

Sights come to life while livin' on ledge

Observation decks bring together urban, rural settings

Sightseeing is a promising way to spend a vacation. Epic skylines and landscapes can stimulate our senses.

Whether it's a bevy of skyscrapers, mountains, valleys, sunrises or sunsets, these views paint portraits in our minds and leave warmth in our hearts. Breathtaking settings overwhelm us and keep us traveling the country to find the perfect location.

While searching for these destinations, it's best to have a platform on which to stand or sit to absorb the atmosphere. Observation decks fill that role.

They come in different shapes and sizes. They can be found in urban and rural surroundings. They share a commonality: providing jaw-dropping settings.

Many of the tallest skyscrapers in the U.S. feature observatories. A myriad of natural landmarks incorporate them to enhance the viewing experience.

Skydeck Chicago sits on the 103rd floor of the Willis Tower. Ascend to the top of the edifice by elevator in 60 seconds, where you can enjoy 360-degree views of downtown, as well as Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin. Test your fear of heights by walking into a glass-windowed room that juts out from the building. Just don't look down.

One of the most iconic cities in the world, New York is teeming with urban



EAGLE'S LANDING – Sightseers take in the breathtaking views of the Grand Canyon from Eagle Point Skywalk. *Image: Bruce Grubbs. Adobe Stock.*

scenery. The Top of the Rock Observation Deck magnifies the Big Apple. Located atop the Comcast Building in Rockefeller Center Plaza – aka 30 Rock – the deck extends beyond its 66 stories, offering views of landmark buildings like the Empire State Building, One World Tower and Central Park.

Few places light up brighter than the Las Vegas Strip. The town sparkles under a dark sky in the desert. SkyPod at The Strat stands more than 1,100 feet high and boasts a pair of observation decks.

Stand or have a seat. It's the tallest free-standing observation tower in the U.S., offering clear views of the Strip and the Las Vegas Valley.

One World Observatory sits near the top of One World Trade Center – the tallest building in the U.S. – and is a reflection on the historical events of 9/11. Located on the 102nd floor, it has multiple levels of sweeping views of the Manhattan skyline.

Not all decks are found in the city. Clingmans Dome Observation Tower is a

mountain peak within the Great Smokey Mountain range in Gatlinburg. The highest point in Tennessee, the deck provides 360-degree views of majestic rural landscape.

Seattle's skyline is considered one of the most beautiful in the U.S. Skyscrapers share real estate with the Space Needle – an iconic structure built in 1962. It's sci-fi appearance is complemented by a deck that sits more than 500 feet high. See the downtown skyline, Mount Rainier, the Cascade Mountains and the islands of the Puget Sound.

Absorb breathtaking views of the Grand Canyon from Eagle Point Skywalk – a pedestrian walkway shaped like a horseshoe to extend over the canyon's ledge. Visitors walk over a glass floor and peer down into the depths of the gorge.

One Liberty Observation Deck – aka Philly From The Top – is on the 57th floor of One Liberty Building. See sights from as far as 40 miles away as you navigate the deck.

U.S. Bank Tower is the tallest building in Los Angeles and its OUE Skyspace LA observation deck stands more than 1,000 feet above the city. There are indoor and outdoor regions that provide stunning views of the city, Hollywood Hills and beyond.

It's impossible to say no to an observation deck. No matter where you look, the eyes have it.

Life is a highway on 15,000-mile roadway

Pan-America Highway navigates from top of globe to bottom

The best vacations often are ones as simple as hopping in a vehicle to take off and see the U.S., one mile at a time.

There are a bevy of choices. Pacific Coast Highway quickly comes to mind. So does Route 66, Great River Road and Florida Highway 1. But these are only a snapshot of the thousands of miles of pavement throughout the intercontinental 48 states that offer never-ending stories, as well as sights.

For travelers eager to conquer a serious challenge, the Pan-American Highway awaits. It's the ultimate road trip – stretching 15,000 miles from Alaska to Argentina and it passes through 14 countries – making it the longest road in the world.

In North America, it takes you through the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. And it passes through Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina in South America.

It's the trip of a lifetime – one that would take likely a year to complete, but decades of memories await. Choosing to navigate only parts of it is priceless.

Travelers venture onto side roads and often face detours. An endless number of unique towns, sights and historic



ROAD TRIP – The Pan-American Highway snakes through the Geoglyphs of Pala, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Peru. *Image: Leonid Andronov. Adobe Stock.*

destinations make it a peerless bucket list journey. A trip could cover as many as 30,000 miles once completed.

Most who travel this highway do so in nine months to two years, depending on where they begin and conclude. A section between Panama and Colombia can't be crossed by

vehicle. Environmental reasons make the Darien Gap unpassable. The only way across is by ship. The cost to have a vehicle transported can cost as much as \$1,000, depending on its size.

Hundreds of stops await. See sights your eyes could never have imagined.

Climate and geographic changes

will wow senses. Witness glaciers, tropical beaches, polar bears and monkeys. Traverse the Andes Mountains – the longest range in the world. Learn about the cultures of other countries. Taste their food, meet their people and make a few friends.

Begin inside the Arctic Circle. You'll cross from Alaska into Canada before returning to the U.S. Spectacular landscapes, small towns with huge personalities and big cities like Los Angeles, San Diego, Las Vegas and San Antonio are awaiting your visit.

See a number of wildlife species, sit on beautiful beaches and touch ancient structures. Allow your curiosities to serve as your compass and take hundreds of photographs along the way.

The Pan-American Highway twists and turns its way from the Arctic Circle to not far from Antarctica. It's a trailblazing path, where history and Mother Nature spin tales that could fill a library of novels.

See it all on one trip or navigate parts that pique your interests. Either way, it's unlikely you ever will experience anything like it. Check that. You *never* will experience anything like it.

The Pan-American Highway ... It seems like a myth but delivers like a legend.