

ASTROTOURISM SHINES BRIGHT: USTOA TOUR OPERATORS CURATE A COLLECTION OF NIGHT-SKY ITINERARIES

Upcoming Trips Include: Sleeping Under the Stars,
Viewing the Northern Lights, and Visiting a Dark Sky Reserve



Photo Courtesy of Avanti Destinations

NEW YORK – July 29, 2019 – Over the last 50 years since the historic Apollo 11 mission on July 20, 1969, humans have continued to explore and learn about the universe outside the earth’s atmosphere. For travelers seeking their own astrotourism adventure, tour operator members of [USTOA \(United States Tour Operators Association\)](#) have curated a collection of itineraries that include cruising under the northern lights in Norway, exploring a dark sky reserve in New Zealand, and even sleeping under the stars in Africa.

Here are a few itineraries that allow astronomy fans, outdoor adventurers, and star-lovers a chance to experience a destination in a new light.

- Handcrafted beds overlooking the Kenya landscape are waiting for travelers on **African Travel’s** “Under the Kenyan Skies” tour. In addition to falling asleep each night stargazing from private Star Beds, guests will explore two distinct iconic wildlife regions, Laikipia and Masai Mara, through game drives, guided walks, and community visits, and visit foster elephants at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. Departures are available throughout 2019 starting at \$10,295 per person. <https://africantravelinc.com/>
- **Avanti Destinations’** “Atacama Explorer & Space Observatory Star Gazing” itinerary takes astronomy fans to Chile, spending three nights in Santiago and four nights in remote San Pedro de Atacama, home to the world’s best skies for astronomical observation. The trip includes a

Space Observatory Star Gazing Tour where guests will observe the skies above the Atacama Desert. Additional experiences include small group tours of the Valley of the Moon, the natural hot springs at Tatio Geyser, and Los Flamencos National Reserve to view flamingos. Departures are available throughout 2019 starting at \$2,565 per person.

<https://www.avantidestinations.com/home> Contact your travel advisor to book a trip or find a USTOA-certified travel advisor by visiting <https://ustoa.com/travel-advisor-directory>.

- From October through March, the northern lights appear across Norway's polar landscape. **Hurtigruten** takes travelers to view this natural phenomenon on a 12-day cruise along the Norwegian coast, "Norway: The Roundtrip Cruise - Bergen – Kirkenes – Bergen". Guests will sail past more than 100 fjords and 1,000 mountains with the option to join adventurous sea and land-based excursions. Departures are available October 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020 starting at \$1,956 per person. <https://www.hurtigruten.com/>
- The Aoraki MacKenzie International Dark Sky Reserve is a highlight of **Alexander + Roberts'** "Spectacular New Zealand" trip, which takes travelers off-the-beaten path to observe the southern constellations in the absence of ambient light. The tour also includes a cruise through Lake Wakatipu and a 4WD journey into Middle Earth, one of the settings for the Lord of the Rings films, as well as meals at local farms and fruit orchards. Departures are available through March 23, 2020 starting at \$6,199 per person. <https://www.alexanderroberts.com/>
- **Travel Impressions'** "Ultimate Winter Wonderland Tour" takes travelers to Fairbanks, Alaska for Aurora Borealis viewing and to Anchorage by way of the Alaskan Railroad. The seven-day trip includes visits to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, the Anchorage Museum, the Denali National Park and the Murie Science and Learning Center. Departures are available between February and March 2020. <http://www.travimp.com/> Contact your travel advisor to book a trip or find a USTOA-certified travel advisor by visiting <https://ustoa.com/travel-advisor-directory>.

For more information on USTOA, visit www.ustoa.com, call 212-599-6599, or email information@ustoa.com.

About USTOA:

Representing nearly \$19 billion in revenue, the member companies of U.S. Tour Operators Association provide tours, packages and custom arrangements that allow 9.8 million travelers annually unparalleled access, insider knowledge, peace-of-mind, value and freedom to enjoy destinations and experiences across the entire globe. Each member company has met the travel industry's highest standards, including participation in the USTOA's Travelers Assistance Program, which protects consumer payments up to \$1 million if the company goes out of business. As a voice for the tour operator industry for more than 40 years, USTOA also provides education and assistance for consumers and travel agents.

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