

ANGEL FALLS

Canaima, Venezuela

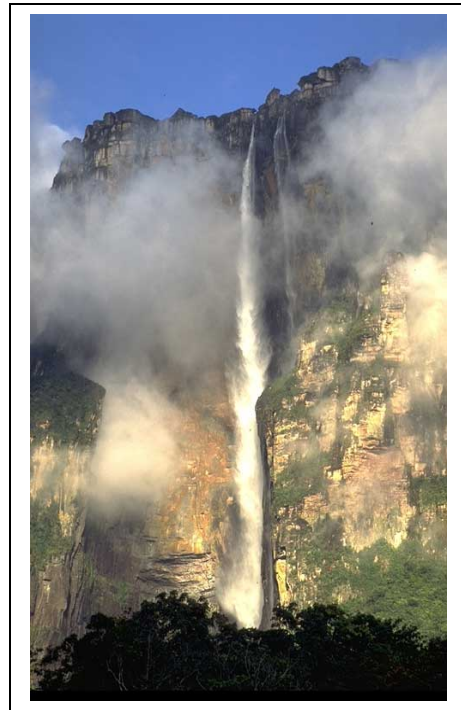
Travel Log: Spring, 1990

March 20, 1990:

Rising majestically above the cloud line in the Valley of Canaima in Venezuela is the world's tallest waterfall – Angel Falls, one of the eight wonders of the world.

This beautiful 3,000-foot waterfall can also be seen from its top, following an arduous hike up the mountain from which its source lies. When seeing it from a small plane for the first time, pouring water into the clouds below, one can easily see how it got its name.

Be careful when approaching the top of the falls as the rocks are as smooth as marble and as slippery as oil from years of mist erosion. In protecting the natural environment of the area, there are no barriers to protect the adventurous traveler who makes the journey there.



My enthusiastic son – seven at the time - gave me the scare of my life when he ran to the edge to peer over and slipped on the rocks. Luckily, he got his balance in time allowing me to move in cautiously and grab him.

Be prepared to hike steep inclines for 60 to 90 minutes, depending on your state of physical fitness. Not only is the final reward worth the effort, but so is the journey through the magnificent canopied rainforest.

The Canaima National Park has a rich history all its own. An evolutionary anomaly, this valley is uniquely formed and protected from outside plant and animal life allowing the indigenous flora and fauna to thrive without external environmental interference.

As a result, there are insects as big as eagles and leaves as big as trucks found here – in a land that time forgot, as H.G. Wells might say. Prehistoric life has been allowed to thrive here and walking through this jungle is truly a unique and memorable journey.

Hollywood paid homage to this valley in the movie **Arachnophobia** where scientists studying the insect life in Venezuela accidentally bring back a few deadly varieties of spider to the small (and fictional) American town of Canaima.