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Why The 2024 Solar Eclipse Should Be On Your Travel Bucket List

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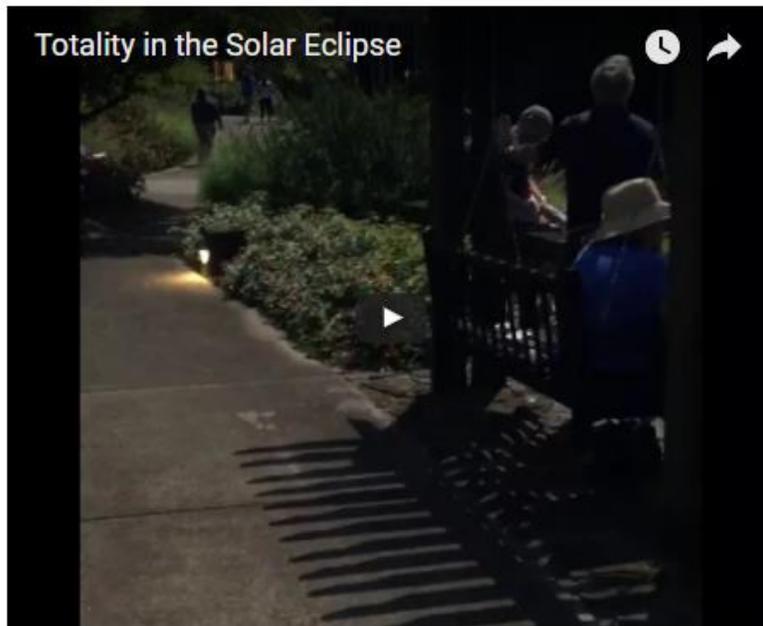
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There are some things that are not my bucket list, and yet they should be--a total solar eclipse deep in the path of totality is one of those things. Indeed, I wasn't even aware that a solar eclipse was on deck for 2017 until the team at [Brasstown Valley Resort and Spa](#) invited me (back in April) to visit the resort during the solar eclipse. I may not have my science calendar up-to-date but I know an opportunity when I see one. I jumped at the invitation and on August 21st pulled the kids out of school, made my husband skip work, packed up the dog, gassed up the car and headed to Young Harris, North Georgia.

The Brasstown Resort sits just below the border of Georgia and North Carolina, in the heart of Cherokee Indian country. It is lush, mountainous and quiet---perfect for experiencing total darkness in the middle of the day. On the day of the eclipse we hiked the resort's nine miles of meandering forested trails. Later we booked an hour-long horseback ride which took us up along an open grassy bald where the local college keeps an observatory, with such unobstructed expansive views this is indeed a place to watch stars. After a full morning we wandered down to the resort's main lawn near the golf course to settle in and watch the moon drift in front of the sun.

The first hour was slow. Even with half of the sun covered it was still a brilliant sunlit day. As we neared the final 30 minutes things started to shift. The air became cooler. I found myself standing in the sunlight at 2:15 on an August day and feeling no heat. The light seemed to thicken into a greenish-yellow hue. Still, it remained sunny. Then just as totality approached the shadow bands came---waves of light that pulsate and flicker across the ground, producing a light show almost as amazing as the one in the sky. The sun became a singular seam of brilliant light and then, nothing. Darkness is instant. The stars come out, and then, thirty seconds later, the crickets start to chime in. Birds are silent, as are the people. It is the ultimate moment of reflection for any human; a moment when you are deeply humbled by your existence and your good fortune to be on this earth. Two minutes or so elapse and it all goes in reverse. The shadow bands come back, the sun emerges and the day goes on. Scientists still don't know what causes the shadow bands, and they are an uncommon and unpredictable occurrence, and eerie, I might add. My video shows the bands as they diminish just before totality.

The hardest part about witnessing totality is going about your day after it's over. Driving, checking email, making dinner; it all seems silly. What you do know is this: you will travel more, see even more of the world, and chase down experiences instead of waiting for them to find you. You planners out there, the next chance at totality is an even better one, with four minutes of darkness. The 2024 solar eclipse path runs from Austin, Texas to Montreal, Quebec. [Do not make the mistake of thinking that 97% or even 99% of totality is enough](#), the sun still shines under those numbers—your bucket list, which I hope you are updating now, must include totality.



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