

Pompeii: A Tragedy Frozen in Time

The city of Pompeii was founded sometime between the 6th or 7th century BC. This port city in Italy was well known for its beautiful weather and was a popular vacation town for rich Romans. At its peak, Pompeii was home to around 20,000 people. Then, disaster struck.

Next to Pompeii was Mount Vesuvius, an active volcano that erupted in 79 AD. The explosion threw ash and rocks almost 20 kilometers into the air, blocking out the sun. At the same time, hot ash and poisonous gas flowed down the side of the mountain into Pompeii. Around 2,000 people died in that eruption, and the city was buried under nearly five meters of ash. The city was deserted and forgotten until 1748.

When Pompeii was rediscovered, people found that homes, everyday objects, and even dead bodies were kept mostly unharmed under the ash. Nowadays, it is a valuable record of life in ancient Rome. Even hundreds of years later, researchers are still finding new things in Pompeii. Older parts of the city, however, have become one of Italy's top tourist attractions. Visitors go to learn the city's history and remember the people who lost their lives in one of the most famous natural disasters of all time.