

ABANDONED GHOST TOWNS AROUND THE WORLD ATTRACT VISITORS



Abandoned places, especially towns, attract visitors, both the individual ones as well as organized groups. Why? There are many reasons indeed, even though some travelers may find these places very scary and uninspiring.

Many visitors are interested in finding out what happened to the towns, seeing local life, walking along empty buildings. The reasons for the “abandonment” can be different: natural disasters, war, unprofitable maintenance etc.

Victim of Turkish Invasion

Varosha was once the main tourist quarter of the city of Famagusta in Cyprus. **But it took just one day for the quarter to become empty and abandoned for many years.** Now it is one of the interesting places that attract visitors.

In 1974, the Turkish army invaded and captured Varosha. All Greeks were ordered to leave the city as soon as possible and entry was only allowed to Turkish military personnel.

After 47 years, the town was opened to the public in 2020. And it has attracted many visitors both from abroad as well as from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. According to the president of the self-proclaimed state, almost 200 thousand tourists visited the ghost town up to July 2021.

A Tragedy to Be Forgotten

Perhaps the most famous ghost town is Pripjat in Ukraine. The city was evacuated after the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986.

After carrying out decontamination work and reducing the radiation level, some residents even came back to Pripjat to work. Now the city is home to about 200 people and has a working hostel for shift workers, shops, canteens, and a medical unit.

Besides this, it is also a very popular tourist destination, with many Ukrainian companies offering guided tours in the area. For example, in the pre-Covid year of 2019 more than 124 thousand people visited the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

Symbol of Industrialization and Dark History

The Japanese island of Hashima is seen as a symbol of industrialization of the country. In 1810, coal was found on the island, and active mining began. Further development continued and in the 20th century, the island was considered the most populous one in the world.

However, there is also a dark part of the country’s history connected to Hashima island. During World War II when most Japanese men were drafted into the military, Korean and Chinese workers were forced to work on the island in inhumane conditions.

The island attracts visitors every year, even more so since it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015. According to data, Hashima welcomes 300 thousand tourists every year.

Landslide Led to Evacuation

The ghost town of Craco in the Matera province in Italy has been partially uninhabited since 1963 due to a series of landslides that forced the inhabitants to leave the city and move to the valley of Craco Peschiera.

However, the situation further worsened. In 1972 there was a flood, while in 1980 the Irpinia earthquake led to the complete abandonment of the town.

Now the city is experiencing a renewed flow of people - not inhabitants though, but tourists. According to official data, 3800 people visited Craco from January to August this year compared to about 2800 during the entire year of 2012.

From Boom Town to Ghost Town

In the 1870s, Bodie in California became a so-called boomtown due to the discovery of gold in the region. In 1879, the town had a population of almost 10 thousand people.

However, Bodie declined in the 20th century and received the "ghost town" label as early as 1915. **In the 1960s, California authorized the creation of the Bodie State Historic Park.**

Listed as a National Historic Landmark by the US Department of the Interior and as a California Historical Landmark by the state, Bodie welcomes around 200 thousand tourists annually.

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