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Night Time is the Light Time

While the natural beauty and rich geographic diversity of our planet may best be viewed during daylight hours, nothing beats the glamour and glitz of Earth after dark.

Bejeweled as if for an evening of urbane merriment, the western Mediterranean Sea glows with the diamonds and pearls of human society. Hot white flashes of lightning off the coast of Algiers contrast the golden tone of city lights, seen in the lower right corner of this image from September of 2017. The Spanish cities of Cartagena, Valencia, and Barcelona adorn the opposite coastline, while the resort island of Mallorca smolders beneath the cloud cover just right of center. Finally, the elegant look is made complete by a curved emerald band offset from the horizon, highlighting the upper limit of Earth's most enchanting feature - its life-sustaining atmosphere.

Is there a dark side to all of this wonderful light? Indeed there is. City-dwelling stargazers know it all too well, and its name is Light Pollution.

