

Volcanoes in Alaska

Alaska Geographic Vol. 18, #2

"<http://www.volcanolive.com>" & Alaska Science Forum, USGS

Centuries ago people living on a small Mediterranean Island, Vulcano, believed that Vulcano was the chimney of the forge of Vulcan, the blacksmith of the Roman gods. They reasoned that the lava and ash from the peak were byproducts from making thunderbolts for Jupiter and Mars.

The first recorded attempt at volcanology was in 79 A.D., when 'Pliny the Younger' sent two letters to a historian describing the eruption of Vesuvius. Vesuvius' blast buried two Roman cities in ash so deep 1,700 years passed before their ruins were discovered.

This warning, carved in stone, is dated Jan. 16, 1632:

"Vesuvius burst into flames, always with huge extermination of those who hesitated. I warn you so that it does not find you undecided, this mountain has its womb heavy with pitch ... if you are wise listen to the voice of this stone."

Good Advice Never Goes Out of Style

WEBSHOTS

Alaska contains over 100 volcanoes and volcanic fields.

Forty-two Alaska volcanoes have spit up magma, or molten rock since people started writing down eruption observations in 1767. These make up about 80% of all active volcanoes in the United States and 8% of all active above-water volcanoes on earth.

Most of Alaska's young volcanoes occur along a 2,400-mile arc that extends from about Mount Spurr, 80 miles west of Anchorage, to beyond Buldir Island in the western Aleutians. The arc forms one of the most spectacular chains of volcanoes around the Pacific Basin and is this continent's major link in the basin's "Ring of Fire". Every year about five eruptions occur along this arc.

The most violent volcanic eruption of the century took place in 1912 when Novarupta Volcano erupted, creating the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes which is now part of Katmai National Park.

When Mount Redoubt erupted in December 1989 a Boeing 747 descending toward an airport in Anchorage flew through an ash plume at 27,000 feet which caused all four engines to quit. The pilots were able to restore power and land even though investigators later discovered that the engines contained glassy deposits created after the ash had melted and then resolidified.

Pavlof, one of the world's most active volcanoes with 41 eruptions since the late 1700s has erupted in mid-November six times in the past 25 years.

Alaska has become a laboratory for scientists who are trying to unravel details of the mystery of earth processes.

Teachers!

Topics to study:

Lava	Tectonic plates	Shield volcanoes	Pyroclastic Flows
Ash flow	Composite volcanoes	Cinder cones	Mount Veniaminof
Tephra	Stratovolcanoes	Lahars	Mt. Augustine

Check out these web sites to learn more about volcanoes:

<http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/learning.html>

<http://www.nearctica.com/geology/volcano.htm>

http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/vwdocs/volc_images/img_vesuvius.html

http://newport.pmel.noaa.gov/nemo_cruise98/multimedia.html

www.mushhusky.com

1-888-866-0156

MushHusky!

mushhusky@acsalaska.net