

# REMOTE CONTROL

# 10

## **MOST ISOLATED SPOTS ON THE PLANET**

Sometimes a body just needs to get away—far away. A post-modern ennui seeps into the bones creating the kind of awayness itch that a weekend at Canyon Ranch or even a week long binge on the Mexican Riviera can't scratch. For this kind of soul-thirst, you need prescription-strength remoteness.

We understand, and we offer you isolation in the purest form—our list of the 10 most sublimely remote locales on the planet Earth. There's an escape here for every palate – from the ultra-luxe to the uber-hermit. And don't worry about the guy sitting next to you, there probably won't be one.

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01

## ISLAND

Destination + Seychelles Islands, Africa

Latitude 4° 35'S

Longitude 55°4 00'E

Altitude Sea level to 905m

The most isolated tropical archipelago in the world, the Seychelles takes remoteness to exclusive heights of sophistication. This isn't the place to see and be seen; many of the luxe resorts require total anonymity for their guests. You might be sharing an island paradise with rock stars or royalty, but you'll never know it. This kind of serious privacy means the dress code is fully optional. Over one hundred islands, many of them uninhabited, dot the Indian Ocean and are rimmed by pristine white sand beaches and vibrant coral reefs. Dive, sail, snorkel, sea kayak or, if that's all too stressful, just relax in your private plunge pool and indulge in ultra-luxurious in-room spa treatments. Bask in the understated splendor of your 4,500-square-foot guest palazzo, order multi-course gourmet meals from the almost invisible room service and you'll feel like you own the island.

### Travel Beta:

Post-tsunami, it's business as usual in the Seychelles, which emerged relatively unscathed from the rogue wave.



02

## MOUNTAINS

Destination + Mount Beluha, Altay Mountains, Russia

Latitude 49° 48'N

Longitude 86° 25'E

Altitude 4,506m

Travel back to where it all began – civilization, that is – if you believe the many researchers who study such things. The Altay Mountains, where Kazakhstan, Russia and Mongolia meet, are thought to be the birthplace of all that has now transmuted into hip and edgy modern culture, including shamanism. Locals believe that Belovodie ("White Waters"), the region surrounding Beluha, is where the legendary new civilization of Shambala will begin. Visit the many caves where archeologists have found 900,000-year-old mementos of our ancestors. Experience the wonder of Altay throat singing—the fascinatingly weird art of overtone singing in which two or three notes are sung simultaneously. Or search for the interdimensional gateway that new age believers say leads to the mystical kingdom of Shambala.

### Travel Beta:

Few people actually climb to the summit of Mount Beluha, the highest mountain in Siberia, but you can enjoy the three-day walk to its base from the local town of Tungur.



03

## SNOW

Destination + East Antarctica

Latitude 80° 78'S

Longitude 124° 50'E

Altitude 2,896 m (But because of the Earth's spin, the atmosphere is thinner in Antarctica and it feels more like 3,353m – bring your altitude sickness bag.)

Snow, snow, and more snow is what lies in store for you here. But don't get the idea that it's flat, because it's not. In this part of the East Antarctic plateau, the snow forms megadunes—great sistrugi-laden seas of the things. So it's up and down in a Sisyphusian maze of pure white – kind of like the great deserts only brutally cold. These dunes rock but to see them, you'll have to brave some of the coldest and windiest conditions on earth. Summer temperatures range from -5°F to -22°F but the wind makes it feel like -51°F. And the closest warming hut is 400km away at Russia's Vostok Station.

### Travel Beta:

Forget about Crème de la Mer, to protect delicate skin from icy blasts follow the lead of savvy Antarctic veterans: pack extra duct tape and super glue. Apply the duct tape liberally to your face to prevent frostbite. Coat your fingers in super glue (But keep them separated while the glue dries!) to keep your fingers from cracking in the cold.



04

## ISLAND

Destination + Easter Island

Latitude 27° 08'S

Longitude 109° 22'W

Altitude Sea level to 510m

This island's vibe is total remote control. The immensity of the Pacific – the closest neighbor is 2,300 miles distant – soothes even the most jaded soul. Commune with the stoic moai (groovy stone sculptures), explore subterranean lava tubes large enough to house entire tribes of early inhabitants, and contemplate their descent into cannibalism as you relax on white sand beaches. Once you've done the rounds of local sights, there's nothing left but to grow your hair, adorn your tanned limbs with traditional Polynesian tribal tattoos, and join the local music scene.

### Travel Beta:

No one really knows how humans came to live on Easter. Like the early arrivals, once you're ensconced in Easter stoke, you'll never want to leave. But just in case, major airlines have regularly scheduled flights.





## DESERT

**Destination + Puna, Argentina**

**Latitude 26° 00'S**

**Longitude 67° 34'W**

**Altitude over 4000m**

The wind blows across vast stretches of this high-altitude desert like some possessing spirit. It will be your constant companion on this journey, wearing away your resistance and sculpting your psyche like the many ventiforms—pieces of black volcanic rock sand-blasted into smooth phantasmagoric shapes—strewn about the ground. The scenery will take your breath away—and so will the altitude. There's not much of anything here, maybe a few guanaco (wild llama-like beasts) and an Argentine peasant in a beat-up truck going somewhere else.

### **Travel Beta:**

Stay in a local pensione in Antofagasta de la Sierra where the lady of the house will graciously feed you with home-made pasta, bread, and quince preserves.



## MOUNTAINS/GLACIERS

**Destination +** Mount Waddington,  
British Columbia, Canada

**Latitude** 51° 22'N

**Longitude** 125° 14'W

**Altitude** 4,016m

Get high in your own backyard. Waddington is the loftiest peak in BC's Coast Ranges, and it's notoriously hard to get to. But once there, set up your tent on a glacier and ski to your heart's content. Log virgin powder descents on innumerable slopes or lounge in camp and catch some glacially-amped rays. Either way, no one will be knocking on your door until your scheduled rendezvous with the helicopter to pull you out.

### **Travel Beta:**

The folks at White Saddle Air Services in Tatla Lake, BC, are your friends. They'll fly you in to the mountain, weather permitting, and bring you home again. Just make sure to stock up on liquid antifreeze before the trip – tipping the delivery boy will set you back several C-notes.

[www.whitesaddleair.com](http://www.whitesaddleair.com)





07

## MOUNTAINS

Destination + Muktinath, Nepal

Latitude 28° 49'N

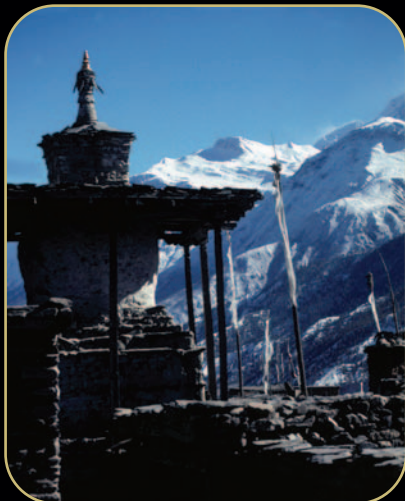
Longitude 83° 52'E

Altitude 4,260m (13,979 ft)

Muktinath is the legendary place of Dakinis Sky Dancer goddesses of the Buddhist pantheon. To seek an audience with these ethereal beings, you must clear your mind, body, and spirit of all earthly attachments. The best way to do this is to forego the temptation of the wild cannabis that lines the trails leading to this hidden Himalayan valley and hole up in a local monastery to seek enlightenment. Mind-cluttering worries dissolve in the sonorous chanting of the monks, incense smoke, and endless cups of yak butter tea. Located on the far northern border of Nepal with Tibet, this is an important pilgrimage center for both Hindus and Buddhists. To reach Muktinath, you must become a pilgrim of sorts — the only way to get there is by walking for several days through remote Nepali villages.

### Travel Beta:

You might want to hold off on enlightenment for now. Ongoing political instability coupled with Maoist insurgents who like to kidnap foreigners make Nepal a dangerous place for outsiders.







08

## JUNGLE

**Destination + Madre de Dios River, Tributary to the Amazon, Peru**

**Latitude 12° 37'S**

**Longitude 69° 4'W**

**Altitude 250m**

Can't catch your breath? Forget about yoga and meditation. You need full-immersion oxygen. This is where the planet breathes – and you, savvy traveler, can breathe along with her. When most people think Amazon, they think Brazil. We're sending you to the deepest, darkest-yet-still-sun-drenched, jungliest upper reaches of the Peruvian Amazon: The Madre de Dios (Mother of God) River. Why? Because it's far away. And, there's swank accommodations and sumptuous cuisine to be had. Your relaxed riverside jungle lodge comes equipped with a French chef who has fully embraced the easy flow of jungletime: dinner will be exquisite, but it won't be on time. No worries. Swing in your hammock, sip Pisco Sours on your private balcony or swim with the piranhas in Lake Sandoval. It's your own tropical paradise.

### Travel Beta:

Fly to Lima, Peru and hop the 60-minute flight to Puerto Maldonado. Your jungle guide will pick you up at this tropical throwback of a Banana Republic-style airport and soon be piloting you downriver. Relax and take a deep breath.



09

## DESERT

**Destination + Timbuktu, Mali, Africa**

**Latitude 16° 45'N**

**Longitude 3° 4'W**

**Altitude 301m**

This mythical city has always claimed top billing as the farthest of the far, but it actually exists in the West African country of Mali. In the Middle Ages, it was nearly the centre of the world—the prosperous hub of trans-Saharan trade, moving gold, salt, and other bling across Africa. Now it's more like the lost city at the end of the world as the sands of the Sahara slowly engulf the great mosques, libraries, and avenues. To fully experience the desert, hop a camel caravan as it navigates 500 miles of sand dunes to reach the fabled Taudenni salt mines. Salt was long considered the gold of the desert.

### Travel Beta:

Get remote here and the next time someone tells you to go to Timbuktu, you can tell them that you already went ... And you found what you were looking for.



10

## DESERT

**Destination + Lake Disappointment, Great Sandy Desert, Western Australia**

**Latitude 23° S**

**Longitude 123° E**

**Altitude 353m**

Still stinging from a vicious divorce? There's no better place to escape, drown your sorrows, and tend to your festering emotional scars than Lake Disappointment in the Great Sandy Desert – but bring your own beverages (and Band-Aids) because it's a salt lake and there's no drinking the water. There's also nowhere to stay and nothing to buy, so it's best to go prepared, if you dare. The Aborigines believed that fearsome mythological beings, called Ngayurnangalku, lived in a subterranean world beneath the lake. Not even their bravest warriors would venture close to the lake's shores. It's thought to be taboo to all humans – even today. After the duel with your ex, this will be a cakewalk.

### Travel Beta:

Since the Ngayurs can pull aircraft from the sky and pummel them on the lake's salty surface, you might want to travel by land. Make sure your 4WD is pimped out for total self-sufficiency.