PROGRAM

	Wednesday 6 June, 2007
9:00-9:30	Registration
9:30-10:30	Invited talk I: Data-driven and Procedural Analysis and Synthesis of Multimedia, I. Essa
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:00	Analysis I (Oral Session)
12:00-12:30	Coffee Break
12:30-13:30	Analysis II (Oral Session)
13:30-14:50	Lunch
14:50-16:10	COST 292 special session (Oral Session)
16:10-16:40	Coffee Break
16:40-18:00	COST 292 special session (Oral Session)

	Thursday 7 June, 2007
9:00-10:00	Invited Talk II: Recent Advances and Open Issues of Digital Image/Video Search, S.-F.Chang
10:00-10:30	Coffee Break
10:30-11:30	Tracking (Oral Session)
11:30-12:00	Coffee Break
12:00-13:20	Analysis III (Oral Session)
13:20-14:50	Lunch
14:50-16:20	Poster Session I
	Coffee Break
16:20-17:40	Coding (Oral Session)

	Friday 8 June, 2007
9:00-10:50	Industry Session
10:50-11:20	Coffee Break
11:20-12:30	CHORUS Panel on AudioVisual Search Engines
12:30-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:30	Poster Session II
	Coffee Break
15:30-17:10	Applications (Oral Session)

Wednesday, 11:00-12:00	
Analysis I (Oral Session)	
Title	**Authors**
Composite Object Detection in Video Sequences: Application to Controlled Environments	Xavier Giro, Ferran Marques
Using Decision Trees for Knowledge-Assisted Topologically Structured Data Analysis	C. Simon, J. Meessen, D. Tzovaras, C. De Vleeschouwer
Event Alignment for Cross-Media Feature Extraction in the Football Domain	Jan Nemrava, Paul Buitelaar, Vojtech Svatek, Thierry Declerck

Wednesday, 12:30-13:30	
Analysis II (Oral Session)	
Title	**Authors**
Surveillance Event Interpretation Using Generalized Stohastic Petri Nets	Artyom Borzin, Ehud Rivlin, Michael Rudzsky
A Framework for Ontology Enriched Semantic Annotation of CCTV Video	Bogdan Vrusias, Dimitrios Makris, John-Paul Renno, Neil Newbold, Khurshid Ahmad, Graeme Jones
Hidden Markov Models for Video Skim Generation	Sergio Benini, Pierangelo Migliorati, Riccardo Leonardi

Wednesday, 14:50-16:10	
COST 292 special session (Oral Session)	
Title	**Authors**
A Topology Preserving Approach for Image Classification	Le Dong, Ebroul Izquierdo
Orientation histogram-based matching for Region Tracking	David Marimon, Touradj Ebrahimi
A Directional Texture Descriptor via 2D Walking Ant Histogram	Serkan Kiranyaz, Miguel Ferreira, Moncef Gabbouj
A Review of Different Object Recognition Methods for the Application in Driver Assistance Systems	Andreas Laika, Walter Stechele

Wednesday, 16:40-18:00	
COST 292 special session (Oral Session)	
Title	**Authors**
Automatic Detection and Classification of Traffic Signs	Carlos Filipe Paulo, Paulo Lobato Correia
Using Multiple Domain Visual Context in Image Analysis	Phivos Mylonas, Yannis Avrithis
Discriminative Feature Selection for Applause Sounds Detection	Roman Jarina, Jan Olajec
Global Image Search vs. Regional Search in CBIR Systems	Stevan Rudinac, Marija Uscumlic, Maja Rudinac, Goran Zajic, Branimir Reljin

Thursday, 10:30-11:30	
Tracking (Oral Session)	
Title	**Authors**
Regression-Based Template Tracking in Presence of Occlusions	Ioannis Patras, Edwin Hancock
kNN-Based High-dimensional Kullback-Leibler distance for tracking	Sylvain Boltz, Eric Debreuve, Michel Barlaud
Probabilistic Matching Algorithm for Keypoint Based Object Tracking Using a Delaunay Triangulation	Trichet Remi, Merialdo Bernard

Thursday, 12:00-13:20	
Analysis III (Oral Session)	
Title	**Authors**
Using Graphics Processor Units (GPUs) for Automatic Video Structuring	Peter Kehoe, Alan F. Smeaton
Fast and Robust Graphic Character Verification System for TV Sets	Antonio Rama Calvo ,Ramon Alujas Tejada, Francesc Tarres Ruiz
Bayesian Region Growing and MRF-based Minimization for Texture and Colour Segmentation	Ilias Grinias, Nikos Komodakis, Georgios Tziritas
Image Denoising Method Using Diffusion Equation and Edge Map Estimated with K-Means Clustering Algorithm	Woong Hee Kim, Thomas Sikora

Thursday, 14:50-16:20	
Poster session I	
Title	**Authors**
A New Method for Infrared Weak Small Target Enhancement Based on Image Fusion	Lei Tang, Zong-gui Zhao
Visual Data Processing and Action Control Using Binary Neural Networks	A.V. Kazantsev
Using Condensation Tracking to Recover Stroke Order of Chinese Calligraphic Handwritings with CCM	Ying-fei Wu, Yue-ting Zhuang , Yun-he Pan, Fei Wu
Spatio-temporal constraints for matching view-based descriptions of 3D objects	E. Delponte, N. Noceti, F. Odone, A. Verri
Accurate Breast region Detection in Digital Mammograms Using a Local Adaptive Thresholding Method	Maysam Shahedi B K, Rassoul Amirfattahi, Farah Torkamani Azar, Saeed Sadri
Recognition of Botanical Bloom Characteristics from Visual Features	Margit Lang, Harald Kosch, Stella Stars, Carsten Kettner, Janine Lachner, Doris Oborny
3D Motion Recognition based on Ensemble Learning	HongLi Zhu, PengYing Du, Jian Xiang
Equivalent Key Frames Selection Based on Iso-Content Distance and Iso-Distortion Principles	Costas Panagiotakis, Anastasios Doulamis, Georgios Tziritas
A Semantic Event Detection Approach for Soccer Video Based on	Liang Bai, Songyang Lao, Weiming Zhang, Gareth J.F.Jones, Alan F.

Perception Concepts and Finite State Machines	Smeaton
Voice Query Transcription and Expansion Scheme for Efficient Music Retrieval	Seungmin Rho, Byeong-jun Han, Eenjun Hwang, Minkoo Kim
Motorcycle Detection and Tracking System with Occlusion Segmentation	Chung-Cheng Chiu, Min-Yu Ku, Hung-Tsung Chen
A New Content-based Image Retrieval Using Color Correlogram and Inner Product Metric	Thurdsak Leauhatong, Kiyoaki Atsuta, Shozo Kondo
A Visual Tracking Algorithm for Real Time People Detection	T. D' Orazio, M. Leo, P. Spagnolo, P.L. Mazzeo, N. Mosca, M. Nitti
Motion-based Object Segmentation using Sprites and Anisotropic Diffusion	Andreas Krutz, Matthias Kunter,Thomas Sikora, Mrinal Mandal, Michael Frater
Learner's Activity During the Understanding of an Interactive Animated Mechanical System: Eye Tracking Investigation	Emmanuel Schneider, Jean-Michel Boucheix
Tracking based on local motion estimation of spatio-temporally weighted salient points	Vincent Garcia, Eric Debreuve, Michel Barlaud
Recognition of Hand Raising Gestures for a remote Learning Application	Bill Kapralos, Andrew Hague, Hamed Sabri
Scene Identification Using Invariant Radial Feature Descriptors	Laura Worthy, Eric Sinzinger
A Secure and Privacy Friendly 2D+3D Face Authentication System Robust under Pose and Illumination Variations	Filareti Tsalakanidou, Christos Dimitriadis, Sotiris Malassiotis
Vision-based human-computer interface using hand gestures	Janez Zaletelj, Jernej Perhavc, Jurij F. Tasic
Camera Motion Analysis in On-line MPEG Sequences	Fabricio Tiburzi, Jesus Bescos
Semantic Mapping of Image Databases using Perceptual Similarity	Christos Theoharatos, George Economou, Spiros Fotopoulos
Image Retrieval based on Wavelet Computation and Neural Network Classification	A. C. Gonzalez-Garcia, J. H. Sossa-Azuela, E. M. Felipe-Riveron
Cartoon Detection Using Fuzzy Integral	Antonio Rama, Francesc Tarres, Laura Sanchez
Edge Pixel Histograms Characterization with Neural Networks for an Improved Semantic Description	Antonio M. G. Pinheiro
A framework for ontology-driven multimedia analysis and composition	Stamatia Dasiopoulou, Ioannis Kompatsiaris, Lyndon J.B. Nixon
Exact and Speedy Computation of Legendre Moments on Binary Images	G.A. Papakostas, E.G. Karakasis, D.E. Koulouriotis

Thursday 16:20-17:40	
Coding (Oral Session)	
Title	**Authors**
XML-driven Bit Rate Adaptation of SVC Bitstreams	Tom Paridaens, Davy De Schrijver, Wesley De Neve, Rik Van de Walle
Optimized Motion Estimation for Robust Video Coding in Packet Loss Environment	Fuzheng Yang, Shuai Wan, Ebroul Izquierdo
Video coding based on distributed source coding	Cristian Perra, Daniele Giusto
Towards A Model Based Paradigm for Efficient Coding of Context Dependent Video Material	Sam J.C. Davies, Dimitris Agrafiotis, Nishan Canagarajah, David R. Bull

Friday 09:00-10:50	
Industry Session	
Title	**Speakers**
Large Scale Multimedia Processing at Google	Pedro Moreno, GOOGLE
Rich Media In Information Analysis	Torstein Thorsen, FAST
A broadcaster's perspective to multimedia access and retrieval	Wilfried Runde, Jochen Spangenberg, Deutsche Welle
Image analysis for multimedia understanding: why companies need it	Ana C. Andres del Valle, Accenture
SportScout and its Olympic Games Services in Athens 2004	Nikolaos Sfingos, SPORTSCOUT

Friday 11:20-12:30	
CHORUS panel on AudioVisual Search Engines	
Panellist	**Affiliation**
Jan Nesvadba	Philips Research Laboratories Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Stephane Marchand-Maillet	Centre Universitaire d'Informatique, Switzerland
Adrian Matellanes	Applications Research Center, Motorola Labs, UK
Paulo Villegas	Telefonica I+D, Spain
Torstein Thorsen	FAST, Norway

Friday 14:00-15:30	
Poster Session II	
Title	**Authors**
How to architect an IPTV system	Yuzo Iano, Marcus Pereira Magri
Channel Adaptive Multi-User Scalable Video Streaming with Unequal Erasure Protection	Hassan Mansour, Vikram Krishnamurthy, Panos Nasiopoulos
AVC Intraprediction Mode Decision Based on 4x4 Integer Transform Coefficients	Florian Obermeier, Marko Durkovic, Michael Zwick, Klaus Diepold
XML-based Exploitation of Region of Interest Scalability in Scalable Video Coding	Davy De Schrijver, Wesley De Neve, Davy Van Deursen, Yves Dhondt, Rik Van de Walle
An Alternative Scattered Pattern for Flexible Macroblock Ordering in H.264/AVC	Yves Dhondt, Stefaan Mys, Saar De Zutter, Rik Van de Walle
Online Collage CAPTCHA	Mohammad Shirali-Shahreza, Sajad Shirali-Shahreza
A Novel Geometrical Robust Image Data Hiding Scheme	Dan Wang, Peizhong Lu
Fast Protection of the Color of High Dimension Digital Painting Images	M. Chaumont, W. Puech

Title	Authors
Low Complexity Multiple Description Coding for H.264/AVC	Kenneth Vermeirsch, Yves Dhondt, Stefaan Mys, Rik Van de Walle
An Improved Wavelet-based Watermarking Method Using the Mathematical Morphology	Kasemsuk Sepsirisuk, Kiyoaki Atsuta, Shozo Kondo
Viewer authentication for personalized iTV services	Tilen Mlakar, Janez Zaletelj, Jurij F. Tasic
An XML-based Synchronization of Audio and Graphical Representations of Music Scores	Adriano Barate, Luca A. Ludovico
An Innocuous Visual Cryptography Scheme	Hyoung Joong Kim, Vasiliy Sachnev, Su-Jeong Choi, Shijun Xiang
Personal Video Coding for Very Low Bit Rate Applications	Cataldo Guaragnella
Media-Driven Dynamic Scene Adaptation	B. Pellan, C. Concolato
Applications of a Neural Network to Estimate Watermark Embedding Strength	Cong Jin, Shihui Wang
Motion Compensation and Reconstruction of H.264/AVC Video Bitstreams using the GPU	Bart Pieters, Dieter Van Rijsselbergen, Wesley De Neve, Rik Van de Walle
Multiple Digital Watermarking Scheme Based on ICA	Cong Jin, Ting Su, Liang-Gang Pan
Analysis of the Impact of Demosaicking on JPEG Image Compression	Colin Doutre, Panos Nasiopoulos
Adapting Surveillance Video to Small Displays via Object-Based Cropping	Luis Herranz, Jose M. Martinez
A New Spatio-Temporal Predictor for Motion Estimation in H.264 Video Coding	Spyridon K. Kapotas, Athanassios N. Skodras
Error resilient H.264/AVC video over satellite for low packet loss rates	Shankar Manuel Aghito, Soren Forchhammer, Jakob D. Andersen
Improvement of Image Retrieval by Fusing Different Descriptors	A. Macedonas, S. Fotopoulos, G. Economou
Empirical Analysis of Libs Images for Ovarian Cancer Detection	Claude Tameze, Robert Vincelette, Noureddine Melikechi, Vesna Zeljkovic, Ebroul Izquierdo
Analysis and Cryptanalysis of a Selective Encryption Method for JPEG Images	W. Puech, J.M. Rodrigues, A.G Bors
Optimal Estimation of Descriptor Scales for Multimedia Retrieval	Nikolaos Doulamis
A Feature Extraction Method for Multimedia Data Analysis in Robot Wireless Sensor Networks	Heng Huanga, Fillia Makedon, Dan Popab, Harry Stephanou, James Ford, Yurong Xu

Friday 15:30-17:10

Applications (Oral Session)

Title	Authors
Time-Compression of Speech in Informational Talks using Spectral Entropy	Mohammed Ajmal, Azadeh Kushki, Konstantinos N. Plataniotis
Cassandra Framework: A Service Oriented Distributed Multimedia Content Analysis Engine	Fons de Lange, Jan Nesvadba, Johan Lukkien
Multimedia Content Adaptation Modelled as a Constraints Matching Problem with optimisation	Fernando Lopez, Jose Maria Martinez
Design and Evaluation of a Metadata-Driven Adaptation Node	Michael Ransburg, Christian Timmerer, Hermann Hellwagner, Sylvain Devillers
Recursive Partitional-Hierarchical Clustering for Navigation in Large Media Databases	Angelica Lozano, Paulo Villegas

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CONFERENCE VENUE

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The Santorini group of volcanic islands possesses characteristics that are enough to satisfy even the most demanding visitor. Geological formations, antiquities, Byzantine monuments, medieval buildings, post-Byzantine buildings, endless pitch-black or red beaches, pathways, the town and villages with their own characteristics, unique views and entertainment are the very special characteristics have made Santorini the number one tourist destination in Europe in 2006 and the second in the world.

The island of Santorini with its capital Fira and thirteen villages offers unique scenery and an outstanding view at the highest point of the Caldera. Known officially as Thira, the island is visited annually by vast numbers of holidaymakers who gaze at the submerged caldera, epicentre of what was probably the biggest volcanic eruption in recorded history.

Its proximity to other beautiful islands such as Anafi, Ios, Sikinos and Folegandros offers unique opportunities for short getaways.

Beaches

Santorini's famous beaches are spread out mainly along the eastern and the south-eastern side of the island. Each beach has special characteristics, which make it unique and outstanding. The black shining pebbles, the unique land formations, the black, white and red sand, make up an unforgettable scenery. Most beaches are well organized offering the choice of lounging chairs, umbrellas, and various water sports.

Starting from the northern part of the island, the beaches on the coastline of Oia will instantly amaze, they have a wild and remote beauty. These beaches were frequented by locals, however recently they have been discovered by few tourists, mainly by families and couples; they can easily be passed by since they cannot be seen from the main road. Coming from Oia, one will first come upon the beach of Baxedes, then follows the beach of Koloumbos and lastly we come upon Pori, a small fisherman's port.

In the south-eastern part of the island one will find the beaches of Monolithos, Avis and Kamari: organized beaches mainly preferred by families with small children. Numerous hotels, restaurants, tavernas and small shops are located along the beaches, especially in Kamari. Water sports are offered at the beach of Avis, which attracts younger people. The beaches of Perissa and Perivolos together form the longest black-sanded beach on the island. Here one will find also a variety of tavernas and restaurants.

Finally we reach the most southern beaches of the island. Vlychada with its beautiful carved mountain, the "moonscape" landscape, sculptured by the wind through the years. The Red beach with its unique vertical cliffs, the White beach, which can be reached only by boat, and the unspoilt beach of Mesa Pigadia form the epilogue of an unrevealing landscape, which has been transformed through the ages.

Activities

Wineries

Indications tell us that viticulture and vine processes on the island of Santorini have a history of 3500 years although historical evidence commenced from 1700 B.C. in the form of pips that were found during excavations at Akrotiri and also pot engravings depicting grapes.

The Santorini vineyard is therefore extremely old and its uniqueness can be found in the fact that it is one of the very few vineyards worldwide that has not been affected by vine louse and has, therefore, not been planted with American characteristics, as was the case all over the world. Over the years, natural renewal has taken place and so age no longer applies to the vines. Bearing in mind that as long as the vine grows larger, its produce decreases whilst the quality of its grapes increases, it becomes clear that we are dealing with a unique product.

Apart from this, the factor that makes Santorini so different giving the varieties their unique character is, together with the microclimate (limited rainfall), the porous terrain of the island which is rich in pumice stone and lava.

Some of the major wineries in Santorini are Boutari Winery of Santorini, Canava Roussos, Hatzidakis Winery, Sigalas Estate and Gavala Vineyard

Archeological Sites

Two great civilizations have left their mark on Santorini: one belongs to prehistoric times and is apparent in what has been coming to light in the excavations at Akrotiri. The other is a Greek civilization represented by the ancient city located on Mesa Vouno.

Prehistoric Thera: Akrotiri The ancient city at Akrotiri is not merely the most important archaeological site on the island, it is also, thanks to its excellent state of preservation and the wealth of findings it has yielded, the most important prehistoric settlement found anywhere in the Eastern Mediterranean. Akrotiri could be called the prehistoric Pompeii of the Aegean. The Akrotiri archaeological site is temporarily closed to the public due to work in progress at the new environmental shelter which covers the site.

Ancient Thera: Mesa Vouno The strategic qualifications of the site attracted the attention of the Lacedaemonian colonisers of the island who founded their city upon the limestone rock of Mesa Vouno. From the 9th century B.C. until the spread of Christianity, the city of Mesa Vouno was the only urban center of the island.

Museums

The Museum of Prehistoric Thera located in the island's capital Fira, has special contents, masterpieces of art in the prehistoric Aegean, such as the famous wall-paintings and the unique gold ibex figurine, place it on a par with the Acropolis Museum of Classical Greece (Parthenon sculptures) and the Vergina Museum of Northern Greece. (Tel: +30 22860 23217)

The Wall Paintings of Thera Exhibition has the three-dimensional life-size reproductions of the wall paintings, which found in Akrotiri - Petros M. Nomikos Conference Centre, Firostefani. (Tel: +30 22860 23016-19)

The Archaeological Museum houses the finds representing the island's long history. The Museum contains collections of sculpture (ranging from the Archaic to the Roman period), inscriptions (ranging from the Archaic to the Roman period) and vases and clay figurines (dating from the Geometric to the Hellenistic periods). (Tel: +30 22860 22217)

The Folklore Museum located in Kontohori, Fira, in a cave house built in 1861. The museum displays workshops of carpenters, barrel makers, shoe makers and tinsmiths as well as an original old winery, a gallery with works of local current artists and document archives. (Tel: +30 22860 22792)

The Megaron Gyzi is a beautiful old mansion-museum, located in Fira, exhibits engravings of the 16th through the 19th centuries with dresses, views and maps of the Cycladic islands as well as old manuscripts and old photographs of how Santorini looked before the devastating earthquake of 1956 and paintings of well-known Greek artists who worked on the island. (Tel: +30 22860 22244)

The Naval Museum located in Ia, houses all kinds of displays featuring marine objects which trace the maritime history of the island, especially during the 19th century. (Tel: +30 22860 71156)

The Wine Museum presents the history of wine in Santorini from 1660 to 1950 with mobile and immobile figures and sound effects. It is located at the premises of the winery "Volcan Wines" of Koutsogiannopoulos family on the way to Kamari beach. (Tel: +30 22860 31322)

Churches

As is the case throughout the Cyclades, Santorini is abundant with more than 250 churches of all shapes and sizes. The ecclesiastical architecture of Santorini is notable for its delicacy and plasticity. Both features stem from the free creative imagination of the local folk craftsmen.

Panagia Episkopi is near Mesa Gonia is the church of Panagia Episkopi, founded by the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus. The marble templon of the church is a rare

example of marble-carving combined with wax decoration. The wall paintings of the church date from around 1100.

Orthodox Metropolitan Cathedral is located in Fira center overlooking the volcano and the sea. The original church was built in 1827. It was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1956, which leveled the church. The frescoes inside were painted by Christoforos Assimis, a local artist of exceptional talent.

Prophet Elias Monastery was founded at the beginning of the 18th century. Apart from the carved wooden templon, the monastery houses important old books, manuscripts and a collection of ethnographic material.

Catholic Cathedral is a baroque church with its elegant bell tower was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1956. It is dedicated to St John the Baptist and is part of the Catholic Quarter in the center of Fira.

Dominican Convert is located in the Catholic Quarter, in the center of Fira, with 12 nuns from different countries. The convent church, named Rozaria, is a fine example of island architecture embellished with baroque features.

Agios Nikolaos Monastery lies between Firostefani and Imerovigli. It was founded in 1651 and is dedicated to three saints, Panteleimon, Zoodohos Pigi, and Nicholas. The monastery houses a fine Byzantine icon of Saint Nicholas.

Volcano

The two small islands in the center of the Santorini caldera, Palea and Nea Kameni, " the volcano " to the local people, are the youngest volcanic lands in the Eastern Mediterranean. Palea Kameni (Old Burnt Island) is less than 2000 years old, while Nea Kameni (Young Burnt Island) began to form only 425 years ago and its youngest lavas are less than 50 years old. These two islands represent the volcano's most recent activity.

Hiking

The longest hike is from Fira, via Firostefani and Imerovigli, to Oia. It takes around 3 hours and offers fantastic views of the caldera. A shorter alternative (about a 30' walk) takes you from Imerovigli into Firostefani and finally to Fira. Remember your camera!

The old pathway from the summit of the Profitis Ilias to the hill (Mesa Vouno) where Ancient Thera was located, and from there to Perissa, is also very worthwhile.

Sea Excursions

Visit by boat the two small islands in the centre of the Santorini caldera, Palea and Nea Kameni, known to the locals as "the volcano". Combine this excursion with a visit to Thirassia and Oia. The boat trips start from the old port of Fira or from the port of Athinios depending on the route you choose. Don't miss the sunset when you 're on board!

Coach Tours

Escorted coach tours are a great way to see Santorini at your leisure and are good value for money. The "full day bus tour" takes you to Fira (a guided visit of the Museum of Prehistoric Thera is included), to Profitis Ilias, a winery for wine tasting, and finally to Perissa for a swim and lunch. The "traditional bus tour" includes a visit to Profitis Ilias, Pyrgos village, Panagia Episkopi, a wine tasting experience, and the chance to enjoy the famous Oia sunset.

Town of Fira

The capital of the island was moved to Fira from pirgos Kallistis in the beginning of the 19th century. Now Fira is a growing town with a population of about 2500 people, which lives in the present but tries to retain the local traditions of the past. In the summer, a loud and good-natured crowd of people strolls, carefree , on the roads which are parallel to the cliff and the small street that cross them.

The central part of the town, the market, is here. Numerous shops offer a great variety of merchandise, satisfying even the most demanding customers. Also, the offered merchandise, from the cheapest (cotton shirts and blouses) to the most expensive (furs and jewelry) give it a particular accent which is quite interesting to the visitor. The visit to the picturesque market of Fira is a pleasant walk.

Small houses, dug in the land, one- or two storied, have a view of either the sea or the land. Lit and crowded against each other, as they are, on the top of the cliff, they seem to be wanting to support each other, so they can reach outward, over the abyss. Straight lines are unknown; everything is in curves, giving a unique architectural characteristic to the houses of Fira which are sunk inside the earth. At Fira buildings do not have height, they have depth.

"Fira" today, is full of life, there are many things that you can do, not mater the age and the interest!

History & Culture

Human presences on the island seem to have existed since the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. The excavations at Akrotiri have confirmed that human activity on the island continued until the eruption of the volcano around 1500 B.C, which entirely buried the island beneath very thick layers of pozzuolona, At that point, all traces of human activity vanished from the island until the end of the 13th century B.C.

According to Herodotus, the island was initially called Strongyle (the Round One). Then later, because of its beauty, it was named Kalliste (the Fairest One). The Phoenicians settled in Kalliste, and after the Phoenicians, the Lacedaemonians arrived and renamed the island after their leader, Theras. In the 9th century B.C. Thera, became an important stopping point of that era in the travel routes between the East and the West. The Phoenician alphabet was adopted at this time for writing in the Greek language. Interestingly though, the conservative Therans, did not follow the cultural development of their counterparts in the other Cycladic islands. At about 630 B.C the Therans reached the north coast of the African continent where they founded Cyrene, the only Theran colony. From as early on as the 6th century B.C. Thera had its own coinage. During the Classical period in Greece [5th and 4th century B.C.] Thera did not play any significant role in the events of that Hellenic time. During the Peloponesian War Thera sided with Sparta, as expected. In Hellenistic times the island's strategic position made Thera an important base for the war campaigns in the Aegean of the successors to Alexander the Great.

During the Roman Empire, Thera was little more than a small, insignificant island. However, when Christianity reached the island early, an organized church was established by the 4th century A.D. The island had neither political nor military significance in Byzantine times, although Alexius I Comnenus [1081 - 1118] founded the church of the Panagia Episkopi at Gonia. After the fall of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade [1204], the Duchy of Naxos was founded and Thera became the seat of one of the four Catholic Bishops of the Duchy. The name Santorini was given at that time by the Crusaders, named after a small chapel of Agia Irini [Santa Irene] which some say was located at Perissa and others say it was at Riva on Therasia.

In the years under Frankish rule [1207 - 1579], Santorini experienced the development of a thriving cotton cultivation and viticulture, but the island suffered as much from piratical raids as it did from the rivalries between the local Latin rulers as well as the Duke and the Sultan.

The Turkish dominion [1579 - 1821] resulted in the abolition of piracy and the development of international trade. The Santorinians created close contacts with the great harbours of the Eastern Mediterranean (Alexandria, Constantinople, Odessa) where they founded important communities.

In 1821, Santorini with its shipping power, took part in the fight for independence from the Turks, and in 1830, the island became part of the independent Greek state. Up until the beginning of the 20th century shipping, textiles, tomato production and viticulture were all flourishing markets, but the change from sail to steam-driven ships and the relocation of the island's factories to mainland Greece had a negative effect on the island's economy. After the 1956 earthquake there was a huge decrease in the population resulting in an economic catastrophe. Towards the end of the 1970s however, tourism began to develop, bringing economic relief to the island.

Geography

The world famous island of Santorini is the southern most island of the Cycladic group in the Aegean Sea, and is located 63 nautical miles north of Crete.

Its surface area is 73 sq. km. and its population, distributed among thirteen villages, just exceeds thirteen thousand six hundred people, according to the census of 2001.

Latitude: from 36 19' 56'' to 36 28' 40''N

Longitude: from 25 19' 22'' to 25 29' 13''E

Geology

The present-day crescent shape of the island is a consequence of the activity of the volcano in prehistoric times. The island itself owes its very existence to the volcano.

The last huge eruption of the volcano dates back 3,600 years, to the late Bronze Age. Thirty million cubic meters of magma in the form of pumice and ash were blown to a height of up to 36 kilometers above the island. Pumice deposits, dozens of meters thick, buried one of the most prosperous pre-historic settlements of that period, feeding the myth of the lost Atlantis.

The mild activity of the volcano after this major eruption continues into the present (the most recent eruption occurred in 1950) building up two small islands within the caldera, Palea and Nea Kameni. These islands represent the volcano's most recent activity.

The marvelous dry climate and continuous sunshine create year around conditions which are perfect for observation, photographs and videos under an extraordinary variety of natural lights and colours that give the visitor the exceptional advantage of reaching the interior of the volcano by boat.

Entertainment

If you are in the mood to live such a cosmopolitan and intense life as nowhere else in the world, the choices for entertainment in Santorini are plenty. After many decades of lively night life, Fira is still offering the classical way of entertainment in the island and has an array of choices for all tastes.

Cocktail-bars with view to Caldera are unique to begin your night in a more relaxed way. In Erythrou Staurou street, also called and bar street, you will find many bars and clubs in line to continue until next morning. If you are lucky, you may also find live music in some of them. Continue by following the crowd to the biggest and trendier clubs with mainstream music in the island, where as the time passes, Greek hits are dominating the club with people dancing in the tables and bars, giving to the tourists a first taste of what Greek entertainment means! If you prefer something less crowded, you should try the Caldera's side. There you will find places with interesting decoration, breathtaking view, cosy couches and loud mainstream music. If you are Roc 'n Roll fans, in Santorini you will find this too. The youngest visitors have the opportunity to enjoy even R 'n B in places with nice atmosphere in combination to the always beautiful view of the Caldera. An alternative in the night life of Santorini are the entertainment centres with music from the eighties that travel visitors in past times. It is worth mentioning that in many of these centres, known Greek and foreign DJs are coming from time to time to play soul, funk and ethnic music. If your are a fan of the Greek way of entertainment and you wish to dance under the sound of the mpouzouki, you will find it in relevant places in Fira. In these places many locals are gathered and the fun is till morning. Of course, for those who have fun till morning, there are places for fast food in Fira's square.

The night out side Fira is quite interesting but less loud. In Oia you will find enough bars with lounge music and view to the Caldera, places where you usually meet those who wish to relax from the city's rhythms and want to rejuvenate.

As far as the entertainment during the day is concerned, the beach bars in Perivolos, Perissa and Kamari are leading the way. Loud music and drinks stimulate the people in the beaches and easily create a party atmosphere. Fun is on the top until the sunset. In Kamari and Perissa bars are crowded until night and have the same intense rhythms with those of the day. In beach bars you will find choices either to chill out next to the wave or to dance and throw a beach party until morning. **Santorini never sleeps in summer!!**

Gastronomy

Santorini's cuisine is primarily based on the island's own agricultural products. These locally grown products nourished by the volcanic soil, the sea breeze and the sunshine of the Aegean Sea, share a unique, full taste. Combined with the almost exclusively organic cultivation of the island the result is top quality produce from ingredients used to cook the original, tasty and healthy foods you will find in most of the island's taverns and restaurants.

Traditional dishes such as tomato balls, the Santorini salads, split peas in all their variations, white aubergines, stuffed round courgettes, omelettes, cooked capers, fresh cheese, and local specialities including apoxti (a type of cured ham), sausages, wild rabbit with a cheese and egg sauce, brantada, sweet melitinia, and saffron bread rusks, all express the rich and varied cuisine of the island's culture.

If you add to this menu the many choice wines produced on the island, from the dry whites to the sweet dessert Vinsanto and the wonderful taste combinations that they create, you will understand why the many restaurateurs, gastronomy experts, and Greek and foreign journalists have embraced and promoted the eclectic tastes of Santorini.

This small island has already made a name for itself in the world of gourmet tastes. It is considered by most to be a must-visit destination for gastronomy connoisseurs as it is offers some of the country's best restaurants, wineries and taverns.

Shopping in Santorini

Even if you are not an overly keen consumer, Santorini's shops - and especially those in Fira - will tempt you for sure. Taking a walk along the narrow cobbled streets of Fira, shop windows will definitely grab your attention. The first to catch your eye are the jewellery shops that you will find along Ypapantis street, or "Gold Street" as it has been nicknamed. Not unduly, as this street is considered to be one of the biggest gold markets in Greece. Here you will find the most modern jewellery designed by the most famous jewellers from both Greece and abroad. Even if you manage to resist and continue on your wander, you will surely find yourself in front of many shops selling handmade jewellery made of silver and other materials at much more affordable prices. The shop windows in Fira also display the latest trends of international fashion in terms of clothes, shoes and accessories coming from big and famous fashion houses.

Compared to Fira's shops, those of Oia are less shiny and more ethnic. The shop displays are of high aesthetic, which will not leave you unmoved. You will find objects and works of art in the village's pretty little shops from different countries and civilisations that do, however, join together harmoniously. If you wish to buy cosmetics, there is a large store in the city centre that offers a wide range of cosmetics, perfumes and sun creams. There is also a wide range of shops along the seaside road and narrow streets of Kamari. You will find labelled clothes and accessories, handmade jewellery, but also decoration crafts and lighting objects.

In Santorini you will find works of art as well. To be more precise, you can find pottery by Andreas Makaris and Galatia Papageorgiou at the crossroads to Akrotiri, marble sculpture by Grigoris Kouskouris in Messaria, modern art by George Kypris and paintings by Christoforos Asimis in the "Fabrica" shopping centre in Fira. You can also find pottery by Andreas Alifrangis in Firostefani. You can stop off at Dimitris Koliousis' religious paintings workshop and the art galleries of Vasilis Kyrkos and Stavros Galanopoulos along Oia's main pedestrian street. You can buy textiles at Oia's traditional weaving mill or paintings by Frederica Nomikou in Finikia.

There are, of course, tourist shops in every part of the island where you can buy small or large souvenirs of Santorini.

Weather Conditions

The climate in Santorini is typical of the Mediterranean climate: generally extended periods of sunshine throughout most of the year, relatively warm and dry summers and mild and rainy winters.

The year can be broadly subdivided into two main seasons: the warm and dry season lasting from April until October and the cold and rainy season lasting from November until the end of March. Long periods of consecutive rainy days are not common in Santorini, even during the winter, and the sky does not remain cloudy for more than a few days in a row, as it does in other regions of the world.

During the warm and dry season the weather is usually stable, the sky is clear, the sun is bright and there is generally no rainfall. A sweater/jacket is advised, especially in April and October, as evenings often bring cooler temperatures.

Average Temperature		
Month	Celsious	Fahrenheit
June	25	77

Important telephone numbers

Police	+30 22860 22649	Taxi Service	+30 22860 22555 +30 22860 23951
Hospital	+30 22860 22237	Bus Service	+30 22860 25404 +30 22860 23812
Santorini Health Center	+30 2286023123	Post Office	+30 22860 22238
Port Authorities	+30 22860 22239	Akrotiri Archaeological Site	+30 22860 81366
Cable Car	+30 22860 22977	Community of Oia	+30 22860 71228
Municipality of Thira	+30 22860 22231	Olympic Airways airport office	+30 22860 31525
Aegean Airlines	+30 22860 28500		

Health

In case of health problems you may visit the Santorini Health Center in Fira (Tel 2286023123) or ask your hotel reception for a private specialist doctor.

Water

Bottled water is recommended for drinking. Tap water can be used for washing, bathing and cleaning your teeth. In the area of Oia the tap water that comes from the local desalination plant is drinkable.

Time

Greece is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2).

Banks

The banks on Santorini are open 8.00 am-2.30 pm Monday to Thursday and 8.00 am-2.00 pm on Friday. ATMs are available in almost all villages on Santorini. Most accept Visa and MasterCards as well as debit cards of internationally recognized networks.

Currency

Since the 1st of January 2002, the Euro (EUR) is the currency of Greece. Notes in circulation are 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euro while coins are in denominations of 1 euro, 2 euro, 1 cent, 2 cents, 5 cents, 10 cents and 20 cents. Major credit cards are widely accepted.

Postal Services

ELTA is the official name of the postal service and their colours are blue and yellow. The main postal offices on Santorini are located in Fira, Emporio and Oia. Postal agencies are located in Pyrgos, Kamari and Perissa. Mailboxes are available in all the villages of Santorini. A standard letter or postcard less than 20 grams sent anywhere in Europe or abroad costs €0.65 (as per April 2007).

Courier services are also available.

Electrical Appliances

The electricity supply in Greece is alternating current, 220-250 volts, 50 cycles. Appliances for 110 or 120 volts may be operated by using step down transformers of 220 - 250/110 volts connected to each outlet.

Transportation

There is a taxi stand in the square of Fira. With just a phone call you can be picked up from any point. The price of your journey is based on a catalogue issued by the Ministry of Transport and not based on the taxi's meter. KTEL buses carry out daily bus routes to almost all destinations. The KTEL terminal is also located in the square of Fira next to the taxis.

Dress

Since temperatures can be high during the day, light wear is suggested. Warmer cloths and jacket are generally recommended in the evening especially for outdoors.

Internet

Most hotels provide Internet access for their guests. Internet cafés are available mostly in Fira.

Liability and Insurance

The organisers cannot be held responsible for accidents to symposium participants or accompanying persons, for damage, or loss of their personal property, or for cancellation expenses, regardless of cause. Participants are advised to carry out their own insurance arrangements during their stay in Greece.