

TOP 10 OLDEST CITIES AROUND THE WORLD



Cities have represented human development and the birth of civilization for eternity. The first cities on our planet started forming in the Neolithic period in ancient Mesopotamia and the very oldest of them show the world incredible architecture accompanied with remarkable stories and a historical brilliance, which attract thousands of tourists around the world. For obvious reasons, there are historical uncertainties about the origins of many and thus it is difficult to make it clear for sure which city is the oldest. However, Tourism-Review.com brings you the top 10 oldest cities in the world.

Jerusalem, Israel

Established between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago, Jerusalem represents a unique city in the history of humanity, as it is the place of origin of the three major religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is not only a destination full of remarkable religious sites but also a destination that has gone through many conflicts throughout the years. As written by historian Eric H. Cline, the city "has been destroyed at least twice, besieged 23 times, attacked an additional 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times". Currently it serves as the capital of Israel and is home to more than 900,000 inhabitants. It welcomes more than 3 million tourists annually.

Sidon, Lebanon

Another of the oldest cities in the area is Sidon. Initially inhabited in 4000 BC, the Lebanese city is located about 25 miles south of Beirut. It was perhaps the most important and oldest Phoenician city. The city represented the base of the Phoenician empire, from which it continued to grow throughout the years in the Mediterranean. There are historical stories about Jesus and St. Paul visiting the city, while Alexander the Great took over the city in 333 BC. Today it is one of Lebanon's main tourist attractions and its Sea Castle built in the 13th century represents an important part of the city's cultural heritage. Today it is home to 200,000 inhabitants.

Athens, Greece

Established in 4000 BC, Athens represents one of the oldest and most valuable cities in the development of western civilization. By the start of the first millennium BC, the city became the most important city of Ancient Greece. It is home to many astonishing sites left over from the Antic times, with the Acropolis being the cherry on top of the Athenian cake. Other notable places include the Parthenon, Erechtheion or the Panathenaic Stadium, the world's only white marble stadium. Currently it serves as the capital of modern Greece with a population of over 3 million people. It is a huge tourism attraction, with more than 5 million arriving every year.

Susa (today Shush), Iran

Established in about 4200 BC, Susa was one of the most important and oldest cities in the Ancient Near East. It is placed in the lower Zagros Mountains and throughout the years it was a part of the

Elamite, Persian, Seleucid and Sasanian empires of Iran. It is the home of many ancient artefacts and sites, such as the Palace of Darius the Great and all its beauties, of which, however, little has remained. Today the city no longer exists and the modern version, Shush, is home to around 65 thousand inhabitants.

Byblos, Lebanon

Established in 5000 BC, Byblos was founded by the Phoenicians as their first city under the name Gebal. In the ancient Egyptian period, Byblos served as an important trading center and was one of the leading exporters of cedar and more valuable resources to Egypt. Interestingly enough, the name Byblos was given by the Greeks, as they imported papyrus to Greece through the city. The English word "Bible" is derived from the city's name. The main tourist attractions are the Byblos Castle, the ancient Phoenician temples as well as the Medieval City Wall. It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1984 and is currently home to some 100 thousand inhabitants.

Argos, Greece

The city of Argos has served as a settlement for approximately 7000 years and, along with Athens and Plovdiv, it is considered to be the oldest city of the Old Continent. It was one of the most important powers of the Peloponnese until the rise of Sparta. The city went through a flourishing period during the times of the Roman rule as well as the Byzantine Empire. The city is also a part of many historical myths and it is believed that Perseus, the son of Zeus, was born here. The region is home to many important sites, such as the Bourtzi Castle, Tiryns or the remains of the Heraion, as well as to more than 20,000 people.

Aleppo, Syria

Established in 5000 BC, Aleppo represents one of the historically most important and oldest cities on our planet. Due to its strategic location between the Mediterranean Sea and Mesopotamia as well as at the end of the Silk Road, it was one of the centers of the ancient times. In recent history, however, the city has been more known for tragical events, as it has been the center of warfare since 2012 in the Syrian civil war. The battles caused enormous damages to the whole city, as well as the Old City, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The official population of modern-day Aleppo is over 1.8 million, but the exact number is not known, considering the number of casualties and refugees.

Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Established between 6000 and 5000 BC, Plovdiv is considered by some the oldest city in Europe. Throughout history many empires conquered the Bulgarian settlement, including the Macedonians, Romans, the Byzantine Empire as well as the Ottomans. As a result of this, the city boasts a large cultural diversity and heritage, for example, the Ancient Theatre of Philippopolis, a Roman Stadium or the Alyosha Monument. Today it is the second largest city in Bulgaria and welcomes over 800 thousand tourists yearly.

Damascus, Syria

Some consider Damascus the world's oldest inhabited city, with records dating back to 10,000 BC. Thanks to its strategic location, it was one of the pearls of the ancient times and an important center. Throughout its history, the Syrian city was conquered by Alexander the Great and later on became a part of the Roman and Ottoman Empire. Today Damascus is one of Syria's cultural centers

and a great tourist attraction, as well as the country's capital, being home to 1.7 million inhabitants. The city has also been affected by the civil war, though not as much as Aleppo.

Jericho, West Bank

The exact date of the establishment of Jericho is unknown but many consider the settlement the oldest continuously inhabited city on the planet. Archaeological excavations have shown that the founding of the city, currently located in the Palestinian territory of West Bank, dates back to between 9500 and 9000 BC. Throughout its history it has been conquered and occupied by many different groups and it is even mentioned in the Bible. The Wall of Jericho is the highlight of the historical heritage of the city. A curiosity about the city is that it is located below sea level, which makes it the lowest permanently inhabited place on the planet. Today the small city is home to 20,000 people.

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