

Icelandic volcanic eruption - an awesome display of elemental power

Pandemic or no pandemic, the world will never standstill. That's perhaps no clearer than in Iceland, where a volcano has awoken from a slumber that has lasted 6000 years, give or take a year or two.

The glow from the bubbling hot lava spewing out of the Fagradalsfjall volcano can be seen from the outskirts of Iceland's capital, Reykjavík, 32 kilometres away. For others around the world, there's always the live feed.



People watch as lava flows from an eruption of the Fagradalsfjall volcano on the Reykjanes Peninsula in southwestern Iceland on Thursday, May 13, 2021. - MIGUEL MORENATTI/AP

But this is the Reykjanes Peninsula's first eruption of any volcano in around 800 years, and nothing quite matches the exhilaration of bearing witness to Planet Earth's raw power up close and personal. Fagradalsfjall itself is made up of the Icelandic words for "beautiful valley mountain".

Miguel Angel Morenatti, a Seville-based freelance photographer for The Associated Press, loves Iceland and brought forward his trip to the North Atlantic island nation when he heard of the eruption on March 19.



Lava flows from an eruption of the Fagradalsfjall volcano on the Reykjanes Peninsula in southwestern Iceland on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. -MIGUEL MORENATTI/AP



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“As a landscape photographer, Iceland is a paradise,” he said.

Getting to the peak is not for everyone. It’s an arduous climb, taking two to three hours, but for Morenatti it’s been an experience that his five senses have never known. Morenatti hopes the photos he took capture some of this “wonder of nature”.

“When you finish the climb, you contemplate in amazement what happens there,” he said. “An impressive image, a Dante-esque sound, and a smell of gases that reaches your throat.”

With international travel slowly opening up, more and more people will be able to make the same journey to marvel at the volcanic show. And with summer looming, daylight will stretch into the small hours, so there won’t be such a hurry to make that arduous trek up.

Still, with the coronavirus pandemic still raging in many parts of the world, Iceland has strict rules on who can enter the country, which has a population of around 400,000. Getting fully vaccinated is key.



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Another view of the Fagradalsfjall volcano erupting. -MIGUEL MORENATTI/AP



An aerial view of lava flows on the Fagradalsfjall volcano on Thursday, May 13, 2021. -MIGUEL MORENATTI/AP



People gather to watch one of nature's marvels. -MIGUEL MORENATTI/AP



The awe-inspiring sight of the Fagradalsfjall volcano erupting. -MIGUEL MORENATTI/AP



Watching the the Fagradalsfjall volcano erupt from afar. -MIGUEL MORENATTI/AP

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