

# The world's most spectacular sunrises

Daybreak offers a fresh start — and often a sublime experience. From a Namibian desert to a glittering cityscape in Taipei, here are 10 sunrises that can rekindle your spirit.

Text by Amanda Castleman | Photo editing by Connie Ricca

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## Sossusvlei, Namibia

Sunrise saturates the scarlet and ochre dunes — some of the world's tallest — deep in the Namib-Naukluft National Park, the southwest African country's largest conservation area. "The air is crystal clear; by day, it's impossibly blue, at night, it's thick with unfamiliar constellations," notes artist [John Paul Caponigro](#), who occasionally leads photography workshops there. Stay at the luxurious [Beyond Sossusvlei Desert Lodge](#) and picnic at the sand drifts for a true taste of this wild, windswept desert.

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New Jersey Sunrise seen from N.J. By [author]

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## Taipei, Taiwan

The world's tallest LEED Platinum eco-building, [Taipei 101](#), rockets up from the cityscape. Its mall and 89th-story observation platform remain one of Republic of China's top 10 tourist destinations. But the iconic skyscraper itself makes for a superb sight at dawn, with its eight ascending sections evoking an Asian pagoda. The rooftop pool at the [Shangri-La's Far Eastern Plaza Hotel](#) offers one of the most dramatic viewpoints.

**Bing: See more pictures of sunrise in Taipei**





## Haleakala, Hawaii

Plenty of tourists tackle Maui's largest mountain, whose name means "house of the sun." Writer Mark Twain described its morning views as "the sublimest spectacle I ever witnessed." Once sacred to Pele, the volcano goddess, Haleakala continues to draw New Agers — and adventurers. The classic sunrise tour starts at the crater's mouth (big enough to swallow Manhattan) and then swoops 38 miles and 10,023 feet down to sea level on mountain bikes.

**Bing: See more pictures of Haleakala at sunrise**



## Stonehenge, England

Druids gather at the standing circle of [Stonehenge](#) in Wiltshire on the winter and summer solstices, when the first rays of sun pierce the prehistoric monument's center. But even on an ordinary day, the silhouetted sarsen stones evoke an air of mystery. Companies such as [British Tours](#) can take visitors inside the circle before the English Heritage site opens. Late 2013 will see big changes, as Stonehenge finally adds an updated visitor center, new galleries and a transit system that encourages exploration of the landscape. Until then, travelers looking for an intimate (and budget-friendly) experience may want to greet the dawn at nearby [Avebury](#), where three megalithic circles wind through a village.

**Bing:** See more pictures of [Stonehenge at summer solstice](#)



## Bagan, Myanmar

At sunrise, hot air balloons drift over the 2,500 Buddhist monuments of [Bagan](#), the capital city of the first Myanma Kingdom. The 16-square-mile archaeological zone remains the biggest draw in the Southeast Asian country's budding tourism scene, which just green-lighted its first ATM last November. "Take a flashlight for the steep climb to Shwesandaw Pagoda before dawn," advises [Marie Javins](#), a travel writer who has roughed it around the globe twice now. "If the crowds are too much, go one terrace down."

**[Bing: See more pictures of the astonishing monuments of Bagan](#)**



## New York City

The rising sun catches the skyscrapers of Manhattan, adding shine to this already legendary metropolis. Walk across the [Brooklyn Bridge](#) for stunning views, or swipe a MetroCard and catch the aerial [tram](#) — one of the continent's few commuter cable cars — to the up-and-coming Roosevelt Island in the East River. New York plans to transform the south end, by the old convalescent hospital, into a tech hub that could rival Seattle and Silicon Valley.

**[Bing: See more pictures of New York at sunrise](#)**





## Easter Island (Rapa Nui), Chile

Often called the "Eighth Wonder of the World," [Rapa Nui National Park](#) houses hundreds of monolithic statues (*moai*) from the ninth through 17th centuries. Hewn from volcanic rock with stone chisels, these ancestor-portraits range from 6 to 66 feet. Many resemble "big heads," because shifting soil has buried their torsos and bent knees. Rent a car to run out to the eastern coast of Rapa Nui, where the sun first kisses the *moai*. "Even in a haze, the sculptures slowly shimmering into view is worth the early morning effort," says Marie Javins, author of the travelogue "[Stalking The Wild Dik-Dik](#)."

**Bing:** [See more pictures of Rapa Nui](#)



## Lake Louise, Canada

The morning light creeps over the glaciers and pours into a turquoise alpine basin. [Lake Louise](#), a World Heritage Site in Alberta, is the best place in [Banff National Park](#) to glory in the break of day, while strolling along the Lakeshore Trail. Hikers can continue past the Victoria Glacier, hanging above the blue-green waters, up to the [Plain of Six Glaciers teahouse](#) (6.8 miles round-trip from the chateau, open in summer only).

**[Bing: See more pictures of Lake Louise](#)**





## Machu Picchu, Peru

The fabled "[lost city of the Incas](#)" sprawls on a jungle ridge in the Andes, a four-hour [train](#) ride northwest from Cuzco. Its sun-worshipping 15th-century builders aligned dawn's first rays with mountains, columns and a sundial (*intihuatana*), said to bestow celestial vision. Intrepid hikers line up early for one of the 400 permits to climb Huayna Picchu, the incisor-shaped mountain that anchors the citadel's north end. To the south looms its much bigger wallflower sibling, Machu Picchu Mountain, which unleashes views of the ruins, cloud forest and white, winding Urubamba River.

**[Bing: See more pictures of Machu Picchu](#)**



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