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Can't Make the 2017 Total Solar Eclipse? Start Planning a Trip for the Next One

Sandy Bornstein

July 28, 2017

Adventure

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On Monday August 21, millions of Americans will eagerly watch as the moon moves across the sun, creating a solar eclipse. And while everyone in the United States will be able to see it in some form, only those in a 60-70 mile wide path that spans from Oregon to South Carolina will be able to view a total eclipse, when the moon completely blocks out the sun. If you don't live within the area known as the "totality" and haven't made travel plans you're pretty much out of luck. Travel accommodations and specialty tours to most of the prime locations were sold out months ago.



So why is there so much hype and excitement for something that only lasts a couple of minutes? According to [Dr. Douglas Duncan](#), the director of the [Fiske Planetarium](#) at the University of Colorado in Boulder (who gave us the inside scoop on the appeal of eclipses), it's all about the apocalyptic awe.

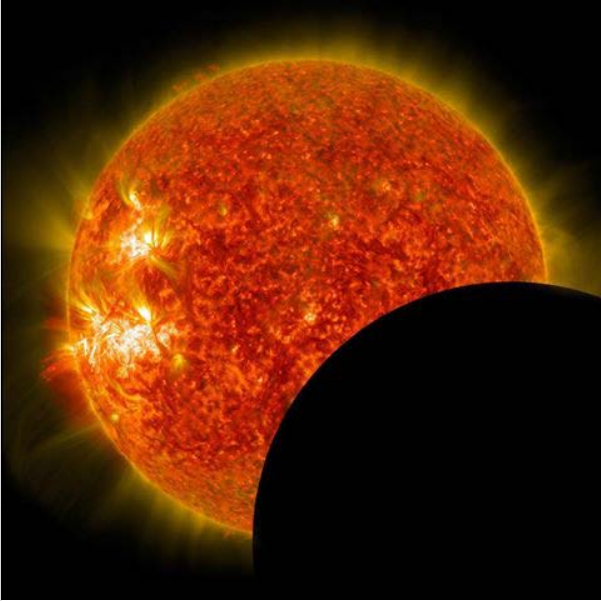
"It looks like the end of the world," Dr. Duncan says, "People cry, scream, and


cheer. Lunar eclipses — they are pretty, but no big deal. Take away the moon and we'd miss it. But take away the sun and we'd all die. And during a total eclipse, you instinctively feel that. It's like coming near a lion on a safari and the lion roars. You NEVER forget it."


The experience can be so powerful that Dr. Duncan claims a significant number of people who see a total solar eclipse are compelled to see it again, no matter where they have to go. "[They] fall in love so much that they travel the world to see another," he says.

So if you're a total eclipse lover (or want to be), who won't be able to see this year's solar spectacle AND can't wait until the next total solar eclipse crosses over the United States and Canada (April 8, 2024) — eclipse tourism might be the answer.

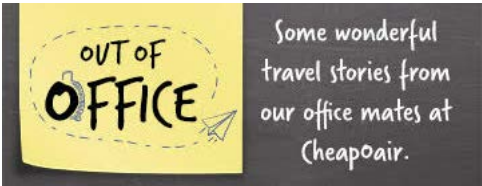
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Mark your calendars! For the first time in 99 years, a total solar eclipse will occur across the entire continental United States, and we're preparing to share this experience of a lifetime on Aug. 21. Viewers around the world will be provided a wealth of images captured before, during, and after the eclipse by 11 spacecraft, at least three NASA aircraft, more than 50 high-altitude balloons, and the astronauts aboard the



International Space Station – each offering a unique vantage point for the celestial event.

More information is at

<http://eclipse2017.nasa.gov>

Seen here is an image of the moon crossing in front of the sun was captured on Jan. 30, 2014, by our Solar Dynamics Observatory observing an eclipse from its vantage point in space. Image Credit: NASA

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According to [NASA](#), the next total eclipse will be on July 2, 2019, and will cross over parts of the [South Pacific](#), Chile, and Argentina. Just under a year and a half later, another total eclipse will be visible along a path through the same regions (which is extremely unusual) on December 14, 2020. The second eclipse's course will once again pass through the South Pacific, [Chile](#), and [Argentina](#), as well as the South Atlantic.

Just like any other type of tourism, the options are abundant. Some eclipse watchers may be content to simply find a place along the totality's path, while others can choose to book with a more organized tour that can include astronomers giving commentary. There are already websites for Eclipse-specific boat and land tours in the South Pacific and South America for 2019 and 2020.

Sticking to land will probably allow for the most eclipse watching options and flexibility, while a boat tour will follow a set embarkation and disembarkation schedule. It's also a good idea to consider the climate of wherever you're thinking of traveling to see an eclipse. Locales with a higher chance of precipitation will run a higher risk of cloudy skies blocking your view.

After 2020, total solar eclipse followers will need to head to the Antarctica to see the next one, which is predicted to occur on December 4, 2021. And yes, you can already reserve your spot on an ice cap for the event.

But no matter where or when you see a total eclipse, proper eye-protection needs to be exercised. Watchers should be sure to view the event only through certified eclipse glasses. Check with the [American Astronomical Society](#) for a list of the manufacturers of approved glasses and additional safety information.

Totally psyched to see a total solar eclipse? Figure out your flights!