



smoking **Mount Bromo**

Mount Bromo in East Java spewed ashes into the air after a relatively minor earthquake eruption which took place in the end of November 2010. It's status was upgraded to top alert and declared off-limits to visitors. Significantly stronger volcanic activity repeated in January 2011. Indonesia has about 500 volcanoes, nearly 130 of them active and 68 classified as dangerous.



The volcano constantly spits smoke and ashes which can reach up to 1,000 meters into the air. Red hot rocks flying out of crater can be seen in all its beauty only at night.

Mount Bromo is an active volcano which forms part of the chain of volcanoes named the Tenger massif that stretches along the bow of the Sunda Islands. It is here that two tectonic plates converge: the Indo-Australian plate forms a subducting boundary with the Eurasian plate. The magma that rises in the subduction zone feeds the surrounding islands, performing the role of nature's "builder". These islands stretch, like a string of exquisite beads, from the Andaman Islands through Sumatra and up to East Timor.



The ash that spills from the crater covers everything with a dusty black patina: streets, houses, fields, forests, and gardens... Due to its chemical composition the volcanic ash can even be used as a fertilizer. It is not poisonous to humans, although in the long run it is likely to cause respiratory problems. In those periods when Bromo remains active for longer than four months, environmental issues are brought to the fore and the local economy is affected, while during its most active periods the volcano causes particular concern to aviation.



Although tourists and other visitors were alerted of the potential risk of visiting the volcano's environs following the eruption of Bromo on the 26th of November 2010, the residents of the surrounding villages were not evacuated. Volcanic ash from large eruptions can affect the climate: massive ash clouds reflect the sun's rays, causing temperatures to fall. In such areas the sun might not appear for prolonged time, forcing locals to look for other means to heat their dwelling houses.





The Bromo volcano looms in the middle of the vast plain known locally as the “Sea of Sand” , or Segara Wedi in Javanese. In this open plain, at the foot of Bromo, undisturbed and veiled in black ash sits the Hindu temple Pura Luhur Poten – seemingly forgotten by all. On the 14th day of the annual Hindu festival Yadnya Kasada, believers from the surrounding area congregate at the temple to climb the volcano (when it is inactive). Offerings are thrown straight into the crater mouth: rice, flowers, fruit, vegetables, as well as domestic animals. Through this act the locals hope to sustain their god’s patronage, and express their gratitude for a rich harvest and good fortune. Those who are especially brave, regardless of the risk, descend into the crater’s abyss to collect the offerings – believing that this will bring them success.

The name of Bromo is derived from Brahma, the Hindu creator god. The Hindu temple that stands at the foot of the volcano can be seen as the village’s protector against the fiery vicissitudes of the god Brahma, the divine creator and destroyer.

Everything arises from Brahma, lives in him, and returns to him to be reborn again.