

# TOP 10 MOST IMPRESSIVE BUILDINGS AROUND THE WORLD



The Taj Mahal, Empire State Building, and Burj Khalifa are some of the most impressive buildings in the world. However, there are other lesser-known but equally fascinating buildings worth seeing. Tourism Review has compiled a list of 10 such buildings: magnificent houses of worship, impressive centers of power, and monumental castles.

## Le Mont-Saint-Michel - Normandy, France

The Benedictine monastery of Mont-Saint-Michel in Normandy was one of the most extensive, complex, and expensive construction projects of the Middle Ages. According to the legend, the Bishop of Avranches had a dream in which he was asked to build the church. Construction began in 708 and continued for hundreds of years until it was finally completed. The bay where the monastery is located is a popular attraction due to its unique geography. Mont-Saint-Michel is visible as an island at high tide, and the strongest tides in Europe can be found there. At low tide, the sea retreats up to 15 kilometers from the coast, and the difference in water level can be up to 14 meters. Mont-Saint-Michel and its bay have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979.

## Palace of the Parliament - Bucharest, Romania

The Palace of the Parliament, located in Bucharest, Romania, is known as the second largest building complex in the world, after the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. This building is considered the heaviest in the world, weighing approximately 4.1 million tons, which is estimated to be four times heavier than St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. Around 700,000 tons of steel, 550,000 tons of cement, and 3,500 tons of crystal were used to construct this building. Additionally, 1 million cubic meters of marble from Transylvania and 900,000 cubic meters of wood were installed. The Palace of Parliament comprises 5,100 rooms and 200 toilets, and its area covers 65,000 square meters.

The Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest was constructed from 1983 to 1989 according to the ideas of dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, Romanian President.

## Hawa Mahal - Jaipur, India

The Palace of the Winds, also known as Hawa Mahal, is a famous landmark of the Indian city of Jaipur and is one of the most impressive buildings in the world. It was constructed in 1799 and was used by the ladies-in-waiting of Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh (1778–1803) to watch the activities on the street without revealing their presence. The facade of the building facing the street is approximately 15 meters tall and contains 953 intricately designed, barred windows that ensure constant air circulation. The lattice windows, known as jalis, enabled the ladies to observe the street without being noticed.

## Château Frontenac - Quebec, Canada

The Château Frontenac is a luxurious hotel located in Old Quebec, one of the city's main attractions.

The castle has been part of the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts hotel chain since October 2001 and is considered one of Canada's most exclusive luxury hotels. Additionally, the Château Frontenac is renowned as one of the most photographed hotels in the world.

The hotel is named after Louis de Buade (1622-1688), Count of Frontenac and Palluau, the most important governor of the French colony of New France. It was built from 1892 to 1893 as a typical railway hotel for the Canadian Pacific Railway.

## **Nasir al-Molk Mosque - Shiraz, Iran**

The Nasir al-Molk Mosque, or the Pink Mosque, is in Shiraz. The mosque's facade has specially colored pink tiles and window glass. Visitors describe the interior as very impressive. The stained glass and sunlight create a vibrant rainbow of colors that makes you feel like you're standing in a kaleidoscope.

Construction of the mosque began in 1876 under Mirzā Hasan Ali during the Qajar dynasty and lasted until 1888.

## **Potala Palace - Lhasa, Tibet**

In the heart of Tibet's capital lies the Potala Palace, which has been Tibet's religious and political center for centuries. It was also the official residence and governing seat of the Dalai Lama. Positioned on the Red Mountain, the palace is believed to be the highest-located building complex in the world.

The main portion of the palace stands at 117 meters and stretches for 350 meters. It houses over 1,000 rooms across 13 floors and has an area of approximately 130,000 square meters. To access the Red Palace, one must climb 365 steps from the Potala Gate.

## **Hallgrim's Church - Reykjavík, Iceland**

The Hallgrímskirkja is a national monument in Iceland dedicated to the famous Icelandic poet Hallgrímur Pétursson. It is the largest church in Iceland and stands tall in the center of Reykjavík, with its tower reaching a height of 73 meters. The construction of this spiritual center took place between 1945 and 1986. The tower of the Evangelical Lutheran Church offers a stunning view of Reykjavík, the surrounding mountains, and the sea, extending to Greenland and America in the west.

## **Santuario de Nuestra Señora de las Lajas - Nariño, Colombia**

The "Santuario de Nuestra Señora de las Lajas," or the Pilgrimage Site of Our Lady of Las Lajas, is a well-known Roman Catholic pilgrimage site that has existed in its current form since 1949. The church is situated about 10 kilometers away from the Ecuadorian border, in the Río Guáitara gorge, located in southern Colombia. The pilgrimage site has been famous for centuries due to a Rosary Madonna painted on a stone. Later, in the 20th century, the church was built on this site to cater to the pilgrims.

## **Xuankong Si Monastery - Datong, China**

Located in the Chinese community of Dongfangcheng, the hanging monastery is suspended 50 meters above the ground. It was built on the steep slope of Mount Heng Shan, one of the five sacred

mountains of the Taoists in China. This monastery, which is one of the most impressive buildings in the world, was built during the Northern Wei Dynasty in the 6th century. It is the only monastery in China that combines the three major religions of the Middle Kingdom—Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

The pilgrimage route from Datong to Wutai Shan, one of the four sacred mountains of Buddhism in China, ran below the hanging monastery. This monastery served as a stop along the way for travelers.

## **Griffith Observatory - Los Angeles, USA**

One of the best views of the City of Angels can be found at the Griffith Observatory, a U.S. observatory at around 300 meters. Visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the entire region, stretching from the center of Los Angeles to Santa Monica Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The Hollywood Sign is also easily visible from this vantage point.

The observatory was constructed between 1933 and 1935 and underwent several years of renovation before reopening in 2006.

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