

'Chicken Skin' Moments

Travel can give you goose bumps when you least expect it

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We had taken the train from Paris and arrived at Venice's Santa Lucia station in early morning. Tired and disheveled from the overnight journey, we dragged our bags through the institutional-looking 1950s-era station. But when we went out through the doors, the vision before us transfixed us. Gondolas and other boats churned the Grand Canal, and Renaissance palaces painted in pastel colors brought Canaletto's Venice to life.

In Hawai'i, people say experiences like these can "give you chicken skin." The feeling you get watching the sun rise over the curvature of the earth from the summit of Haleakalā on Maui. Sights, sounds, and tastes that give you goose bumps. These moments are among travel's greatest pleasures—they capture an instant and leave lifetime memories. Especially now, when travel is taking a pause, it's rewarding to recall experiences that remind us of why we venture.

Many of these moments are visual. We'll never forget walking from bright sunlight into the dark interior of Paris' Notre-Dame cathedral, long before last year's devastating structure fire, and looking up to our right: The Rose Window glowed with colors so rich and patterns so intricate, the light coming through seemed ethereal. Or stopping on the pier in Petoskey, Michigan, to watch a sunset blaze across the sky in shades of magenta, pink, and purple, creating the illusion of a celestial desert awaiting the arrival of ghost riders.


Other moments can be audible. As we waited for a friend in England's Winchester Cathedral, the organist began practicing on one of the world's great instruments. The clarity of tone reverberated around the Gothic columns, creating a universe of sound that vibrated through our bodies. And we'll always remember the catch in our breath when we heard Beverly Sills' bell-like soprano for the first time in a New York City Opera production of Handel's *Julius Caesar*.

These experiences can even involve taste and smell. At an open-air market in Nice, France, we ate wild strawberries for the first time: The tiny fruits were so sweet, they tasted like candy. And when someone presented a pīkake lei to us on Kaua'i, the blossoms' sugary scent permeated the air around us like a cloud.

Chicken-skin moments are not predictable. They hit you as you turn a corner or lift your gaze or crest a hill. And, suddenly, you have a new encounter in your album of sensual travel memories.




You tell us: What is your most memorable chicken-skin moment? Write to us about it at westways@aaa-calif.com and put "Chicken Skin Moments" in the subject line. We might print your contribution in a future issue or online. And check out Paul and Elizabeth's podcasts at OnTravel.com.



Worth the Trip

Move over, Bugs Bunny. Animation just might have been invented 20,000 years ago in what is now Portugal's Côa Valley. In the 1990s, significant rock art dating from Paleozoic times was discovered here. The **Côa Valley Museum of Art and Archaeology**, which opened in 2010, displays replicas of the engravings. (Many of the actual site locations are kept secret to protect them.) Among the earliest drawings are a two-headed goat and a three-headed horse. No one knows for sure, but it appears that the Paleolithic artists were trying to depict movement: the goat looking backward and then forward, and the horse beginning to gallop. arte-coa.pt/en/museum.



From the Insiders

Nalgene water bottles—free of the chemical BPA (bisphenol A), which can seep into food or beverages, with negative health effects—are one solution to single-use plastics and good for filling up after you've cleared airport security. The 32-ounce version is ideal for travel. nalgene.com.