

27 NEW UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES



and 25 are mixed sites.

The UNESCO World Heritage List has been extended by additional 27 sites. The new sites were announced on the 32nd UNESCO committee meeting. This year the committee picked 19 cultural and 8 natural sites from countries all over the world. After the committee meeting there are now 878 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 145 countries - 679 of them cultural sites, 174 natural sites

Among the newly chosen sites there are 500-year-old Malaysian historic towns of Melaka and Georgetown that offer picturesque architecture. Germany has gained the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site for Berlin Modernism Housing Estates. The status was also granted to several Slovakian wooden churches. Mexico has nowadays a UNESCO Natural Site, a butterfly reservation. Rhaetian Railway in Swiss has also made it to the list.

The 32nd UNESCO committee meeting has also extended some already existing sites. For example Indian mountain railways saw such an extension. The famous Altamira caves UNESCO site in northern Spain has been extended by seventeen additional caves. The UK's "Frontiers of the Roman Empire" site has been extended by the 60km Antonine Wall in Scotland.

The choosing of the sites is, nevertheless, accompanied by some disappointments and also disagreement. There is for example the Preah Vihear temple in Cambodia. The problem is that Thailand claims it belongs to them therefore there was a strong political opposition against making the temple a "Cambodian" UNESCO site. Then there are the losers. This year it was for example Czech Republic with its picturesque spa village Luhačovice which did not make it to the list.

To get to this list is a prestigious thing. It serves as a great promotional boost to the tourism industry of the country that "possesses" the site. The sites aren't chosen only on the basis of cultural significance, the choosing is also based on whether they face immediate danger from threats like development or environmental degradation.

The 19 new cultural world heritage sites are:

Preah Vihear Temple (Cambodia)

Fujian Tulou (China)

Stari Grad Plain (Croatia)

Historic Centre of Camagüey (Cuba)

Fortifications of Vauban (France)

Berlin Modernism Housing Estates (Germany)

Armenian Monastic Ensembles in Iran (Iran)

Baha'i Holy Places in Haifa and Western Galilee (Israel)

Mantua and Sabbioneta (Italy)

The Mijikenda Kaya Forests (Kenya)

Melaka and George Town, historic cities of the Straits of Malacca (Malaysia)

Protective town of San Miguel and the Sanctuary of Jesús de Nazareno de Atotonilco (Mexico)

Le Morne Cultural Landscape (Mauritius)

Kuk Early Agricultural Site (Papua New Guinea)

San Marino Historic Centre and Mount Titano (San Marino)

Archaeological Site of Al-Hijr (Madâin Sâlih) (Saudi Arabia)

The Wooden Churches of the Slovak part of Carpathian Mountain Area (Slovakia)

Rhaetian Railway in the Albula / Bernina Cultural Landscape (Switzerland and Italy)

Chief Roi Mata's Domain (Vanuatu)

The 8 new natural world heritage sites are:

Joggins Fossil Cliffs (Canada)

Mount Sanqingshan National Park (China)

Lagoons of New Caledonia: Reef Diversity and Associated Ecosystems (France)

Surtsey (Iceland)

Saryarka - Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan)

Monarch Butterfly biosphere Reserve (Mexico)

Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona (Switzerland)

Socotra Archipelago (Yemen)

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