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Where to see the world's most beautiful sunsets

As the stars wheel into place, the sun often rallies for one last blaze of glory. From the African savanna to a remote Polynesian island, here are 10 prime places to salute the end of day.

Text by Amanda Castleman | Photo editing by Connie Ricca

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Uluru, Australia

Slanting rays of sun light up the rusty sandstone of the continent's best-known natural landmark, [Uluru](#). Briefly renamed Ayers Rock by white settlers, the site has been sacred to the Aborigines for millennia. The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park built five [viewing areas](#) so visitors could experience the full wattage of the desert's stunning sunrises and sunsets. But intrepid travelers also can greet twilight on camelback, thanks to [Ayers Rock Resort](#), which finishes its evening rides with an array of bush foods, including fresh-baked beer bread.

[Bing: View more photos of Uluru at sunset](#)

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

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Maasai Mara, Kenya

Kenya's most famous game viewing zone, "the Mara" sprawls across the Great Rift Valley. Each year, 2.5 million wildebeest and zebras migrate through from July to October. But at any time of the year, visitors may encounter lions, elephants, giraffes, hippos and crocodiles, among others. Lift a glass to diversity under an acacia via Mara Leisure Camp or beside a bonfire at Elephant Pepper Camp, which styles its eco-lodge like Indian-Raj campaign headquarters. Or head to the more remote Shaba Reserve, home to springs, rocky river gorges and Joy's Camp, which transforms a Land Cruiser into a bar atop a mountain.

[Bing: View photos of the Mara](#)



Rome

Escape the bustle and watch the sunset kiss the Eternal City's domes and terracotta tiles from the Capitoli Museum café. The broad marble terrace looms over the cupolas, towers, alleys and ruins of the *centro storico* (historic district). The swanky view inflates the table prices, so grab an espresso or aperitif at the bar, then linger by the balustrade. No admission ticket is required; a separate entrance lies on the right side of the Palazzo dei Conservatori.

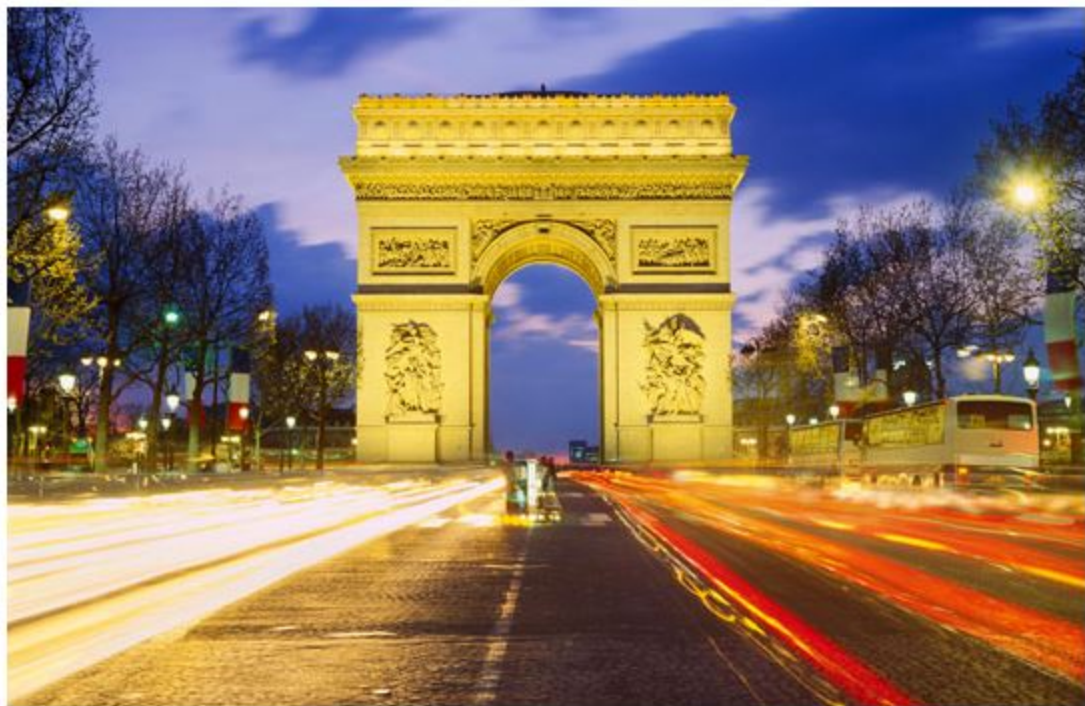
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Inside Passage, Alaska

Whales spy hop in the wake of the [Alaska Marine Highway Ferry](#), which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Crags, blue-green glaciers and moss-shrouded rain forests overhang the fjords of the [Inside Passage](#), as boats thread up from Bellingham, Wash. to southeastern Alaska and beyond. Travel alongside locals on the three-night passage to the Gold Rush town of Skagway; skip the more expensive berths and camp on deck. Heat lamps burn away the chill, allowing travelers to snuggle into lounge chairs and watch the Land of the Midnight Sun slide past.

[Bing: View more pictures of the Inside Passage](#)



Paris

"From vividly orange to sunshine streaming through the clouds, the [City of Lights](#) puts on a good show," says [Christine Amorose](#), a Francophile blogger. Naturally, the Eiffel Tower attracts romantics at dusk. Skip the long lines with tour companies such as [Classic Walks](#) or head to less crowded overlooks such as the banks of the Seine River and Buttes Chaumont, the steepest park in Paris. For just a few days in May and August, the setting sun spills through the [Arc de Triomphe](#) on the Champs-Élysées. Arrive early to secure a spot among photographers from all over the world.

[Bing: View more photos of Paris](#)



Cappadocia, Turkey

Wind and water have sculpted the soft volcanic stone of [central Turkey](#) into fantastical shapes. Boulders teeter atop slender stalks, and locals have honeycombed the cliffs and pinnacles — most strikingly, carving rock cones into snug homes. Some underground villages date back to the fourth century and contain still-vivid Byzantine wall paintings of saints. Catch the sunset from Uchisar Castle, the region's highest point. Or hop on a [Muskara Travel tour](#) and toast the stunning colors of Rose Valley with Cappadocian wine.

[Bing: View more photos of Cappadocia](#)



Sonoran Desert, Arizona

America's largest cactus, the saguaro, can reach 60 feet and 4,800 pounds, and its many-armed silhouette against the sunset has grown into a Western icon. Almost 2 million of these giants shelter inside [Saguaro National Park](#), which wraps around Tucson. Drive the eight-mile [Cactus Forest Loop](#) and hike the half-mile [Signal Hill Petroglyphs Trail](#) to get a sense of this unique landscape. Or stay true to the Wild West spirit and saddle up for an evening horse ride at one of the area's dude ranches, such as the elegant [Tanque Verde](#).

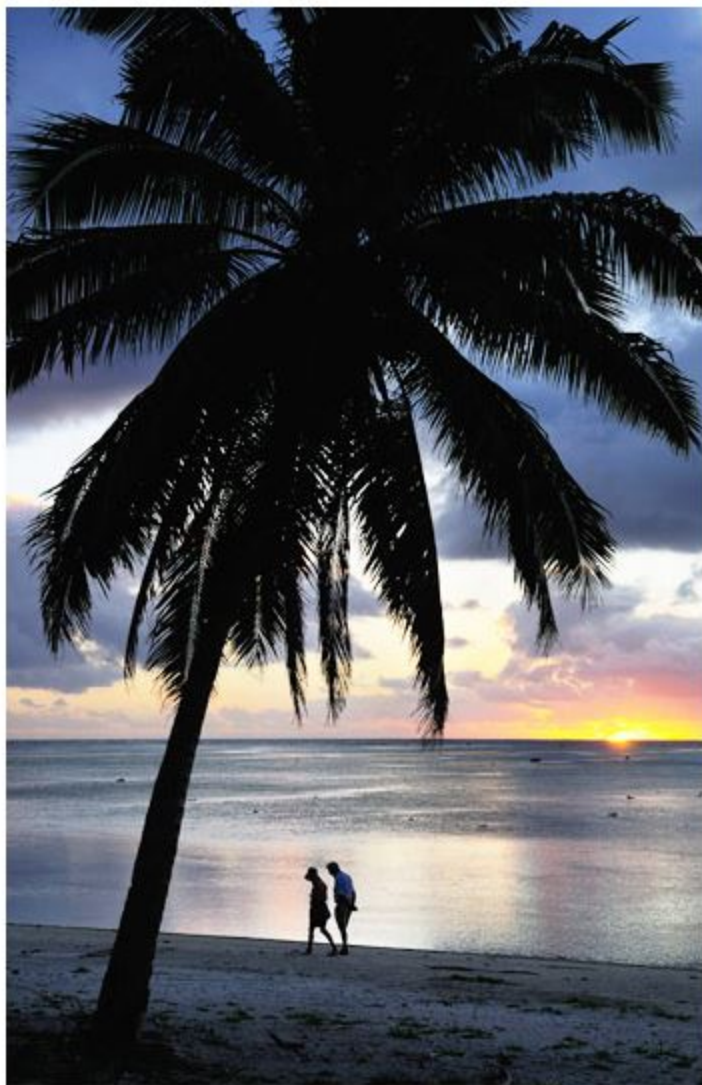
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Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The sun dramatically slips behind the *Dois Irmãos* (Two Brothers) Mountains at [Ipanema Beach](#), but even more scenic views unfold above [Rio de Janeiro](#). "Christ the Redeemer," the globe's largest art deco statue at 105 feet, crowns Corcovado Mountain, a site voted one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. Hop a cab to this stunning vantage point or trundle through the Tijuca rain forest on a 20-minute tram ride. Rio, shining below, gained [World Heritage status](#) last year, just in time to host the next football World Cup in 2014, followed by the [Olympics in 2016](#).

Bing: [View more photos of Rio de Janeiro](#)



Aitutaki, Cook Islands

The South Pacific weighs in with palm-fringed, Technicolor skies — the stuff of screensavers and vacation daydreams. As the sun dives into the turquoise ocean, kick back with a mango cocktail at a tropical hideaway such as [Pacific Resort Aitutaki](#) in the [Cook Islands](#), an archipelago halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand. “Aitutaki has to be one of the best sunsets ever,” says travel writer [Travis Marshall](#). “A massive, lake-calm lagoon surrounds a little nub of an island. When the sun sinks low, its rays hit the mirrorlike, glassy water, sending those reds and yellows and oranges burning back through the atmosphere like some cosmic kaleidoscope.”

[Bing: View more photos of the Cook Islands](#)



Wat Muang, Thailand

A two-hour drive north of Bangkok looms the Great Buddha of Thailand, the kingdom's highest statue, in the [Wat Muang](#) monastery. Known locally as Phra Buddha Maha Nawamin, the serene, gold-painted sculpture celebrates its fifth birthday this year. The temple also houses the Hell Park, statues that warn sinners of their fate — sort of a Buddhist take on Dante's "Inferno." But the sight of the Buddha, especially silhouetted against the sunset, can quickly restore a serene state of mind.

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