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24 HOURS A DAY

Morning | Afternoon

15°C 

17°C 

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JENNIFER ROMANCES IN NY



Hot new couple Jennifer Aniston and John Mayer take their romance to the Big Apple...[more](#)

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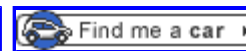
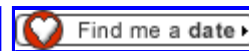
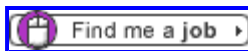
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Amazing pictures: The lightning storm that engulfed

an erupting volcano

By MICHAEL HANLON - [More by this author »](#) Last updated at 10:01am on 7th May 2008

[Comments \(30\)](#)

Few sights in nature can compare to the sheer magnificence of a volcano erupting in full flow.

But while scenes of molten lava are relatively commonplace, this otherworldly picture of Chaiten Volcano in southern Chile shows a truly spectacular, and devastating, volcanic phenomenon.

Scroll down for more...



UPI Photo/Carlos Gutierrez

This astonishing picture shows the Chaiten volcano

erupting during storms in the middle of the night

[ENLARGE](#)

As clouds of toxic ash and dust tower into the sky, they ionise the air, generating an explosive electrical storm. Colossal forks of lightning spark around the noxious plume as it spews from the volcano's crater, creating an image of raw, terrifying energy - as if the air itself were ablaze.

Now, the worst-case scenario is the collapse of the volcano accompanied by a "pyroclastic flow" - a devastating super-eruption of scorching dense gas and molten rock that would roll down the mountainside at 100mph or faster, incinerating and flattening all in its wake.

Thankfully, experts think this is unlikely at this stage.

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The Chaiten volcano has triggered earth tremors and spewed ash two miles into the air

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Seen from space, Chaiten's ash plume streams across Argentina towards the Atlantic



Locals wear masks to protect themselves from the all-pervasive ash near Futaleuf



The gigantic plume of smoke from the volcano dominates the skyline

Pyroclastic flows are also called nubes ardentes - or "burning clouds" - and are probably the single most destructive weapon in nature's armoury, capable of flattening cities in seconds.

It was such a catastrophe that destroyed the Roman town of Pompeii in AD79.

The 3,300 ft Chaiten Volcano, 800 miles south of the Chilean capital Santiago, is erupting for the first time in thousands of years, sending a plume of ash into the sky that stretches as far as Argentina.

It is also spewing out chunks of lava and hot rock. Authorities have already evacuated around 4,200 people from the town of Chaiten, six miles from the volcano, but 300 civilians and troops remain and are being evacuated now. Rescue is complicated by the fact that southern Chile is fragmented by fjords and access is often difficult.

Scroll down for more...



The village of Chaiten, next to the volcano, was virtually emptied in a massive evacuation

[ENLARGE](#)



Winds carried the ash to other towns in the region and across the Andes to Argentina



A local resident cycles through the ash as it settles across the town

The authorities are also evacuating a second town, Futaleufu. Some of Futaleufu's 1,000 or so residents had already crossed into neighbouring Argentina, where some areas have been showered with ash and where authorities last week closed schools and treated some for breathing problems.

The ash is more than six inches (15 cm) thick in places, and has contaminated water supplies.

Chile, which sits right on the Pacific's volcanic "ring of fire", has the world's second most active string of volcanoes behind Indonesia.

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30 people have commented on this story so far. Tell us what you think below.

Here's a sample of the latest comments published. You can click [view all](#) to read all comments that readers have sent in.

Stop that pollution Green Peace!

- Michael Harris, Manchester UK

Large quantities of ash sent into the air produce localised global cooling, with a smaller widespread effect on the worlds climate. Ash reflects the suns rays very effectively. It all depends how much ash is sent into the atmosphere - enough and global temperatures can take a significant short term dip.

- Mr H, UK

Now we know who or what is the greatest polluter re CO2 emissions, it's mother nature! Emissions produced by man pail into insignificance when compared with this. Also, do not forget that volcano's have been around since time began, so there must be other factors involved that contribute to "Global Warming".

- C Johnson, Stockport

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[Dustin Hoffman names the day after Angelina Jolie confirms 'I AM expecting twins'](#)

The glamorous mum-to-be wore a flowing Thomas Wylde dress for the premiere of her new animated film, Kung Fu Panda in Cannes. News of the couple's double baby-joy was accidentally broken today by Jack Black



[Kate's stand-in role for William at his cousin's wedding](#)

Kate Middleton will attend Saturday's royal wedding alone while Prince William sees a former girlfriend's brother marry in Africa



[The Green Rocket: Revolutionary sports car powered by mobile phone batteries gets its first test drive](#)

Zippier than a Lotus, 1p a mile to run...ROSIE BOYCOTT exclusively test drive the revolutionary Tesla Roadster sports car — powered by mobile phone batteries — that just might be the answer to global warming



[Pictured: 8am, two days out of rehab and Gazza shambles across the road with a bottle of gin](#)

His face a mask of despair, his holdall open to reveal a gin bottle and a child's piggy bank, Gascoigne wanders dazed and disoriented on the streets of his native Gateshead. Can anyone save the fallen hero?



[My 15-year-old son has Down's syndrome - but he's already a Hollywood star](#)

When Max's mother was told he had Down's syndrome, she fell into deep despair. Yet, at 11, he astounded critics with his performance in the hit film Notes On A Scandal - and is now about to make a second blockbuster



[I want to teach the world their cup size: New Seeker Eve Graham went from singing with the stars to fitting bras](#)

When Eve left the The New Seekers to pursue a solo career she had every hope of a glittering future. But her dreams ended in tatters and she was forced to take up a job fitting bras



[After Cherie Blair's shocking confession: Is it OK to sleep with someone on your first date?](#)

It's the very modern question raised by Cherie Blair's toe-curling admission that she and Tony spent the night together the first time they met. Here two writers give very different (and provocative) reactions

- [Cherie demeans the legal profession and must resign over her £1million memoirs, says disgusted judge](#)



[Backstage with the Nancys: The final five Oliver! hopefuls really will do ANYTHING to win](#)

They're down to the final five in the fight to be a West End star. Now, in an exclusive report, REBECCA HARDY reveals the backstage tears, temper tantrums and rebellion as the pressure begins to take its toll on the

remaining Nancies



TODAY'S DEBATE

Do you feel safe walking around the streets of Britain?

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DON'T MISS...



[Dad to the rescue as too much sun and alcohol-fuelled fun leaves Lily Allen in a heap](#)

The singer had to be taken back to her Cannes hotel by her father after a film party



[Katie Derham scolded by overweight job centre worker who posed for Lucian Freud after calling her 'Fat Sue'](#)

The ITV host put her foot in it during an interview



[Is Christina Aguilera showbiz's yummiest mummy?](#)

She may be a new mother, but Christina Aguilera hasn't let it dull down her dress sense



['I can't concentrate in flat shoes,' explains high-heel addict Victoria Beckham](#)

Posh, in town for her jeans launch, revealed more of her fashion secrets in a GMTV interview



[It's Sweat and the City as Madonna gets celebrity friends round for a girly workout](#)

Madonna and best buddy Gwyneth Paltrow were joined by Stella McCartney in the singer's gym



[Spreading the news: Jennifer Aniston and John Mayer's tour of love rolls in to New York](#)

Hollywood's hot new couple went for a romantic meal but strangely left separately



[The night Juliette Lewis groped Cate Blanchett in Cannes](#)

A busy night of DJing and dancing at a film party ended with the wildchild grabbing at the actress's cleavage



[Pictured: The moment a fan's Eva Longoria cardboard cut-out made her basketballer husband miss](#)

Tony Parker's Spurs lost, no thanks to a rival team's weapon of mass distraction



[Sienna Miller set to play Wuthering Heights heroine Cathy after Natalie Portman drops out](#)

The Factory Girl star is in early talks to take the star role in the epic romance



[Indiana Jones and the quest for box office gold](#)

It has been 19 years since Indiana Jones last buckled his swash across our screens - but he's still the hottest ticket at Cannes



[With Ashley still in the doghouse, Cheryl Cole turns to a faithful companion - her chihuahua](#)

At least the unhappy-in-love singer could turn to Buster after a Girls Aloud gig



[Amy and Pete out together for SECOND night running... celebrating news she won't face criminal charges over 'crack smoking' video](#)

La Winehouse and her NBF terrorise Camden



[Faye's Dunaway does away with the dowdy look as she dazzles at Cannes](#)

The 67-year-old has totally overhauled her image in time for the premiere of her new film with Julianne Moore
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[FANCY THAT](#)



[Norwegian Blue parrot really DID exist - but now they are all 'stiff, bereft of life and ex-parrots'](#)

Monty Python was right as it emerges the breed lived 55million years ago



[The sat nav that allows you to lock the doors of your home, switch off the lights and check on your pets... from the front seat of your car](#)

Is this the ultimate gadget?



['Start conversation by saying Hulloo!' ... World's first guide to using the telephone goes on sale](#)

The world's first telephone directory is set to fetch £20,000 at auction



[The electric cigarette that gives you a nicotine hit and gets round the smoking ban](#)

Inventors have created an electric cigarette which gives a nicotine hit while avoiding the smoking ban



[Robo Doc: The robot that can perform pioneering cancer surgery](#)

A cancer sufferer has had his prostate removed in surgery performed by a robot dubbed 'Robo Doc'



[Pictured: Duke, the 6ft 5in Shire horse that is Britain's tallest \(but he's still scared of mice\)](#)

He is as big as a family car, but fortunately Duke is just as easy to control



[The amazing pictures of a robot conducting a symphony orchestra](#)

A Robot has taken the baton to conduct an orchestra in what engineers claim is a world first



[Pictured: The amazing moment a horse did a perfect somersault](#)

Schattenlady and her jockey were unhurt after the horse crashed into safety rails and somersaulted into the air



[Ancient church emerges from flooded valley for first time in 50 years in most striking image of Barcelona drought](#)

Receding waters reveal an 11th-century church



[Divers haul oldest-ever bust of Caesar from bottom of river in France](#)

A bust of Julius Caesar found in a trove of Roman artefacts in the River Rhone is the oldest ever discovered
[More fancy that >>](#)

[IN OUR OPINION](#)



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The Queen's Speech preview was only a modest step in the right direction



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What we are experiencing at the moment could not reasonably be called a crisis



[QUENTIN LETTS: Old Brucie never saw such a spectacle](#)

In all Brucie's days presenting game shows he surely never saw quite such a sorry spectacle as the current Labour front bench



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How one woman's extraordinary courage is a rebuke to a world that is ignoring Mugabe's genocide

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