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Top 10 most scenic flights in the world

April 25, 2022 1

Monday **newsletters** always feature **top 10 travel lists** to inspire.

Today: Top 10 most beautiful flights in the world

There's no denying that our planet looks amazing from above. Observing majestic mountain peaks, thundering waterfalls, gorgeous islands, and deep canyons from a bird's-eye perspective makes you appreciate even more the vast and often remote wilderness areas left on our beautiful world. So be sure to request a window seat on one of the following 10 scenic flights, which I consider to be the most spectacular journeys on the planet.

There is more information (with YouTube videos) below the slide show. Think I missed one? Share your favorite scenic flight in the **comments section**.

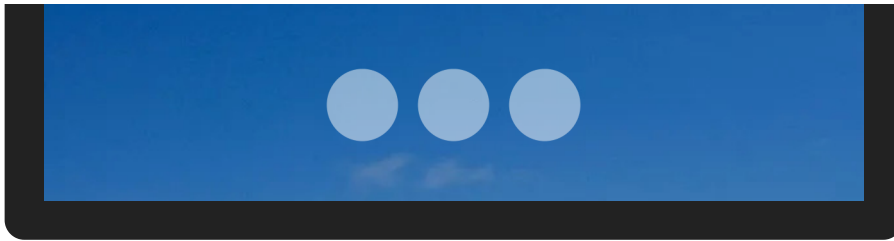
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10. FLIGHT TO THE SOUTHERN AURORA WITH AIR NEW ZEALAND

In April 2017, the first ever commercial flight to view the Southern Lights took off from Dunedin on New Zealand's South Island. The Boeing 767 – operated by [Air New Zealand](#) – had more than 130 photographers and aurora enthusiasts on board and traveled south to the Antarctic circle to see the natural lights phenomenon up close. The eight-hour flight crossed the international dateline twice, with the plane flying in large circles so that passengers on both sides could get a good view of the spectacular lights. The special Aurora Australis mission was the bold idea of Otago Museum director Dr Ian Griffin, but caught the imagination of aurora photographers with the flight selling out in less than a week, with some passengers even flying in from Australia, South Africa and Spain. Several flights are planned for 2022 and 2023 (operated by a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner) and can be booked [here](#).

9. FLIGHT OVER THE OKAVANGO DELTA IN BOTSWANA

The Okavango Delta in Botswana is one of the most pristine wilderness areas in the world. The largest inland delta in the world offers access to the spectacle of wild Africa with the heart-stopping excitement of big game viewing, the supreme tranquility and serenity of an untouched delta, and evocative scenes of extraordinary natural beauty. A scenic flight over the delta gives you a bird's-eye perspective of the golden-grassed floodplains, framed by lush palm islands, that are inhabited by a staggering variety of wildlife. You can keep a look out for hippos in the waterways and elephant and buffalo in the shade of the trees. You also observe how the water channels meander their way through the delta in ever-changing paths as this dynamic water system evolves. Transport within the Okavango Delta is primarily by light aircraft – mostly single engine airplanes – although helicopter services are also available.

- **Other accolades:** the Okavango Delta also features in my top 10 lists of the [most spectacular ways to arrive at a hotel](#), the [most stunning safari lodges in Africa](#), the [most luxurious glamping sites in the world](#), and the [most epic trips of a lifetime](#).

check-in, and late check-out. Click [here](#) to book your hotel online on the Classic Travel website.



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8. SCENIC FLIGHT OVER AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the world's great natural wonders. It is the largest reef in the world and consists of nearly 3000 individual reefs, 880 islands and hundreds and thousands of different types of plant, bird and marine life. Swimming with the fish and admiring the colors of the coral is a must for any holiday to the Great Barrier Reef. But to get a complete grasp of the sheer magnitude of the Great Barrier Reef, you need to stop swimming with the diverse marine creatures, get out of the water, let your feet leave the pure-white beaches, take to the sky, and see the reef from the air. On sightseeing flights to and from the reef, you will experience some breathtaking views over the Whitsunday Islands, and over the coral reef formations that make this part of the world so unique.

- **Other accolades:** the Great Barrier Reef also features in my top 10 list of the [most epic trips of a lifetime](#).



7. FLYING IN A HELICOPTER OVER THE GRAND CANYON, USA

A powerful and inspiring landscape, [Grand Canyon National Park](#) is one of the USA's most popular tourist destinations. Unique combinations of

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geologic color and erosional forms carved by the Colorado River decorate a canyon that is 277 river miles (446km) long, up to 18 miles (29km) wide, and a mile (1.6km) deep. The Grand Canyon reveals nature's sheer force with its towering buttes, pinnacles and mesas, and its immense size leaves many visitors weak in the knees. One of the most exciting ways to see the Grand Canyon is on a helicopter tour, with departure from either Las Vegas or near the entrance of the Grand Canyon National Park. Flying above and beneath the rim of the Grand Canyon will offer views you can't see from any viewpoint on the ground.

- **Other accolades:** the Grand Canyon also features in my top 10 lists of the [most beautiful national parks in the USA](#), the [world's most iconic sunrise & sunset spots](#), the [most spectacular waterfalls in the world](#), the [most magnificent scenery in the world](#), and the [most epic trips of a lifetime](#).

6. A FLIGHT OVER THE WORLD'S HIGHEST WATERFALL IN VENEZUELA

Angel Falls is located in the Canaima National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, in Venezuela. It is the world's highest waterfall, and it spills from the Auyantepui into what is known as the Devil's canyon 979 m (3211 ft) below. The indigenous people call it Kerepakupai-mer but it was named Angel Falls after Jimmy Angel, an American bush pilot and gold-hunting adventurer, who discovered it in 1937. The height of the falls is so great that before getting anywhere near the ground, the water is atomized by the strong winds and turned into mist. The falls are estimated to be 15 times as high as America's Niagara Falls. A scenic flight above Angel's Fall in a light aircraft will give you a birds-eye view of the falls and bring your thoughts as if you were in "The Lost World" of British author Arthur Conan Doyle (1912).

- **Other accolades:** Angel Falls also feature in my top 10 lists of the [most amazing places to visit in South America](#) and the [most spectacular waterfalls in the world](#).

5. LANDING OR TAKING OFF AT BHUTAN'S PARO AIRPORT

Travelers visiting the kingdom of Buthan have no other option but to fly to Paro Airport, the sole international airport of the four airports in the Kingdom of Bhutan. Located 2,4 km (1.5 mi) above sea level and with surrounding peaks as high as 5,500 m (18,000 ft), it is considered one of the world's most dangerous airports. So treacherous is the landing, that only a select number of pilots (from [Bhutan Airlines](#), [Buddha Air](#), and [Drukair](#)) are certified to land at the airport. Flights to and from Paro are allowed under visual meteorological conditions only and are restricted to daylight hours from sunrise to sunset. Planes have to weave through the dozens of houses that are scattered across the mountainside – coming within feet of clipping the roofs. But if you are not too nervous about the perilous conditions, you will be rewarded with breathtaking views over the clear blue waters over the Paro river, the lush green foliage of Bhutan's landscape, and the majestic peaks of the Himalayas (including Mount Everest).

- **Review:** read my review of my flight with Bhutan Airlines [here](#).

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4. FLYING OVER SANTORINI, GREECE

The Greek island of Santorini is arguably one of the world's most idyllic islands and ranks among my favorite destinations on earth. Perched high above the deep blue Aegean Sea, Santorini's whitewashed villages are clustered atop dramatic cliffs, with black sand beaches resting at the bottom. The island was shaped some 3,600 years ago by one of the largest volcanic eruptions in recorded history, which left a giant water-filled crater measuring about 12 by 7 km (7.5 by 4 mi) and surrounded by 300 m (980 ft) high cliffs on all sides. One of the best ways to appreciate the island's natural splendor is to fly over the world-renowned caldera by helicopter, especially around sunset time. [Peak Helicopter Service](#) offers a choice between two helicopter tours, the standard 20 minute or the extended 30 minute tour.

3. DAY TRIP TO ANTARCTICA WITH QANTAS

If you want to fulfill that bucket list dream of exploring the great white Continent without getting your feet wet, then taking a [Qantas sightseeing day trip](#) with departure from Australia may be your best bid. No passports are needed and you are kept warm and safe with a glass in hand while the privately chartered Qantas Boeing 787 Dreamliner glides effortlessly over amazing scenery. Approximately three hours south of Australia, passengers will usually see the first scattered ice followed by dozens of icebergs and ice floes. The scenic flight then crosses the South Magnetic Pole with views of the rugged mountainous topography of the Antarctic mainland. With up to four hours over the ice and the remaining hours to enjoy the bespoke service – including premium drinks, delicious meals and talks from Antarctic expeditioners – it's an experience like no other.

2. SEAPLANE FLIGHT IN THE MALDIVES

For most people, the iconic image of the Maldives is that of a deep blue ocean interspersed by tiny palm islands surrounded by ridiculously clear lagoons and sugar white beaches. The only way to see that breathtaking view of 50 shades of blue is from the air, and although you will catch a few glimpses of the islands from your plane upon landing or departure at Male airport, the best vantage point for the breathtaking panoramas is offered by the seaplanes that transfer guests to their resorts. Seaplane transfers in the Maldives are operated by either [Trans Maldivian Airways](#) or [Manta Air](#). A flight onboard a seaplane in the Maldives and admiring the picture-perfect archipelago from a bird's eye perspective is one of the ultimate scenic experiences that the destination has to offer.

- **Other accolades:** flying onboard a seaplane in the Maldives also features in my top 10 list of the [most fabulous things to see & do in the Maldives](#).

1. HELICOPTER TOUR OVER THE ISLAND OF KAUAI, HAWAII

Kauai was the first of the major Hawaiian Islands to rise from the ocean floor and it was the first to become extinct some 5 million years ago. Sculpted by nature for millions of years, Kauai's legendary and sensational natural beauty is epitomized by the Na Pali Coast – 14 miles (22 km) of sea cliffs ascending 3,000 feet (900 m) above untamed

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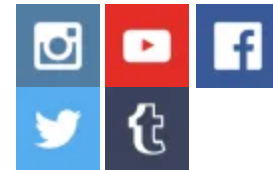
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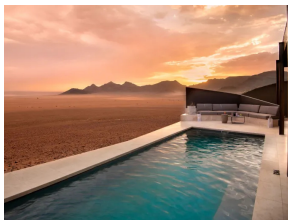
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shoreline, with sheer-walled valleys and cascading waterfalls—and spectacular Waimea Canyon, the ‘Grand Canyon of the Pacific’. Kauai also boasts the wettest spot on the planet at Mount Wai’ale’ale and the tremendous rainfall has produced the most remarkable sheer valleys, razor sharp ridges descending to the sea and most amazing array of waterfalls to be assembled anywhere in the world. Most of Kauai’s awe-inspiring sights are inaccessible from the ground and can only be seen and appreciated by helicopter.

- **Other accolades:** Kauai also features in my top 10 lists of the **most scenic islands in the world**, **most beautiful beaches in the world**, **the world’s most epic hikes**, **the most spectacular waterfalls in the world**, **the most magnificent scenery in the world**, and **most epic trips of a lifetime**.

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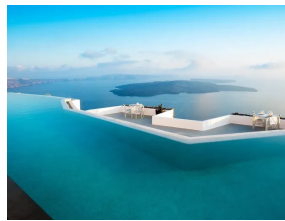


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