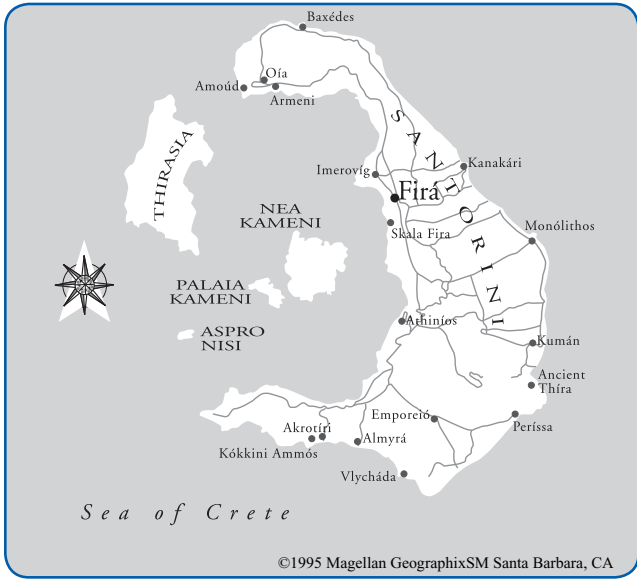


NOTES

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GENERAL INFORMATION In 1450 BC, this volcanic island erupted forming Santorini's spectacular crescent shape. Santorini now consists of three main islands, Thira, Thirasia and Aspronisi. Originally named Thira by the Dorians, the island's name was later changed to Santorini, after St. Irene, during the 13th century Venetian settlement.

Santorini is one of the many popular islands that comprise the Cyclades; the chain of islands surrounding the once sacred island of Delos. Delos (now uninhabited) is one of the most important archaeological sites in Greece and is considered the mythological birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. This chain of islands is best known for its beaches and whitewashed cliff-top villages with stunning views. Santorini is the southernmost island of the chain and is considered to be one of the most beautiful of all the Greek islands.

The ship drops anchor off of Skala, which is 890 feet (270 m) below the small town of Fira (Thira), the island's capital. It can be reached from Skala by cable car, donkey or climbing the more than 600 steps. Fira overlooks the caldera and the island of Nea Kameni.

Devastated by an earthquake in 1956, Fira was re-built, and engraved into the volcanic cliffs with domed churches and barrel-roofed cave houses. The terraces are packed with hotels, bars and restaurants. With a population of about 2000, it is the largest community on the island.



PORT EXPLORER & SHOPPING GUIDE

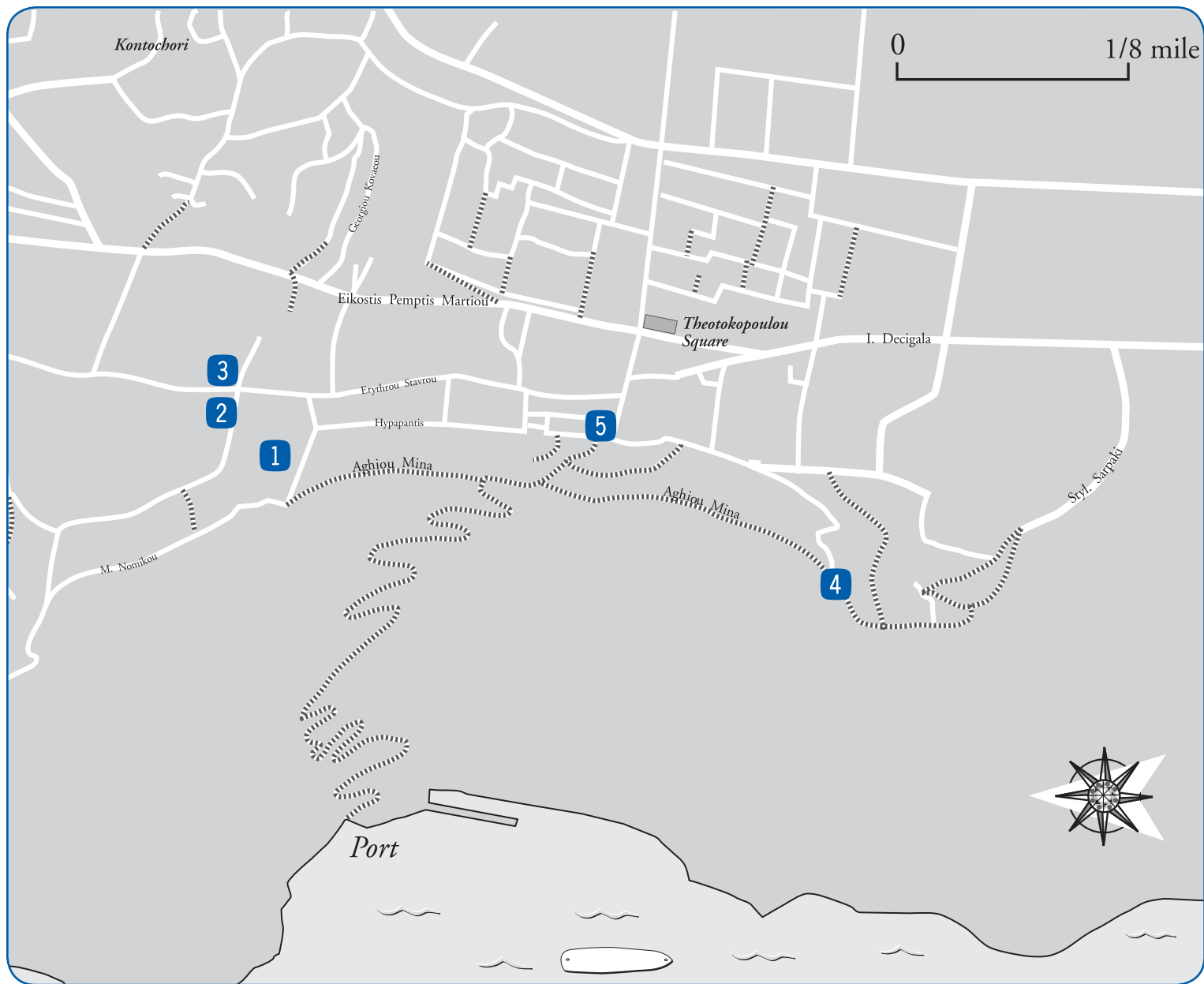
Santorini

HISTORY The island's geological history began at the time when Europe and Africa were still joined together. At that time, the Aegean was dry land and linked the mainland of Greece to Crete. After a series of geological upheavals, the Aegean sank beneath the surface of the sea, an amazing event that occurred about six million years ago. The land masses that we see today are the mountain peaks of the lost Aegean, that protrude above the water. We now call the many individual land peaks, islands of the Aegean Sea.

Geologically, Santorini is one of several ancient volcanoes lying in the southern Aegean volcanic arc. During the Minoan era, approximately 1450 BC, the volcano erupted changing Santorini's geography forever. The center of the island sunk into the sea and Santorini went from a circular volcano to the shape of the crescent-formed islands that we see today. The explosion exterminated all life on the island and produced a tidal wave so immense, 820 feet (250 m) high, traveling at a speed of 217 miles (350 km) per hour, that it claimed the lives of the entire Minoan civilization on the island of Crete. Crete is less than 75 miles south of Santorini.

Throughout the years Santorini was subject to many more volcanic eruptions, and most notably the 1956 earthquake that created fear among its residents as well as massive destruction.





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PLACES OF INTEREST

- 1 The Cable Car Station** is located in Firá and connects the tender landing area of Skala to the island's capital. There is a charge for each transfer in either direction.
- 2 The Archaeological Museum** is located opposite the cable car station in Firá and is best known for its prehistoric finds. This impressive museum houses early Cycladic figurines, artifacts from Akrotiri, Mesa Vouno and artifacts from the Hellenistic and Roman eras.
- 3 The Mégaro Ghisi Museum** is located in the northern part of Firá (opposite the Archaeological Museum). It houses manuscripts from the 16th through the 19th centuries, maps, engravings, paintings and photographs of Firá before and after the 1956 earthquake. The museum is actually a restored 17th century mansion and one of the oldest buildings in Firá, complete with ancient architecture and a lavish courtyard.

- 4 Agíou Miná** is an 18th century church, which has become the symbol of Santoríni with its distinctive blue dome and white bell tower. This private church is located at the edge of Agíou Miná street facing the caldera.
- 5 The Orthodox Cathedral** is dedicated to Ipapantí (the Coming or Presentation of Christ in the Temple). The cathedral is also known to the locals as Our Lady Beloniá.

Beyond Firá

Ancient Thíra – is approximately 6 miles (9 km) southeast of Firá. As you make your way up to the end of the Mésa Vounó peninsula 1,210 ft (370 m), you will be in the heart of the remains of the ancient inhabitants of Santoríni. The ruins stand on terraces overlooking the sea.

Akrotíri – is located a little over 7 miles (12 km) southwest of Firá and is one of the most impressive archaeological sites in the Cyclades. Excavations began in 1866 and have uncovered Minoan pots, and more recently the entire ancient city of Akrotíri was unearthed. The city was well preserved for 3,500 years under tons of volcanic ash.

Oía – (pronounced EE-AH) is situated at the northern tip of the island, about 7 miles (11 km) northwest of Firá. It is a small fishing community, and is the island's third port. This town is famous for its spectacular sunsets and beautiful restored houses that were damaged after the 1956 earthquake.

Antoniou and Boutari Wineries – are two of the most popular wine production facilities on the island. Santorini wine is a well-known export. Both wineries are open to the public.

- Admission charges are generally in local currency.
- When going ashore, passengers are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Firá and the island of Santoríni we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Some shops may be prepared to bargain.

Tipping: When a service charge is not included in a restaurant bill, a 10 – 15% gratuity is suggested.

Local Cuisine: Fish and seafood feature prominently on Greek menus, as well as fruits and vegetables. In restaurants olive oil, garlic and herbs are used in traditional Greek dishes. Bread is served at every meal in Greece. The breads vary with flavorings of currants, herbs, wild greens, or cheese. Koulourákia are sweet or plain rolls, tsouréki is the festival bread loaf and paximádia is twice-baked bread, to name a few.

Traditional psefrokeftedes (meatless meatballs) are native to the island of Santoríni. These are made from a batter of flour, tomato juice, grated onions, vegetables and mint. The island is also famous for its fava beans and small tasty tomatoes.

Drink Specialties: The most common drink in Greece is wine (either white or red). Greek drink specialties also include retsina (wine flavored with pine resin for improving the quality), the local spirit ouzo, and dessert wines from the north Aegean. Small cups of Greek coffee are common at breakfast. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING FACILITIES All shops are independent on the island of Santorini and their individual opening and closing times vary. Shops throughout the island cater to tourists and usually remain open throughout the day, possibly closing for an hour or two during lunch. Many tourist shops will remain open late into the evening, especially in Firá.

Santorini wine, gold, and silver jewelry are among the most popular tourist items. Traditional handicrafts and locally produced pottery are also items of interest.

A Value Added Tax (VAT), is almost always added to most purchases. Visitors from outside the European Union who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change, and RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY The unit of currency in this port of call is the euro. There are 8 euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cent pieces. Every euro coin carries a common European face. On the obverse, each Member State decorates the coins with their own motifs. No matter which motif is on the coins they can be used anywhere inside the Member States. There are 7 euro notes. In different colors and sizes, they are denominated in 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euros. The notes are uniform throughout the euro area; unlike coins, they have no national side. All euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the euro area.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES The main post office is located in Firá. Telephone calls may be made from the O.T.E. (Greek Telecommunications Organization) office located in the center of Firá. International telephone calls can also be made from street kiosks equipped with meters and from public phonocard booths. Telephone cards can be purchased directly from kiosks and the local O.T.E office.

AT&T: 00-800-1311 / MCI: 00-800-1211 / SPRINT: 00-800-1411

TRANSPORTATION Transportation on the island is limited, due to the few roads available and the limitations of automotive vehicles. There are three ways of reaching the mountain-top village of Firá, which is located 890 feet (270 m) above the Port of Skala. Guests can either climb the zig-zag series of steps, which total more than 600 steps built on an incline, travel by donkey along the same steep path, or use the local cable car.

The town of Firá is pedestrian only, and guests requiring transportation will have to go to Main Square in order to catch a taxi or bus.

USEFUL WORDS

Yes • Nai
 No • Ochi
 Hello • Yeíá sas
 Good Bye • Antío
 Thank You • Efcharistó
 You're Welcome • Parakaló