

Mount Etna is known as the highest and most active [volcano](#) in Europe. It is located on the island of Sicily, [Italy](#), in the Mediterranean region.

- It is almost 11,000 ft high, making it the tallest mountain in the southern Alps. Almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sicily's population live on its slopes, with a total area of 460 square miles.
- The [Roman God](#) of fire, Vulcan, was believed to use the base of the mountain for metal working. Mount Etna's volcanic activities are well documented, starting from Virgil's Aeneid.
- Mount Etna is a product of time. It is a stratovolcano with two structures. The ancient base and the dried lava layers formed the Montibello or Mongibello, which means 'beautiful mountain'.
- Mt. Etna has summit craters that tourists and hikers can access during safe season.
- Mt. Etna's instability and continuous volcanic activities are due to the consistent subduction of the convergent plates of Eurasia and Africa where it is located. During eruptions, it releases pyroclastic flows and ash clouds contributing to the igneous deposits around the area.
- In March 1669, Etna erupted destroying small villages and reached the walls of Catania. The people of Catania decided to divert the lava flow through canals which affected the village of Paterno.
- By 1928, the village of Mascali was destroyed by large amount of lava flow which was later rebuilt by Benito Mussolini. In 1992, the Operation Volcano Buster was conducted by the US troops to divert the lava flow.
- Concrete blocks were dropped through helicopters to divert the lava flow from totally destroying the village of Zafferana.
- Its atmospheric and geological conditions are somewhat similar to Mars making the scientists conduct experiments on space robots. In addition, the site was also used in the third installment of the Star Wars saga depicting the Mustafar planet.
- The mineral rich lava made the surrounding soil fertile helping the farmers of vineyards and olive orchards.
- Varieties of fauna and flora exist across different altitudes. Today, it serves as a tourist destination for skiing since Etna is topped with snow caps almost all year round.