



Volcano Tours

Hi! My name is Magnus and I own a company that takes people to look at the volcanoes here on Iceland. Normally, there are no volcanoes erupting here in Iceland, but we still go to look at the craters and the lava fields.

When the volcano erupted here in 2010, it instantly became a tourist attraction. We had people arriving here from all over the world to look at the magma being thrown out of the volcano. It was totally safe to go and look at the volcano and there was no end to the demand for our trips, and other similar companies that operate here.

We can get seven tourists into each of our big trucks, and while the volcano was safe to visit we didn't have any spaces left on our tours. People were ringing us at all times of the day wanting to put on reserve lists – we could have taken twice as many people if we had more trucks!

We charged £200 per person for the visit to see the volcano. We could have charged a lot more! But we were making enough money. We have three trucks and each one did three visits a day. We were making thousands of pounds every day! This was a good time for us; it helped my family to pay for a holiday, and it helped other people too because we had to take on extra drivers and an additional receptionist.

But it didn't last for long. Once the ash cloud was produced, people couldn't fly into Iceland anymore and it wasn't long before we had to put an end to our trips. It was nice while it lasted – and I can't wait for one of our volcanoes to erupt again!



Tourist - Keith

Hi – My name is Keith and we have just had a wonderful time on holiday in Tenerife! We were looking forward to the holiday so much and it didn't disappoint. The best thing about it was that we had an extra week in the hotel for free!

Just as we were about to start packing to come home, we saw on the news that the ash cloud from a volcano in Iceland had grounded flights across Europe. Shortly after that, the holiday rep came to see us and told us that we couldn't leave just yet. Because we had bought the holiday as a package, we were insured and the travel company had to pay for us to change our flights and stay in a hotel until they could fly us home.

There was a bit of uncertainty during the second week of our holiday because we didn't know if we would be going home from one day to the next. If we were told in the morning that it wouldn't be today, that meant another day lounging around in the sun by the swimming pool! They even had to provide our food, so we didn't have to spend any extra money!

It also meant that I had an extra week off work. They weren't too happy about that because they were losing money, but with the circumstances they let me off. There were thousands of people who couldn't return to work during that week, so I wasn't on my own.



Tourist - Michael

Hi – My name is Michael and my family and I had a nightmare in New York.

We were at the airport, waiting to come back from The Big Apple when it was suddenly announced that the flight was cancelled. At first, no reason was given, but then they said it was because of this volcano in Iceland! I couldn't believe it at first. We didn't need to fly over Iceland, but the ash had blown south.

I called the insurance company, but we were not covered for this kind of delay! And because I had booked the holiday on my own, there was no company who were insured to help us out! I soon realised that it was going to cost me a lot of money.

We booked a hotel in New York because we had to stay over in the city. Our hotel cost £189 a night, and we ended up staying there for five nights! I couldn't really afford it, but we had no choice. As well as that, we ended up spending around £100 a day on food and paying for things like museums to pass the time. When we did eventually manage to get a flight that would leave, we had to pay an upgrade of £199 per person – and there were four of us! It cost us a fortune – and all because of a volcano in a place I have never been to!

We did see a lot more of this great city, so that was something positive. But leaving New York wasn't easy.



Air stewardess - Nicola

I work for an airline that flies all over Europe and I was due to fly to Berlin, but I got a call in the middle of the night to tell me that the government was shutting all air space over the UK. I couldn't believe it. Nothing like this has ever happened before and I could not believe our bad luck!

In our industry, the safety of our passengers in the air is the most important thing so any decision that has to be taken for safety is fine by me. The last thing I wanted to happen was for a crash to take place. So when they told us that the ash cloud could cut out all the engines, I guess the airline had no choice. I suppose they didn't want a repeat of what happened in the 1980s when a plane flying through lost all its engines. Because of this, all the flights were scrapped.

It cost the airline a lot of money – and it cost me some as well. My bosses said the company lost about £20 million a day while the flying ban was on. I and the other air stewards were told there was no work for us, so we had to take some time off and didn't get paid. The airline industry as a whole lost £1.5 billion during the ban – that's a lot of money.

What's really annoying is that some people say they don't think the ban ever needed to happen. Our airline did tests and found that it was safe to fly through the ash cloud with modern engines. So was it all just a big waste of time? Could be...



Icelandic farmers

Hi – My name is Siggí and I am a farmer in Iceland, near Eyjafjallajökull. I've had a bad week. A very bad week.

The volcano started erupting with people thinking it was a bit of a novelty, but I knew it could all go wrong. And now it has. I own a big farm, where I keep sheep and horses. I don't grow crops; nothing much grows on Iceland.

Things were fine until the eruption with the ash came. The ash fell on our farmhouse, leaving a sticky goeey ash liquid about 5 inches deep. It was terrible and you could hear the whole building creaking under its weight. We had to go out and clear it, but the ash was so thick it got in our lungs and really made us feel ill.

As if that wasn't bad enough, the volcano melted some of the glacier. This sent floods coming right down the valley. We were told we had to evacuate the area. When I came back to inspect our land after the flood, I found our house was intact, but three of our stables had been washed away by a three-metre wall of mud and water. It's costing us a lot of money to put right.



Iceland residents

My name is Lisa and I live in a village just outside Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. At first, I quite liked all the attention that the volcano was getting our country, especially as it was safe. It was also bringing a lot of money in for local people – my sister works in a hotel and they had to employ extra staff to cope with the demand.

But when ice was melted and the flood came, things became quite serious for me. I drive to work on a farm about a couple of hours away, but the flood water washed away one of the main bridges and it meant that I couldn't reach it for weeks. Without the ability to get to work, I didn't get any money and things were quite tough.

The volcano really affected my life and I really don't want to see another one cause any damage for a long time.