

# Volcanic Eruption Expected to Help Economy in Iceland

The Icelandic volcano Fagradalsfjall in the Meradalir valley began a strong lava eruption on 3 August 2022. The volcano is located in an unpopulated area so it is not causing any local damage. Also, the levels of ash emissions are relatively low, so it is not disrupting airline traffic, as Eyjafjallajökull did in 2010. On the contrary, there is the hope that the eruption will be good for the Iceland economy by attracting many tourists. The volcano is located about 1 hour drive from the largest city of Reykjavik and because of the type of effusive eruption, people can walk quite close to the volcano relatively safely. This is providing a rare opportunity for people to have a close encounter with an erupting volcano.

I visited the volcano on 12 August 2022.

James Mori





The volcano viewpoint is about a 2 hour hike from the parking lot.

This photo shows the first part of the trail which is easy to walk. The path is very good because it also leads to the site of the 2021 eruption last year. During that time, the condition of the trail was greatly improved.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the hike to the 2022 eruption is more difficult with lots of rocks and no clear path. It is not recommended for small children or people not in good physical condition. However, to encourage visitors, they are currently working to improve the path and every day the portion of the trail that is in good condition is being extended.

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The hike passes the large lava flow (dark gray rocks) from the 2021 eruption.

The activity in March to September 2021 was similar to the current eruption, but in a slightly different location. The volcano attracted several hundred thousand Icelandic and foreign observers. However, because of the travel restrictions due to the Covid pandemic, there were relatively few foreign visitors. This year with the improved health conditions, Iceland is hoping that the presently erupting volcano will attract more foreign tourists.



This is the current main vent which opened on 3 August 2022 as part of a 360 meter long fissure eruption. The eruption is presently no longer a fissure eruption, but concentrated from this one main vent and a spatter cone is being built up. The black rocks are new lava which flowed out during the past 9 days.

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Since the eruptive style is mainly an effusive lava eruption with relatively low explosive activity, it seems fairly safe to observe at close distances of less than 1 km. Of course, volcanoes are always dangerous and a sudden large explosion or a sudden change in the location of the vent is possible.

The physical and volcanic conditions here are unique and enable people to approach close to an erupting volcano.



At the close distance where the people are sitting in the photo, you can feel the heat and hear the sounds of the lava fountaining. The temperature of the erupting lava is over 1000 °C.



This is another photo of the current lava fountaining.

The eruption last year in 2021 lasted for 6 months from March to September. The Iceland tourist industry is hoping that the 2022 eruption will also last for a similar or longer duration and attract many foreign visitors.

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<https://youtu.be/IWPjhpn63uM>