Santorini Greece Port Guide

The caldera viewed from Oia
Santorini is one of the most popular Greek Islands. It was formed ~3600 years ago by a massive volcanic eruption. The island was reshaped forming the six islands we see today. Santorini is the largest, but it's only ~ 10 miles long and ~3 miles wide at the mid-section.

Terminology is confusing. The Greek name for “Santorini” is “Thira” or “Thera”. The capital city is “Fira”, but is also called “Thira” or “Thera.”

Cruise ships anchor next to dramatic, 700 foot high cliffs at Fira. You will ascend the cliffs at one of three ports; namely, Fira (Ormos Firon), Oia (Ormos Ammoudiou), or Santos Winery (Ormos Athinios) depending on the tour you choose.

Santorini is a beautiful and romantic island. Enjoy the breathtaking views. Explore the beautiful buildings, volcanic beaches, churches, museums, etc. Be sure to leave some time for Greek food and shopping for jewelry, glass art, leather, crafts, clothing, wine, etc.

GPS Coordinates:
This guide includes GPS Coordinates for tourist sites and key locations. Open this port guide in one window on your computer and open Google Maps in a second window. Copy and paste the GPS coordinates into Google maps to find sites and get directions and time for travel by car, bus, walking, or bicycle. The coordinates can be used with any Google map format such as “map”, “satellite”, “earth”, and “terrain” views at any map scale.

These coordinates can also be used in hand-held or vehicle GPS devices. Note that these devices can accept different formats. It's important to set your device to accept data in this format:

   Degrees, Minutes, and Seconds shown as N ddd° mm' ss.ss",  E ddd° mm' ss.ss"

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CAVEAT
Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify the information you use for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

Tom Sheridan

NOTE:
I would like to thank Len Cole, Raymond Ma, Sharon Sumliner, Carol Mills and Mike Engelberg for their help on this port guide.
Cruise ships anchor at Ormos Firon (Old Port) near the cable car where passengers ascend the 700 foot cliff to Fira (also called Thira), the capital city.

**TRAVEL OPTIONS from a Cruise Ship to the Top of the 700 Foot High Cliff:**
1. Take the ship’s tender to the dock at Ormos Firon (Old Port of Fira). Ride the cable car (4 euro), walk up 588 steps, or ride a donkey (5 euro) to the top of the cliff at Fira (Thira).
2. When your ship's tender arrives at Ormos Firon, board a speedboat to Ormos Ammoudiou at Oia. Transfer from the boat to a bus up the cliff to visit Oia. Then the bus will transport you to Fira.
3. Take a cruise ship shore excursion that includes a boat ride to Ormos Athinios, the ferry port, where you board a bus. At the end of your island tour, the bus will drop you off at the top of the cliff in Fira.

**TRAVEL OPTIONS from Fira Down to the Old Port Dock for the Tender Back to Your Ship:**
Use the cable car, walk, or ride a donkey down the cliff to the dock.

Points “A” thru “E” on the map above show my rental car driving tour route using these coordinates:

- **A)** Fira – Parking Lot for Rental Cars  
  N 36° 25' 22.20", E 25° 25' 49.67"
- **B)** Santos Wines – must visit site, fantastic views  
  N 36° 23' 13.70", E 25° 26' 14.45"
- **C)** Pyrgos Kallistis – great place to visit  
  N 36° 22' 52.60", E 25° 26' 56.89"
- **D)** Perissa – the black beach, relax with lunch  
  N 36° 21' 21.51, E 25° 28' 30.84"
- **E)** Oia – the most popular tourist site  
  N 36° 27' 45.91, E 25° 22' 40.06"

For info, here is the airport location  
N 36° 24' 10.59", E 25° 28' 22.75"
It's about 700 feet vertical distance up the cliff from the tender dock to Fira. The cable car entrance is at the white building on the left.
There are three options to get from the dock up/down the 700 foot high cliff to Fira:

1. The cable car is a 3-minute, 4 Euro ride. Lines can be long coming back down to the dock in the afternoon. Get there early enough to return to your ship on time. In May 2013, I waited ~ 30 minutes in line for the cable car down to the dock. The lines could delay return to your ship one hour or longer!

2. It is a tradition in Greece to ride donkeys up/down steep, zig-zag trails. Many adults, and kids especially, regard this as a memorable experience. It's 5 Euros for a donkey ride.

3. You can walk the 588 steps on the zig-zag trail. Walking and the donkey ride take the same time. I've heard complaints about donkey poop on the walkway and the walkway is slippery!

Sources of Information:

This website has impressive photos of Fira

For general information, see http://www.kalispera.se/islands/cyclades/santorini.html

This website has extensive, useful info, photos, etc. on Santorini:
http://www.greeka.com/cyclades/santorini/santorini-excursions.htm


Pages 27-30 in the guidebook cover Fira. Also, the guidebook has an excellent review of the history of the formation of Santorini by leading scientists.

You could easily spend an entire day in Fira exploring the narrow, cobblestone paths, taking in the scenic views, shopping, and enjoying a drink or meal. It's a classic, old Greek city with beautiful white buildings, churches, museums, and more!
Here are the GPS coordinates for the map above.

- **Cable car entrance/exit (1500 feet to bus stop)**
  - N 36° 25′ 12.9″, E 25° 25′ 50″

- **Donkey trail & walkway entrance/exit (1200 feet to bus stop)**
  - N 36° 25′ 7.84″, E 25° 25′ 50.57″

- **Fira bus station and taxicab stands**
  - N 36° 24′ 59.1″, E 25° 25′ 58.7″

The walkway is flat and there are many stores along the route. It's a good place to shop.

There are two important tourist sites near the bus station:

- **Hypapante Cathedral**
  - N 36° 25′ 00.5″, E 25° 25′ 54.8″
  

- **Museum of Prehistoric Thira**
  - N 36° 24′ 59.5″, E 25° 25′ 57.2″

  Exhibits go back several thousand years. It's a small museum, rated as a top attraction in Fira. Hours Tuesday through Sunday 8:30 am to 3 pm Admission: 3 euro
Map & Photos at Cable Car and the Intersection where you Turn to Bus & Taxi Station

This route is 1500 feet to the Bus Station.

A) Cable Car

GPS = N 36° 25′ 12.9″, E 25° 25′ 50″

(Photo below)

Exit the cable car, turn left, and walk ~ 150 feet to the intersection at "B"

GPS = N 36° 25' 12.73", E 25° 25' 51.81"

(Photo Below)

Turn right at this intersection (next to the Archaeological Museum). It's 1350 feet to the Bus Station.

For more guides, see www.TomsPortGuides.com
Walking Route to Rental Car Parking Lot (map below)

This parking lot was the pickup and drop-off point for the car we rented from Santorini Car Hire. The parking lot is used by several rental companies, but it might not be used by your rental company! We met our agent at the cable car and walked with him 1200 feet to the parking lot.

Turn left from the Cable Car exit (A). Walk to (B) shown in the photo on the previous page and turn left, toward the Catholic Church and Museum.

At point (C) on the map, walk through the Arch. (photo below). Continue 780 feet to the parking lot.

A) Cable car entrance/exit
   GPS = N 36° 25′ 12.9″, E 25° 25′ 50″
B) Turn left at intersection
   GPS = N 36° 25' 12.73", E 25° 25' 51.81"
C) Archway
   GPS = N 36° 25' 14.79", E 25° 25' 51.64"
D) Parking lot   GPS = N 36° 25' 22.20", E 25° 25' 49.67"

Travel Options from Fira to Oia

Your cruise ship tender will drop you at Ormos Firon, the Old Port dock at Fira. If you take the cable car, walk, or ride a donkey up to Fira, you can walk to the Bus & Taxi Station. The public buses are cheap, but they are crowded and don't run on time. Lines for the buses returning to Fira from Oia are so long that you might stand in line until the third bus and worry you might miss your ship.

I believe a round trip cab is a better option to/from Oia than a public bus. The driver will return to Oia to pick you up at a specified time. Cost for the round trip taxi is ~ 50 euros.

A popular travel option to Oia is the speedboat from the dock where your ship's tender dropped you off. The boats are run by the "Union Boatmen of Santorini", the same people who operate the tenders for the cruise ships. Their partner bus service is NST Travel. Tickets are sold at the dock for 20 euros/person. That covers a 12-minute speedboat ride to Ammoudiou Bay at the bottom of the cliff next to Oia. You board a private bus to ride up a switchback road to a parking lot in Oia. You can explore Oia for 1, 2, 3, or 4 hours and then board a private bus to Fira. Raymond Ma and several fellow travelers used this service and were pleased with it.
If you use the speedboat option, you will be dropped off at a private parking lot right across from the Main Bus Stop & Parking Lot. If you arrive/depart Oia using the ship's tour, a cab, or a public bus, it will, most likely, be at the main bus stop & parking lot. This is the only lot where buses can easily turn around. **However, there are many parking lots. Know where your meeting point is and go there at the specified time.**

From the **Main Bus Stop & Parking Lot**, walk South 420 feet to the large church at Nikolaou Nomikou square. Go west on the “main path” as shown in this map. **Oia Castle/Fortress** has spectacular views, see [http://www.santorini360hotels.com/landmarks/oia/oia-fortress](http://www.santorini360hotels.com/landmarks/oia/oia-fortress).

Some travelers walk down to the beaches. I have not been to the beaches, but cite these comments from the blogs.

- **Amoudi Beach** is one of the most charming Santorini Beaches - clean, clear waters, a small harbor and several quaint fish taverns and cafes.
- **Areni beach** has a view to Thirassia and clear blue deep water. It is a rocky and not comfortable to rest there but you may hire a sunbed and enjoy. There is a bar downstairs and a port with ships going, for example, to Thirassia. Areni beach is small and it is difficult to get to. It is accessible only on foot. It’s almost 300 steps!
OIA – One of the Most Beautiful and Photogenic Villages on Santorini

Oia is north of Santorini with breathtaking views of the sea, the volcano, caldera and the islands of Aspro and Thirassia. From the main bus/cab parking lot, it's a 420 foot walk south along a narrow path to the church. The path is on the right side of the church in this photo below. This is Nicolaou Nomikou, the main square in Oia. The pedestrian street in front of the church runs East-West with many connecting small pathways to explore the area.

Mobility Issues: The main pedestrian walkways are relatively flat with a few slopes and some stairs. We find it easy to walk. If you chose to go everywhere to see everything, you'll encounter some slopes and stairs.

There are numerous shops, cafes, restaurants, art galleries, churches, souvenir shops, old mansions, a few traditional Cycladic windmills, and a maritime museum. Be sure to explore the narrow alleyways toward the sea for different views. Keep your camera ready for postcard photos.

The best spot for panoramic views is Oia Castle. Mike Engelberg reminded me that it's tricky to find the pathway to Oia Castle/Fortress. The problem is that it's down on the edge of the cliff, so you can't see it until you get to it and there are no signs pointing the way. In May 2013, I walked to the castle, measured GPS coordinates and took photos to create the walking route with turn-by-turn directions on the following pages.
Walking Route from Main Bus & Taxi Parking Lot to Oia Castle

Use "Get Directions" with these GPS Coordinates to create this Google Map

A) Oia main bus stop  
N 36° 27' 47.10", E 25° 22' 35.25"  
B) Church  
N 36° 27' 40.70", E 25° 22' 27.32"  
C) Bear left  
D) Red Bicycle restaurant  
N 36° 27' 38.17", E 25° 22' 24.04"  
E) Oia Castle ruins  
N 36° 27' 43.04", E 25° 22' 34.91"  

For more guides, see www.TomsPortGuides.com
Walking Route from the Main Parking Lot to the Church

This Google Satellite image (photo left) shows more detail. When you are in the parking lot, look to the southwest corner. You'll spot a steady stream of people coming and going from a narrow side street to the south.

Turn left on that side street. There will be a number of steps, but I found it easy to walk. You are walking slightly uphill to the church.

You will enter the main square from the right side of the church as shown at point (B) on this map at left.

Once you get to the church, you've arrived in a drop dead gorgeous area with great pathways, many shops and cafes, and an unbelievable number of nooks and crannies to explore.

To reach Oia Castle, walk 720 feet west from the church to the point (C) where the pathway divides, as shown on the map on the previous page.

Bear left at point (C) as shown in the photo below
When you bear left at (C), you'll walk down several steps. (photo below)

Continue walking along the path. You will go past (D), the Red Bicycle Restaurant (photo below left)

Walk down a flight of stairs at the restaurant and turn right at the church. Actually, you have to turn right. (photo below)
Continue walking along the water front. You'll see (E) the Castle ruins (photo below right)

You can walk on top of, and around the castle. You are on the edge of the cliff with breathtaking views of the caldera to the east and south, the sea to the west, and Ammoudiou Bay below you. It's a must-visit site and a great place to start your tour of Oia.

With a 10x zoom lens, you'll get photos of the windmills to the north (photo below)

The panorama of the area will help you decide which places to explore in more detail. Before you visit Oia, be sure to view the 360° video at http://www.santorini360hotels.com/landmarks/oia/oia-fortress.
Self-Guided Touring of Oia and Fira

Oia is a must-visit site. It's the most beautiful location on Santorini. Fira is a nice city, but it is a must-visit site for a different reason; namely, you can't get off the island without going through Fira.

You don't need a guide to walk with you in Oia or Fira. The issue for self-guided touring is transportation. I'm not keen on public buses, but they are cheap and many people use them. Although I have not used it, I would pick the speedboat and bus ride to Oia for 20 euro/person from the cruise ship tender dock at Fira. Taxis between Fira and Oia would be my second choice (~ 50 euro round trip).

Getting Back to Your Ship on Time

Once you enter the island of Santorini, the only way back to your ship is by descending the cliff at Fira to the dock for your ship's tender. Most people ride the cable car. Some walk the stairs or ride the donkeys.

There are six cable cars. Each car can hold 6 passengers, but cars might only have 4 or 5 passengers. The theoretical capacity of the cable car is 1200 people/hour. I measured ~ 2.5 minutes for the ride. That's about 864 people/hour assuming 6 people in each car.

Our ship carried 3000 passengers. It would take 2.5 to 3.5 hours for all those people to ride the cable car!!!

Be prepared for long lines at the cable car. Plan accordingly to get back to your ship on time.

On May 15, 2013, the Ruby Princess and MSC Fantasia were in port. "Port load," the number of passengers plus crew, for the two ships was 7039. I waited in line for the cable car from 3:30 pm to 4:00 pm. The line was getting longer around 4 pm. Some people on our ship stood in line for an hour. People who worried they would miss the ship, found the courage to walk the donkey trail to the dock.

To determine the number of ships in port, go to http://ports.cruisett.com/schedule/Greece/805-Santorini_Island

Click on the month your ship will anchor and read the "Port Load" for the day you will be in Santorini. Our port lecturer said there can be as many as nine cruise ships at Santorini. WOW!
Tourist Sites Beyond Oia and Fira, and Tour Options on Santorini

If it's your first visit to Santorini, go to Oia. If it's a return visit, or if you wish to see more sites, there are several options for self-guided touring. There are private bus/van excursions, public buses, rental cars, rental scooters, ATV's, etc. and boat rides around the island. Also, some people hike the island.

An important consideration is that Santorini is a tiny island 10 miles long and about 3 miles wide. You are not going far. Travel time is not a major issue unless you are standing in line waiting for a cable car or public bus.

In this section, I describe my rental car tour and Sharon Sumliner's and Len Cole's boat tours around the island.

Rental Car Touring of Santorini

NOTE: Renting a car is not for everyone. It's a personal decision. You have to be comfortable with it.

I was introduced to rental cars in Santorini when we shared a car rented by Bob and Carol Mills. It was a fantastic tour. I decided to rent a car for my May 15, 2013 visit to Santorini.

Bob Mills bought maps for his GPS and brought it with him. He also had an International Drivers Permit from AAA for $26. The permit is good for one year. I bought maps for Greece and Italy for my Garmin nuvi 2460 LMT for $70. It took several hours to download and install the maps to my GPS.

Do you need a GPS?

I do. I wanted a GPS because streets on Santorini do not have names nor addresses. There are signs on major roads listing towns along that road and signs pointing to towns. Fira has one-way streets that can be tricky. At some intersections in the country, there are no signs; you have to figure out which way to go. You could buy a book of road maps, but then someone has to study the maps rather than enjoy the views. Another advantage of a GPS is that when you pick the car up, you can press "Where am I" on the GPS and save that location. No matter where you go, you'll find your way back to that location because it's in your GPS.

It's difficult to find good maps for Santorini. I have provided details on our driving tour with GPS coordinates. You can use this information to create your own "Google Map" driving tour of Santorini and print it.

Renting a car in Santorini is a "different" experience - totally unlike car rental in the USA:

- **Prices:** I called the Avis 800 number in the US. Their price was outrageous = 4 times the price of Santorini Rental Agencies. I rented a 7 passenger van for 49 euro including extra insurance. Fuel was 17 euro. The 66 euro cost was shared by six of us in the van. Whether you rent a 4 or 6 passenger vehicle, it's an incredibly inexpensive way to tour Santorini.

- **Rental Agency:** I rented from Santorini Car Hire support@santorinicarhire.com This is the same company used by Bob and Carol Mills. Both car rentals were fine.

- **Manual Transmission Only:** All the cars are manual transmission. When I drove manual transmission in college, there was a hand emergency brake handle between the seats that was useful when backing up on a hill. The van I rented in Santorini had a foot pedal emergency brake that was not useful for reverse when backing up a grade.

- **Delay in picking up the car:** We were on the first ship tender to Santorini and the first ones on the cable car around 8 AM. The rental agency had sent me an email with details on picking up the car at Fira. The instructions were to take the cable car to the top, go to any merchant and ask him to call this number +30 211 800 3693 and that an agent would appear within half an hour with a sign with my name. I went into a shop near the cable car and asked the merchant to call the number. It was busy. I came back several times before he could get through on the phone. The rental car companies are busy in the morning. Be prepared for a slight delay in getting the car. RELAX, you're on vacation.

We walked with the agent to the parking lot. See page 8 of this port guide for a detailed map showing the walking route from the cable car to the parking lot.

- **Paperwork:** It took a few minutes to fill out the paperwork and inspect the vehicle.
• **Gas level:** The vehicle had about 1/4 tank of gas. The instructions are to fill it up to that level or higher before you drop it off at the parking lot. We estimated how far we had driven, assumed 20 mpg, converted that to liters, and stopped at a gas station asking the attendant to put that much gas in the tank. It was just over 1/4 tank, so we did not add more fuel.

• **Returning the vehicle:** Park the car in the lot, put the keys under the floor mat, and walk back to the cable car. The car is unlocked, but it's a tiny island. If someone stole it, they couldn't go far.

**Driving Tour Route with GPS Coordinates**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Fira rental car parking lot</td>
<td>N 36° 25' 22.20&quot;, E 25° 25' 49.67&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Santos Winery</td>
<td>N 36° 23' 13.70&quot;, E 25° 26' 14.45&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Pyrgos Kallistis parking lot</td>
<td>N 36° 22' 52.60&quot;, E 25° 26' 56.89&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Perissa beach</td>
<td>N 36° 21' 21.51, E 25° 28' 30.84&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E) Oia main bus stop &amp; parking lot</td>
<td>N 36° 27° 47.10, E 25° 22' 35.25&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have shown the entire rental car driving route on page 2 of this port guide.

Use these GPS coordinates in Google satellite, map, earth, and terrain views at any magnification scale to examine the area around a specific location in detail. Enter the coordinates in Google Maps "Get Directions" to plot the route, distance, and driving time. Make your own maps and print them or save them as electronic files on your iPad or phone.

The first section of the route is 4.7 Km and a ten minute drive from the Fira Rental Car Parking Lot to the Santos Winery. (map at left)

Most passengers on cruise ships go north to Oia in the morning. To avoid the crowds, we went south in the morning and visited Oia in the afternoon. We arrived at Santos winery at 9:30 am, before the tour buses. We had the entire, fantastic site to ourselves!

Santos Winery is at the top of the cliff above the ferry port at Ormos Athinios. The views are spectacular looking north toward Fira. You'll see your cruise ship at anchor beside the cliffs.

In addition to spectacular scenery, Santos Winery is a relaxing place to have a coffee, a snack, sample wine, purchase wine, and view the flowers in bloom. It is an upscale, very impressive site.

The sign at Santos Winery has this description of the vineyard:

Santorini vineyard is reasonably considered a monument of world heritage. It is self-rooted, 3,500 years old, potentially the oldest vineyard in the world. Santorini volcanic ecosystem has a natural resistance to diseases and is characterized by the rare rainfalls. The vines are nourished by the sea mist. They fight to survive on the anhydrous volcanic soil, giving the lowest yield per hectare in Greece. This unique terroir in combination with the human care such as reshaping of steep, hill-side terrains in stepped form, the so called "pezoules" or the special local basket-shaped way of pruning, the so called "kouloures" which protect the grapes from the strong winds, give Santorini wines good structure, crisp acidity, distinctive citrus fruits aromas, intense minerality, and increased aromatic complexity in barrel aged wines.
The next stop on the route was **Pyrgos Kallistis**, a village with attractive churches, narrow streets, restaurants, shops, museums, etc. The parking lot is near town center at the base of a hill. You walk up the narrow, winding pathways to the top of the hill. The higher you climb, the more you see. I climbed to the top to photograph several churches.
Driving route from Santos Winery to Pyrgos Kallistis (map below)

This satellite view, Google Map shows more detail at the parking lot area in Pyrgos Kallistis. (map at left)

As you enter town, you'll turn right at the main square. There are parking areas on both sides of the street.

Walk back to the main square. There are cafes at the square if you're interested in a drink or snack.

Turn right from the square and start walking up the narrow passages to ascend the hill. I walk to the churches because they're photogenic and good landmarks. The large churches are closed, but the little chapel at Saint Nicholas is usually open.
Photos of Churches in Pyrgos Kallistis (below)
The next stop on our driving tour was Perissa, the black volcanic beach. It's 13 Km and a 25 minute drive from Pyrgos Kallistis. We drove south, then east toward Emporio to get south of the mountain range.

This Google Earth view map (below) shows the driving route from (C) to (D)
We had lunch at Yazz. They serve fresh, organic Greek food and great drinks. We sat under a screen, with a slight breeze blowing, music playing in the background, and enjoyed great food, drink, conversation with friends, and gorgeous scenery around us. We didn't want to leave, but we had to drive to Oia for our last stop.

It's 24 Km and a 31-minute drive from Perissa to Oia Main Bus & Car Parking lot. I have listed the coordinates on page 17 of this guide so you can plot a map. We stopped for gas on the way back to Fira from Oia, dropped the car off at the rental car parking lot, and got in line for the Cable Car at 3:30 PM.
Conclusions RE Renting a Car in Santorini

CAVEAT: I am not trying to persuade you to rent a car. That is your decision.

For me, and several of my friends, car rental is the preferred way to explore Santorini. It gives us flexibility to go where we choose, and spend time as we wish. Santorini is a tiny island. We are never much more than five miles from where we rented the car. When Carol Mills rented her car, somehow the keys got locked inside. That's supposed to be impossible with a modern car. Within a few minutes of our call, an agent from Santorini Car Hire arrived to unlock the car. The island of Santorini impresses me as a clean, safe place to explore. It's a beautiful little island. And renting a car is cheap, especially if the cost is shared by four or more people.

If you are interested in creating maps for Santorini, here are some GPS coordinates that may be helpful

**Santorini Airport**
N 36° 24' 10.59", E 25° 28' 22.75"

**Arkrotiri**
N 36° 21' 30.8", E 25°23' 46.7"

**Archaeological site of Akrotiri**
N 36° 21 '06.1", E 25° 24' 14.2"

**Red beach**
N 36° 20' 55.8", E 25° 23' 38.5"

**White beach**
N 36° 21' 04", E 25° 22' 54.4"

**Vlychada Beach (nude)**
N 36° 20' 28.4", E 25° 25' 47.5"

**Vlychada Marina**
N 36° 20' 13.4", E 25° 26' 07.4"

**Aghios Georgios Beach**
N 36° 20' 22.5", E 25° 27' 13.8"

**Perivolos Beach**
N 36° 20' 38.6", E 25° 27' 44.3"

**Perissa Beach**
N 36° 21' 14.3", E 25° 28' 24.9"

**Near Perissa Beach**

- **Prophet Elias Mountain**
  N 36° 22' 08.6", E 25° 27' 45.7"

- **Ancient Thira**
  N 36° 21' 51.2", E 25° 28' 47.8"

- **Koloumpos Beach**
  N 36° 28' 25.5", E 25° 25' 14"

**Near Oia**

- **Ammoudiou small boat drop off for bus**
  N 36° 27' 38.16", E 25° 22' 11.70"

- **Armeni**
  N 36° 27' 39", E 25° 22' 51"

**Towns**

- **Imerovigli**
  N 36° 25' 58.7", E 25° 25' 23.3"

- **Vourvoulos**
  N 36° 26' 08.2", E 25° 26' 08.9"

- **Karterados**
  N 36° 24' 39.8", E 25° 26' 48.2"

- **Mesaria**
  N 36° 23' 58.2", E 25° 26' 55.1"

- **Exo Gonia**
  N 36° 23' 14.5", E 25° 27' 30"

- **Emporio**
  N 36° 21' 25.79", E 25° 26' 39.42"

- **Kamari**
  N 36° 22' 27", E 25° 28' 49.8"
Sailing around Santorini

It's not surprising that sailing is rated as "the best tourist attraction at Santorini."
Imagine stepping aboard a yacht to sail in the caldera. It's one of the most beautiful sites in the world with deep blue, crystal clear waters, dramatic, colorful cliffs of Santorini, and other small islands as the backdrop. It doesn't get much better. This is the "stuff" vacation dreams are made of.

The company is Santorini Sailing. See http://www.santorinisailing.com/ info@santorinisailing.com. They operate four catamarans docked at Vlychada Marina, south of Fira. Three are sailing vessels; the fourth is powered. There are several sailing tours at different times of the day, including evening tours to see the sunset. Cruise ship passengers take 4 to 5-hour tours which begin at 10:00 am. The price range is $129 to $225 per person depending on the boat, number of passengers, length of tour, and type of lunch, i.e., BBQ or gourmet.

Map of Islands

For more guides, see www.TomsPortGuides.com
Use these GPS coordinates to locate the sites on a map

**Vlychada Marina**  
N 36° 20′ 13.4", E 25° 26′ 07.4"

**Arkrotiri**  
N 36° 21′ 30.8", E 25° 23′ 46.7"

**Red beach**  
N 36° 20′ 55.8", E 25° 23′ 38.5"

**White beach**  
N 36° 21′ 04", E 25° 22′ 54.4"

**Aspronisi**  
N 36° 23′ 1.33", E 25° 20′ 54.60"

**Thirasia Island**  
N 36° 26′ 8.83", E 25° 20′ 40.56"

Sharon Sumliner sailed on the "Dream Catcher" (photo right)
The "Dream Catcher" is a 62-foot sailing catamaran. A 5-hour excursion is offered as a public charter with room for 36 passengers.

Our group of four contacted Dina at Santorini Sailing from the US. She could not have been more helpful and responsive. Arrangements were made to pick-up at the top of the cable car, and everything ran smoothly. We were driven to the spot where our "chariot," the "Dream Catcher," awaited us. It's a fantastic catamaran with plenty of space for all guests and their beach bags. From the minute we boarded, we were treated as family by Captain Ted and his crew. He knew we were on a cruise ship and tailored the day's activities to get us back to the ship on time. A fantastic lunch was prepared on board, and the scenery could not have been matched. I would highly recommend Santorini Sailing for all ages.

*Sharon Sumliner*

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**The Caldera (photo above)**
Len Cole sailed on the "Triton"

It's a 43-foot luxury, powered catamaran yacht with an open deck of 800 square feet. Len Cole organized a private charter through Cruise Critic Roll Calls for 10 people for a 4.5-hour sail including a gourmet lunch. The yacht picked up Len's party at the cruise port tender dock at 10:00 AM and dropped them at Ormos Ammoudiou in the afternoon. A Mercedes minibus took them up the switchback road to Oia. They explored Oia for an hour. Then they boarded the minibus for a ride to Fira where they took the cable car to the dock.

Photo of Triton (below)

"Triton" provided ample shade in the cockpit for all that wanted shade, but our day was perfect under the sun or shade. Fabulous!

We stopped in one of the area's thermal bays. Captain Theo presented an overview of the yacht, the region's geography, history and culture.

This stop progressed into an opportunity for relaxation and enjoying the open bar with beer, wine and soft drinks while engaging in casual conversations.

Next, we motored out again and took up another mooring on Palea Kameni Island at Agios Nikolaos (a beautiful little white shrine) at the head of a thermal cove. (photo left) We climbed down the swim ladder into the cove's warmest center to stand on the rocks before returning to the boat. The water temperature in mid-May was at first bracing (Ooooh!) but enjoyable.

Captain Theo fired up the grill and served a gourmet feast of grilled calamari, shrimp saganaki, a roasted vegetable Briam dish, Greek penne pasta, Greek salads, eggplant salad, Tzatziki Yogurt dipping Sauce, and steak on skewers.

All ten of us had a seat in the shade around the comfortable cockpit table. Warm conversation continued as we enjoyed each course.

There was ample time for more relaxing drinks, sunshine and chatting before we set free the mooring ball and headed to the dock at Ammoudiou harbor. We boarded the waiting Mercedes minibus for a short drive up the cliff to the picturesque town of Oia. We enjoyed about an hour seeing the town through our camera's viewfinder. I got some great shots of the deep-blue water contrasted by the ultra white buildings with their blue domed roofs. We strolled the main pedestrian road through the town. At the other end of town we met the minibus for our ride to near the top of Fira's cable car for the trip back down to the dock and our ship's tender. At the end of a fantastic day all agreed it had been the #1 thing to do on Santorini that fine day.

Priceless! Santorini Sailing delivered on every promise. They easily earned my wholehearted recommendation.

Len Cole
User Feedback Is Welcome

Goal
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation.

Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend [www.CruiseCritic.com](http://www.CruiseCritic.com); it's free to join.

Why feedback is important
User feedback helps me make corrections and improve the format and content in my quest to produce the “ultimate” port guides. I welcome offers to collaborate with me or provide materials for use in my guides.

PLEASE Help “spread the word” about my website
The only negative feedback I get is, “I wish I knew about your port guides before my vacation”. Please tell your friends and post a reference to my guides and website on the blogs. To receive email notification when new guides are available, send your email address to me at TomsPortGuides@gmail.com

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Fortunately, a friend of mine on that ship complained to the purser and the ship stopped violating my copyright.

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Tom Sheridan