

Webcams capture a window into the world

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NEW YORK (AP) -- Ride the waves. Race down the slopes. Visit Times Square. Take a virtual vacation that requires no money, no vacation days, and no planning.

Webcams, short for web cameras, are capturing more than baby pandas at the zoo.

More than a million are offering images in real-time across the Internet, ranging from the not-so-interesting (a pug sleeping on a couch) to destinations like Iceland. Some are live streaming video 24-7, while others refresh the image every few seconds or longer.

Still, regardless of how "live" these images are, webcams are showing the world to the world, says Brian Curry, founder and CEO of [EarthCam](#), a leader in providing webcam content, technology and software.

Here are some webcams worth checking out. Note that some of these Web sites may prompt you to download software before you can view them; many are best viewed at certain times of day, and some can be enlarged for better viewing.

Hawaii Waves

[www.mauiwindcam.com/streaming](#) -- Catch the waves on the reef in the North Shore of Maui. (Note: The camera runs from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Hawaiian Standard Time (noon to midnight CST) but replays the previous 12 hours during dark hours).

Times Square

[www.earthcam.com/usa/newyork/timesquare](#) -- One of the best webcams for people who are burning the midnight oil. The cameras show live streaming video of Times Square, and the illuminated signs mean the view is great 24/7.

African Safari

[www9.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/wildcamafrika](#) -- Go on a virtual safari with live streaming video of the Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana, Africa. The best viewing times are 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. or 11 a.m. to 3 a.m. (7-11 a.m. or 3-7 p.m. CST), according to the site.

Old Faithful

[www.nps.gov/archive/yell/oldfaithfulcam.htm](#) -- Watch an eruption of the geyser Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park. (Note: The image updates every 30 seconds, so you may have to watch for a while to see the eruption.)

Niagara Falls

[www.earthcam.com/canada/niagarafalls](#) -- The camera is on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. The image updates every two to three seconds.

For Divers

[www.breathebonaire.com](#) -- Go scuba diving in Bonaire National Marine Park in the Netherlands Antilles without donning a wet suit. The camera is 49 feet below the drop off at the dive site and offers a view of the coral reef. Control how fast the image updates by selecting the refresh rate in the lefthand corner of the screen.

For Skiers

[tinyurl.com/2bxy7u](#) -- Race down the slopes at Sugar Mountain Resort in North Carolina. The live video shows skiers at the base of the Lower Flying Mile beginner slope. (Note: Skiing stops at 10 p.m. (9 p.m. CST) and lights are turned off.) Many other ski resorts have webcams, so check out the Web site for your favorite slope.

