

Greece - Santorini

Although the island of Santorini is located in the middle of the Aegean Sea and belongs to the Cyclades, it is completely unique in character due to the volcanic landscape. It is an island that must be visited at least once in a lifetime because of its spectacular landscape and the unique way in which the villages have grown in total harmony with the surroundings further enhancing the natural beauty. Being in Santorini is an experience. The charming villages are built right on top of the Caldera, the white houses and the blue painted windows fight the reddish black rocks which rise from the deep blue sea.

Open your shutters to reveal one of the most exciting and magical images of nature. Stark sunlight draws the eye to flamboyant blue church domes and whitewashed houses, narrow terraces of bougainvillea and the backdrop of a dark glistening sea one thousand feet below.

Archaeologists believe that in about 1550 BC the island Strongyle (or Strogili which means rounded) was shattered and its remaining fragments constituted Thera, Therasia and Aspronisi. Tidal waves washed the shores of the surrounding islands and Crete. The eruption is estimated to have been four times more powerful than that of Krakatoa in 1883. Its repercussions within the Aegean area were tremendous. The sinking of Strongyle is frequently identified with the submergence of the mythical Atlantis.

The island of Santorini is home to eight marvellous beaches, some over 5 miles in length. Most of these beaches have the very distinct quality of being made of small, polished, black lava rock which give them a unique beauty and make them quite practical when compared to fine sand.

Each of the three cliff-top villages of Fira, Imerovigli and Oia offers an enticing selection of tavernas, bars and shops, hidden away in narrow, pedestrian cobblestone streets. We recommend the hiring of a car to discover the different parts of the island including the beaches on the east coast or the inland villages or the island wineries which now export some of the Greece's most acclaimed wines or the ancient sites of Thira and Akrotiki.

Santorini is also known for some of the world's most beautiful gold jewellery, fine handmade linen, woolen sweaters and artwork. The island now has some very smart boutiques offering local artifacts not just the usual tourist fair.