



# Kamchatka: Land of Fire and Ice

*Vadim Gippenreiter*

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## **Kamchatka: Land of Fire and Ice** Vadim Gippenreiter

The Kamchatka Peninsula, resting at the outermost eastern border of the old Soviet territories, north of Japan and west of Alaska, is one of the most remote places on earth. It forms part of the volcanic rift that runs southward through Japan and around the Pacific rim, and consequently is the site of almost constant volcanic activity. There are more than 30 "live" volcanoes on Kamchatka. Seismic activity has produced a rapidly changing landscape, surprisingly rich in flora and fauna. From the deserts of black ash left by recent eruptions springs a wealth of plants and flowers, many unique to the peninsula. The rocky coastline is home to an immense number of seabirds and many types of seals, while inland, bears compete with smaller mammals for the harvest of berries gleaned from bushes growing on the banks of lakes of boiling mud. The vast volcanic peaks loom over the landscape, erratically erupting with dazzling displays of fire, clouds of ash and streams of red-hot lava. Vadim Gippenreiter's award-winning photographs have appeared all over the world. A veteran traveller and mountaineer, he has produced a wide variety of pictures of the countryside, the wildlife and the volcanoes in every stage of their intermittent eruptions. His text tells of his experiences in Kamchatka and provides an account of life on the slopes of the volcano in the course of its eruption. Robert Perkins was the first Westerner to be allowed to travel in Kamchatka in 40 years. His introduction is a history and travelogue of a country which is only now becoming more widely known.

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