PARTNER COUNTRY · SPAIN

TEIDE

TENERIFE, CANARY ISLANDS

TYPE	ELEVATION
Stratovolcano (Teide–Pico Viejo)	3,715 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
c. 1,200 years ago (summit)	None recorded

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

max. VEI 4 — Montaña Blanca, ~2,000 years ago

0	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

DID YOU KNOW?

Measured from the ocean floor, Teide is about 7,500 m tall: the third-highest volcano on Earth from its base. UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2007.

ABOUT

Spain's highest mountain. Teide and its neighbour Pico Viejo form a stratovolcano complex inside Las Cañadas caldera (16 × 9 km). Teide's summit has not erupted in historic times: its last lava flows, the black 'Lavas Negras', are about 1,200 years old. Tenerife's historic eruptions came from its rift zones and from Pico Viejo's flank (1798), not from Teide.

IMPACT

Montaña Blanca (~2,000 years ago): a sub-Plinian eruption from Teide's east flank that covered the area in pale pumice · 1798: Chahorra, a 3-month flank eruption of neighbouring Pico Viejo

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Data: Smithsonian GVP, USGS, INGV, IGN, JMA, Icelandic Met Office, geological surveys and peer-reviewed sources, checked October 2026.

VOLCANO & CULTURE · SPAIN

TEIDE · ECHEYDE

THE VOLCANO IN GUANCHE CULTURE · TENERIFE, CANARY ISLANDS

PEOPLE	NAME FOR TEIDE	SPIRIT OF THE VOLCANO	ON TENERIFE
Guanches: Amazigh roots in North Africa	Echeyde, the place of hell	Guayota, the evil one	c. 2,000 years, until the conquest (1496)

THE VOLCANO AND THE PEOPLE OF TENERIFE

c. 2,000 yrs ago	c. 1,200 yrs ago	24 Aug 1492	1496	1594	1954
First settlers arrive from North Africa	Teide's last summit eruption: the black 'Lavas Negras'	Columbus's crews see fire on Tenerife	Castilian conquest of the island ends	Friar Espinosa writes down Echeyde and Guayota	National Park: grazing in Las Cañadas ends

A MOUNTAIN OF FIRE AND FEAR

For the Guanches, Teide was a sacred place. In 1594 the friar Alonso de Espinosa wrote that they believed hell was inside the Peak: they called it **Echeyde**, and the demon who lived there **Guayota**. Every summer, shepherds took their goats and sheep up to the pastures of Las Cañadas, slept in stone huts near springs and made blades from obsidian, the black volcanic glass of the caldera.

THE LEGEND OF THE SUN

Legend says Guayota locked Magec, the Sun, inside Teide and the world went dark, until Achamán, the supreme god, freed him and sealed the crater. The tale is modern: the old chronicles place hell in the volcano, but don't tell this story.

DID YOU KNOW?

On the night of 24 August 1492, Columbus's ships saw great flames on Tenerife on their way to America: an eruption the Guanches lived through, four years before the conquest.

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Sources: A. de Espinosa (1594), J. de Abreu Galindo, MITECO – Teide National Park, INVOLCAN, Carracedo et al. (2007). Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · ITALY

VESUVIUS

CAMPANIA, BAY OF NAPLES

TYPE	ELEVATION
Stratovolcano	1,281 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
March 1944	1,500–3,500 (79 AD)

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

max. VEI 5 — 79 AD

0	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

DID YOU KNOW?

Pliny the Younger, aged 17, watched the 79 AD eruption from 29 km away. His letters gave the name to 'Plinian' eruptions.

ABOUT

One of the most closely watched volcanoes in the world. In 79 AD a Plinian eruption with a column up to 33 km high buried Pompeii, Herculaneum and Oplontis, freezing everyday Roman life in ash.

IMPACT

1631: ~4,000 deaths · 1944: 26 deaths · about 700,000 people live in today's red zone

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L.A.V.A. EUROPE · VOLCANO & CULTURE

VOLCANO & CULTURE · ITALY

VESUVIUS · SAN GENNARO

THE VOLCANO IN NEAPOLITAN CULTURE · NAPLES, ITALY

THE PROTECTOR	THE ERUPTION	THE MIRACLE	THE WINE
San Gennaro (Saint Januarius)	December 1631	His blood liquefies three times a year	Lacryma Christi, 'tears of Christ'

THE VOLCANO AND THE PEOPLE OF NAPLES

79 AD	c. 305	1389	Dec 1631	1944	Today
Pompeii and Herculaneum buried	Gennaro, bishop, is martyred	First recorded liquefaction of his blood	His bust is carried towards the volcano	Last eruption of Vesuvius	Liquefaction in May, 19 Sept and 16 Dec

FACING THE FIRE: 1631

In December 1631 a violent eruption threatened Naples with lava and toxic ash. Desperate to save their city, the people carried the relics and bust of **San Gennaro** in a solemn procession towards the danger. Legend says that when the saint faced the volcano, the eruption stopped, and he became the great protector of Naples.

THE BLOOD OF PROTECTION

Three times a year, in Naples Cathedral, the saint's dried blood turns liquid inside its glass ampoule. For Neapolitans it is the sign that he has renewed his pact to protect the city; if it fails to liquefy, people fear bad luck.

DID YOU KNOW?

Legend says Jesus looked down from Vesuvius and wept at the beauty of the Gulf of Naples. Where his tears touched the volcanic soil, vines grew: the origin of Lacryma Christi, the 'tears of Christ' wine.

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Sources: Archdiocese of Naples, INGV – Osservatorio Vesuviano, Neapolitan tradition. Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · PORTUGAL

SETE CIDADES

SÃO MIGUEL, AZORES

TYPE	ELEVATION
Stratovolcano with caldera lakes	Caldera 6 × 5 km

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
1713 (on land)	Not recorded

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

max. VEI 4 — several, e.g. c. 1444

0	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

ABOUT

A huge caldera about 6 × 5 km wide and 300 m deep, filled with a blue lake and a green lake. Behind the postcard view hides a very explosive volcano: many of its eruptions were Plinian or sub-Plinian.

IMPACT

17 explosive eruptions inside the caldera in the last 5,000 years

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1811 an eruption created Sabrina Island offshore. British sailors claimed it for their country, but by October the sea had erased it.

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L.A.V.A. EUROPE · VOLCANO & CULTURE

VOLCANO & CULTURE · PORTUGAL

SETE CIDADES · BLUE & GREEN

THE VOLCANO IN AZOREAN CULTURE · SÃO MIGUEL, AZORES, PORTUGAL

THE PRINCESS	THE SHEPHERD	THE KING	THE TEARS
Her eyes were blue	His eyes were green	Forbade their love	Two lagoons: one blue, one green

THE LEGEND IN SIX STEPS

1	2	3	4	5	6
A princess meets a young shepherd	They fall in love in the green hills	The king, her father, forbids it	They meet one last time to say goodbye	Both cry as they part for ever	Their tears fill the crater: two lagoons

THE LEGEND OF THE TWO LAGOONS

A **princess** and a young **shepherd** fell in love, but the king, her father, forbade their romance. At their last meeting they both wept, and their tears filled the crater and became two lagoons: one blue, the colour of the princess's eyes, and one green, the colour of the shepherd's.

COOKING WITH THE VOLCANO

On the same island, people use volcanic heat as an oven. For the cozido das Furnas, a Portuguese stew, a pot wrapped in foil is buried in the hot ground next to the fumaroles of Furnas, the neighbouring volcano, and cooks at about 100 °C for 5 to 7 hours.

DID YOU KNOW?

Science has another answer for the colours: the Blue Lake is deeper and mirrors the sky, while the shallower Green Lake holds more algae and reflects the green slopes around it.

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Sources: Azores Natural Parks (Government of the Azores); Azores Geopark; local folklore of São Miguel. Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · GREECE

SANTORINI

CYCLADES, AEGEAN SEA

TYPE	ELEVATION
Flooded caldera	367 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
1950 (Nea Kameni)	Unknown (Minoan eruption)

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

max. VEI 7 — Minoan eruption, c. 1600 BC

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

ABOUT

Santorini's famous white houses sit on the rim of a collapsed volcano. About 3,600 years ago a colossal eruption emptied its magma chamber and the sea flooded in, leaving a caldera surrounded by 300 m cliffs.

IMPACT

2025 earthquake swarm: ~11,000 people left the island

DID YOU KNOW?

The Bronze Age town of Akrotiri was preserved under the ash: a 'Bronze Age Pompeii'.

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · GREECE

SANTORINI · THERA

THE VOLCANO IN GREEK CULTURE · CYCLADES, GREECE

BURIED TOWN	THE ERUPTION	VOLCANIC WINE	BUILT FROM ASH
Akrotiri, the 'Bronze Age Pompeii'	Minoan eruption, c. 1600 BC	Assyrtiko and Vinsanto	Cave houses and 'Santorini earth'

THE VOLCANO AND THE PEOPLE OF SANTORINI

c. 1600 BC	c. 360 BC	1860s	1950	1967	2025
Ash and pumice bury the town of Akrotiri	Plato tells the story of Atlantis	Santorini earth shipped for the Suez Canal	Last eruption, on Nea Kameni	Excavation of Akrotiri begins	Earthquake swarm: thousands leave the island

DESTROYED AND PRESERVED

The great eruption buried **Akrotiri** under metres of pumice and ash. It destroyed the town but also sealed it: houses two and three storeys high, furniture and colourful frescoes survived, so we know how people lived in the Aegean Bronze Age. Ash also fell on Minoan Crete and tsunami waves may have reached its coast. Whether this helped end the Minoan civilisation, or inspired the legend of **Atlantis**, is still debated.

LIVING ON A VOLCANO

Vines grow low, woven into baskets (kouloura) that protect the grapes from wind in the dry pumice soil; cherry tomatoes and fava beans love it too. People dug cave houses (yposkafa) into the soft tuff and built with black, red and white volcanic stone. Today visitors watch the caldera sunset, and scientists watch the volcano.

DID YOU KNOW?

No victims have been found at Akrotiri: its people seem to have left after strong earthquakes, before the eruption. Over 3,500 years later, the 2025 earthquake swarm again sent thousands of people off the island.

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Sources: Akrotiri excavations (Marinatos, Doumas), Municipality of Thira, Hellenic seismological services, news reports (Feb. 2025). Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · GEORGIA

MOUNT KAZBEK

GREATER CAUCASUS

TYPE	ELEVATION
Glaciated stratovolcano (dormant)	5,054 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
c. 750 BC	No eruption deaths recorded

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

not determined (prehistoric or no explosive record)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

DID YOU KNOW?

In Georgian legend, the hero Amirani was chained to this mountain for stealing fire from the gods: a fire myth on a real volcano!

ABOUT

The highest peak of eastern Georgia and the second volcanic summit of the Caucasus after Elbrus. Its summit cone and youngest lava flows formed after the last Ice Age, and its glaciers cover about 135 km².

IMPACT

2002: the Kolka glacier collapse (not an eruption) killed ~140 people

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · GEORGIA

KAZBEGI · THE CHAINED GIANT

THE VOLCANO IN GEORGIAN CULTURE · GREATER CAUCASUS, GEORGIA

THE GIANT	HIS CRIME	THE CHAIN	GREEK TWIN
Amirani, chained in a cave on Kazbegi	He challenged God	Renewed by blacksmiths every year	Prometheus, bound in the Caucasus

THE MOUNTAIN, THE ROAD AND THE MYTH

Antiquity	14th c.	Invasions	1776–2014	19th c.	Today
Greek myth chains Prometheus in the Caucasus	Gergeti Trinity Church built at 2,170 m	Monks hide church treasures up the mountain	Glacier mudflows hit the valley	Pushkin and Lermontov cross the Dariali Gorge	Each Easter Monday, smiths strike their anvils

THE CHAINED GIANT

Rumbling ground and sudden avalanches needed an explanation. Georgians found it in **Amirani**, a giant who challenged God and was chained in a cave on Kazbegi. His loyal dog gnaws at the chain all year, and every year blacksmiths strike their anvils to make it strong again. If the chain ever breaks, the giant will return and end the world. The Greeks told a twin story: **Prometheus**, bound to a Caucasus peak while an eagle tore at his liver.

HOW THE LAND SHAPED THE PEOPLE

The Terek River cut the Dariali Gorge, the one road through the Caucasus, so armies, merchants and poets all passed below the volcano. Avalanches and mudflows could erase a village overnight, and highlanders answered with shrines and guardian spirits: pagan shrines and Orthodox churches still stand side by side.

DID YOU KNOW?

Georgians call Kazbegi Mkinvartsveri, the 'Ice Mountain'. High on its slopes, the Betlemi cave is known as the 'Bethlehem of the Caucasus', with stories of Christ's manger and of Noah's Ark resting on the heights.

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Sources: 'Born of Fire, Ruled by Ice' (L.A.V.A. Europe); Georgian folklore of the Khevi region. Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · ROMANIA

BERCA MUD VOLCANOES

PÂCLELE MARI & MICI, BUZĂU COUNTY

TYPE	SIZE
Mud volcanoes	Cones up to ~6 m

DRIVEN BY	STATUS
Methane gas from ~3 km deep	Active today

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

Mud volcano: VEI does not apply

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

ABOUT

Not real volcanoes: there is no magma and the mud is cold. Gas, mostly methane, rises along faults from about 3 km deep. It mixes with clay and groundwater and pushes bubbling mud to the surface, where it builds small cones.

IMPACT

Protected since 1924 (Pâclele Mici) and 1955 (Pâclele Mari) · Part of Buzău Land UNESCO Global Geopark (2022)

DID YOU KNOW?

Salt brought up with the mud makes the ground so salty that only special salt-loving plants can grow, giving the place a strange, moon-like look.

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · ROMANIA

THE SEVEN-HEADED DRAGON

MUD VOLCANOES OF PÂCLELE MARI & PÂCLELE MICI · BERCA, BUZĂU, ROMANIA

THE HEROES	THE CREATURE	THE MUD	WHEN
Doamna Neaga and her son Arbănașu	Balaurul cu șapte capete	The black blood of a wounded dragon	A legend set about 400 years ago

THE LEGEND IN SIX STEPS

1. A dragon burns crops and kills animals
2. Doamna Neaga sends her son Arbănașu
3. On a white horse, he cuts off one head
4. The wounded dragon flees under Berca
5. A second head falls; the hero is thrown
6. The dragon hides underground for ever

A DRAGON UNDER THE HILLS

Long ago **Doamna Neaga**, widow of the ruler Mihnea Turcitul, lived here with her children. Then a seven-headed dragon appeared: it destroyed crops, killed animals and sent streams of fire across the land. Neaga sent her son **Arbănașu** to fight it. Riding a white horse, he cut off one head with his sword, then a second one near Berca, but the blow threw him from his horse and the dragon escaped beneath the earth. It was never seen again.

THE DRAGON'S WOUNDS

The dragon is still down there. Its black blood seeps up through the ground, and its wounds became the bubbling pools of mud.

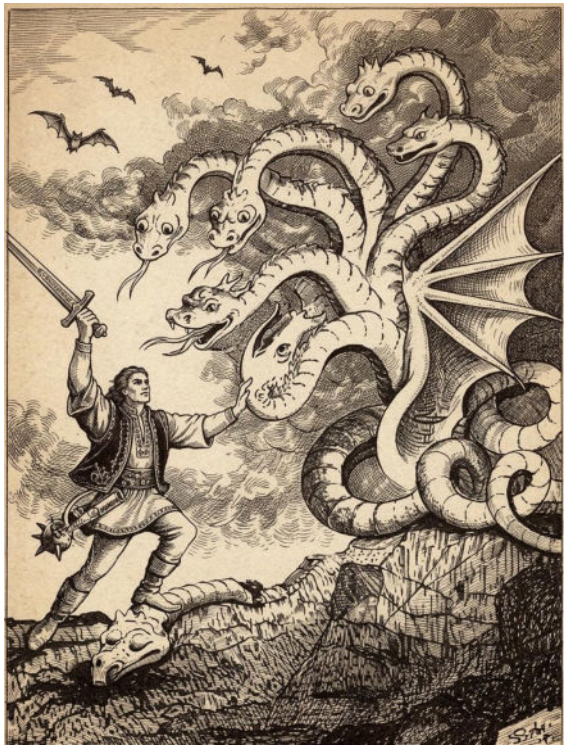
DID YOU KNOW?

In local folklore the dry, cracked grey ground is the dragon's back, and every little crater is an open wound that still bubbles from deep underground.

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Source: local folklore of Berca and Buzău County, Romania. Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · SERBIA

ĐAVOLJA VAROŠ

RADAN MOUNTAIN, SOUTH SERBIA

TYPE	ELEVATION
Earth pyramids in volcanic rock	~700 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
~33–18 million years ago	Prehistoric

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

not determined (prehistoric or no explosive record)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

DID YOU KNOW?

Next to the towers flows 'Devil's Water', extremely acidic (pH 1.5). Legend says the towers are wedding guests turned to stone.

ABOUT

'Devil's Town': ancient volcanic activity covered the area with tuff and andesite. Rain washed away the soft material, but where a hard block acts as a 'hat' it protects the column below.

IMPACT

202 rock towers, 2–15 m tall

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · SERBIA

THE LEGEND OF DEVIL'S TOWN

ĐAVOLJA VAROŠ · RADAN MOUNTAIN, SERBIA

THE VILLAIN	THE CURSE	THE HELPER	THE STONES
The Devil, jealous of a united village	Water that made people forget	A protective fairy who prays	A wedding party turned to stone

THE LEGEND IN SIX STEPS

1. People live together in peace
2. The Devil makes a cursed water
3. Villagers drink it and forget their families
4. A brother and sister plan to marry
5. A prayer is heard: a freezing wind blows
6. The wedding guests turn to stone

A WEDDING TURNED TO STONE

Long ago the people of this valley lived in harmony, and the Devil grew jealous. He gave them a cursed water that erased their memories, until a brother and sister, not knowing they were related, decided to marry. As the wedding procession walked to the church, a desperate prayer to God was answered: sky and earth met, a freezing wind swept the valley and every guest, bride and groom included, turned to stone. The pillars are that wedding procession.

WHAT THE LEGEND TEACHES

Family ties are sacred, marriage joins whole communities, and good (the protective fairy) fights evil (the Devil's temptation). Folklore passed these rules on from one generation to the next.

DID YOU KNOW?

The strange, otherworldly pillars gave the place its name, 'Devil's Town'. In 2012 the first wedding was held there, turning a place of fear into a celebration of love.

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Source: local folklore of Đavolja Varoš (Kuršumlija, Serbia), as told on the site.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · TURKEY

MOUNT ARARAT

AĞRI PROVINCE (SEEN FROM YEREVAN)

TYPE	ELEVATION
Stratovolcano (two cones)	5,137 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
1840	Up to ~10,000 (1840 earthquake)

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

max. VEI 3 — 1840 (phreatic; debated)

0	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

ABOUT

Turkey's highest and most voluminous volcano: a giant of about 1,150 km³ crowned with ice. Its two cones, Greater and Lesser Ararat, grew in a basin opened by faults.

IMPACT

1840: village of Akhuri and St Jacob's monastery destroyed

DID YOU KNOW?

Tradition links it to Noah's Ark. What we can measure is its ice: the summit ice cap lost 29% of its area between 1976 and 2011.

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · TURKEY

MOUNT ARARAT · NOAH'S ARK

THE VOLCANO IN FAITH AND LEGEND · AĞRI DAĞI, EASTERN TURKEY

THE PROPHET	THE DISASTER	THE MOUNTAIN	THE SIGN
Noah, warned by God of a great flood	Forty days and nights of rain	Ararat, 5,137 m: where the Ark came to rest	A dove with an olive branch

THE LEGEND IN SIX STEPS

1	2	3	4	5	6
People stray from the righteous path	Noah builds a huge ship, a sanctuary for all	His family, believers and animals go on board	Forty days of rain flood the whole earth	The Ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat	A dove brings an olive branch: life begins again

THE FLOOD AND THE ARK

Because humanity had rebelled against God, **Noah** was told to build a huge ship, a sanctuary for people and animals. He went on board with his family and a group of believers, and the skies opened: it rained for forty days and forty nights and the waters covered the earth. When the flood ended, the Ark came to rest on **Mount Ararat**. Noah sent out a dove, and it came back with an olive branch: the waters had gone down and life could begin again.

A SACRED MOUNTAIN

As the resting place of the Ark, Ararat has been revered by different faiths and by local people for centuries, and explorers still climb it looking for the remains of the ship.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many cultures tell of a great flood. In the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh, written down long before the Bible, the hero Utnapishtim also builds a boat, saves the animals and sends out birds to look for dry land.

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Picture: Simon de Myle, 'Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat' (1570), public domain. Sources: Genesis 6–9, Qur'an (Sura Hud), Epic of Gilgamesh (tablet XI).



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PARTNER COUNTRY · NORTH MACEDONIA

KRATOVO

KRATOVO-ZLETOVO VOLCANIC AREA

TYPE	ELEVATION
Town in an ancient volcanic landscape	~600 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
~32–16 million years ago	Prehistoric

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

not determined (prehistoric or no explosive record)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

DID YOU KNOW?

Six medieval towers and several stone bridges still cross the ravine that runs through the old town.

ABOUT

Kratovo is often described as a town built inside the crater of an extinct volcano. It sits in a huge ancient volcanic field of andesite, dacite and tuff. Its minerals made it one of the main mining towns of the Ottoman Empire in Europe.

IMPACT

A volcanic field of ~1,200 km² rich in gold, silver, lead and copper

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Data: Smithsonian GVP, USGS, INGV, IGN, JMA, Icelandic Met Office, geological surveys and peer-reviewed sources, checked October 2026.

L.A.V.A. EUROPE · VOLCANO & CULTURE

VOLCANO & CULTURE · NORTH MACEDONIA

KRATOVO · A TOWN OF MINERS

THE VOLCANO IN MACEDONIAN CULTURE · KRATOVO, NORTH MACEDONIA

THE TOWN	THE TREASURE	THE MINT	THE MINERS
Built inside an old volcanic crater	Silver, lead, gold, copper and iron	Second largest in the Ottoman Empire	Locals, Saxons and Dubrovnik traders

THE VOLCANO AND THE PEOPLE OF KRATOVO

Roman times	1282	1341	1488	1550	1689
A mine is worked at Tranatura	Saxon miners arrive from Central Europe	Mining wealth founds Lesnovo monastery	Kratovo has its own mining law	About 1,765 kg of pure silver in one year	War ends mining in the town

SILVER FROM THE VOLCANO

Kratovo lies in a deep valley on the slopes of Mount Osogovo, often described as the crater of an extinct volcano. That volcanic rock held lead, silver, gold, copper and iron, and for more than a thousand years people came to dig them out: Romans, **Saxon miners** from Central Europe, merchants from Dubrovnik. Under the Ottomans its mint turned the town's own silver into coins, and it became the second-largest mint of the empire.

A CULTURE MADE BY MINING

Miners had their own law: a tenth of the ore for the state, a ninth for the owners, a fifteenth for the blacksmiths. The German word Schaffer became the Ottoman title şafar. Mining wealth paid for 12 stone towers, bridges and churches, and Kratovo's miners were sent to work silver mines as far as Bursa.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ten kilometres away, at Kuklica, more than 140 pillars of volcanic tuff look like people. Legend says they are a wedding party turned to stone by a girl the groom had abandoned.

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Sources: Katić (2024); Kratovo museum; Journalift (2024); Milevski et al. (2025), Heritage; Government of North Macedonia.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · POLAND

GIEWONT

WESTERN TATRAS · ZAKOPANE

TYPE	ELEVATION
Limestone and dolomite mountain	1,894 m (Great Giewont)

RANGE	SUMMIT
Western Tatras, Poland	Iron cross, 15 m, raised in 1901

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

not applicable (not a volcano)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

DID YOU KNOW?

Water slowly dissolves limestone, so these mountains are full of caves. A few kilometres away, in the same massif, Wielka Śnieżna is the longest and deepest cave in Poland.

ABOUT

Giewont is not a volcano: it is built of limestone and dolomite, rocks made from the shells and skeletons of sea creatures that settled on the floor of an ancient sea. When Africa pushed against Europe, these layers were folded and lifted to form the Tatras. Its massif has three summits: Great Giewont (1,894 m), Long Giewont (1,867 m) and Small Giewont (1,728 m).

IMPACT

Its north face drops about 600 m straight towards Zakopane. In August 2019 a sudden storm sent lightning into the metal cross and chains: four people died and more than 100 were injured.

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · POLAND

GIEWONT · THE SLEEPING KNIGHT

THE MOUNTAIN IN HIGHLANDER CULTURE · ZAKOPANE, TATRA MOUNTAINS, POLAND

THE LEGEND	THE PEOPLE	THE CLOTHES	THE CHEESE
Sleeping knights inside the mountain	Górale, the Tatra highlanders	Parzenica patterns and kierpce shoes	Oscypek, smoked sheep's cheese

HOW THE LANDSCAPE SHAPED LIFE

Shape	Legend	Pastures	Cheese	Houses	1901
The ridge looks like a knight lying down	An army sleeps inside, ready to wake	Sheep graze the high meadows in summer	Shepherds smoke oscypek in their huts	Heavy log houses resist the halny wind	An iron cross is raised on the summit

THE LEGEND OF THE SLEEPING KNIGHTS

Seen from Zakopane, the ridge of Giewont looks like a **knight lying on his back**. Local legend says a whole army of knights sleeps inside the mountain and will wake up to defend Poland when the country needs them.

LIFE OF THE GÓRALE

The Tatras shaped how the highlanders live, build, dress and sing. Men wear woollen trousers embroidered with colourful parzenica patterns, leather kierpce shoes and decorated hats. Houses are built of heavy wood to keep warm and resist the strong halny wind, and shepherds take their sheep to the high pastures to make oscypek, a smoked cheese.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 15 m iron cross on the summit, raised in 1901, has become a symbol of the Tatras and a place of pilgrimage for Poles.

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Sources: Tatra National Park; Polish highlander (górale) tradition. Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · LITHUANIA

CURONIAN SPIT DUNES

PARNIDIS DUNE, NIDA, NERINGA

TYPE	HEIGHT
Wind-blown sand dunes	Up to ~67 m (Parnidis 52 m)
FORMED	**STATUS**
~5,000 years ago	UNESCO World Heritage (2000)

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

Not a volcano: no VEI

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

DID YOU KNOW?

Once the forests were cut down, the dunes moved and swallowed villages. Karvaičiai's church disappeared under the sand, and its last people left in 1797.

ABOUT

Lithuania has no volcanoes. This 98 km strip of sand divides the Baltic Sea from the Curonian Lagoon. It grew about 5,000 years ago as sea currents piled sand onto moraine left by Ice Age glaciers. Wind then built some of Europe's highest moving dunes.

IMPACT

Drifting sand buried several villages (1600s–1800s) · Replanted from 1825 · UNESCO World Heritage (2000) · 2010: Iceland's ash cloud closed Lithuania's airports

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · LITHUANIA

THE GIANTESS NERINGA

THE LANDSCAPE IN LITHUANIAN LEGEND · CURONIAN SPIT, LITHUANIA

THE GIANTESS	HER FRIENDS	HER GIFT	THE RESULT
Neringa, kind and powerful	The fishermen of the Baltic coast	Sand carried in her apron	The Curonian Spit, a shield of dunes

THE LEGEND IN SIX STEPS

1. A giantess lives on the Baltic coast
2. She loves the local fishermen
3. Storms and waves put them in danger
4. She fills her apron with sand
5. She pours it into the sea, strip by strip
6. A spit of land shields the lagoon

A WALL OF SAND AGAINST THE SEA

Long ago a kind and powerful giantess, **Neringa**, lived on the Baltic coast. She loved the fishermen and wanted to protect them from the dangerous waves and storms. So she carried huge amounts of sand in her apron and poured it into the sea, building a long strip of land between the open sea and the Curonian Lagoon: the **Curonian Spit**.

PEOPLE, NATURE AND HOMELAND

The sandy spit became a natural shield for the fishermen and their villages. Today it reminds Lithuanians of the bond between people, nature and the protection of their homeland, and the town on the spit still carries her name: Neringa.

DID YOU KNOW?

Science tells a different story: waves, currents and wind built the spit after the last Ice Age. Its 98 km of dunes and forests are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, shared by Lithuania and Russia.

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Sources: Lithuanian folklore; UNESCO World Heritage Centre (Curonian Spit, site 994). Checked November 2026.



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PARTNER COUNTRY · ICELAND

EYJAFJALLAJÖKULL

SOUTH ICELAND

TYPE	ELEVATION
Ice-capped stratovolcano	1,651 m

LAST ERUPTION	DEATHS
March – June 2010	No direct deaths

VOLCANIC EXPLOSIVITY INDEX (VEI)

max. VEI 4 — 2010 eruption

0	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8

gentle lava flows — super-eruption

ABOUT

A modest volcano under a glacier that grounded half of Europe's air traffic in 2010. Melting ice chilled the magma into very fine ash, and the wind carried it straight over Europe.

IMPACT

~107,000 flights cancelled in 8 days · ~10 million passengers affected

DID YOU KNOW?

Its neighbour Katla erupted after every known eruption of Eyjafjallajökull (920, 1612, 1821–23)... but not in 2010.

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VOLCANO & CULTURE · ICELAND

ICELAND · LIVING WITH FIRE

VOLCANOES IN ICELANDIC CULTURE · ICELAND

TROLLS	HULDUFÓLK	THE MOTTO	HOT POOLS
Giants turned to stone by sunlight	Hidden people living in rocks and lava	Þetta reddast: 'It will work out'	Geothermal pools for health and friends

LIVING WITH VOLCANIC POWER

Pools	Greenhouses	Rúgbrauð	Energy	Church	Attitude
Heated by the Earth, open all year	Geothermal heat grows food in winter	Rye bread baked slowly in hot ground	Clean heating and electricity	Hallgrímskirkja copies basalt columns	Þetta reddast: stay calm and adapt

THE 13 YULE LADS OF DIMMUBORGIR

Folklore says 13 mischievous **Yule Lads** live among the strange lava formations of Dimmuborgir with their terrifying mother, **Grýla**, who eats naughty children. Starting 13 nights before Christmas, one Yule Lad visits Icelandic homes each night: he leaves a small gift in the shoe of children who behaved well, or a rotten potato for those who did not.

VOLCANOES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Rocks and lava fields are home to trolls, who turn to stone in sunlight, and to the hidden people. Hot pools are where Icelanders relax and meet friends, and Reykjavík's church, Hallgrímskirkja, was designed after the basalt columns of the volcanic landscape.

DID YOU KNOW?

Unlike Santa Claus, each Yule Lad has a funny name and a strange habit: one steals sausages, another licks spoons, another slams doors! In Iceland, volcanoes shape stories as well as the land.

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Sources: Icelandic folklore; Visit Iceland; Orkustofnun (National Energy Authority of Iceland). Checked November 2026.



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