1. Valdivia, Chile, May 22, 1960: 9.5

Number killed: 1,655

Number displaced: 2 million

Cost of damages: $550 million

The world's largest earthquake produced landslides so massive that they changed the courses of rivers and lakes. It begot a tsunami that battered the northern coastline of California, some 9,000 miles away; waves also hit Hawaii, the Philippines, and Japan where hundreds died.


Number killed: 128

Number displaced: Unknown

Cost of damages: $311 million

Because it occurred on Good Friday, it earned the somewhat dubious (if logical) title of the "Good Friday Earthquake."

3. The west coast of Northern Sumatra, Indonesia, December 26, 2004: 9.1

Number killed: 157,577

Number displaced: 1,075,350

Cost of damages: Unknown

The tsunami that followed caused more casualties than any in recorded history.

4. Kamchatka, Russia, November 5, 1952: 9.0

Number killed: Unknown

Number displaced: Unknown

Cost of damages: $800,000 to $1 million

This earthquake unleashed a tsunami that was "powerful enough to throw a cement barge in the Honolulu Harbor into a freighter," but it wasn't widely reported in the West because it happened during the Cold War.

5. Off the coast of Ecuador, January 31, 1906: 8.8

Number killed: 500 to 1,500

Number displaced: Unknown

Cost of damages: Unknown

An especially violent year for earthquakes, 1906 also saw massive tremors in San Francisco and in Valparaiso, Chile.


Number killed: Unknown

Number displaced: Unknown

Cost of damages: $10,000
Positioned on the Aleutian arc on the boundary between the Pacific and North American crustal plates, the Rat Islands occupy one of the world's most active seismic zones; with more than 100 7.0 or larger magnitude earthquakes having occurred there in the past 100 years.

7. **Northern Sumatra, Indonesia, March 28, 2005: 8.7**

   Number killed: at least 1,000
   
   Number displaced: Unknown
   
   Cost of damages: Unknown

   Two months earlier National Geographic predicted that Sumatra would experience more earthquakes (following the larger one on December 26, 2004). The island sits on a part of the ocean where large chunks of Earth's crust often collide; Sumatra's fault also spans the entire length of the island, which is a bit of a double whammy.

8. **Assam, Tibet, August 15, 1950: 8.6**

   Number killed: 780
   
   Number displaced: Unknown
   
   Cost of damages: more than $25 million

   Forty to 50 percent of all wildlife in the area nearest the quake died; the quake produced an violent aftershock a few days later that many journalists mistakenly believed to not only be greater than the original (it wasn't), but also the largest of all time (nor was it that).

9. **Andeanof Islands Alaska, March 9, 1957: 8.6**

   Number killed: 0
   
   Number displaced: Unknown
   
   Cost of damages: $5 million

   The only reported casualties were sheep, but it did produce massive waves all along the coastline of North, Central, and South America.

10. **Southern Sumatra, Indonesia, September 12, 2007: 8.5**

    Number killed: at least 25
    
    Number injured: 161
    
    Cost of damages: Unknown

    Only a day after the dust settled, another 7.9 magnitude earthquake followed, collapsing buildings and killing five people.

11. **West Coast of Sumatra, Asia, December 26, 2004: 9.0**

    Number killed: 212,000
    
    Number injured:
    
    Cost of damages:

    The quake caused a tsunami that killed thousands.
SRI LANKA
Sri Lankan military authorities report over 6,000 people killed in government-controlled and rebel-controlled areas

INDIA
At least 4,000 killed by waves which flooded the southern coast, official media report

INDONESIA
Local media report more than 4,400 dead -- many of them in Aceh, in northern Sumatra

THAILAND
Thai authorities say more than 430 are feared dead, and hundreds are missing

MALDIVES
At least 32 reported killed in the high waters on an island north of the capital, Male

MALAYSIA
At least 48 dead and 150 people reported missing

BANGLADESH
At least two people reported dead and several missing

12. The 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck the nation of Haiti on January 12, 2010 has begotten widespread devastation and unfathomable ruin, killing hundreds of thousands of people and leaving an estimated 1 million with nowhere to live.

13. Charleston Earthquake of 1886, August 31, 1886