

UNIT III

Tourism Destinations in North America

There's an infinite number of worthy tourist places in North America one can visit, with the continent being as vast as it is and spanning multiple countries. Northern America or North America lies in the northern hemisphere, sharing its northern border with the Arctic Ocean. The continent is considered one of the best travel destinations with the various tours in North America that will offer you all travel experiences that you may seek. Whether you are looking for a romantic holiday or an adventurous one with your friends or want a relaxing family vacation, the North America tourism caters to it all. From towering forests to undulating fields, pulsating metropolises and high-plain deserts, North America has it all.

Canada, Mexico and the US are the most popular destinations to cover within the continent.

Destinations in Canada

The second largest country in the world, Canada has no shortage of beautiful landscapes and unique sites for travelers to explore. From coast to coast to coast, the country is home to vibrant and culturally rich cities, along with incredible natural wonders.

In Western Canada, the Rocky Mountains and cities of Vancouver, Victoria, and Calgary dominate most itineraries. In Central Canada, Niagara Falls, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec City, are some of the most popular destinations. For those who venture out to Canada's Maritime Provinces in the east, the beauty of Gros Morne National Park, along with the cities of Halifax and St. John's, provide their own unique character.

Off the beaten path, but equally impressive, is Canada's North, where great rivers flow out to the Arctic Ocean, creating some incredible territory for canoeists, and where polar bears can be seen in the wild. Travelers can explore the remote beauty of places like Nahanni National Park and the towns and cities of Churchill, Whitehorse, and Yellowknife.

1. Niagara Falls



Niagara Falls is Canada's most famous natural attraction, bringing in millions of visitors each year. Located just over an hour's drive from Toronto, along the American border, these massive falls drop approximately 57 meters. You can see the falls at an astoundingly close distance from several key points.

Niagara Falls and the Niagara Gorge have been attracting tourists and daredevils for well over a century. Between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries there were numerous attempts to plunge over the falls in various types of homemade boats and barrels. This, along with tightrope walkers and other spectacles, led to the adjacent town of Niagara Falls developing a carnival type atmosphere that still persists today. Families will enjoy a walk down Niagara's outrageous Clifton Hill leading to the gorge and falls.

2. Banff National Park & the Rocky Mountains



Banff National Park lies in the heart of the majestic Rocky Mountains in the province of Alberta, and showcases some of Canada's most beautiful scenery. Turquoise-colored lakes, snow-capped peaks, and glaciers are all easily accessible in this stunning park.

The jewel of the park is Lake Louise, where green waters reflect the surrounding mountains and glaciers, and visitors can stroll easily around the shores. Just a short distance is Moraine Lake, another impressive alpine lake with an even slightly more dramatic surrounding.

The Icefields Parkway, which runs from Lake Louise to Jasper, is an unforgettable drive and another major attraction in Banff. At the south end of the park is the lovely little town of Banff, providing all kinds of options for accommodation, shopping, dining, and nightlife.

Banff is also a major winter sports area and home to Lake Louise Ski Resort and Sunshine Village, two of Canada's most prominent ski destinations.

3. Toronto's CN Tower



On the shores of Lake Ontario in Canada's biggest city is the iconic CN Tower, one of Canada's most famous landmarks. The tower stands an impressive 553 meters high and dominates the skyline.

At the top, you can find fine dining in the revolving 360 restaurant, and enjoy a meal while looking out over the city and lake. The LookOut and the Glass Floor offer beautiful views out over the entire area. But even those who choose not to go up the tower will find themselves stopping to stare at the structure, which is visible from almost everywhere in the city. At night, the tower is lit in different colors.

4. Old Quebec (Vieux-Quebec)



Old Quebec (Vieux-Quebec)

Old Quebec is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Canada's historic gems. Spread across the Upper and Lower Town of Quebec, this area contains the city's most historic buildings. The Lower Town, along the St. Lawrence River, is the site of the original settlement and home to the outstanding Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, as well as numerous other treasures. The Upper Town rests on 100-meter-high cliffs and is home to the Citadel, the Plains of Abraham, Place d'Armes, and the Parque Historique de l'Artillerie.

Old Quebec is one of Canada's most popular historical areas and is well developed for tourism. In addition to the historical sites, other highlights include artists displaying their works on Rue du Trésor; interesting museums, like the Musée de la Civilisation; and unique shops and restaurants.

5. Whistler



Whistler

Just a two-hour drive from Vancouver is the famous ski resort and village of Whistler. While Whistler has always been an important winter sports area, it has also developed into a popular summer destination, with golf, mountain biking, and a lively town atmosphere throughout the year.

The village gained international attention in 2010 when it became one of the locations for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. The area offers world class skiing, hotels, and dining, as well as a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities and beautiful mountain scenery.

6. Ottawa's Parliament Hill



Ottawa's Parliament Hill

Ottawa's Parliament Hill stands high above the Ottawa River and is graced by the Neo-Gothic-style Parliament buildings built in the last half of the 19th century. The most prominent feature is the Peace Tower, which divides the House of Commons and the Senate on either side. In front of the Parliament buildings is the Centennial Flame, lit in 1966 to commemorate the centenary of the Canadian Confederation, and behind the buildings is a sculpture garden.

In the summer, the Changing of the Guard takes place on the front lawn of the Houses of Parliament, weather permitting. Below Parliament Hill, a lovely walk runs alongside the Ottawa River.

7. St. John's Signal Hill National Historic Site



View of St. John's from Signal Hill

At the entrance to St. John's harbor, overlooking the city and sea, is Signal Hill National Historic Site. It was here, in 1901, that the first wireless transatlantic signal was received. It also played a strategic role in the Seven Years war with France, although the current fortifications were built during the hostilities of 1812.

The Cabot Tower is one of the key sites of Signal Hill. It was built in 1897 to mark the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of Newfoundland. It also now commemorates Guglielmo Marconi's reception here in 1901 of the first transatlantic radio telegraphy signal, transmitted over a distance of 2,700 kilometers from Poldhu in England. In the tower are exhibitions on the history of Signal Hill and the history of communications (with a special section on Marconi). From the top, you can enjoy panoramic views of the city and the coast as far as Cape Spear — the most easterly point of North America.

8. Old Montreal



Old Montreal

Old Montreal, lined with lovely historic buildings, is a place to go for great shopping and fine dining. While Montreal itself is a vibrant modern city, Old Montreal, down by the waterfront, is where most tourists come to soak up the atmosphere. Some of the must-see places in Old Montreal include Rue Bonsecours and the landmark Marché Bonsecours in the old town hall building, the interior of the beautiful Notre-Dame Basilica, the lively Place Jacques-Cartier, and the 1870s City Hall.

9. Polar Bears of Churchill, Manitoba



Polar Bears of Churchill, Manitoba

One of Canada's most unique attractions is the polar bear migration that sees these beautiful creatures make their way from land out onto the ice in Hudson Bay, near the town of Churchill in Northern Manitoba.

This small community opens itself up to tourists each fall. Tours take visitors out in tundra buggies with caged windows for close encounters with the polar bears. The prime viewing time

occurs in October or November while the bears are waiting for the water to freeze before heading out onto the ice.

10. Vancouver Island



Tofino, BC | Photo Copyright: Lana Law

Although it is less than a two-hour ferry ride from the mainland, Vancouver Island can seem a world away. Most people head to Victoria, BC's capital city, for sightseeing and culture, but if you head north into the wild and remote landscapes, the island holds some unexpected and unforgettable experiences. Nature lovers can hit the best hiking trails on Vancouver Island and set themselves up at some beautiful camping locations. Those looking for more comfort can always turn to one of the island's lodges or resorts.

On the rugged west coast, a magnificent scene of huge ancient trees, sandy coves, and dramatic rocky shores reveals itself as you drive up to Tofino. Around this tiny but incredibly popular off-the-beaten-path tourist town, in nearby Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, you can find incredible hiking trails, endless beaches, great surfing spots, camping, and places where you can simply soak up nature in peace.

Tofino is a year-round destination, although in the storm season from November to March, many visitors come to appreciate the huge waves rolling ashore; some come to surf, and others come simply to cozy up next to a fire in one of Tofino's lovely resorts looking out over the Pacific Ocean.

Other destinations around the Island, include Nanaimo, Parksville, and Qualicum Beach, all on the eastern shore, looking out onto the Salish Sea. If you really want to get away from it all, head up to the far north of the island and explore Cape Scott Provincial Park.

11. Bay of Fundy



Bay of Fundy

The Bay of Fundy, located in Eastern Canada in between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, is known for its amazing tides. The variation between high and low is the largest in the world, measuring up to a maximum of 19 meters (10 fathoms). While there are many ways to appreciate this natural wonder, some of the most popular locations and sights along the Bay of Fundy are the cliffs and rock formations at Hopewell Cape, Fundy National Park, the Fundy Trail Parkway, and Grand Manan Island.

12. Victoria's Inner Harbour

Few Canadian cities have done such a beautiful job of developing their waterfront area as Victoria and its Inner Harbour. This is a great place for strolling, relaxing, shopping, dining, and watching street performers all against the backdrop of the harbor.

The centerpiece of this area is the historic Empress Hotel, one of the city's most lovely buildings. Over the years, the Empress has welcomed kings and queens and, today, features a traditional high tea, which is one of the highlights for many visitors coming to Victoria. While the harbor area is popular year-round, it is particularly lively during the summer months.



Victoria's Inner Harbour

13. Gros Morne National Park



Gros Morne National Park

Newfoundland's Gros Morne National Park is more remote than many of Canada's most popular national parks, but worth the effort to discover this beautiful landscape of mountains and fjords. The park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring steep cliff walls, waterfalls, and interesting rock formations carved by the glacier-fed waters.

Most visitors take a boat tour to appreciate the scenery, but there are also hiking trails and opportunities for kayaking. In winter, the park receives far fewer visitors, but is open for ski touring, complete with backcountry ski huts.

14. Vancouver's Stanley Park



Vancouver's Stanley Park

One of Vancouver's greatest treasures is the 405-hectare Stanley Park, conveniently located on the west side of the downtown area. Situated on a peninsula, the park is surrounded by the ocean and home to huge red cedar and Douglas fir trees. The seawall, which rings the park, has an extensive walking, jogging, and biking path with designated lanes for walkers and bikers. From the seawall are some lovely views of the city and mountains. A scenic drive also winds through Stanley Park with numerous pullouts.

Within the park are the Vancouver Aquarium, scenic Beaver Lake, and the Stanley Park Pavilion and Rose Garden. Also of special interest are numerous totem poles, some of which were erected more than 100 years ago.

15. Calgary Stampede

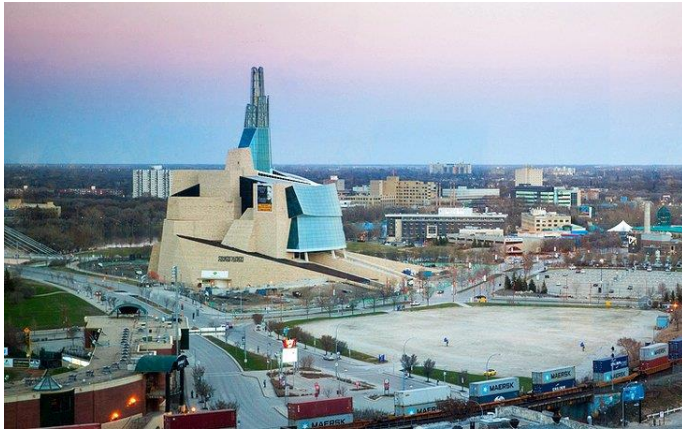


Calgary Stampede | Danteling / photo modified

This 10-day affair is one of the most widely anticipated events in Western Canada, with many locals and summertime travelers planning their holidays around the Calgary Stampede. For this week in July, the city of Calgary turns into a true western town, where people who might otherwise be wearing suits to work instead don jeans and cowboy boots.

At the Stampede Grounds are daily rodeo events drawing participants from across North America, thrill rides, games, food, and the nightly Grandstand Show. Around town, free "Stampede Breakfasts" are hosted by numerous establishments either at indoor or outdoor locations and usually consist of pancakes. Many big name country music performers also typically come to the city for this event.

16. Canadian Museum for Human Rights



Canadian Museum for Human Rights | AJ Batac / photo modified

Winnipeg's newest major attraction, which has drawn both national and international attention, is the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Opening in 2014 near The Forks, the building displays a unique design that is eye-catching to say the least, with geometry and colors based on images of the Canadian landscape.

Also unique is the concept behind the museum, which proved controversial when deciding which histories would be featured here. The museum highlights personal stories, capturing different perspectives, and focuses on a range of themes.

Destinations in Mexico

In the 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) report, which is a measurement of the factors that make it attractive to developing business in the travel and tourism industry of individual countries, Mexico was ranked 22nd place in the world's ranking, with tourist service infrastructure rank 43; price competitiveness 63; health and hygiene, 72; safety and security, 113; environmental sustainability, 116. Mexico has distinct geographical and cultural regions. Many Mexican cities in Central and Southern Mexico were the centers of indigenous populations in the prehispanic era and became administrative centers during the colonial era (1521-1821), with churches, government buildings, and residences of elites. Some cities in Mexico's North were founded in the colonial era or nineteenth century, but have grown in

importance with the expansion of Mexican industry (Monterrey), and cross-border trade with the U.S.

General tourism

Chichen Itza

The Mayan ruins Chichen Itza is located on the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico. Chichen Itza means “at the mouth of the well of the Itza people”. It was the Mayan’s largest and most densely populated city between 750 AD and 900 AD and most likely a spiritual center. The ruins of the city are managed by the federal government. The architectural ruins of Chichen Itza are some of the most visited in the world with more than 2 million tourists a year. Many of its stone buildings have been restored. Preserved structures include El Castillo, the Great Ball Court, a skull platform, the Sacred Cenote, the Temple of the Warriors, and the Group of A Thousand Columns.



The island of Cozumel, Quintana Roo

- Monterrey, Nuevo León
- Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas
- León, Guanajuato
- Guadalajara, Jalisco – and nearby Lake Chapala
- Papantla, Veracruz – vanilla
- Piedras Negras, Coahuila
- San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas
- San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí
- Saltillo, Coahuila
- Tequila, Jalisco
- Tijuana, Baja California

- Torreón, Coahuila
- Puerto Vallarta festival
- San Sebastián del Oeste, Jalisco
- Zipolite, and Mazunte, Oaxaca
 - Grutas Tolantongo.
 - Hierve El Agua.
 - Suytun Cenote.
 - Edward James Garden.
 - Tak Be Ha Cenote.
 - Bacalar.
 - Tamasopo.
 - Tulum.

Destinations in North America

North America is filled with must see attractions. Hundreds of locations draw millions of tourists to natural landmarks, historic sites and exciting places. Some are old, some are new. Some are geological wonders. Some are manmade structures. Here are our picks for the top 20 must see attractions in North America.

Niagara Falls

The Niagara Falls is an amazing natural wonder located on the border of the United States and Canada. The Falls are the must see attraction in North America. The geological wonder consists of three waterfalls. The Horseshoe Falls border New York State and Ontario, Canada. The American Falls and Bridal Veil Falls are in New York State. The Falls attract an average of 12

million visitors from all over the world each year, and there is much to do and see besides the amazing water falls. There are tours, parks, restaurant, shopping, interactive exhibits, casinos and luxury hotels. Since 1900, daredevils have attempted to go over the Falls in enclosed barrels. Some were successful and some were not. During the mid-twentieth century, the Falls became a popular honeymoon destination. The Niagara Falls are definitely a must see attraction in North America.

Walt Disney World Parks

Walt Disney World is the most visited resort in the United States. Walt Disney and his brother Roy opened a theme park Disneyland in Anaheim, California in 1955 and wanted to open a supplemental park. Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom was created in Orlando, Florida and opened in October 1971. Epcot Center followed in 1982, Hollywood Studios opened in 1989, and Animal Kingdom followed in 1998. The resort is often used as a corporate meeting destination, and 52 million people visit the parks each year. There are many resorts and different types of Amusement Parks. Walt Disney World is the most popular family trip destination. The Magic Kingdom's iconic Cinderella's Castle, Space Mountain, and are fun for people of all ages. Epcot Center celebrates the countries of the world and science. Animal Kingdom provides rides and adventures in a safari atmosphere. There are also two water parks associated with Disney World as well as golf courses, restaurants, shopping and more.

Times Square

New York City has many must see attractions including Central Park, Rockefeller Plaza, Radio City Music Hall, Fifth Avenue, Wall Street, Broadway and Ellis Island. Time Square, located in Midtown Manhattan at Broadway and Seventh Avenue, is the United States' most famous intersection. It's home to commercial business, entertainment venues, hotels and restaurants. It's also the hub of the Times Square has been called "The Crossroads of the World", "The Center of the Universe" and "The heart of The Great White Way". Over 50 million people, mostly tourists, cross the intersection each year. Originally called Longacre Square, it was renamed Times Square in 1904 when The New York Times moved its headquarters there. Since 1907, the iconic New Year's Eve celebration has been held in Times Square when the "ball is dropped" at midnight. The annual celebration attracts over a million visitors every December 31 except when the event was during World War II. During the Great Depression, the area

became seedy but was revived in the 1990's. "Good Morning America" is broadcast live at ABC's Times Square Studios. Well known for its bright advertising signage, Times Squares is home to neon and LED lighting jumbotron.

National Mall

The capital of the United States, Washington DC, has multiple attractions, but visitors must be sure to check out the National Mall. The national park begins at Capitol Hill and stretches toward the Potomac River and is home to several memorials including the Washington Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and memorials honoring the wars that the United States have fought. The National Mall is a gathering place for people witnessing the United States Presidential Inaugurations. The National Mall is also home to the Smithsonian Institute. The Institute features several museums including the National Gallery of Art, the National Museum of American History, the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The National Mall is also used as a place of peaceful protest.

The Getty Center

Endowed by the Getty Trust, the Getty Center features the Getty Museum in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles, California. In 1997, the \$1.3 billion Center opened to the public. It's beautiful hill top architecture and gardens overlook the city of Los Angeles. The J. Paul Getty Museum draws nearly 2 million visitors each year. The Getty Center includes the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, the Getty Foundation and the J. Paul Getty Trust. The buildings were designed by Richard Meier for beautiful views and safe from earthquakes and fires. One of the most visited museums in the United States, the J. Paul Getty Museum includes pre twentieth century European art and nineteenth and twentieth century American and European photographs.

The CN Tower

The skyline of Toronto, Canada is defined by The CN Tower. The 553.3 foot communications tower was completed in 1976. The tower was the worlds tallest free standing structure until 2009 when the Canton Tower was built in Burj Khalifa. Built on the Canadian National railroad lines by the Canadian railway company, the CN Tower attracts more than 2 million visitors a

year. Not only does the tower serve as a communications tower, but it also has an observation deck and a restaurant with amazing panoramic views of Toronto. Since 1995 the CN Tower has been controlled by the Canada Lands Company. The same year, the American Society of Civil Engineers named the CN Tower one of the modern Seven Wonders of the World.

Pearl Harbor

The USS Arizona memorial is in Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. It is the resting place of 1,102 bodies of United States Marines killed during the surprise attack by the Japanese on the morning of December 7, 1941. The events of that morning would lead the United States into World War II. The United States Navy established the harbor as a base in 1899. The memorial was built in 1962 and is visited by more than 2 million people each year. The memorial is built over the wreckage of the bombed ship, the USS Arizona. It is one of several United States memorials as part of the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument. Another important memorial to visit is the World Trade Center Memorial in New York City. The Twin Towers were destroyed by terrorists who had hijacked jet passenger airplanes and flew them into the office skyscrapers on the morning of September 11, 2001. The memorial features two waterfalls honoring the thousands killed that morning. The waterfalls are built over the footprints of the Twin Towers.

Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone National Park is an extensive United States park established in 1872 by President Ulysses S. Grant. The expansive park covers nearly 3,500 miles in parts of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana. Best known for its protected wildlife and geothermal features, Yellowstone National Park attracts millions of visitors every year. Yellowstone is well known for its geysers. There are at least 1,280 known geysers. "Old Faithful" erupts regularly and is probably the most well known geyser in the world. Wildlife includes bears, wolves, elk and bison.

The Freedom Trail

The Freedom Trail covers 2 and a half miles in Boston Massachusetts. The trail follows a path in the city that marks several sites that were important to the American Revolution. Many of America's founding fathers lived in Boston and the city was home to many Revolutionary events. It was also home to many of the meetings where the American strategy for the war were

held. The Trail begins at Boston Common and winds through downtown through the North End and ends in Charlestown at the USS Constitution. The Trail is marked by red lines or red bricks. Sites along the trail include churches, graveyards and the naval frigate at the site of the “Boston Tea Party”. Other sites include the Old State House, the Old South Meeting House and Paul Revere’s house. The Freedom Trail was conceived in 1951 by journalist William Schofield. Mayor Hynes made the idea a reality, and by 1953, more than 40,000 walked the trail annually. The Freedom Trail remains a popular attraction. It is a great way to get a history lesson at your own pace.

Bourbon Street

In the heart of New Orleans and its oldest neighborhood, the French Quarter, Bourbon Street. The French Quarter of Louisiana is its most historic and carries the legacy of New Orleans’ French heritage. Bourbon Street has always had a risqué reputation as home of the city’s red light district. In the 1940’s and 1950’s, the street was lined with nightclubs with over 50 burlesque and striptease shows. In the 1960’s and 1970’s the street was cleaned up and made as a pedestrian plaza inviting tourists. Many festivals are held in New Orleans’ French Quarter and along Bourbon Street. The most popular is Mardi Gras. The street is still home to bars and trip clubs, but it is also home to fine dining, shopping, art exhibits and live Jazz music performances.

Grand Canyon

The Grand Canyon is one of North America’s most amazing natural formation. It is a part of the Colorado River basin and has been formed over the last 70 million years. It is located in Arizona and stretches 277 miles with width up to 18 miles and a depth of more than a mile. The river valley in the Colorado plateau is a site to behold. The is home to Native Americans and draws in 5 million tourists each year. It is a great place to sightsee, camp, hike, skydive and raft. Helicopter tours are regular. The biological diversity of the Grand Canyon is vast and many species of animals inhabit the Canyon.

Capilano Suspension Bridge

The Capilano Suspension Bridge stretches 460 feet and rises 230 feet above the Capilano River in North Vancouver, British Columbia. The Canadian walking bridge draws over 800,000

tourists a year. The bridge was built in 1989 by Scottish civil engineer George Grant Mackay who served as the park commissioner for Vancouver. The bridge was made of cedar planks and hemp ropes. It was replaced with a wire cable bridge in 1903. Edward Mahon purchased the bridge in 1910 and sold it to “Mac” MacEachran in 1935 who invited native Americans to place totem poles in the park. Ten years later “Mac” sold the bridge to Henri Aubeneau, and the bridge was completely rebuilt ten years after that. The site has been owned by Nancy Stibburd since 1983. Stibbard brought more tourists to the park and the bridge by adding different walkways across different areas of the canyon. Guests of the Capilano Suspension Bridge can enjoy the beautiful park land high above the canyon floor.

The Alamo

No visit to San Antonio, Texas is complete without a visit to the Alamo. The Spanish Mission was the site of the Battle of the Alamo, an important point in the Texas American Revolution. During the 13 day siege between February 23 and March 6, 1836, Mexican troops assaulted and killed all but two Texan defenders. The site became known as a battle site instead of a mission. The Texas Legislature would purchase the land and buildings during the early twentieth century and the Alamo’s chapel became a State Shrine. The Alamo is the most popular tourist destination in Texas. It inspired the quote “Remember the Alamo” and inspired several movies.

Denali National Park

Alaska’s Denali National Park is one of North America’s most beautiful attractions. It features Mount McKinley, the highest peak in North America that rises 20,320 feet. There is also abundant wildlife living in the park. Bus tours offer sights of grizzly bears, caribou, moose, wolves and Dall sheep. The park is filled with picturesque lakes, rivers and tundra landscape. It is home to the large Kahiltna Glacier. Wintertime activities include dog sledding, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. The 6 million acre park is located in central Alaska.

Whistler Blackcomb

Whistler, Canada is a must during any visit to western Canada. The ski resort town grew in the early twentieth century and built itself up in a bid to be a location for the 1960 Olympics but lost the bid. Just a two hour drive from Vancouver, Whistler Village and Whistler Blackcomb

Ski Resort are breathtaking. It is the largest ski resort in North America. Blackcomb Mountain opened in 1980. The mountainous and forested area of Canada has always been a winter retreat, but it has become a summer retreat as well. The Village increased in popularity after becoming a venue in the 2010 Olympics. It is also a retreat for golfing, hiking, biking and other summertime activities.

Cedar Point

For roller coaster enthusiasts, Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio is a popular destination in North America. The amusement park on Lake Erie opened in 1870 and is the second oldest operating amusement park in the United States. The park has over 75 rides including 16 roller coasters. It is the only park in the world with five coasters higher than 200 feet. Cedar Point has received awards including the Golden Ticket Award for “Best Amusement Park in the World” for 16 consecutive years. Over 3.6 million visitors come the park each year. Cedar Point has several buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The park has both indoor and outdoor water parks and a historic hotel, The Breakers with a boardwalk leading to the beaches of Lake Erie. Every October Cedar Point hosts Halloweekends with Halloween themed attractions

The Las Vegas Strip

Just about everyone in the world has to make a trip to Las Vegas in their life time. The 4.2 mile strip along South Las Vegas Boulevard is home to the major resorts and casinos of Las Vegas, Nevada. Up until 1959 casinos and hotels were based in downtown Las Vegas along Freemont Street with some resorts out of the city limits. After 1959 large resorts and casinos were built on what would become to be known as “The Strip”. Some of the largest resorts are located there. Las Vegas become a place for gambling, vacationing, seeing live shows, and getting married. Many of the original casinos and resorts have been taken down to be replaced by modern luxury hotels. Caesars, Mirage, Treasure Island, Bellagio, Paris, New York New York, MGM and Luxor are just some of the massive and popular resorts and casinos on the Las Vegas strip.

The Golden Gate Bridge

When visiting the San Francisco – Oakland area of California, it would be impossible to miss the Golden Gate Bridge. The iconic “orange vermilion” also called “international orange”, colored steel suspension bridge links San Francisco to Marin County. The color was chosen to make the bridge appear in the notorious San Pacific Ocean fog that rolls into the city San Francisco Bay daily. Construction of the bridge began in 1933. At the time of its opening in 1937, the Golden Gate Bridge was the tallest and longest suspension bridge in the world. At 4,200 feet tall, the bridge is the tallest in the United States today. The bridge is 1 mile long above the San Francisco Bay and is the most photographed bridge in the world. When visiting San Francisco, tourists have many attractions to see, but the bridge is certainly the most visible.

Mont Royal Park

It would be impossible to miss the massive Mont Royal Park on a trip to French Canadian city Montreal. The vast park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the same designer who created the plans for New York City’s Central Park. The public park has walking paths, bike paths, lakes and lookouts. Mont Royal Park offers educational opportunities, music venues and spacious grounds to lay around. The park typically helps visitors to Montreal get their bearings as they sightsee the grand city

Top North America Experiences

- Standing on the rim of Arizona’s Grand Canyon, gazing at the magnitude of it all. Mounting a mule to ride to the canyon floor, and hiking through.
- Exploring the vibrant city of Toronto in Canada
- Experiencing the hustle and bustle of New York City, seeing a Broadway show, walking through historic neighborhoods, and visiting Ellis Island
- Viewing the Mayan pyramids in Chichen Itza and Tulum on Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula.
- Marveling at the thundering Niagara Falls and feeling the intense spray as you take a ferry around the magnificent site.
- Taking an epic train journey through the landscapes of Alaska.
- Touring Northern California’s coastal redwoods (the tallest trees on earth) and central California’s sequoias (the most massive living things).

- Waiting faithfully for Old Faithful, the most famous geyser in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, to erupt (it always does).
- Practicing French while sipping wine at a café in Old Quebec, Canada.
- Cruising the Mississippi River on an old fashioned riverboat down to New Orleans, then feasting on crawfish and oysters.

Adjacent Islands

Hawaiian Islands



Although over 2,000 miles from the west coast of the United States, the Hawaiian Islands remain one of North America's most popular vacation destinations. The jaw-dropping scenery of the islands, from white sandy beaches to lush mountains to volcanic craters, makes it a beautiful place to relax on the beach, hike in the mountains, or surf in the Pacific.

The Hawaiian Islands are an archipelago of 8 major islands (Hawai'i, Maui, O'ahu, Kaua'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Ni'ihau, and Kaho'olawe), numerous small islets, and seamounts in the Pacific Ocean. On the islands you can surf, swim, fish, boat, and hike, among other outdoor adventure activities.

Whether you want a relaxing beach vacation, or a trip filled with activities, the Hawaii Islands offer everything you could ever want from a trip.

See the Northern Lights in Alaska



The view of the night sky from Fairbanks, Alaska is known as one of the best places in the world to view the Northern Lights. Visitors may also see the famous light show from Coldfoot, Barrow, and Elias National Park.

Book a guided Northern Lights tour in Alaska anytime between late September and early April to witness this spectacular phenomenon. Tours will often include daytime activities such as dog sledding, snowshoeing, or “flightseeing” (sightseeing from a small plane).

Central America

Top Destinations



Monteverde Cloudforest - Costa Rica

Costa Rica is known as being one of the most biologically diverse spots on the planet. Of its fauna, few places have garnered worldwide attention like the cloudforests of Monteverde. A biological reserve was set up here in 1972 to protect this important ancient tract of cloudforest

and the hundreds of species it supports. For visitors there are a wealth of ways in which to experience the cloudforest from popular canopy tours to horse riding and bird watching, night walks to circuits of the hanging bridges. In the surrounding area you can also visit coffee plantations for a taste of one of Costa Rica's most famous exports.



Arenal Volcano - Costa Rica

For years Arenal was one of the most active volcanoes in the Americas. Plumes of smoke would erupt during the day while at night the sides of the peak would glow red with lava flows. This activity has quietened down in the last few years but that doesn't make Arenal any less impressive. You'll still catch glimpses of smoke trailing from the conical peak and feel the odd deep rumble. And there's still plenty to do in the immediate vicinity. There are good walking trails to follow, waterfalls and hot springs to enjoy, caves to explore and a host of thrilling activities to try from rafting to fly boarding.



Tikal - Guatemala

Central America is littered with ancient Maya ruins but perhaps none of them are as impressive as Tikal. The complex of large temples and steep-sided pyramids, along with the remains of

palaces and ceremonial centres, is one of the largest Maya archaeological sites discovered. Tikal was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 1979 and its scale is overwhelming, occupying 16 square kilometres of land that has been protected as a national park. What makes Tikal particularly evocative is the dense rainforest that surrounds it. Walking between the ruins you can smell the forest greenery and hear the cries of jungle-dwelling animals.



Lake Atitlan - Guatemala

Writers and explorers have been waxing lyrical about the beauty of Lake Atitlan since the 19th century. Aldous Huxley considered it superior to Lake Como while John L. Stephens said it was 'the most magnificent spectacle' he'd ever seen. It's a place that captivates visitors with its bounty of good looks thanks to the wide waters that are hemmed in by steep hills and three volcanic peaks. But it's not just natural beauty that this part of Guatemala has to offer - there's a healthy dose of traditional culture to discover too. Around the lake you'll find numerous indigenous communities where Maya culture has been preserved. You'll soon see it in the colourful clothing that the locals wear.



León - Nicaragua

The crumbling colonial town of León is the sort of place that captures your heart and refuses to give it back. It's a charming combination of grand architecture, paintbox hues and urban energy that can often keep visitors lingering for longer than expected. Despite being the second largest city in Nicaragua, León has retained much of its Spanish colonial heritage, from the cathedrals and churches to the attractive private residences. The university here (the second oldest in Central America) attracts a large student population, which in turn has given rise to a vibrant nightlife and choice of eateries that visitors are just as keen to take advantage of.



Chichen Itza - Mexico

Since becoming one of the New Seven World Wonders back in 2007, Chichen Itza is perhaps one of Central America's most iconic archaeological sites. It's one of Mexico's most visited destinations and has been on the UNESCO World Heritage list since 1988. The pre-Columbian city was built by the Maya people and was once the largest urban centre of the civilisation. Today the complex of ruins testifies to Chichen Itza's one-time importance with the remains of temples, ball courts, palaces and pyramids. The most recognised of these monuments is the El Castillo step-pyramid with its square terraces and stairways leading to the top. The number of visitors increases dramatically at the spring and autumn equinoxes when the late afternoon sun creates the illusion of a moving snake across these stairs.



Panama City - Panama

Known as the 'Miami of Central America', Panama City is a thriving metropolis where history and modernity meet. As the capital of Panama, the city has developed into a gleaming hub of international trade with towering skyscrapers, chic restaurants, bars and clubs, and wide tree-lined boulevards. There also exists a world a million miles from this in the form of the Casco Viejo peninsula, the historic UNESCO-listed old quarter where crumbled ruins line cobblestone streets. It's the best place to get a sense of the city's Spanish colonial history. Those in need of greenery will find themselves perfectly positioned to take advantage of the surrounding tropical rainforests and national parks.



Caye Caulker - Belize

The small Caribbean island of Caye Caulker is one of the best places in Central America to simply lie back and relax. Measuring just one mile long and five miles wide, there's certainly no pressure to get out and explore. In fact, with hammocks swinging between palm trees and colourful coral reefs fringing the beaches, you won't have to move very far in order to enjoy what Caye Caulker is really all about. And if you do want to participate in a little activity then

there's great snorkelling, diving and kayaking to be enjoyed. There are no cars on this island - bicycles serve as the main mode of transport so even the roads are a laidback affair.



Roatán Island - Honduras

Roatán is another Caribbean island that deserves the accolade of being one of Central America's top destinations. It's located some 65 kilometres off the northern coast of Honduras and forms part of the archipelago known as the Bay Islands. Like Caye Caulker, it's not very large and the coastline is a diving mecca thanks to the brilliant coral reefs. Depending on the time of year you might spot whale sharks though at any given time you're guaranteed an impressive array of marine life as well as wreckage dive sites. There's ample natural beauty on land too with sparkling white beaches, and a mountainous and forested interior to explore.



Ometepe Island - Nicaragua

The island of Ometepe is one of Nicaragua's most stunning natural features. It was formed by two volcanoes - Concepción and Maderas, and sits on Lake Nicaragua, known in the local language as Cocibolca. Around the island are wide, beautiful beaches that front the clean, clear waters of the lake with the majestic peaks as a backdrop. Aside from the breathtaking vistas on

Ometepe, there's also outdoor adventure to enjoy in the tranquil surroundings, from kayaking to hiking, and even archaeological sites to discover. Ometepe has been a firm favourite with savvy backpackers for years now, and as tourism slowly picks up, it's a part of the world that will no doubt receive the attention it deserves.



Tulum - Mexico

Located at the southern end of the Mayan Riviera, Tulum is a small town that shot to fame for its Mayan ruins and idyllic beach. Set on the edge of a cliff, the ruins were once a point of defence against invaders and nowadays boasts UNESCO World Heritage status. The site is incredibly photogenic, with the fine sands of Paradise Beach and turquoise waters of the Caribbean lying below. Visitors can unwind on the beach or take an excursion to the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, which is renowned for its natural beauty. Close by you'll also find Cenote Dos Ojos, a vast underwater cave system of crystal-blue waters and stalactite-filled caverns.



Antigua - Guatemala

Founded in the early 16th century, Antigua is undoubtedly one of Guatemala's must-visit destinations. UNESCO World Heritage-listed since 1979, the city boasts a dramatic setting hemmed in by three looming volcanoes. Its cobbled streets lie in a grid-like pattern, featuring pastel-coloured buildings and numerous colonial relics. Highlights include La Merced Church, Casa Santo Domingo and the iconic Santa Catalina Arch, where you can take a quintessential photo of Antigua beneath the magnificent Agua volcano. There're also dozens of Spanish-language schools and, outside of the city, plenty of volcano trekking, indigenous communities and coffee plantations to be explored.



Palenque - Mexico

The town of Palenque is merely the base for exploring the jungle-clad ruins of the nearby Parque Nacional de Palenque. Featuring several large temples and tombs, these ruins are some of the best examples of Maya architecture in all of Mexico and the hieroglyphs found here have enlightened scholars about hundreds of years of Maya history. The site was once a powerful Mayan city in the Classic period from 250 BC to 900 BC, before it was abandoned, and the surrounding jungle overtook it. However, the ruins are no less spectacular today and made all the more magical by their mysterious jungle setting.



Manuel Antonio National Park - Costa Rica

Manuel Antonio may be Costa Rica's smallest national park, but it certainly doesn't lack in attractions. Easy hiking trails take you through a dense rainforest teeming with animal life. Expect to see Capuchin, Howler and Squirrel monkeys leaping from branch to branch, alongside sloths, iguanas and hundreds of bird species. There's also three beautiful beaches, of which Playa Manuel Antonio is the most well-known for its spectacular views. In 2011, Manuel Antonio National Park was named by Forbes as one of the most beautiful parks in the world. And after a few hours here, you're sure to be in agreement.

South America

South America tourism is heating up. Travelers are flocking towards the equator for a glimpse at a stunning patchwork of beautiful landscapes with snow-capped mountains, spectacular jungles, and awe-inspiring deserts.

Whatever you plan on embarking on an adventure, or taking a more relaxing vacation, South America will not disappoint. The spirit of this continent is infectious, and no matter where you go, the fierce Latin passion will sweep you away.

Of course, due to the number of countries with such vastly different cultures and terrain, you may find it overwhelming to pick the one that's right for you. So, when planning your trip, consider one of these highly recommended destinations that are perfect for both first times and repeat visitors.

Machu Picchu, Peru



Peru has recently become the darling of the traveling community due to its shining jewel, the Incan kingdom of Machu Picchu.

Hidden within the lush Peruvian mountains, this mystical city remained a secret for ages and now is the continent's best known archaeological site.

While some travelers choose to enjoy the views in comfort aboard a luxurious train, others choose the more adventurous option of trekking the trail. Both offer a tremendous sense of wonder by seeing the ancient society, so you will no doubt be happy by choosing either option.

Amazonia, Ecuador



Henri Leduc / Getty Images

The Amazon is one of the most unique ecosystems on our planet. This enormous region covers about 40% of the South American continent, touching many countries.

Travelers should be aware that this region is not for the lighthearted, but if you are comfortable with roughing it, you will get a chance to see a vast amount of creatures including monkeys, birds, caimans, and tarantulas.

One of the easiest and most popular ways to enter the Amazon is located in Ecuador through its capital city, Quito.

Angel Falls, Venezuela



Jane Sweeney / Getty Images

Nestled within Venezuela's Canaima National Park is Angel Falls, the world's highest uninterrupted waterfall.

Although impressive, the hike into Angel Falls is not the only reward. The accompanying jungle trek navigates the grasslands, rivers, and mountains to reveal other spectacular waterfalls and lagoons.

Travelers who brave the trip will be treated to a tropical wildlife viewing including monkeys, poison arrow frogs, and gorgeous native plants like orchids.

Torres del Paine, Chile



Michele Falzone / Getty Images

Torres del Paine National Park is located in the Southern-most region of Chile and for those willing to venture to Patagonia, it offers amazing hiking opportunities that traverse through glaciers, lakes, and blue mountains.

Treks are available for varying experience levels on clearly marked paths. Travelers seeking just a taste of the breathtaking views can choose a day-trip, while experienced hikers may want to opt for the popular five-day “W” route. For the most adventurous and seasoned hikers, the full circuit is your best bet and can be completed in 9 days.

Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia



Chris VR / TripSavvy

If you have spent time scrolling through Instagram photos, you may already be familiar with the Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia, which is the largest salt flat in the world.

Photographers flock here to capture the unique landscape. Visiting during the dry season is recommended for its limitless horizon perspective, but if you plan your trip during the rainy

season, from January through March, your photographs will have the magnificent reflections that are almost Dali-like.

The salt flats are often part of a 3 or 4-day tour in Bolivia that promises to defy expectations and include such unusual stops as the Salt Hotel. This intriguing location is so incredible, you may feel like you're outside of this world.

San Pedro de Atacama, Chile



Chris VR / TripSavvy

San Pedro de Atacama once was a cattle transport hub that has morphed into a major tourist destination.

The star of this region is the Valle de Luna (Moon Valley), which brings tourists on a trek of the area at sunset. You will marvel at the expansive desert that provides an idyllic setting for star-gazing.

Often, guests are taken by the town's quaint charm and frequently stay longer than expected for the many tour offerings of craters, canyons, caves, valleys, and salt mines, so make sure you leave yourself enough time for proper exploration.

The Galapagos Islands, Ecuador



Jessie Reeder / Getty Images

The Galapagos Islands are the ultimate animal lover's paradise and perhaps the last unspoiled place on earth where wild creatures prosper without fear of mankind.

Like a fairytale, you can play amongst sea lions, march with the penguins, and swim alongside turtles. This is the premier destination for anyone looking to truly connect with nature and respectfully interact with the wildlife.

Most of the tours offered are full-day explorations of a single island, but some kayaking, hiking, and cruise packages can go on for several days.

Lake Titicaca, Bolivia



Juergen Ritterbach / Getty Images

South America's largest lake is home to several indigenous communities that make the area both agriculturally strong, and full of cultural significance.

Copacabana is largest and most well-known town on the shoreline. Due to its rich history, Copacabana's religious festivities, often celebrating Pachamama (Mother Earth), are frequent and popular with visitors.

Your experience doesn't have to end at the shore, however. Many boats leave for Isla del Sol (Sun Island), which is a sacred Incan island. Here travelers can bask in the beauty of blue skies and clear fresh water while gazing at the snowcapped mountains of the Cordillera Real.

Easter Island, Chile



Anne Dirkse / Getty Images

Easter Island, also known as Isla de Pascua or Rapa Nui by the Spanish and Polynesian, is one of the most alluring sacred sites on Earth.

Famous for its enigmatic giant stone figures, the Moai were built centuries ago, but continue to be a mystery. They remain our only link to ancient Polynesian culture.

Easter Island's white sand beaches make it the idyllic location that combines ancient history with a healthy dose of tropical fun in the sun. After viewing the Moai many visitors choose to participate in a number of water sports including bodysurfing, surfing, scuba diving, snorkeling, and more.

The Pantanal, Brazil

This region of Brazil is fairly unknown by most travelers, but with the greatest density of animal life in all South America, it is not to be missed.



Chris VR / TripSavvy

Created by seasonal flooding of the river Paraguai, the area's wetlands are considered to be one of the world's largest and most diverse freshwater wetland ecosystems.

Photographic safari tours are popular with visitors and offer views of majestic jaguars, blink-and-you'll-miss-them hummingbirds, colorful macaws, and several other species that inhabit the area.

Development of World Transport Modes

Centuries before the wheel was invented or animals were domesticated humans had invented primitive boats for crossing bodies of water. Because, as we learned earlier, 71% of the earth's surface is covered with water, a means of transport across these bodies of water was essential for human exploration and development. Perhaps the single biggest transport development, since the wheel, was the development of the power engine. It is hard to fully appreciate the importance the engine has had on human transport. But life as we know it today would not be possible without this amazing invention. Virtually all modern forms of transport including cars, cruise ships, airplanes, and trains are powered by engines. The engine has made rapid transport from one side of the globe to the other, not only possible, but fortunately for the travel industry, affordable.

Improved technology has resulted in more efficient and cost-effective means of transport.

Transport in North America North

America is fortunate to have one of the most developed and efficient transport systems in the world. In the early days of European continental settlement, the explorers took full advantage

to the continent's extensive natural system of rivers and lakes. By the early 1800's man-made canals linked the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes waterway to the Mississippi-Ohio river system. Today, this water system still serves as an important transport corridor linking many of the important economic centers of the continent.

Railways also played a significant part in the development of North America, particularly the United States. The first transcontinental railway was completed in 1869 across the mid-section of the United States, and this infrastructure led the way for extensive settlement and development of the western United States. The development of the railways created vast fortunes in the late 19th century in the United States. But technology changed and so did this dominant form of transport. By the 1920's cars were gaining popularity and it was not long before an extensive system of motorways connected the major metropolitan areas.

At present, in the United States and Canada, over 200 million cars, lorries (trucks) and buses drive on over 6,500,000 kilometers of paved roads. This distance is almost equal to 16 times the distance from the earth to the moon!

Although Alaska is currently not connected to the North American rail network, there are plans to connect Alaska via BC Rail. Until this happens, the only way for rail-based equipment to enter or leave Alaska is via rail ferry from Seattle, Washington and British Columbia. A rail connection between Alaska and the North American rail network could prove beneficial, and could even become a vital link towards a rail link over Bering Strait Bridge, if it is ever built.

In the early 1970's commercial jet aircraft became widely available and popular as a form of both commercial and personal transport. Currently there are more than 2000 commercial airports in the United States, which serve over 500 million passengers annually—approximately half of the world's total flights. This staggering figure signals not only the importance of commercial jet aircraft to transport in the United States, but also the potential difficulties including increased air congestion and noise and air pollution.

In the countries to the south of the United States—Mexico and Central America—the transport systems are less developed and reliable. Several natural, geographic and cultural factors including dense jungles, political instability and poverty have hindered development of transport systems in much of the region. Nevertheless, in recent years economic progress and regional stability has resulted in the development of a new and effective transport infrastructure.

With increasing pressure on the continent's road and airport capacity, North America is evaluating development of magnetic levitation— high-speed train transport—to complement existing means of transport.

Transport in South America

Transport in South America, both from the standpoint of development and infrastructure, is similar to that in southern North America (i.e. Mexico and Central America), except that the continent's vast size and large natural barriers make transport more difficult here than for its neighbors to the north. There are vast expanses in South America, such as that of the Amazon basin, that are connected only by waterways and air transport. The rugged and massive Andes mountain range, which runs down South America like a geological spine, also creates transport barriers that can be overcome only by air transport.

In certain mountainous regions of some countries, such as Peru and Bolivia, the only effective means of transport are walking and using domesticated animals such as burros and llamas. In other parts of South America, such as Brazil, waterways are the only effective way of reaching the outside world. Railways are well developed in southern Brazil and Argentina, but in many areas their efficiency is limited by varying sizes of tracks and the prevalence of single-track systems, which do not permit bi-directional traffic flow.

In land-locked South American countries and regions, geography presents real challenges to commerce. For example, Bolivia must export sugar via Chile, and Paraguay must send its cotton by way of Argentina. Land-locked Bolivia sends natural gas by way of pipeline to Argentina, and the city of Iquitos, located in the jungles of Peru, sends oil to Brazil via barge on inland waterways.

Appendix:

Useful Web Sites www.oanda.com Currency conversion and rates Web site.

<http://www.x-rates.com> Currency conversion and rates Web site.

<http://www.weather.com> Good weather site. <http://www.timezoneconverter.com/> Time zone conversion Web sites.

<http://www.ceoexpress.com/> Excellent Web site for business travelers.

<http://www.geography.com/> Web site devoted to information about geography.

<http://www.worldclimate.com/> Web site

devoted to information about world climates.

Transport Systems

Airlines

Airlines for America (A4A), formerly known as Air Transport Association of America (ATA), is an American trade association and lobbying group based in Washington, D.C. that represents major North American airlines.

Mainline passenger

- Alaska Airlines
- Allegiant Air
- American Airlines
- Delta Air Lines
- Frontier Airlines
- Hawaiian Airlines
- JetBlue
- Southwest Airlines
- Spirit Airlines
- United Airlines

Regional passenger

- Envoy Air (subsidiary of American Airlines Group)
- Republic Airways (subsidiary of Republic Airways Holdings)
- SkyWest Airlines (subsidiary of SkyWest, Inc.)

	Airline ⇅	Country ⇅
1	American Airlines	United States
2	Delta Air Lines	United States
3	Southwest Airlines	United States
4	United Airlines	United States
5	Air Canada	Canada
6	Alaska Airlines	United States
7	JetBlue Airways	United States
8	Spirit Airlines	United States
9	WestJet	Canada
10	Volaris	Mexico
11	Frontier Airlines	United States
12	Aeroméxico	Mexico
13	Interjet	Mexico
14	Allegiant Air	United States
15	VivaAerobus	Mexico
16	Hawaiian Airlines	United States
17	Sun Country Airlines	United States

Best Cruise Lines

- Royal Caribbean International.
- Celebrity Cruises
- Norwegian Cruise Line.
- Princess Cruises.
- Carnival Cruise Line
- Holland America Line
- MSC Cruises
- Costa Cruises.

Trains of America

1. Amtrak's Coast Starlight

- *Route:* Seattle - Portland - Los Angeles
Travel time: 36 hours (one way)
Amenities: Dining car, sleeping car, lounge/cafe car, Pacific Parlour car
- Travelers come from around the world to experience this gorgeous West Coast train journey. Amtrak's most popular long-distance route and widely regarded as the most stunning, Coast Starlight welcomed more than 455,000 passengers last year.
- The Coast Starlight whisks you past waterfalls, lush forests, snowy Cascade Mountains and the Puget Sound. To see long stretches of Pacific shoreline — views you won't get from the highway — book a seat on the west side of the train. If you upgrade from coach to a small private room with beds you'll have upgraded dining and access to the Pacific Parlour Car with its dome windows and evening wine and cheese parties. Want to extend your trip to San Diego? Connect to the popular Pacific Surfliner train at L.A.'s Union Station.

2. Amtrak's Empire Builder

- *Route:* Chicago - St. Paul/Minneapolis - Spokane - Portland/Seattle
Travel time: 46 hours (one way)
Amenities: Dining car, sleeping car, lounge/cafe car
- Tracing portions of the Lewis & Clark Trail from America's heartland to the Pacific Northwest, the Empire Builder is a great way to see the United States. You'll cross the Mississippi River, venture into Montana's Big Sky country and pass Glacier National Park.
- From Spokane, you can either head south along the Columbia River Gorge to Portland or cut through the Cascade Mountains north to Seattle's Puget Sound. Along the way, mountain passes are marked with lofty trestles and long tunnels, while rivers feature hydroelectric dams and salmon fish ladders. During spring and summer, an onboard volunteer National Park Service ranger shares facts about the landscape. There are plenty of 20-minute stops where you can get out and stretch your legs — or pick up a pizza delivery.



3. Amtrak's California Zephyr

- *Route:* Chicago - Denver - Reno – Sacramento – Emeryville (San Francisco)
Travel time: 51 hours, 20 minutes (one way)
Amenities: Dining car, sleeping car, lounge/cafe car
- Looking out the windows of the California Zephyr, you'll see the same sights that enchanted 19th-century fortune seekers as they rode the first transcontinental railroad line west to San Francisco and dreamed of striking it rich. This historic line takes you through the heart of Gold Rush country's mining and ghost towns to old stagecoach stations that became stops on the original railroad.
- Rocky Mountain tunnels carry you across the Continental Divide, while aspens and evergreens dot the steep cliffs of Glenwood Canyon on the Colorado River. "I especially enjoyed the scenery," says James S., a Vacations By Rail passenger. "The highlight was an American eagle flying over the Colorado River right next to the train." The journey ends with one last bucket list sight: the Golden Gate Bridge.

4. Amtrak's Southwest Chief

- *Route:* Chicago - Albuquerque - Los Angeles
Travel time: 40+ hours (one way)
Amenities: Dining car, sleeping car, lounge/cafe car
- On these rails once ran the nation's first all-Pullman sleeping car train, dubbed the "Train of the Stars" for the celebrity passengers that frequented it in the late 1930s.
- Today, the Southwest Chief follows that same route between Los Angeles and Chicago. Book a sleeping car and enjoy the thrilling curves and switchbacks that lead to some of

America's most iconic sights: the Santa Fe Trail, Sedona's red cliffs, pueblos and missions, the Grand Canyon, and the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountains. Tucked among the grandeur of the American West you'll find beauty in modest, everyday living, too. Watch farmers harvesting expansive wheat fields and dogs playing in back yards. From the window of a train it's fascinating to see how different people live in different parts of the country.



5. Grand Canyon Railway

- *Route:* Williams, Ariz. – South Rim, Grand Canyon National Park – Williams, Ariz.
Travel time: 8.25 hours including four-hour stopover (round-trip)
Amenities: Cafe car, sleeping car
- Arriving at Grand Canyon National Park on this rail line, as visitors did in 1901 when the railway opened, helps you imagine what a remote, inaccessible wonder the canyon once was. You can still ride in the Grand Canyon Railway's historical cars pulled along by the "French Fry Express," a converted 1923 locomotive that now runs on recycled waste vegetable oil from South Rim restaurants.
- En route to the canyon are pine forests and sprawling prairies with plenty of chances to spot antelope, the California condor and wild horses. Onboard, colorful railway characters keep history alive with mock train robberies and cowboy musicians who lead passengers in old-time sing-alongs. Once at the log-cabin style Grand Canyon Depot in the South Rim, you're within walking distance of popular viewpoints and most of the village's historical buildings.

6. Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad

- *Route:* Durango, Colo. – Silverton, Colo.
Travel time: 3.5 hours (one way)
Amenities: Open-air gondolas, vintage coach cars

- Set nearly two feet closer together than standard rail lines, this historic narrow-gauge railroad was built during the silver mining boom specifically so it could hang onto sharper curves and clear tighter spaces on mountainsides. No doubt, the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad is a thrill to ride along the Animas River. The canyon's rock walls are only inches away in some sections, so tight you're inclined to draw in a breath and make yourself smaller. Along other stretches you can't even see the canyon's edge, only the immense chasm below. Elk occasionally meander near the tracks and bighorn sheep inhabit the cliffsides. From May through October you'll hear stories about the coal-fired, steam-powered engine and the mining legacy of Silverton onboard this rolling National Historic Landmark.



7. Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

- *Route:* Chama, N.M. – Osier, Colo. – Antonito, Colo.
Travel time: 6.5 hours including stopover (one way)
Amenities: Concession car
- The longest (64 miles) and highest (10,015 feet) steam railroad in America, Cumbres & Toltec originally served southwest Colorado's silver mining district. Today this scenic railway totes only passengers as it chugs up a 4% grade in the San Juan Mountains and edges narrow gorge ledges with views 800 feet straight down. "It's a 'Williamsburg on wheels,' an authentic National Historic Landmark that moves," says Lee Bates, Cumbres & Toltec's marketing and communications manager.
- Passengers can experience history from a parlor car, coach car or the open-air gondolas, which are especially popular in the fall when the aspens shimmer their golden glow. The train runs Memorial Day through October. Fun trivia: The train has appeared in more than 20 Hollywood movies including *Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid*.



8. Alaska Railroad's Coastal Classic

- Route:* Anchorage — Girdwood — Seward
Travel time: 1.25 hours (one way)
Amenities: Dining car
- From mid-May to mid-September, Alaska's days are long, plants are blooming, wildlife is on the move, and the Coastal Classic offers daily departures so you can experience it all.
- The route, from Anchorage to Seward, follows the shoreline of the Turnagain Arm, where 3,000-foot mountains plunge straight into the ocean. Watch for beluga whales in the inlet and, farther along on the journey, Dall sheep on cliffsides and bear and moose in the backcountry wilderness. The conductor slows the train for wildlife and glacier photo ops. Once you reach Seward, there's a seven-hour stopover with plenty of touring options — including boat cruises, national park tours, glacier treks and sled dog rides — before you return by rail to Anchorage in the evening.

9. Amtrak's Adirondack

- Route:* New York — Saratoga Springs — Montreal
Travel time: 10 hours (one way)
Amenities: Cafe car
- Leave New York City in the morning and Amtrak's Adirondack will take you through charming towns and along the beautiful Hudson River Valley, delivering you to

Montreal by dinnertime. If you travel in autumn, you'll look out over deep woods and vineyards bathed in color.

- Between New York City and Albany, meticulously kept mansions line the banks of the wide blue Hudson River. It's easy to see how the natural splendor of this valley inspired an entire artistic genre. Other don't-miss sights along the route include the Adirondack Mountains, the Palisades, West Point Academy's riverfront stone battlements, and the Bannerman's Castle ruins.



10. Cass Scenic Railroad

- *Route:* Cass, W.Va. – Whittaker Station – Bald Knob – Cass
Travel time: 4.5 hours (round-trip)
Amenities: Ticket includes museum admission and logging camp tour
- In the mountains of West Virginia, steam-driven Shay locomotives still run on the same line once used to haul lumber to the mill in Cass in 1901. The old logging flat cars have since been refurbished to carry passengers from May through October.
- Pistons pulse, black smoke puffs and the whistle sounds as the train chuffs out of the station. First stop: the recreated 1940s logging camp at Whittaker Station, where there's time to wander and grab a snack. On the full four-and-a-half-hour round-trip to Bald Knob, you'll continue on for the climb up to the state's third-highest point, stopping off at a spring so the train can take on more water to produce its steam power. This extra stretch includes lunch and spectacular views at 4,700 feet.



Road Transportation

Intercity bus

Greyhound Lines is the largest intercity bus company in the United States, with routes in all parts of the contiguous U.S. There are also many smaller regional bus companies, many of which use the terminal and booking facilities provided by Greyhound. Intercity bus is, in most cases, the least expensive way to travel long distances in the United States.

Roadway links with adjacent countries and non-contiguous parts of the United States

Within the United States:

- Alaska - Yes, via Canada and the Alaska Marine Highway in Washington
- Hawaii - No.
- American Samoa - No.
- Guam - No.
- Northern Mariana Islands - No.
- Puerto Rico - No.
- U.S. Virgin Islands - No.

With adjacent countries:

- Canada - Yes.
- Mexico - Yes.
- Russia - No, but proposed via Bering Strait crossing
- Cuba - No. Since the American embargo against Cuba, car ferry service from Florida and New Orleans to Havana ceased in 1962.
- Bahamas - No, but ferries travel to the Bahamas
