



Cessna Grand Caravan



Orinoco River near Puerto Ordaz



Venezuela jungle and river



River and Angel Falls

A Long Weekend Escape to *Venezuela's* Angel Falls

By Ted Cookson



Top of Angel Falls



Side of tepui through plane window



Canaima air strip



Landing at Canaima



Canaima Airport terminal building



Waterfall at Canaima

Early one Friday in September 2008 my fiance Barbara and I flew American Airlines from Miami via San Juan, Puerto Rico to Caracas, Venezuela. We had arranged to rendezvous at Caracas Airport with two friends who had been traveling in South America earlier in the week. On Friday and Saturday nights all four of us stayed at a comfortable hotel in downtown Caracas.

Early on Saturday morning we all flew an Aserca Airlines DC-9 from Caracas to Puerto Ordaz, a major industrial port situated on the Orinoco River in eastern Venezuela. From

there we connected south immediately on a 12-passenger single prop Cessna Grand Caravan aircraft to make two passes by 3,212-foot-high (979-meter-high) Angel Falls, the world's highest waterfall.

As you might imagine, the bottom of Angel Falls, which is a staggering 15 times higher than Niagara Falls, was obscured by clouds. However, we could clearly see and photograph the top of the falls, with the water falling off the magnificent tepui (plateau) into the clouds below!

After flying by Angel Falls, we landed on the paved airstrip



Motorized canoe in jungle



Waterfall near Canaima from canoe



Lunch at tourist lodge



Canaima Airport terminal building



Canaima Airport shopping



Tepuis

at the nearby hamlet of Canaima. There we were given a ride on a motorised canoe to visit some other, much smaller but very picturesque waterfalls. After a wonderful lunch at a tourist lodge, we returned to the Canaima Airport to fly in a 10-passenger twin prop aircraft to Puerto Ordaz. After a three-hour layover there we returned on the same Aserca Airlines DC-9 aircraft back to Caracas.

Finally, on Sunday morning Barbara and I flew American Airlines nonstop from Caracas to Miami. It was a wonderful long weekend adventure, and Angel Falls was truly a wonderful spectacle to behold!

PRACTICALITIES:

Angel Falls is 450 miles (725 km) southeast of Caracas. The best time to visit is during the wet season, between May and November. During these months the water volume is greatest. However, frustratingly, that is also when visibility can be the worst!

For general information on Angels Falls, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel_Falls

For the story of how American pilot Jimmy Angel discovered Angel Falls in 1935, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmie_Angel

For information on the world's second-largest power station at Puerto Ordaz, visit <http://www.venezuelatuya.com/guayana/ciudadguayanaeng.htm>



Japanese tourist

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