

7 volcanoes to visit for both thrill seekers and homebodies

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Online Desk: A volcanic landscape gives you the chance to immerse in breath-taking scenery while learning about the science that underlies these magnificent structures. It also serves as a sobering lesson about nature's great strength and the significance of environmental conservation. Volcanoes are not just about the eruptions, and travelling to volcanic areas does not always have to be dangerous. While many crave the adrenaline rush from hiking an active volcano, there are many volcanoes across the globe that are dormant and ideal tourist attractions.

Volcano tours provide an unforgettable experience, and whether you are looking for adventure or just a chance to explore our planet's dynamic nature, here are 7 volcanoes, with varying levels of volcanic activities, to visit.

Thrihnukagigur, Iceland

For non-thrill-seeking travellers, Thrihnukagigur (also known as 'Three Peaks Crater') should be one of the first volcanoes on the list. Located just 9 kilometres outside of Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, this dormant volcano last erupted over 4,000 years ago and there are no signs of it going off any time soon.

Inside the Volcano Tour, a fully authorised tour provider in Iceland, has built a cable car system that transports visitors into a vibrantly coloured, thankfully empty magma chamber big enough to accommodate the iconic, 244-foot-tall Hallgrímskirkja (Iceland's tallest church).

The cost per person is roughly Tk 4500, which includes all necessary gears, hotel pick-up and drop-off. However, you will have to climb a moderate two-mile distance to reach the crater rim.

Furna do Enxofre, Portugal

The Furna do Enxofre is a large cavern situated in the south-eastern part of the Caldeira da Ilha Graciosa in Portugal. The impressive lava cave's main feature is its perfectly dome-shaped roof. Another fascinating part of this cave is the 200-step spiral down into Furna do Enxofre. Once you have gone down the volcanic stairway, you are likely to see a sizable crater lake that is sheltered by the lava cave's dome-shaped roof. With many sights and smells, the Furna do Enxofre is a sight but keep your nose pointed because "Furna do Enxofre" is Portuguese for "Sulphur Cave."

When touring this location, you can walk in and around a volcano's ruins and can choose from adventure hikes to guided tours which can vary between Tk 7,400 to Tk 17,000. However, the volcano is not nearly as well-preserved as Thrihnukagigur.

Mauna Kea, Hawaii

When measured from its base beneath the ocean's surface, Mauna Kea is the world's tallest mountain, reaching 13,800 feet above sea level. Tourists get a magnificent perspective of the landscape below from the summit's height, but you should take this chance to view the stars because it is so close to the equator and has no cloud cover or pollution.

Despite the fact that Mauna Kea last erupted some 4,500 years ago, it is likely to erupt again but not during our lifetime. So, the destination makes for a steady and safe travel spot. However, do not confuse Mauna Loa with Mauna Kea, because Mauna Loa is among the largest and most active volcanoes in the world, occupying half of Hawaii's island.

Mauna Kea is not only the highest peak in Hawaii but is also considered sacred. For these reasons, tourists are often discouraged from travelling beyond the Mauna Kea Visitor Center, especially if you are visiting without a guide.

Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa

The highest peak in Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro, is a volcano with three different cones — Kibo, Mawenzi, and Shira. It is 19,341 feet above sea level. Although it is still a very difficult climb, Mount Kilimanjaro is one of the few high peaks that can be reached without using climbing equipment, which attracts hikers and tourists.

Mount Kilimanjaro has occasionally vibrated due to movement and molten lava, but geologists do not feel that an eruption is imminent. For more than 200,000 years, neither seismic nor volcanic activity has occurred.

The rates for climbing Kilimanjaro vary from agency to agency, and depend on which route you choose. The estimated cost for a 7-day hike is approximately Tk 220, 000 to 270,000.

Stromboli, Italy

As one of the seven volcanic islands that make up the Aeolian archipelago off the northern coast of Sicily, Stromboli is one of the planet's most active volcanoes and has been erupting almost continuously since 1932. Given that the volcanic peak has a 2,500-year-long history of spewing lava fountains, it is known as the "Lighthouse of the Mediterranean". The volcano rises 3,031 feet above sea level, and its eruptions during the night can be seen from great distances. While it is still active, its volcanic activities have decreased since July 2019.

There are many boat tours which cost around Tk 8,000 if you were to start off from Milazzo, and two of the best tours are Panarea and Stromboli Night Tour and Stromboli Hike to Sciara del Fuoco.

For hikers and trekkers, many tourist companies offer guided climbs. Trekkers can choose their preferred route to get to the peak from the website Volcano Adventures and prices vary from Tk 4,600 to Tk 13,000.

Keep in mind that the excursion requires a gruelling 900 metre (about 3,000 feet) elevation ascent and descent which can take nearly seven hours. The climb should only be attempted by experienced trekkers in good physical condition, as the trail may be sandy, rocky, or unpaved, and you may encounter plan changes along the way.

Haleakalā, Hawaii

Haleakalā is perhaps the ideal volcanic landscape for tourists who do not have any desire to face the potential dangers of an eruption. Haleakalā is a huge shield volcano, meaning that it's a large, dome-shaped volcano with gently sloping sides. Lava flows constructed the whole structure of Haleakalā.

Since Haleakalā has not erupted in a while and the last time it showed any activity was between 1480 and 1600 A.D., it is thought of as a dormant volcano; however, that does not mean it will not erupt in the future.

The Haleakalā National Park offers a wide range of activities and tours, allowing individual tourists and groups to see the biodiversity and wildlife in the area.

Mount Fuji, Japan

Mount Fuji is a volcano and is undoubtedly Japan's most famous landmark. Even though it has not erupted since 1707, experts warn that it might do so at any moment. As the tallest peak in the nation and a significant landmark, Mount Fuji is frequently visited by tourists with limited time in Japan, which is why Mount Fuji excursions from Tokyo are so well-liked. The volcano is relatively simple to get on a day trip as it is only 2.5 hours from the capital city.

There are many local tour companies that offer travel packages. The ideal rate for a day trip from Tokyo would be around Tk 5,700 to 14,000.

Travelling different landscapes and indulging in the experience it offers is always a great opportunity. The thrill and adventure do not always need to come from the potential threat of natural disaster, nor does it need to deprive you of experiencing volcanic landscapes.