



VIRTUAL TOURIST

The Places to Go When You Can't Go Places

To travel or not to travel? - In recent months, the COVID-19 pandemic forever changed the world as we knew it. In a bid to “flatten the curve”, domestic and international travel restrictions surfaced, making it impossible to explore the world. Thanks to virtual technology, however, it’s now possible to get front-row seats to museums and natural sites around the globe - and beyond. Best of all, you can do so without leaving the comfort and safety of your home.

Whether you are inclined towards nature or the natural, virtual tours have opened a doorway to exploring the world and its esteemed gems. It is not just about peeping through a lens or viewing static representations! Rather than standing by and watching from a distance, virtual visitors are lured closer with real sounds, direct angles and actual footage to evoke the spirit of the

time and place. Allow *Signature* to share some of the ultimate virtual tours on our planet and in the stars.

AS IT IS IN THE HEAVENS

With the spotlight shining ever so brightly on world news, it is easy to forget that Earth is but one planet in the observable universe. Intergalactic virtual travel becomes ever so important to remind us - lest we ever forget - that we are certainly not alone. Since Yuri Gagarin became the first person to





travel from Earth to space in 1961, humankind has proceeded to send many people and even more human-made objects into space.

If one were to do a virtual tour of space justice, then a visit to the International Space Station (ISS) is in order. Launched in 1998, the ISS is believed to be the most massive artificial object orbiting our planet. At present, this microgravity science lab is manned by a handful of people at a time and embodies the tenacity, wit and combined intellect of our species to survive in whatever dimension.

Forget missing out on your favourite holiday spot or expand your horizons by seeing the bigger picture of Earth as seen from ISS. With technology at its peak, you will be spoilt for choice as more high-definition, state-of-the-art streaming webcams let you in on the crew while

they're on duty. And yes, this includes both watching and listening to astronauts as they converse with each other as they carry out their assignments. For unforgettable views and voices "from the other side" - ISS should be your virtual tour of choice.

ON EARTH

Under no circumstances should visits to world-famous museums be postponed, if this is within the ambit of the law. That is because art and culture can play a pivotal role in uplifting the human spirit. It is against this backdrop that you are encouraged to scrap long-overdue bucket list visits to the ultimate museums - and just do it virtually. You can still go again in person, but don't deny yourself the instant privilege.





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For a rich multi-cultural experience, a virtual trip to the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul opens up six floors filled with contemporary art predominantly from Korea. This is undoubtedly one of Korea’s most celebrated museums and a popular tourist destination, that can now be accessible to you, wherever you may be.

Known by many as a tragic, yet awe-inspiring painter, Vincent van

Gogh’s artworks can, perhaps, be most appreciated at a time as this. Art lovers from all over the globe are invited to join a virtual tour of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. This space is believed to offer the alleged most extensive collection of Vincent van Gogh’s masterpieces, paintings and letters. It is not just a tour of work by a master painter, but there is a vulnerable, personal and almost tangible approach to deciphering his work.





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AND BELOW

When you've seen the awe of the heavens and Earth, nothing harnesses it all like the life-force from below. Virtual "Dive Safari" Tours to breath-taking coral reefs in tropical and subtropical waters are best described as all-consuming, refreshing and alive. There is an unpredictability to it as one observes unrehearsed nature. There is movement, a pulse, and none other than the breadth of creatures great and small.

One of the advantages of such a virtual tour lies in the comforting knowledge that you can enjoy the beauty, get immersed in the views, and partake of the magic of being in the moment without running the risk of damaging the reefs that nature has patiently assembled. Thanks to advances

in technology, you can't help but be drawn in deeper regardless of the season and tide. It is nature's very own showcase of spectacular coral reefs - and you are heartily invited.

Whether you prefer to go above or below, far or near; there are high-tech webcams to usher in sights untold to virtual tourists. You need not be limited by the circumstances around you, to step away and venture into the unknown. If social distancing is your forte, but you still have the urge to explore, then the game plan may need to take a digital approach. 📺

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