

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP ▶ Patience is a virtue

It's worth joining the queue of waiting guests at the *Náoussa* taverna in Firá for the restaurant's food and value for money → p. 42

INSIDER TIP ▶ Enigmatic T-shirt symbols

The stylish T-shirts designed by Werner Hampel at *New Art* in Firá leave you puzzling and make them an original souvenir to take back home → p. 44

INSIDER TIP ▶ Collages inspired by island's nature

The German artist *Leoni Schmiedel* creatively uses everything she finds in nature and the houses of Santorini for her collages → p. 44

INSIDER TIP ▶ Affordable yet comfortable accommodation

Although close to the centre, the *Hotel Golden Star* in Firá has a tranquil setting with pool and sea view → p. 46

INSIDER TIP ▶ Sea-inspired garden

Besides its tasty cuisine, *Jutta's Café* in Kamári attracts guests with its garden, lovingly decorated with sea shells → p. 55

INSIDER TIP ▶ Insider art

The gallery owner Antónios Argyrós exhibits international contemporary art in his unmissable *Art Space* gallery just outside Kamári. He also offers free wine-tastings → p. 58

INSIDER TIP ▶ In family hands

The traditional *Saliveros* taverna in Kamári is run by the whole family who go to great lengths to satisfy guests → p. 56

INSIDER TIP ▶ A village in a tranquil valley

The village of *Vóthonas* (photo above) appears to have stood still in time with very few inhabitants still living there. Those who venture here will be rewarded by the village's morbid beauty, untouched by tourism → p. 65

INSIDER TIP ▶ Dine like a prince of

Santorini

When Kamári locals go out to eat, they usually head for *Prince*. The restaurant serves the traditional yellow pea puree *fáva* flavoured with almonds and pork filet served with prunes → p. 56

INSIDER TIP ▶ Fantastic food, good value for money

Despite its unspectacular setting on the main road between Firá and Karterádos, the *Kyrá Niki* taverna more than makes up with a creatively decorated interior and excellent dishes at fair prices. Order a salad and you can eat the bowl as well! → p. 41

INSIDER TIP ▶ Adventure inside the caldera

Actively explore the caldera by taking up the paddles in a *guided sea kayaking tour*. Easier tours are also available for beginners → p. 106

INSIDER TIP ▶ Glass condoms

Only a handful of works exhibited at the glassworks gallery *The Wave* (photo below) in Oía are designed for use but many are sold for a good cause → p. 87

INSIDER TIP ▶ A no-go for vegetarians

Greek locals order kilos of meat straight off the barbecue at the *Kritikós* taverna near Vóthonas → p. 65

INSIDER TIP ▶ Honeymoon in blue

The "Endless Blue" apartment at the *Hotel Art Maisons* in Oía has been designed for honeymooners in mind with an open-air whirlpool and magnificent views → p. 90

INSIDER TIP ▶ God's garden

Hidden away from the seafront on the edge of Períssa, the *God's Garden* taverna serves authentic Greek dishes in large portions at very reasonable prices in the trees' shade → p. 77



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Ferry to Thirasia*

Early morning on almost every day of the week, a small boat ferries tourists and workers from Oía to Ríva on the neighbouring island of *Thirasia*. This free service returns to Oía in the afternoon → p. 91

● *Sacred food*

Patron saint day festivals are celebrated on the island with the preparation of a meal distributed to locals who queue up patiently in front of the church dressed in their Sunday best. This frugal feast is hosted e.g. by the *Ágios Artémios* church on October 20 at around 10am → p. 111

● *Wine tasting in a quaint village setting*

Unlike most of the other wineries around the island, the tiny *Gaválas Winery* in *Mégalochorí* warmly invites visitors to taste their wines for free in its cosy atmosphere. You can of course buy their wines here too → p. 61

● *Greek bagpipes*

Contrary to popular misconception, the Scots cannot lay claim to the invention of the bagpipe. Bagpipes were in fact a popular instrument played on Santorini and the other Cyclades islands particular at carnival time. You can learn more about this unique instrument and even listen to its sounds at the *Fortress of Akrotíri* → p. 72

● *Meeting the island's artists*

The pottery workshops and painters' studios at *Mégalochorí* are not a destination for the busloads of island-hopping cruise passengers who visit Santorini. Although some of the exhibitions resemble museums, none of them charge admission (photo) → p. 62

● *Pools open to the public*

If you are staying in a hotel without a pool but would like to lounge around one, the *Santorini Camping Site* and, in high summer, the *Hotel Golden Star* in *Firá* warmly welcome non-paying guests to use their pools. The only condition is you buy something from their poolside bar and do not bring your own drinks → p. 46, 47



●●● Dots in guidebook refer to "Best of..." tips

ONLY ON SANTORINI

Unique experiences

● *Cave apartments with skyline balconies*

Built into niches carved out of the caldera, these cave apartments are a great way to experience the true Santorini lifestyle. The *Scirocco Apartments* in *Firá* are a good address; the terraces and balconies appear to be floating between the sky and the Aegean → p. 47

● *Home of the dead*

Santorini's graveyards such as the one in *Vourvouílos* resemble small villages consisting exclusively of chapels. The ossuaries serve as the final resting place of generations of human skeletal remains → p. 49

● *Village hidden in the gorge*

The volcanic island is world renowned for its villages built into the caldera. Yet Santorini is also home to other settlements in the surrounding gorges with many houses tucked in caves – their whereabouts kept hidden from pirates. *Karterádos* is one of these villages → p. 48

● *Food on a tray*

In keeping with old Greek tradition, rather than offering you a menu, the waiter at the *Símos* taverna in *Firostefáni* will bring a tray full of tasty dishes to your table for you to choose from → p. 42

● *Port nestled below lava cliffs*

Santorini has battled against the elements of fire and water since the beginning of time. Nowhere is this more evident than down at the promenade along the tiny *Ammoúdi* port in *Oía* where the landscape is a compact mixture of volcanic ash, pumice, lava and sea (photo) → p. 83

● *Adventure beaches*

It helps to be of the adventurous type if you want to discover most of Santorini's tiny, secluded beaches. One of the island's hidden gems is the *White Beach* which can only be reached by boat → p. 74

● *Fishermen's caves*

The fishermen of Santorini also carved out caves from the soft rock where they kept their boats and fishing equipment. In *Akrotíri*, many of these niches have been transformed into tavernas; the *Meliha* taverna even has its own art gallery → p. 73



ONLY ON

DISCOVERY TOURS

1

SANTORINI AT A GLANCE



START: ① Firá
END: ① Firá

Distance:
📏 105 km/65 miles

2 days
Driving time
(without stops)
3½ hours



COSTS: 330 euros per person for accommodation, food and drink, admission costs, hire car incl. petrol

Paragliding: 38 euros per person, boat: 6 euros per person

WHAT TO PACK: swimwear

Santorini is a small island: hire a car for two days and you will have plenty of time to explore the island with breaks for swimming, relaxing or other activities. Taking time out for coffee or leisurely eating splendid food in splendid settings is also part of the Santorini lifestyle. The island's capital Firá occupies a central location on the caldera edge, making it the perfect base for this tour.

Would you like to explore the places that are unique to this island? Then the Discovery Tours are just the thing for you – they include terrific tips for stops worth making, breathtaking places to visit, selected restaurants and fun activities. It's even easier with the Touring App: download the tour with map and route to your smartphone using the QR Code on pages 2/3 or from the website address in the footer below – and you'll never get lost again even when you're offline.



→ p. 2/3

Pick up your rental car at 9.30am in ① Firá → p. 33 and follow the road along the caldera edge to the ② lighthouse → p. 75 at the tip of the cape of Akrotiri. You'll have amazing views over the wide-open sea to Crete on one side and of the entire caldera on the other. Head back to the village of Akrotiri and drive to its other side where you should plan to spend an hour visiting the ③ excavations → p. 69 of Ancient Akrotiri. Then wander down to the quay from where you can hire a **INSIDER TIP** small boat to spend an hour bathing and

