

TOP 7 ACTIVE VOLCANOES WORTH VISITING



Travelers planning a visit to an active volcano are growing in numbers. The popularity of volcano tours only increased with the recent eruption of the Fagradalsfjall volcano in Iceland. While it may seem dangerous to some, with the right safety precautions such a tour may be quite exciting. Tourism Review compiled a list of the most interesting volcanoes worth visiting.

Fagradalsfjall, Iceland

Fagradalsfjall volcano located on the Reykjanes peninsula in southwestern Iceland recently erupted, on March 19th - after 900 years. Streams of red lava flowed through the valley in Geldingadalur. The glow of the lava could be spotted even from Reykjavik, which is about 32 km away. The lava area covered less than one square kilometer, with small lava fountains. For three weeks before the eruption, locals reported daily earthquakes signaling the coming eruption. Soon after that, the experts said that the activity was subsiding and posed no danger to people or air travel. The highest summit of the volcano is Langhóll, which is 385 m high.

Piton de la Fournaise, Réunion Island

The Piton de la Fournaise (“Peak of the Furnace”) has an elevation of 2,632 meters and is the active volcano on Réunion Island. It is part of the summit and the eastern flank of the Island. This massive shield volcano makes up 40% of the island’s southeastern part.

It is one of the most active volcanoes on the planet: due to the frequency of new eruptions (every nine months on average), it currently holds first place in the world. The volume of lava, estimated at 0.32 cubic meters per second, is approximately ten times less than Kilauea, although it is comparable to Etna.

Since the Piton de la Fournaise Volcanic Observatory was founded in 1978, it has become one of the most closely watched volcanoes. Access is relatively easy, especially along the forest road or the Lavas road, which sometimes allows for public views of the eruptions and lava flows.

Like Hawaiian volcanoes, Piton de la Fournaise is a hot spot volcano, meaning that heat has been rising from a deep region within the Earth’s mantle for more than 65 million years.

Mount St. Helens, the U.S.

Mount St. Helens is an active stratovolcano located in Skamania County, Washington, in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States.

Its current elevation is 2,550 meters above sea level, and it is located 154 kilometers south of Seattle, and 85 kilometers northeast of Portland, Oregon. The mountain is part of the Cascade Range and was known as Louwala-Clough, which means “smoking or fiery mountain” in the language of the local indigenous tribe of the Klickitats.

Its current name was given after British diplomat Alleyne Fitzherbert, 1st Baron of St. Helens, who was a friend of George Vancouver, a Royal Navy Commander who surveyed the area in the late 18th century. St. Helens is well known for its ash explosions and pyroclastic flows.

Like most other volcanoes in the Cascade Range, Mount St. Helens is a large eruptive cone consisting of lava rock interlayered with ash, pumice, and other deposits.

Villarrica, Chile

Villarrica is a Chilean stratovolcano in the southern Andes with an elevation of 2,860 meters. It is located on the border of the provinces of Cautín (Araucanía region) and Valdivia (Los Ríos region), between the Villarrica and Calafquén lakes. It is one of the most active volcanoes worth visiting in South America, and has an almost perfect conical shape.

The upper part of Villarrica is permanently covered with snow and has about 40 km² glaciers with a volume of 8 km³, in addition to snow that rises 1,500 meters above sea level.

On the top, there is an active lava lake within its 200 m diameter crater (at a variable depth of between 100 and 50 m, and the lake between 30 and 50 m in diameter), which alternately rises up and down. The lake has intense volcanic gas emissions, which is frequently accompanied by weak eruptions.

Kīlauea, the Hawaiian Islands

Kīlauea is an active shield volcano in the Hawaiian Islands. Historically, it is the most active of the five volcanoes (as well as one of the most active in the world) that make up the Big Island of Hawaii.

Located along the southern shore of the island, this volcano is believed to be between 300,000 and 600,000 years of age, emerging above sea level about 100,000 years ago. It is the second-youngest volcano formed in the Hawaiian hot spot and the current eruptive center of the Hawaiian-Emperor seamount chain.

Since Kīlauea lacks topographical prominence and its eruptive activity historically happened at the same time like Mauna Loa, this volcano was mistakenly considered an active satellite of its more massive neighbor.

Structurally, Kīlauea has recently formed a large caldera on its summit and two active rift zones, one extending 125 km east and the other 35 km west, forming an active fault of unknown depth that moves vertically an average of 2 to 20 mm per year.

Mount Etna, Sicily, Italy

Etna is an active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy, in the Metropolitan City of Catania. It is around 3,322 meters high, though its elevation varies due to constant summit eruptions. It is one of the best known volcanoes worth visiting.

Today, the mount is 21.6 meters shorter than in 1865. However, it is the highest active volcano in the Eurasian Plate, the second in Europe after Teide, and the highest peak in Italy south of the Alps. Etna covers an area of 1,190 km² with a basal circumference of 140 km.

In Greek mythology, the forges of Hephaestus were located inside Etna, who worked inside the volcano in the company of Cyclopes and giants. The deadly monster Typhon was trapped under this

mountain, causing constant earthquakes and eruptions of smoke and lava.

Masaya, Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, in addition to the majestic Momotombo, one can visit the Masaya volcano, located near the city of the same name, just 20 km south of Managua.

Masaya is one of the seven active volcanoes in the country. Its crater, named Santiago, has an elevation of 635 meters and continuously emits large amounts of sulfur dioxide gas. Due to steam reflecting the light from the hot lava lake inside of the crater, Masaya always looks as if it was about to erupt.

The volcano is at the center of the Masaya Volcano National Park, and at its feet, in the far eastern end, is the volcanic lake of the same name. The park has an area of 54 km² that includes two volcanoes and five craters. More than 20 km can be traveled by car to reach the very edge of one of the craters. Among its facilities, visitors can find a museum dedicated to the volcanoes.

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