

UNWTO Names its Best Tourism Villages 2023

Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 18 October 2023 – The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has announced its list of Best Tourism Villages 2023. The accolade recognizes villages that are leading in nurturing rural areas and preserving landscapes, cultural diversity, local values, and culinary traditions.

In this third edition 54 villages from all regions were selected from almost 260 applications. A further 20 villages have joined the Upgrade Programme, and all 74 villages are now part of the **UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Network**. The villages were named during the UNWTO General Assembly, taking place this week in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

“Tourism can be a powerful force for inclusivity, empowering local communities and distributing benefits across regions,” emphasizes UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. “This initiative acknowledges villages that have harnessed tourism as a catalyst for their development and well-being.”

A global network of local communities

Launched in 2021, the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative is part of the UNWTO Tourism for Rural Development Programme. The Programme works to foster development and inclusion in rural areas, combat depopulation, advance innovation and value chain integration through tourism and encourage sustainable practices.

As in previous editions, the villages are evaluated under nine key areas:

1. Cultural and Natural Resources
2. Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources
3. Economic Sustainability
4. Social Sustainability
5. Environmental Sustainability
6. Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration
7. Governance and Prioritization of Tourism

8. Infrastructure and Connectivity

9. Health, Safety, and Security

The initiative comprises three pillars:

Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO: Recognizes outstanding rural tourism destinations with accredited cultural and natural assets, a commitment to preserving community-based values, and a clear commitment to innovation and sustainability across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO Upgrade Programme: Supports villages on their journey to meet recognition criteria, helping in areas identified as gaps during evaluation.

The Best Tourism Villages Network: a space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learning, and opportunities among its members, and it is open to contributions of experts and public and private sector partners engaged in the promotion of tourism as a driver for rural development.

The Network enlarges every year and aims at becoming the largest global rural network: with the announcement today of these 74 new members, 190 villages are now part of this unique Network.

Best Tourism Villages 2023

List of Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO 2023 is as follows (by alphabetic order):

Al Sela, Jordan	Manteigas, Portugal
Barrancas, Chile	Morcote, Switzerland
Biei, Japan	Mosan, Republic of Korea
Caleta Tortel, Chile	Oku-Matsushima, Japan
Cantavieja, Spain	Omitlán de Juárez, Mexico
Chacas, Peru	Oñati, Spain
Chavín de Huantar, Peru	Ordino, Andorra
Dahshour, Egypt	Oyacachi, Ecuador
Dhordo, India	Paucartambo, Peru
Dongbaek, Republic of Korea	Penglipuran, Indonesia
Douma, Lebanon	Pisco Elqui, Chile
Ericeira, Portugal	Pozuzo, Peru
Filandia, Colombia	Saint-Ursanne, Switzerland
Hakuba, Japan	Saty, Kazakhstan
Higueras, Mexico	Schladming, Austria
Huangling, China	Sehwa, Republic of Korea
Jalpa de Cánovas, Mexico	Sentob, Uzbekistan
Kandovan, Iran	Shirakawa, Japan
La Carolina, Argentina	Sigüenza, Spain
Lephis Village, Ethiopia	Şirince, Türkiye
Lerici, Italy	Siwa, Egypt

Slunj, Croatia
Sortelha, Portugal
St. Anton am Arlberg, Austria
Tân Hoá, Viet Nam
Taquile, Peru
Tokaj, Hungary

Văleni, Moldova
Vila da Madalena, Portugal
Xiajiang, China
Zapatoca, Colombia
Zhagana, China
Zhujiawan, China

The villages selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme this year are:

Asuka, Japan
Baños de Montemayor, Spain
Bilebante, Indonesia
Ciocănești, Romania
Civita di Bagnoregio, Italy
El Cisne, Ecuador
Iza, Colombia
Kale Üçağız, Türkiye
Kemaliye, Türkiye
Kfar Masaryk, Israel

Madla, India
Ounagha, Morocco
Pela, Indonesia
Puerto Octay, Chile
Sabbioneta, Italy
Saint Catherine, Egypt
Sarhua, Peru
Taro, Indonesia
Vila de Frades, Portugal
Yanque, Peru

The call for submissions for the fourth edition will take place in the first months of 2024, opening a new opportunity to rural destinations to shine on the global stage.

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