

Spotlight on Santorini

HISTORY

The Cyclades islands, situated in the Aegean off the east coast of the Peloponnese, are named for the circle they form around the sacred island of Delos in the center. They make up a most satisfying archipelago for island hopping owing to their proximity of each other and numerous and regular ferry services between islands.

The Cyclades epitomize the postcard image of the Greek islands with their dazzling white buildings offset by bright blue church domes, while golden beaches meet an aquamarine sea. Some of the islands have vigorously embraced tourism while others have maintained their idyllic secluded and ancient charm.

The volcanic island of Santorini is the most southern of the Cyclades. Many breathtaking sites and rare phenomena of volcanic activity on the nearby small islands of Nea and Palea Kameni, make Santorini an unforgettable experience. The island is adorned with wonderful sea caves, beautiful little bays, mesmerizing sea and charismatic locals.

Thousands of visitors come to Santorini every year to witness one of the most majestic sunsets offered when on top of this wild rock. Many also visit to learn of the mythical lost world of Atlantis that was said to have been swallowed by the sea when the volcano erupted 3,500 years ago causing the end of the Minoan civilization. Around 1500 BC, the Stroggili volcano (as the original island was called), erupted with catastrophic but incredible results. The Stroggili island disappeared along with the city of Atlantis and today's remaining island, Santorini, is composed of the earth and lava that were pushed up from inside the earth. In fact, subsequent eruptions have divided Santorini and the island is now actually four islands linked by roads.

Arriving from the sea, the steep ascent from the port to the town is composed of at least 580 steps upward. Donkeys are available to take visitors up the hill, as is a cable car, for those who don't wish to walk the ascent. The town itself is very beautiful with white washed houses and many churches.

DOCKING

The ship tenders passengers into Skala Fira, the small port below the capital.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

Please check your tour ticket for the correct meeting time and location for your tour. Your cruise line representative will direct you to your transportation.

HOW TO GET TO TOWN

There can easily be explored on foot, and buses run hourly to Akrotiri and Oia from the bus station at the end of Gold Street.

TRANSPORTATION

To get to Fira, located on a mountain top, your best bet is the local cable car, which you can catch at

the pier area of Skala below. The fare is approximately € 4.20 per person, one way. United States dollars are accepted at the cable car. While in Fira, no transportation is needed. For those wishing to travel outside the city, for island sightseeing or travel to beaches, it is a short walk to the main square, where there is a central taxi station location.

SHOPPING INFORMATION

All shops in Fira are open when cruise ships are in port.

BANKING INFORMATION

Banks are normally open Monday to Friday in the morning and early afternoon. Some locations in the city are open in the evening and on Saturday for exchanging money.

POSTAL INFORMATION

Post offices will exchange money as well as handle mail, and are open throughout the day.

TELEPHONES

In order to use a telephone in Santorini, a phone card must be purchased. They can be purchased from kiosks, OTE (Organismos Tiliepikinionion tis Elladhos) offices and newsstands.

EMERGENCY#

In case of an emergency, dial 2286022649.



SANTORINI

PORT & SHOPPING MAP



CAPITAL

The capital of Santorini is Fira. The city has been rebuilt since a devastating earthquake in 1956.

SIZE

The island covers about 29 square miles.

LOCATION

The southern most of the Cycladic group of Greek islands, Santorini lies 130 nautical miles southeast of Piraeus and 70 nautical miles north of Crete.

POPULATION

There are approximately 8,000 people in Santorini, with roughly 1,650 living in Fira.

LANGUAGE

Greek is the spoken language throughout Greece. The language is probably the oldest in Europe with a 4,000 year-old tradition and a 3,000 year-old written tradition.

CURRENCY

The Euro is the national currency. Recommended stores accept credit cards and traveler's checks.

TIME ZONE

Santorini is on Eastern Europe Time. The ship may not always follow local time. Please adhere to ship's time while in port.

VAT

GLOBAL REFUND

Many stores participating in the Value Added Tax (VAT) refund program in which non-European citizens may be entitled to re-claim a portion or all of the tax paid (depending on the total purchase price). Each store's participating in the VAT refund program is discretionary. In addition regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change. It is the responsibility of each cruise ship guest making a purchase to inquire as to whether or not store participates in VAT refund program and if the purchase qualifies for a refund. For general questions regarding the participation of stores, please see your Port & Shopping Guide.



Shop where you see the Global Refund TAX FREE SHOPPING SIGN and simply ask for your tax refund cheque. Not all stores have a visible TaxFree Shopping logo so do remember to ask for Tax Free Shopping. To qualify you must spend min. EUR 120 (approx. USD 175) in one shop in one day. Show your purchases, receipts and passport to customs officials when leaving EU and have your Global Refund cheques stamped. Now you can collect your refund in cash at the nearby Global Refund Cash Refund Office or mail the check to Global Refund for direct crediting of your credit card. **It feels even better when you shop Tax Free.**



GUARANTEE

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SIGHTS TO VISIT WHILE SHOPPING

A. THE CABLE CAR STATION

The cable car links the tender landing area of Skala to the capital city of Fira. Hours are from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm daily. (Transfer Charge) The easiest way to get to and from Fira on your own is to take the cable car. The fare is approximately € 4.20 per person, one way. The alternative from the port is to take a donkey ride up or climb the stairs. It should be noted that walking would take around 30 minutes. Make sure you agree on a price before your ride.

B. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Located north of town, this museum houses a collection of Dionysiac figures and Cycladic figurines as well as artifacts from Akrotiri, Mesa Vouno and the Hellenistic and Roman eras. It is open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. (Admission Fee)

C. THE MEGARO GHISI MUSEUM

This museum is located across from the Archaeological Museum. It was once owned by the Catholic diocese of Santorini and has now been restored as a cultural center. It has a good collection of photographs of Fira before the earthquake in 1956 as well as old maps and prints.

D. AGIOU MINA

This structure has become the symbol of Santorini because of its distinctive blue dome and white bell tower. It is located at the edge of Agiou Mina street facing the caldera.

E. OIA

Oia is a small historic village on the island of Santorini where local customs and traditions have been preserved. The town is well known for its picturesque architecture and houses that have been delved into the porous volcanic rock. Oia remains one of the foremost tourist attractions of the Aegean Sea with spectacular sun sets and natural beauty. In recent years, Hollywood has used Oia as the backdrop of movies such as Lara Croft Tomb Raider and Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants.

Locations found inside on map

Tune in to Shopping Channel 22

