

SUN

RISE

DESTINATIONS



INTRODUCTION

A pretty sunset is easy to catch; it mostly springs up on you as you go about your day. A sunrise, on the other hand, requires quite a bit of effort, whether you have decided to pull an all-nighter or set your alarm extra early. So, in one stroke of golden light, dawn unites two very different crowds: partygoers who don't want their night to end, and early birds, keen to start their day with yoga or paddleboarding.

Whichever type you are, the 55 destinations gathered in this book will inspire you to discover new places to witness the free, daily morning show: hike to a hilltop viewpoint in Cape Town, visit the ancient citadel of Machu Picchu, sit atop a volcano in Java, catch an early-morning train in Zermatt or join the dawn patrol while surfing in Hawaii. Sunrise is also nearly always the best time to spot animals in the wild, and its calm, more predictable winds are ideal for hot-air balloon flights.

The golden hour lasts from 30 minutes before the actual sunrise to one hour after. The brilliant hues of orange, red and pink created as the sun nears the horizon are caused by the light passing through a thicker layer of the atmosphere, which filters out the blue and violet wavelengths. And yet, no two sunrises are the same.

Sunrise, of course, also symbolises hope, rebirth, and renewal: the triumph of light over dark, celebrated in myths from around the world, from the Egyptian sun god Ra returning from the underworld to the Norse goddess Sól, who escapes the wolf Sköll time and time again. Daybreak is the perfect moment to breathe, refocus, and contemplate what life might bring you. As the sun rises, so do our spirits.

ASIA & OCEANIA

THE GREAT WALL

China

LOCATION: Spans 6,350 km in several sections, one of which is just north-east of Beijing.

WHEN TO GO: In April, when the surrounding slopes are filled with flowering apricot trees.

PHOTO TIP: If you don't like crowds, avoid weekends, public holidays and Badaling.

BREAKFAST ON: Steamed buns, jianbing pancakes, or fried dough dipped in fresh soya milk.





ASIA & OCEANIA

VARANASI

India

LOCATION: On the Ganges River in Uttar Pradesh, northern India.

WHEN TO GO: Between October and March, when it's sunny and warm.

PHOTO TIP: Take a sunrise boat trip to see the ghats from the river.

BREAKFAST ON: Sweet lassi, with golden kachoris or smashed green peas and rice.







On one of Athens' many hills are the ruins of a great marble monument built by the Ancient Greeks. And no, it's not the Parthenon we're talking about here, but rather Philopappos Hill, or the Hill of the Muses, which is just a short walk away from the famous temple complex.

The summit of Philopappos Hill is the perfect place to watch the sunrise over the Acropolis (which itself only opens at 8 a.m.). Follow the path climbing between the olive, cypress and pine trees for around 10 minutes and you will reach the marble tomb of the prominent Roman and Athenian citizen Philopappos. A prince born in Turkey who was friends with historian Plutarch, he is pictured here as a consul riding on a chariot.

But the main event here is, of course, the panoramic views of the sprawling Greek capital. To the south you can see glimpses of the shimmering Aegean Sea, while to the east is the fortified hill of the Acropolis and its Parthenon temple, with the huge Odeon of Herodes Atticus amphitheatre at its foot.

On the west side of the Acropolis, you can also spot the propylaea, a monumental gateway that once served as the main

entrance to the complex, as well as the small but beautifully decorated Temple of Nike Apteros. Just next to the Parthenon, on the north side, is the Erechtheion and its Porch of the Maidens.

On the way down, make sure to stop at Socrates' Prison, a warren of rooms carved into the hill. 'True knowledge exists in knowing that you know nothing,' wrote the great philosopher, who is said to have been imprisoned here before his trial in 399 BC. Charged for failing to acknowledge the city's gods worshipped in the Parthenon, he was executed by drinking a poisonous beverage of hemlock.

Use the rest of your day to explore Plaka, have a leisurely lunch under the shade of a pink bougainvillea, and visit the Acropolis Museum. Then, head to the Acropolis itself just before sunset. It's slightly less crowded at the end of the afternoon, when long shadows highlight the friezes and sculptures. You can also witness the closing ceremony at 7.30 p.m. when guards take down the Greek flag and visitors walk down together as the sun sets.





EUROPE

TUSCANY

Italy

LOCATION: On the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Sea in central Italy, between Rome and Milan.

WHEN TO GO: All year round, although summer's sunflower fields and poppies are a highlight.

PHOTO TIP: Try a sunrise walk on the medieval walls of Lucca, the city of a hundred churches.

BREAKFAST ON: Coffee or hot chocolate, a cream-filled bomboloni or a piece of stuffed focaccia.



Dubbed the Valley of the Moon for its unique landscape of rocky canyons and red sand dunes, Wadi Rum is Jordan's most famous desert region. First popularised by writer T.E. Lawrence, aka Lawrence of Arabia, who described 'Rum the Magnificent' as a 'vast, echoing and god-like' place, it has served as the set location for *The Martian* and *Star Wars*.

Today you can take a 4x4 tour to Lawrence Spring, one of the many natural waterspouts that made the region an important stop for caravans travelling between Syria and Arabia. The largest river valley in Jordan, Wadi Rum is a protected nature reserve. Here, you can climb to the top of its rock bridges, admire starry night skies, and hike to hidden springs surrounded by ferns, trees and fragrant mint.

Most 4x4 circuits include a first stop at Little Bridge, a rock bridge where you can see the sun rise from behind a mountain, painting the landscape in hues of vibrant red. The Al Ramal Red Sand Dune offers sweeping views of the valley, and at Khazali Canyon you can spot ancient rock carvings and later Nabatean and Islamic inscriptions.

But one of the best ways to really soak up the region's landscapes and culture is to stay at one of its Bedouin-run camps and go on a sunrise camel ride to enjoy the stillness of the desert. Travelling at a leisurely pace, you can take the time to admire the shadows lifting, and the scenery transitioning from grey to pastel shades of pink, orange and blue.

Another popular early morning activity is a hot-air balloon ride; flights always take place just after sunrise when the air is cooler and more stable. Wadi Rum's sandstone formations also make it one of the world's great traditional rock-climbing destinations, featuring several bolted or sport-climbing routes managed by the local climbing association.

An hour's drive to the west is the resort town of Aqaba and its Red Sea beaches; north, about an hour and a half away, lies Jordan's other top attraction – Petra, the Rose City, whose rock-cut architecture is best admired at sunset.











CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA

SALAR DE UYUNI

Bolivia

LOCATION: On the Altiplano in south-west Bolivia, at an elevation of 3,656 m.

WHEN TO GO: December to April for the mirror effect; May to November for the dry season.

PHOTO TIP: The endless horizon makes it easy to play with perspective and depth of field.

BREAKFAST ON: Empanadas with api, a hot drink made from corn, pineapple and cinnamon.

