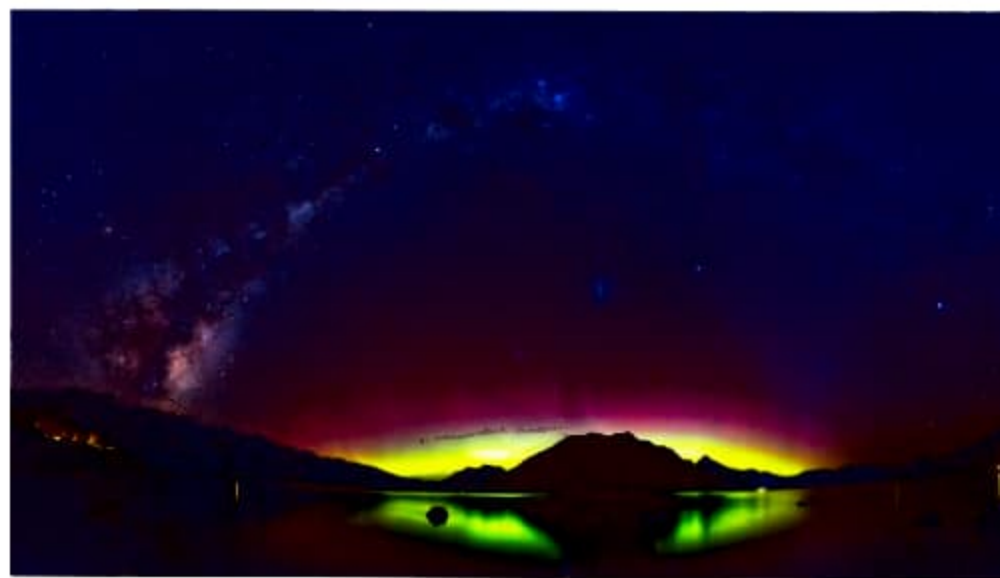


Where to See the Southern Lights

The Southern Lights are visible from high southern latitudes in Australia, New Zealand, South America, and, of course, Antarctica, and are most frequently seen in the auroral zone. Because of their accessibility, proximity, and abundance of breathtaking natural landscapes, Australia and New Zealand are extremely popular travel destinations – chasing the Southern Lights is no longer a pipe dream!

Here are the best places to see the Southern Lights if you want to get off the beaten path and witness one of nature's most spectacular displays!

Southern Island, New Zealand



Southern Lights of Lake Wakatipu in Queenstown, New Zealand

One of the best places to see the Southern Lights is New Zealand. Its southern location, combined with low light pollution, makes it ideal for an aurora-themed trip. Not to mention the abundance of natural beauty that begs to be explored!

When : From March to September, you can see both the Southern Lights and the Milky Way, providing an out-of-this-world experience.

Where : Stewart Island, Lake Tekapo, Dunedin, Invercargill, The Catlins, Queenstown, and Christchurch are all hotspots for aurora spotting on the Southern Island.

Lake Tekapo is one of New Zealand's most popular places to see the Lights, and for good reason. It is the location of the Aoraki Mackenzie Dark Sky Reserve, the world's largest and the only one in the Southern Hemisphere.

Getting there: Queenstown is the most affordable city to fly into on the Southern Island (and Auckland on the North).

How: Spend the night camping or in a remote cabin or lodge. Prefer roadtripping in a Jucy campervan. It allows you to sleep with the stars at your doorstep or you can rent a car. You could also go on a stargazing tour during a period of high solar storm activity. Aside from the Southern Lights, there's plenty of natural beauty to behold at Lake Wakatipu, from above in a helicopter tour, and while cruising through the famous Milford Sound.

Tasmania, Australia



Southern Lights over Cloudy Bay, Tasmania

Tasmania, with its gleaming white sand beaches, hopping wallabies (mini kangaroos!), and some of the purest air on the planet, is one of Australia's most underappreciated regions. This is the furthest south one can go in Australia, and it offers the best chances for aurora activity. From the mainland, it's surprisingly inexpensive to get there. Even if you don't see the aurora, the stunning scenery and adorable wildlife make the trip worthwhile.

When: It's one of the few places on the planet where you can see the aurora all year, but visiting Tasmania during the winter (June to August, peaking in July) will increase your chances of seeing the lights simply because it's darker for longer.

Where: The aurora can be seen almost everywhere in Tasmania. Seek out views to the south that are unobstructed. Mount Nelson, Mount Wellington, Rosny Hill, and Seven Mile are just a few examples of places to visit in the Southern Peninsula (south of Hobart).

From Cremorne Beach to Clifton Beach to Goat Bluff Lookout, the South Arm Peninsula in Tasmania provides seaside views of the lights. Seeing the lights dancing over water bodies is a must-do when visiting Tasmania.

Getting There: The largest city is Hobart, followed by Launceston. Jetstar and Tiger are two low-cost airlines that fly here.

How: Camping, camping in a campervan, road tripping, or staying in a cabin or lodge are all options. If the chances of seeing the aurora are good, consider taking a stargazing tour. While you're in town, visit Port Arthur for breathtaking views, Bruny Island for gourmet wines and cheeses. Or perhaps embark on a multi-day tour to see the best of Tasmania.

Falkland Islands, UK



This small group of islands, 400 miles off the coast of Argentina, is home to penguins, elephant seals, and aurora. The island was dotted with snowcapped peaks and stretches of white sand beaches. Despite its remoteness, the Falklands are rapidly attracting tourists drawn by its breathtaking scenery and wildlife.

When: Its' lack of urban development (it has a population of only 3400 people!) makes it incredibly easy to get away from the city lights and find dark skies between May and August. The Falkland Islands continue to be one of the best places to see the Southern Lights.

Where: The aurora can be seen in all parts of these southerly islands.

Getting There: From Argentina, take a flight to Port Stanley Airport (PSY). Traveling to the Falkland Islands, however, can be a long and expensive journey, with stops in Oxfordshire, the United Kingdom, or Santiago, Chile.

How: Simply take a walk outside! You can book accommodation in advance on the internet. Spend your vacation with the snow-capped peaks and stretches of white sand beaches, and sleep under the stars.

Antarctica



Southern Lights over a satellite dome in Antarctica

Antarctica is quickly attracting visitors due to its pristine state. Turquoise glaciers, waddling penguins, and stunning snowy hills inhabit the eerily barren landscapes. This part of the world truly does appear to be otherworldly. It costs a lot of money and takes a lot of effort to get here, but it is undeniably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

When: The Antarctic winter lasts from March to September, but due to bad weather, cruises are only available from November to March. As a result, March is your best bet.

Where: You'll be limited to the areas of your cruise/tour, but aurora can appear anywhere.

Getting There: Argentina (Ushuaia), Chile (Valparaiso and Punta Arenas), Uruguay (Montevideo), Australia, and New Zealand all have cruises to Antarctica. Because of the harsh weather, Antarctic cruises are only

available from October to March, so plan your trip for October or March to see the best of the Southern Lights!

How: From the comfort of your cruise ship's deck. However, because of the lack of light pollution, year-round sightings have been reported, so visiting Antarctica at any time of year could potentially yield promising results.

South Georgia Island



South Georgia, the world's southernmost island, is stunningly barren. Except for the odd elephant seals and penguins, there are no permanent residents here, as there are in much of Antarctica. White snowcapped peaks contrast with brilliantly blue glaciers; this place is a visual feast, especially if you can spot the Southern Lights!

When: The Antarctic winter (March–September) is the best time to visit, but cruises only go during this time. The best time to see the aurora is in March.

Where: Anywhere on the island's outskirts.

Getting There: The only way to get there is by cruise ship. From Chile, Argentina, or Uruguay, cruises are available. Many Antarctica cruises include a stop on South Georgia Island.

How: From your cruise ship's deck, you can see it.