

This Greek Island Is One of the Most-visited in the World — With Instagram-worthy Views, Romantic Villages, and Relaxed Tavernas

Here's your ultimate guide to Santorini, the Cycladic showstopper that sets hearts aflutter.

By [Helen Iatrou](#) | Published on May 19, 2024



Lovers and [honeymooners](#) gravitate to Santorini to meander amid cliffside cave houses that hover almost imperceptibly above a lustrous, inky Aegean Sea.

A catastrophic volcanic eruption some 3,600 years ago, which saw half the island swallowed by the sea, is responsible for the dizzying visuals. Famed for its sunsets, photogenic blue-domed whitewashed churches, and intensely mineral white wine, Greek tourism's poster child has long epitomized romance. It's no wonder *Travel + Leisure* readers have repeatedly voted the Cycladic superstar among their [favorite islands in the world](#) as recently as 2023. It's that kind of mind-blowing destination you must experience once in a lifetime.

And while Santorini seems more geared toward couples, you don't have to be partnered up to enjoy a visit. Most travelers stay in accommodations in one of the caldera-facing villages in northwest Santorini, namely Oia, Fira, or Imerovigli. It's no coincidence that [eight Santorini hotels made it into the top 10 Greece-wide among 2023 T+L reader picks](#).

[Christos Stergiou](#), a T+L A-List Advisor and the CEO and founder of True Trips, said accommodations on Santorini's "off-caldera" side are worth considering if you're looking to dodge the crowds. Cruise ship passengers, in particular, make up many visitors who visit in the peak summer months.

"There's an advantage to staying on the caldera because you have the views. You exit your hotel, and you're in the heart of everything," he said. "In recent years, we've seen quite a few hotels opening up inland on Santorini, offering more of a private refuge."

Stergiou makes a similar recommendation in terms of sightseeing. “Hire a car and follow a road to see where it takes you,” he told T+L. “Or book a private walking tour to explore villages beyond Oia.”

Meanwhile, the island’s food scene has also improved in recent years. High-quality restaurants helmed by prominent chefs have opened within the island’s best hotels, showcasing superior local produce ranging from white eggplant to yellow split pea (fava). Fish tavernas on the waterfront and inconspicuous dining spots in the interior enhance culinary offerings.

Add black sand beaches and historical and cultural attractions, including an enigmatic ancient settlement and wine tasting at small-scale estates.

Dreaming of a Santorini getaway? Here’s how to plan your perfect vacation on the island.

Best Hotels and Resorts

Andronis Boutique Hotel

A consistent [T+L World’s Best winner](#), this caldera-facing Oia resort echoes traditional cave houses, once home to seafarers. Of [Andronis Boutique Hotel](#)’s 25 accommodation options, the largest and most lavish is the Prestige Suite. Emmanuel Renaut, chef and founder of three Michelin-starred Flocons de Sel, curates the menu at in-house restaurant Lauda.