

TRAVEL

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HOT STUFF:
stylish hotels at volcanic destinations*Though Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano has been hogging the limelight of late, it isn't the last word on locations with mountains that spew out ash and lava*

REUTERS, SINGAPORE



Gas rises from the crater of a mud volcano in East Java, Indonesia.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Ash and plumes of grit spew out of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano.

PHOTO: AP



Smoke rises from Mount Bromo (left) and Mount Semeru (right) in East Java, Indonesia.

PHOTO: EPA

PHOTO: AP

Iceland's volcano may be wreaking havoc on the travel industry, but not all mountains that rumble are bad news. Boutique hotel specialists Mr and Mrs Smith (www.mrandmrsmith.com) have come up with a list of stylish hotels in volcanic destinations.

» 101 Hotel, Reykjavik, Iceland

They don't call it the Land of Fire and Ice for nothing, but if it's cool you're after, make a date with the 101 Hotel in Iceland's happening harborside capital, more than 100km from headline grabbing volcano Eyjafjallajökull. Behind the classical facade you'll find a vision of metropolitan monochrome, with sleek bedrooms and freestanding baths. Dine on Mod Icelandic cuisine at the restaurant or consider the local art at the 101 Gallery. Then warm up in the basement sauna.

» **Hacienda de San Antonio, Colima, Mexico**
Backstroke up and down the enormous pool at this coral-pink, classically decorated heritage hotel and you'll be able to eyeball the unmistakably steep slopes of the Colima volcano in the distance. Nestled near the Pacific coast, west of capital Mexico City, this elegant 120-year-old retreat offers stately manor luxe amid lush landscaped gardens. You can't beat the El Quetzal

Junior Suite, which boasts panoramic views of the smoke-haloed volcano from its pretty terrace. The hacienda runs its own organic ranch so you can dine on delicious local produce, then kick back with a margarita made from local mango grappa.

» Mystique, Santorini, Greece

Set on a rugged Cycladic island summit with vistas of a cliff-lined volcanic bay, this getaway is high on romance, relaxation and nature. Soaring above the rocky heights of the southern tip of Oia, in the north of Santorini, its serene, all-white suites are spacious and airy with private terraces overlooking the sea. Gym freaks will love the spa-inspired Spiritual Suites, which come with a Jacuzzi, exercise machine and spa bed to ensure you're looking your best.

» The Boatshed, Auckland, New Zealand

If you love making an entrance, hop aboard the 35-minute ferry ride from Auckland to Waiheke Island, home to the Boatshed. En route you won't be able to take your eyes off the dramatic low-lying lines of volcanic island Rangitoto, which means "blood red sky" but which last erupted about 600 years ago. With just seven suites, and chic nautical styling, the Boatshed is a laid-back haven with friendly hosts who can cook up a storm.

The hike up Rangitoto takes about an hour, but the views from the crater rim are worth it. With 50 volcanoes making up the Auckland Volcanic Field, this is a volcano fan's dream destination.

» Hotel Raya, Aeolian Islands, Sicily, Italy

Fashion designer Giorgio Armani regularly holidays on Panarea, one of the volcanic Aeolian Islands off the northeast coast of Sicily, and it's easy to see why. For a boutique bolt-hole that perfectly captures Panarea's Mediterranean charms, check out the Hotel Raya, which offers vistas of iconic volcano Mount Stromboli, delicious seafood, top diving and sailing, and Raya nightclub for hot evenings out. Fiery Stromboli and sulphurous Vulcano are just two of the seven Aeolian Island sisters if you fancy touring, or stop over in mainland Sicily where iconic volcano Mount Etna dominates the landscape.

» Amankila, Bali, Indonesia

What do you get when you team a luxe Aman resort with a coastal cliff-side spot nestled below Bali's tallest and most sacred volcano? Amankila, on the island's east coast near Manggis, which boasts jaw-dropping views of towering Mount Agung. Enjoy the skyline from the rustic-deluxe sanctuary of your private terrace, set amid coconut groves, or from

the tempting three-tier infinity pools that step down from reception to the shore like paddy fields. All suites are freestanding huts with thatched roofs, but interiors offer a sophisticated modern take on Balinese style.

» Ace Hotel, Portland, US

Within reach of dormant volcanoes Mount Hood and Mount Tabor, as well as active Mount St Helens and Mount Rainier further north — and some superb snowboarding — this hip hotel is the ace in downtown Portland's pack. The look here is groovy graphic designer's den, with edgy wall murals by local artists, quirky vintage finds and vinyl record players in rooms, plus a box of discs to spin. Pop down to Clyde Common bar and restaurant next door and you may find yourself sharing a One-Trick Pony cocktail, or even a Suicide Note, with the grungerati.

» Huka Lodge, Lake Taupo, New Zealand

A traditional 1920s hunting lodge famous for its sumptuous riverside rooms, creative dining and world-class fishing, Huka Lodge is one of New Zealand's most sought-after stays, beloved of celebrities. Set in the heart of the North Island near Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake formed by volcanic eruption 30,000 years ago, it's also within striking distance of

still-active Mount Ruapehu, home to the Whakapapa and Turoa ski fields, where you can slalom down volcanic cones.

» La Minervetta, Sorrento, Italy

Working a quirky nautical look, this Amalfi Coast cliff-hanger near Sorrento comes with vertiginous views of Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples from its lofty pool and stunning terrace. La Minervetta is handy for visiting the famous archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum (Ercolano) nearby, both victims of devastating ancient volcanic eruptions but now among Italy's top tourist must-sees.

» Losari Spa Retreat & Coffee Plantation, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

This coffee plot in a remote mountain setting on Indonesia's main island Java is surrounded by plantation fields and ringed by no less than eight volcanoes. Stay in authentic antique-filled Dutch colonial villas, set amid 25 hectares of lovingly tended gardens and coffee plants. Naturally, the home-grown coffee is a highlight, as is the award-winning spa which boasts a Turkish-style hammam bath and uses herbs and ingredients harvested on site. If you're heading out and about, there's great jungle trekking, and cultural centre Yogyakarta and Buddhist temple complex Borobudur both within easy reach.