steep cliff, it views the caldera, the nearby island of Thirassia, but also almost the whole island.



About 500 people live permanently in the village, rather few if compared with its population by the end of the 19th century. In that period of time Oia was a prosperous town of about 9000 people. Prosperity came from the sea, as most of the residents were marines, or ship owners; this development had abruptly stopped by the destructive earthquake of 1956. Many people had then left the village which revived again in the 70's. Today Oia offers full facilities to the visitors, many of the old traditional houses and churches have been restored, and apart from lodging, restaurants and cafes, it has a cultural centre, a few art galleries and a maritime museum established in 1951.

Some windmills discarded around give to the village a typical Cycladic colour.

One of the most famous attractions in Oia is its view and the sunset, said to be the best in the Aegean. Walking across the narrow street leading to the town with the sea at one side and the high volcanic cliffs at the other is an experience you shouldn't miss. And as the sun sets, crowds of people are gathered at the square overlooking the sea. From there they watch the sun falling slowly and disappearing into the sea, painting the landscape in yellow, red and purple. Whoever has seen the sunset from Oia, considers it an unforgettable spectacle.

At the foot of the town two small beaches, Ammoudi at the North and Armeni at the South offer to the visitor a magnificent natural environment and the freshness of a swim. The only problem is that access to the beaches is possible only on foot via the countless steps (214 for Ammoudi and 286 for Armeni) leading there. Walking this way in the hot summer days is not very comfortable indeed!

Two local feasts ("panighyri") take place in the village; one in honour of Aghios Georgios (St. George), on April 23rd (or on Monday following the Easter) and the other on August 23rd in honour of Kyra Panaghia ("Our Holy Dame").

Access to Oia is possible by public buses, which run regularly all year round and every half an hour in summer. Taxis, tourist buses and rented cars are also available ([click here to view hotels in Oia by Greekislands.com](#)).

## the village of *Finikia*



10 km far from Fira, at the North West on the public road to Oia and less than 1 km from it, it is found Finikia, a small inland traditional village with 50 permanent residents. The entrance is quite impressive, as the visitor is faced with a high wall made of dark volcanic stone.

Two churches, Aghia Matrona and Epta Paides, made in the rock and are worth seeing.

Finikia offers to the visitor some lodging in rented rooms and food in small taverns; it is ideal for a quiet staying, without being isolated, as Oia with its various alternatives and nightlife is only a few minutes walk.

The village is accessible by public bus (running to Oia) and of course by taxi and rented or private car and motorbike ([click here to view hotels in Finikia by Greekislands.com](#)).

the beach of  
*Ammoudi*



Small beach at the foot of the village of Oia, at the caldera, with clear blue water, which get deep just at the first steps; families with children should be cautious.

It is accessible only on foot or on mules' back via the 214 broad steps which you have to descend and (that is the difficult part of the story!) to ascend.

Although difficult in access, Ammoudi attracts many visitors, thanks to its scenic environment, with the imposing colourful volcanic rocks shadowing the sea. A few taverns and cafes are available.

the beach of  
*Armeni*



Small beach very close to Oia, slightly at the South, Armeni has a view to Thirassia and clear blue deep water. It is accessible on foot or on mules' back via the 286 steps; more difficult than Ammoudi!

the beach of  
*Baxedes*



Beach at the very North of the island, 3 km far from Oia at the North-east, it is ideal for those liking to avoid big crowds.

Beach with black sand and shade. Due to its location the beach is affected by the summer northern winds ("meltemia") which make it unsuitable for swimming. Access is possible by rented or private car and motorbike.

the beach of  
*Kolumbo*



A quiet beach at the north of the island, some 4 km far from Oia and 1 km at the east of Baxedes, Kolumbo is ideal for those looking for solitary swimming and calmness. It has a marvellous view to the Aegean and if

the atmosphere is clear you can see the southern coasts of Ios. Due to its location it is affected by the summer northern winds (meltemia).

Access is possible by rented or private car and motorbike.

### the beach of *Pori*



Pori is another quiet sandy beach, located 10 km Northeast from Fira, ideal for those liking to avoid crowded beaches. Access is possible by rented or private car and motorbike.

### the village of *Messaria*



Situated almost at the centre of the island, this inland village is only 4 km far from Fira, at the Southeast. Messaria has 1.075 permanent residents and it is the heart of the Santorini wine. Surrounded by gardens and vineyards, with its white houses and narrow paths, it is possibly the most beautiful village of the island and worth visiting and staying all year round.

A few houses of neo-classic style create an interesting blend. The most impressive of them is “Argyros Mansion”; the house belonged to the winemaker George Argyros and was built in 1888. His grandson has restored it recently, as it had suffered serious damages during the earthquake of 1956.

It is worth seeing some of the churches in Messaria. The church of “Metamorphosis Sotiros” (Transfiguration of Christ) and Aghia Irini were built in the late 17th or early 18th century and are quite interesting, as it is the Cathedral of the village.

Messaria has been developed last years and the visitor can find good accommodation, for any budget; good food, cafes and places of amusements are also available. But be cautious! The sweet wine and the spirit of the village might get you drunk more easily than you can imagine!

As Messaria is at the centre of the island you can easily get there from any other place in the island either by public bus and taxi or by private means and rented car and motorbikes. And if you are romantic enough don't miss an evening walk from Fira, with the full moon to light your way ([click here to view hotels in Messaria by Greekislands.com](#)).

the village of  
*Vothonas*



6 km far from Fira at the Southeast, it is situated Vothonas, a small scenic village built in a valley, with small cute houses and few residents. It is worth seeing the two churches built in caves; the “Panaghia tis Sergeinas” and the “Panaghia tis Tripas” (meaning “of the hole”).

As Vothonas is close enough to the main road, it is easily accessible. It is a short walk from Messaria and you can always use your car or rent one.

the village of  
*Messa Gonia*



Village at the interior of the island 8 km far from Fira at the southeast, on the way to Kamari. The village suffered from the earthquakes of 1956 and was partly abandoned by its residents who settled to Kamari. It is a traditional village, surrounded by vineyards, one of the major wine production centres of the island.

The church of Panaghia Episkopi dating back to 1100 is one of the older and most interesting of the island. Being an orthodox church, it has been turned to catholic during the Venetian domination; orthodox have taken it back during the Ottoman domination. At the interior one can admire the sculpted decoration as well as the old Byzantine icons, some of them going back to the 11th and 12th centuries. The church dedicated to Virgin Mary and a great local feast takes place on the 15th of August with folk music and dance; food and wine are offered to the people participating to the feast.

Don't miss to visit the Canava Roussos, a family winery established in 1836, at the entrance of the village. You may taste various types of wines produced there, see the place and buy products. Some small taverns offering typical dishes of Santorini are available in the Village, but there are no lodging facilities.

Access to the village is easy by the buses running to Kamari, which run regularly and very frequently in summer. Rented or private car is also an alternative.

the village of  
*Exo Gonia*



Small traditional village, 12 km far from Fira at the South-east, with few permanent residents. The village has kept the way of leaving of the past; it is quiet and unaffected from big crowds. Narrow streets, beautiful

houses, a flat landscape and a marvellous view, people sitting in the courtyards, enjoying their company and greeting the people passing by.

An old factory of tomato paste has been transformed to a cultural centre, and it is possible to find interesting art exhibitions. There are no accommodation facilities, but food is available in the few taverns and cafes. Access is possible by private or rented car or even by walking from Pyrgos or Messa Gonia (3 km approximately from both).

### the village of *Megalochori*



At a distance of 10 km far from Fira at the Southwest, it is found Megalochori. Its name in Greek means “big village”, but in fact with 460 permanent residents, the name is not fully justified! However, Megalochori is one of the most representative villages of Santorini, having kept almost intact its features. Typical traditional Cycladic houses, neoclassic buildings and small houses dug in the volcanic rock blend together with harmony.

As the rest of the villages, we find here also the typical small white churches, some of them with their blue domes; the most important of them are that of “Panaghia ton Isodion” dedicated to Virgin Mary, with a beautiful wood carved icon screen and Byzantine icons of Russian style, and Aghios Nicolas Marmaritis. Is in fact a Doric temple of the 4th century B.C. converted to Christian church; the features of ancient architecture have been left almost intact. Its name is owed to the marble (“marmaro” in Greek), the main building material of the ancient temple, retained in the Christian church...

It is also worth seeing the wine factory of Boutaris, one of the most well known firms of wine making in Greece. Various programs in three languages guide the visitor in the history of the island and of wine and teach the secrets of wine tasting.

Two local feasts (“panighyri”) take place on the 1st of July on the feast of Aghioi Anargyri and on 15th of August, in honour of the Assumption of Virgin Mary. Hotels, rooms to let and a camping are available, as well as taverns and cafes.

Megalochori is on the road to Acrotiri. Public buses running regularly and more frequently in summer connect the village with Athinios, the port, as well as with the other villages of the island. And there is always the choice of taxi, rented or private car and motorbike ([click here to view hotels in Megalochori by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the port of *Athinios*



It is the new port of Santorini, 12 km far from Fira at the South, almost at the middle of the caldera coasts.

Some cafes and one or two mini markets are available to serve the passengers arriving by the ships of the line, but it is not a settlement.

Athinios is connected with Fira, but also with other villages by bus, which run regularly and are more frequent on arrival or departure of the ship.

### the village of *Pyrgos*



An inland village built on the slope of the mountain Profitis Ilias, Pyrgos is situated 7,5 km far from Fira, at the southeast and has 730 permanent residents. The houses are arranged amphitheatrically surrounding the remains of the Venetian castle (today known as “kasteli”) offering a magnificent view.

Apart from the “kasteli”, it is worth seeing the Monastery of Profitis Ilias on the top of the mountain, built in the 18th century. Several precious religious artefacts are shown to the visitor; among them the adorned mitre of the Patriarch Gregorius the fifth, crosses and silver bound books, as well as Byzantine icons dating back to the 15th century. The view from the Monastery is breathtaking, it can be seen almost the entire island. The monastery is 4 km far from Pyrgos, at the South.

The church of “Theotokaki” is one of the older churches in Santorini, dating back to the 10th century.

It is also worth visiting the winery of Santo, one of the wine making companies of the island. There is an exhibition of photographs and local products of Santorini. The visitor can taste various types of wine produced by the company. In the folk museum of the village are hosted items of everyday life of the village in the past.

There are various types of accommodation, including a luxurious hotel, taverns where you can eat well, cafes and some bars. A series of cultural activities are organised during the first days of September, with plays, music concerts, poetry etc.

Access to Pyrgos is possible by public bus, taxi, private or rented cars and motorbikes. Cars are not allowed in the village; you should leave your vehicle at the parking at the entrance of the village ([click here to view hotels in Pyrgos by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the village and beach of *Kamari*



One of the best organised places in Santorini Kamari is situated 10 km far from Fira, at the South east. It is a new village, reconstructed after the earthquake of 1956 and fully developed in a tourist resort, with 1350 permanent residents.

Apart from the beach, it is worth seeing the ruins of ancient buildings by the sea.

An old winery that of “Volcan” agency established in 1880 has been converted to a museum of wine production. It is presented the process of wine making, as well as the equipment and machinery used, traditional artefacts etc.

Various cultural activities, including a Jazz festival, take place in August during the local festival known as the “Kamariano Panighyri”. A local feast, also in honour of Virgin Mary (“Panaghia Myrtidiotissa) takes place on September 24th. Again, there is plenty of music and dance and food and wine is offered to the participants.

A lot of hotels and rooms to let of any category and for all budgets can cover the needs of the visitors; there is also a camping. However, as Kamari is one of the spots of attraction in Santorini, it is advised to book accommodation, especially during August. You will not have problem with eating, as there are several restaurants, taverns and snack bars for any taste. Bars, cafes and discos can fill your nights and warrantee your entertainment and an outdoor cinema, the only one on the island, can fill some of your evenings.

You can find various shops for gifts and souvenirs, but also for your needs during vacation. A medical centre is available in case of health problems. Excursions are made in summer to the nearby island of Anafi. The boats depart from the small port of the village.

Kamari is well connected by public bus with Fira and the rest of the island; especially in summer the bus service runs every 15 minutes. Travel agencies and rent-a-car facilities are also available, and there is always the alternative of taxi or private car.

Kamari beach is one of the most popular and crowded beaches of Santorini, Kamari is located at the eastern part of the island. It is a long, more than five km. beach, with black sand and crystal clear deep blue water.

A good number of taverns and cafes are situated along the beach and various sea sports are available, including a scuba diving centre.

Access is easy since Kamari is well connected by public bus with Fira and the rest of the island; especially in summer the bus service is very frequent. Travel and rent-a-car facilities are also available, and there is always the alternative of taxi or private car ([click here to view hotels in Kamari by Greekislands.com](#)).

## the village of *Emporio*



Built at the middle of the big plain of the southern part of Santorini, Emporeio is 12 km far from Fira at the South and has 1770 permanent residents. Due to the tourist development the village has been expanded and it tends to join the nearby resort of Perissa at the east.

Emporeio is a rather impressive village. Fortified during the medieval times, the old village has such narrow streets and paths that it difficult even for two people to walk side- by side or cross each other. The houses climb on the slope of a hill and those built higher look like a castle if seen from the exterior.

Only a few remains of the castle are seen today; the remains of the two entrances are better preserved.

It is worth seeing the square tower, known as Goulas, at the northern part of the village. It has been built during the Ottoman occupation of the island to protect the people from pirates' invasions and host safely the treasures of the Monastery of Patmos kept there.

A local feast ("panighyri") takes place on the 22nd of October, in honour of Aghios Averkios, the protector of wines.

Several alternatives of accommodation are offered in Emporeio. Hotels with sport facilities and rooms to let cover However, due to the vicinity with Perissa and the other popular beaches of the eastern part, in summer it may be difficult to find accommodation. As in every other village, food is not a problem. Taverns, cafes and bars are more than sufficient, offering good food, wine and amusement.

Emporeio is easily accessible by public bus (being on the way to Perissa, the bus is very frequent, especially in summer), taxi or rented and private car and motorbike.

## the village and beach of *Perissa*



Due to its impressive long black sandy beach, Perissa is the most well known summer resort of Santorini. Situated at the south-eastern edge of the island, it is 15 km far from Fira and has 470 permanent residents. Due to the tourist development, Perissa has almost been joined with the nearby village of Emporeio.

It is worth seeing the Byzantine church of Aghia Irini (St. Irene), the patron saint of the island, from whom it has taken its actual name, as St Irene died on the island, while in exile.

The church of Panaghia Katefiani, dedicated to Holy Mary, is another interesting church, dug in the rock with a magnificent view to the sea. The Monastery of Timios Stavros (Holy Cross), built at the beach, has an impressive church of 19th century.

If you are interested in archaeological sites, don't miss to visit the ruins of Ancient Thira on Mesa Vouno, at a height of 300 m. The excavations have revealed part of the Dorian city: sanctuaries, a Doric temple of Dionysus, the forum, the theatre and the gymnasium, all dating back to the periods between 4th and 1st centuries B.C. From Perissa you will reach Ancient Thira only on foot, an hour walk.

Three local feasts ("panighyri") take place in the village on the 29th of August in honour of St. John, on the 8th of September in honour of Panaghia Katefiani and on the 14th of September in honour of the Holy Cross.



Any kind of accommodation from luxurious hotels to camping is available in Perissa. A good number of taverns, restaurants and cafes of various tastes can satisfy any desire. And plenty of discos, bars and clubs promise to give you an unforgettable and intense nightlife.

There are various shops for with gifts and souvenirs, but also with clothes and anything you might need. In case of health problems, a medical centre is available. Access to Perissa is possible via the public bus, running from Fira every 25 minutes in summer

Situated at the South-eastern part of the island, it is one of the most impressive beaches in the Aegean. Black sand, made of lava, is extended for some 7 km, combined with crystal clear water and a glaring and burning sun. Due to this unique combination, Perissa is the most popular beach.

Well organised, it offers accommodation facilities, including a camping (it is advised to check if it is available), food and drink at the sea front taverns and bars, and a range of sea sports as windsurfing and water skiing; there is also a diving club. Some trees at the sea front make the beach ideal, since they offer the precious shade, in general difficult to find at the Aegean islands.

It is well connected with the rest of the island by public buses, running regularly especially in summer, by rented or private car and motorbike ([click here to view hotels in Perissa by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the beach of *Perivolos*



3 km far from Perissa at the South it is found the beach of Perivolos. Sandy with clear water, the beach is one of the quiet ones of Santorini.

A few rooms to let and small taverns and cafes are provided for those who choose this place for staying.

Access is possible by rented or private car from Perissa; walking is also a good alternative, since the distance is short ([click here to view hotels in Perivolos by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the beach of *Aghios Georgios*



Successive to Perivolos, at a distance of 0, 5 km from it, at the south, it is situated the beach of Aghios Georgios. The beaches are suitable for those preferring a solitary swim and avoid the massive crowds.

The beach is accessible from Emporeio and Perissa (3 and 3, 5 km respectively), by rented or private car and motorbike. Walking is also an alternative.

### the beach of *Vlyhada*



Situated at the southern part of the island, slightly at the west, Vlyhada is a very beautiful quiet enough beach, 13 km far from Fira.

Long enough, with dark sand set below the yellowish volcanic cliffs carved by the winds and the water and forming small caves, sharp edges, a natural sculpture, a moon landscape.

Access is possible by car or motorbike.

### the village of *Akrotiri*



Situated 15 km far from Fira, at the south-western part of the island, this village of 450 people has been famous thanks to the very important Minoan settlement brought in light by excavations conducted at the site since 1967, firstly by Sp. Marinatos and after his death by Chr. Doumas, up to now.

Buried under the tons of volcanic ashes, this prehistoric settlement was left almost intact and archaeologists have found a settlement which had been active since at least the 3rd millennium B.C.

The most impressive discovery is that of the Minoan settlement which had been disappeared under the volcanic ashes of the explosion in circa 1500 B.C.

A well organized town, with two – store luxurious houses some of them with fascinating frescoes, pottery and various precious finds, along with burnt food remains have been brought to light during the excavations.

The site is open to visitors, but many of the finds, especially the frescoes have been transferred in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens and the new Archaeological Museum of Fira.

Apart from the prehistoric settlement which is worth seeing more than once, it is interesting to visit the Venetian castle, as well as the churches of Aghia Triada and Ipapandi.

An asphalted road leads to the cape, 3 km far, at the very west of the island, with a magnificent view and a lighthouse. A few hotels and rooms for rent are available, most of them open from April to October, as well as some taverns and cafes.

Akrotiri is close enough to the sea and swimming is possible at the nearby beaches; Kokkini Ammos (“red sand”) is the most well known of them.

A few local feasts (“panighyri”) take place at Acrotiri; two in May (12th and 29th) and two in August (6th and 15th), the latter being more important as they are dedicated to Jesus Christ’s Transfiguration and to the Virgin’s Assumption.

The village is connected with Fira by public buses which run every hour in summer; from 9 am to 8 pm. Taxis and rented cars or motorbikes are always a good alternative. The asphalted road is good enough and leads also to Kokkini Ammos at the South of the village and to Faros at the very west end of the island ([click here to view hotels in Akroti by Greekislands.com](#)).

### the *Red Beach*



Just a step from the archaeological site of Akrotiri it is situated Kokkini Ammos. Not only one finds again the black sand and blue water; the beach has taken its name (“red beach”) from the impressive red lava cliffs dropping to the sea and surrounding the beach.

This impressive beach seems to have been painted on one of the frescoes found in the Minoan settlement. Tolerant to nudism. Food and drink are available at the nearby hotel.

Access is possible by car, but also on foot; the beach is some 500 m at the south of Akrotiri. Boats leaving from Akrotiri can bring you to other and beaches of the area.

### the *White Beach*



At a walking distance from Kokkini Ammos at the west there is the beach Aspri Ammos “white beach”. Here again we have the same scenic environment, but the cliffs surrounding the beach are whitish. Access is possible by boat or by walking.

### the beach of *Messa Pigadia*



Messa Pigadia & Apothikes are small, quiet beaches at the south, with access mostly by boat, suitable for those who don’t like big crowds.

Access is possible by car or motorbike.

the island of  
*Thirassia*



A small island opposite Oia; a bit of the once round island that was Santorini before the explosion of 1500 B.C. Along with Oia, it forms the northern entrance of the caldera. Its extent is 9 square km and it has 150 permanent residents.

The main settlement is Chora (or Manolas), not far from the sea and Korfos on the beach at the Eastern part; Riva, just opposite to Oia at the North and Potamos at the west are the rest.

Thirassia is a typical Cycladic village with a way of life as it used to be before the invasion of tourism. Tiny houses of various colours give a special character to these small settlements. Few people and fewer tourists stroll around the narrow streets and

What are plenty here are calmness, traditional timing and natural life. Local herbs, scents, an unspoiled beach with clear blue water, a marvellous view of Oia and wilderness are what the island can offer to those who choose to spend some days here.

A few churches at Chora and at Potamos are worth seeing, and if you are on the island on the 21st of September you may attend the local feast in honour of Panaghia Giatrena (Virgin Mary).

A hotel and some rooms to let are available; you will find good food with local dishes in the few taverns and cafes.

Access to Thirassia is possible by boat from Oia; excursions are organised in summer. The boat will leave you in Riva and a taxi can get you to Chora and Potamos.

## *Why Santorini*

Because of the most breathtaking and unique landscape you could ever find; a combination of a volcano with a deep blue crystal clear sea and a bright sun.

Because the sunset at the caldera is an unforgettable experience.

Because it is the most romantic place to fall in love and to get married.

Because visiting a volcano still alive is not that common!

Because you can record meters of video tapes and take an endless number of photos.

Because food and wine are delicious and you have many opportunities for amusement.

Because the Minoan settlement at Akrotiri is one of the most famous and interesting archaeological sites you have ever seen.

## *Shopping - Local products*

All the local products of the island are very delicious, due to the fertile volcanic soil.

Santorini is famous for its wines, especially the sweet red dessert wine, the “visanto”.

You will also find white table wine and, if you are lucky enough, the red dry wine known as “brouSCO”.

Ask for the yellow peas known as “fava” and try to find tomato paste made of the small local variety of tomatoes.

In the taverns and restaurants of the island taste the tomato croquettes, ask for fava and try the local goat cheese (although rather rare). In the pastry shops and bakeries ask for “melitina”, sweet cheese pies made of local cheese. Try the barley twists at the traditional bakery in Karterados.