

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST EXPANDS



Recently, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee met in Brasilia to decide whether there are more relevant locations to add to the list of endangered sites. The result of their meeting is an additional 21 sites topping up the list to an incredible 911.

UNESCO, or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has long been trying to preserve our world's most precious sites and phenomena, and for decades has been supporting the protection of these. **Every year, the World Heritage Committee**, which integrates many international representatives, **meets to discuss which of the nominated sites of 'outstanding universal value' should be added on the list**, and also, which are no longer in danger. This year's ten-day meeting in Brasilia resulted in an additional 21 sites being added to the list pushing up the total to 911.

The UNESCO initiative goes back to 1959 when Egyptian government decided to create a massive dam which would have - among other areas - flooded the location of the ancient Abu Simbel temples. Eventually, these were relocated to a safe place and gradually, UNESCO grew. **In 1978, the first list of 12 heritage sites was created and since then the Committee set up a system of criteria according to which the sites are nominated and selected.**

There are several kinds of possible nominations, for example representations of a "masterpiece of human creative genius" and examples of "superlative natural phenomena". This year, the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands or the Atsinanana rain forest in Madagascar, the Thang Long-Hanoi imperial citadel in Vietnam, the archeological site Sarazm in Tajikistan, the Episcopal city of Albi in France, and even a 17th-century canal ring in Amsterdam were among the 21 newly added sites.

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