



UN Tourism



**BEST
TOURISM
VILLAGES**

by UN Tourism

**Best Tourism Villages
2024 Edition
Recognized Villages Booklet**



The Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism Initiative

The Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism (BTV) initiative is a pioneering effort to recognize and support villages that harness the power of tourism for sustainable development. Launched with the vision to spotlight exemplary rural tourism practices, the Best Tourism Villages initiative identifies villages worldwide that serve as outstanding examples of rural tourism destinations.

These villages demonstrate innovative approaches to tourism, showcasing how it can be a driving force for positive change. They provide inspiring models of how tourism can create jobs, stimulate local economies, and promote social inclusion, all while safeguarding cultural and natural assets.

The initiative also provides a platform for knowledge sharing and capacity building, helping other villages and rural destinations to learn from these best practices and implement similar strategies. By promoting a network of Best Tourism Villages, UN Tourism aims to enhance the visibility of rural destinations and attract more visitors, investments, and opportunities for sustainable growth.

The Best Tourism Villages Initiative by UN Tourism is based on three pillars:

Best Tourism Villages (BTV)

A recognized BTV is an example of a rural tourism destination with recognized cultural and natural assets, that preserves and promotes rural and community-based values, products, and lifestyle, and has a clear commitment to sustainability with the fundamental aim of making tourism one of the drivers of rural development and community well-being.

BTV Upgrade Programme

It includes villages that do not fully meet the initiative criteria but have strong potential. These villages receive mentoring from UN Tourism to improve elements of the areas identified as gaps in the evaluation process.

Best Tourism Villages Network

The members of the network are those villages recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism, and those selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme. It is a space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learnings, and opportunities. It is the largest community of villages sharing the vision and mission of making tourism a driver of rural development and well-being.

Best Tourism Villages 2024 Edition



55

Villages worldwide

27

Countries represented

5

Regions



AFRICA

Grand Baie, Mauritius
Roches Noires, Mauritius
Ruboni, Uganda

AMERICAS

Caviahue-Copahue, Argentina
Gaiman, Argentina
Trevelin, Argentina
Villa Tulumba, Argentina
Ralco, Chile
Jardín, Colombia
El Tambo, Ecuador
Mindo, Ecuador
San Rafael de La Laguna, Ecuador
San Juan del Obispo, Guatemala
Uaxactún, Guatemala
Capulálpam de Méndez, Mexico
Cuatro Ciénegas de Carranza, Mexico
Palizada, Mexico
El Valle de Antón, Panama
Portobelo, Panama
Huancaya, Peru
Leymebamba, Peru
Pueblo de Maras, Peru
Quinua, Peru
Sibayo, Peru

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Azheke, China
Guanyang, China
Shibadong, China
Taoping, China
Xiaogang, China
Xitou, China
Yandunjiao, China
Jatiluwih, Indonesia
Wukirsari, Indonesia
Esfahak, Islamic Republic of Iran
Amagi, Japan
Nishikawa, Japan
Bo Suak, Thailand
Trà Que Vegetable Village, Viet Nam

EUROPE

St. Johann in Tirol, Austria
Kalopanagiotis, Cyprus
Pissouri, Cyprus
Anogeia, Greece
San Casciano dei Bagni, Italy
Óbidos, Portugal
Santa Cruz da Graciosa, Portugal
Aínsa, Spain
Mura, Spain
Romoos, Switzerland
Splügen, Switzerland
Ormana, Türkiye
Urych, Ukraine
Vorokhta, Ukraine

MIDDLE EAST

Abo Noghta Castles & Historic
Tabab, Saudi Arabia
Abu Ghosoun, Egypt
Gharb Suhayl, Egypt

Best Tourism Villages Upgrade Programme 2024

20 villages in 15 countries:

Breb, Romania	Dhudmaras, India	Pals, Spain	Seonhakhdong, Republic of Korea
Campo Ramón, Argentina	Lens, Switzerland	Piedades Sur, Costa Rica	Shirayama, Japan
Cap Malheureux Village, Mauritius	Malalcahuello, Chile	Polovragi, Romania	St. Leonhard in Pitztal, Austria
Cascas, Peru	Mexcaltitán de Uribe, Mexico	San Juan Bautista, Chile	Yamakoshi, Japan
Choshuenco, Chile	Mittelberg, Austria	Santa Catarina Palopó, Guatemala	Yörük, Türkiye

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Mauritius

Grand Baie

Grand Baie, a renowned tourist destination, is situated in the northern region of Mauritius and is governed by the Grand Baie Village Council under the District Council of Riviere du Rempart. Originally a fishing village, it has become one of the island's leading tourism hotspots, celebrated for its diverse scenic landscapes, beautiful beaches, excursion trails, and entertainment options.

Marine ecotourism

Grand Baie is promoting eco-friendly marine tourism through sustainable diving and snorkelling practices aimed at protecting coral reefs. The lagoon has designated swimming zones and navigable passages marked with buoys following international standards to minimize conflicts among users and improve safety at sea. Additionally, some recreational boats are equipped with electric engines, while others operate on solar power.

Digital platform

In collaboration with the private sector, the village is developing an online platform to enhance both local and international visibility. This digital platform will offer updates and information about the village and its available facilities. It will also serve as a review space where visitors can share their experiences and memories from their time in the village, providing real-time, authentic feedback on tourist satisfaction. Additionally, efforts are being made to improve virtual reality experiences and create interactive apps that offer immersive tours and detailed information about local attractions.

Environmental conservation

The local community is deeply concerned about environmental issues and sustainable development. In response, the villagers have established a coastal and environmental protection cluster, which includes the Beach Authority (the governing body responsible for beach management under Mauritian law), the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Ministry of Tourism, and the District Council of Riviere du Rempart. This collaborative effort aims to address the effects of climate change and other environmental impacts. The meetings will generate recommendations for the protection of the village's natural resources, including beaches, wetlands, and coral reefs.



Mauritius

Roches Noires

Roches Noires, a quaint village nestled in the northeast of Mauritius, offers a refreshing escape from the hustle and bustle of mass tourism. With its pristine and unspoiled beaches, vibrant local culture, and lush landscapes, Roches Noires retains its authentic charm. The village has recently experienced significant growth in tourism infrastructure, creating a balance between development and environmental preservation, making it an ideal destination for eco-conscious travelers seeking a genuine Mauritian experience.

Natural Beauty and Authentic Charm

Roches Noires boasts stunning public beaches and breathtaking seascapes that attract visitors seeking tranquility. The village's coastal road, lined with traditional shops and dense vegetation, invites exploration and offers a glimpse into the local lifestyle. The untouched beauty of the area serves as a backdrop for various water-based activities, fostering a connection between tourists and nature.

Voluntary Marine Conservation Areas (VMCAs)

In collaboration with NGOs like Reef Conservation, the United Nations has established an 8-hectare Voluntary Marine Conservation Area in the lagoon of Roches Noires. This initiative protects vital seagrass beds and coral ecosystems, promotes sustainable tourism practices, and includes a snorkeling trail for visitors. Local fishermen have taken on roles as guides and monitors, ensuring the preservation of marine habitats while engaging the community in conservation efforts.

Community-Based Eco-Tourism Initiatives

Roches Noires is home to a local environmental organization, Roche Noire Eco-Marine, where community members provide guide services for eco-tourism activities, including exploring the unique lava tubes in the area. The village also features nature trails such as the "Coq de Bois Loop" and "Coq de Bois Trail," perfect for hiking and birdwatching. These activities not only enrich the visitor experience but also enhance local entrepreneurship and contribute to the economic growth of the community.



Uganda

Ruboni

Ruboni village features a hilly landscape with stunning views and lush greenery, abundant rivers, and a diverse array of plant and tree species. The indigenous Bakonzo people primarily rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Situated at the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, the village borders the Rwenzori Mountains National Park. To supplement agricultural income, Ruboni village engages in tourism both within and outside the park. Inside the park, the community is involved in three tourist trails, while outside, they offer ten tourism activities, including the Bururu Forest Trail, Makongothe Hill Trail, Ruboni Village Walk, Mappata Waterfalls Trail, cultural dance performances, basket weaving experiences, farming activities, coffee-making sessions, and traditional cooking tours. The village boasts several tourism assets, including nine hotels and accommodation facilities, one campground, three homestays, and the infrastructure of the Rwenzori Mountains National Park, which can be accessed through the Mihunga Park Gate.

Forest conservation

Ruboni village has established its forest reserves, which promote cultural connections to nature for tourists who prefer not to trek up the high mountains. These community forests offer ecosystem benefits and serve as a natural resource bank for residents while also acting as a buffer to the national park. This initiative reduces the tendency of community members to trespass on national park resources while searching for medicinal plants, crafting materials, or educational experiences related to nature, which in turn decreases the chances of human-wildlife conflicts.

Digitalization

Ruboni village is digitizing its tourism sector to improve marketing, service quality, and timely service delivery. Collaborating with stakeholders, we have enhanced the digital capabilities of the village, making it the first initiative of its kind in the Rwenzori region. We are developing a digital infrastructure to promote tourism inclusiveness, marketing, and sales. Recently, we completed a map of the tourism village, launched a collective credit card payment system, and are currently working on a mobile application and website for the village. All tourism stakeholders are now equally represented within this digital framework, allowing them to accept credit card payments, and appear on both a printed and interactive map and soon on the mobile app.

Tourism for equality

The Ruboni community has established a visitor center aimed at providing skills, serving as an enterprise hub, and offering business incubation for women and youth engaged in tourism-related innovations. This initiative is designed to ensure equal benefits for all, particularly for these specific groups, to mitigate the labor drain, foster innovation, and reduce over-reliance on land for sustenance.



Argentina

Caviahue–Copahue

Nestled in the province of Neuquén, Argentina, Caviahue–Copahue is a stunning destination where breathtaking landscapes blend seamlessly with rich cultural heritage. This unique area, located 365 km from Neuquén Capital, comprises two settlements: Caviahue at 1,600 meters above sea level and Copahue at 1,800 meters. Together, they form part of the “Copahue Natural Protected Area,” covering 28,300 hectares of geodiversity shaped by volcanic and glacial activity. Known for its active volcano, thermal springs, and ancient forests, Caviahue–Copahue transforms into a winter wonderland from June to October, offering a plethora of outdoor activities. Visitors can immerse themselves in the vibrant Mapuche culture through crafts, festivals, and culinary experiences, making this destination truly special.

Strengthening Wellness Tourism

Caviahue–Copahue is innovating in wellness tourism by developing unique geotherapy treatments. These include inhalation therapies that utilize sulfurous water, topical mud applications, and hydroponic cures that promote revitalization. Additionally, the village is organizing holistic events and enhancing existing spaces into specialized spas and wellness centers.

Geotourism Development

The region is embarking on an exciting project to establish a unique geopark that highlights the geological riches of the area. This initiative will create geotourism and hiking routes, allowing visitors to explore extraordinary rock formations while promoting the brand “Snow Village” through low-impact winter activities that honor the natural environment.

Strengthening Cultural Tourism with Identity

Caviahue–Copahue actively promotes cultural tourism by offering guided tours in Mapuche territories. These experiences help visitors engage with local traditions, crafts, and cuisine, fostering a deeper understanding of Mapuche culture. Projects aimed at identity-based tourism within the framework of rural tourism further enhance community sustainability and cultural appreciation, ensuring the preservation of heritage. This remarkable blend of natural beauty, cultural depth, and innovative tourism practices makes Caviahue–Copahue an extraordinary destination for travelers seeking adventure and authentic experiences.



Argentina

Gaiman

Gaiman is a picturesque town nestled in the Chubut Valley, deep within the heart of Patagonia, Argentina. Located along National Route 25, it is about 1,500 km from Buenos Aires, 180 km from the Valdés Peninsula, and just 36 km from Rawson, the provincial capital. Gaiman's identity is rich with Welsh influences, yet its name originates from the Tehuelche people, meaning "sharpening stone." Today, visiting Gaiman offers a unique experience that intertwines its historical roots with contemporary life, showcasing a striking contrast between urban and rural landscapes, characterized by sandstone and brick architecture set against the lush greenery and ochre hills of the Patagonian steppe.

Cultural Events and Museums

Gaiman embraces its vibrant history and culture through events like La Noche de los Museos, an immersive cultural experience that opens the doors of local museums for a night of music, gastronomy, and education. This event, which welcomes visitors of all ages, showcases the town's rich heritage and provides an opportunity to explore its architectural treasures and historical narratives.

Educational Activities for Children

The town offers an engaging program called Paleontólogo por un día, where children aged 5 to 12 can experience the work of paleontologists firsthand. This interactive and educational activity allows young visitors to delve into the region's prehistoric past, fostering a love for science and discovery.

Astronomy Tourism

Gaiman has also become a notable destination for Astroturismo, or astronomical tourism. With its stunning rural settings and panoramic viewpoints, visitors can marvel at the Patagonian night sky. This experience is often enhanced with local culinary delights, such as cured meats, wines, and cakes, allowing tourists to savor the essence of Gaiman while enjoying the celestial wonders. In essence, Gaiman represents a harmonious blend of history, culture, and natural beauty, inviting visitors to explore its unique offerings while immersing themselves in the enchanting landscapes of Patagonia.



Argentina

Trevelin

Trevelin is a captivating destination in Patagonia, Argentina, situated at the base of the Andes Mountain range and rich in cultural heritage influenced by the region's agricultural characteristics. The area has been shaped by its first inhabitants, including native peoples and Welsh settlers who arrived in 1885 and harnessed the fertile land known as the "Beautiful Valley" or Cwn Hyfrid (as named by the Welsh). Various productive activities in Trevelin are now open to tourism, becoming significant attractions for the region. Notable highlights include tulip fields, vineyards, and the cultivation of wheat, red fruits, honey, and saffron.

Tulip Effect

The productive activities in the Trevelin Valley have transformed into significant tourist attractions, enabling a diversification of offerings in the area. The tulip field, Trevelin's premier attraction and the only one of its kind in the country has successfully altered the traditional tourism season that typically peaks in January and February. Currently, October, when the tulips bloom, stands as the most popular month for visitors. This phenomenon has positively affected not just Trevelin but also the surrounding region, extending up to 300 kilometres. As hotel occupancy rises in Trevelin, accommodation in nearby areas, even in different provinces, also begins to fill up.

Rural Development

Trevelin encompasses an urban area alongside a vast rural expanse that includes various rural communities and indigenous populations. The promotion of community-based rural tourism has significantly stimulated the local economy, celebrated cultural heritage, reduced youth migration, and encouraged environmental stewardship in Trevelin's regions. Visitors can engage in unique experiences that hold deep symbolic significance within these communities.

The Southernmost Wine Route

A decade ago, wine production in the Trevelin Valley was just a concept. Today, it has become a reality that is reshaping the Argentine wine industry. Trevelin wines have received Geographical Indication status, a designation from the national government that allows products to be recognized for their quality based on their geographical origin. The region is home to 17 vineyards and 5 wineries (with 2 more under construction), all of which continue to enhance their production capacity and the quality of their wines each year.



Argentina

Villa Tulumba

Villa Tulumba, located 150 km north of Córdoba city in the scenic Sierras Chicas region, is a living testament to Argentina's colonial history. Founded in 1585 and declared a Villa Real in 1803 by King Carlos IV, it features charming cobbled streets, ancient lampposts, and adobe houses from the 18th and 19th centuries, making it an open-air museum. It is home to a Baroque-style church with invaluable relics over 430 years old, and the ancient Sanavirones left behind over 35,000 rock paintings. Nestled between the breathtaking Salinas Grandes and Ansenzuza National Park, Villa Tulumba offers a rich cultural experience combined with stunning natural landscapes, making it an ideal destination for those seeking historical exploration.

Huellas Coloniales – A Journey Through History

For history enthusiasts, the Huellas Coloniales experience offers an in-depth exploration of Villa Tulumba's colonial architecture and cultural heritage. Guided by knowledgeable locals, visitors embark on a walking tour through the village, discovering ancient mansions, churches, and iron lampposts that reflect the Spanish colonial era. This immersive experience serves as a gateway to understanding the region's history, culminating in a visit to the Camino Real Interpretation Center.

“Caminando Chacareras” – A Cultural Walking Experience

“Caminando Chacareras” offers a unique blend of nature and music, where local guides lead participants on scenic hikes along the Suncho River and through the surrounding hills. This experience highlights the natural landscapes that have inspired renowned Argentine artists, musicians, and poets, such as Atahualpa Yupanqui and Carlos Di Fulvio. Each hiking circuit is named after a traditional song, allowing participants to delve into the lyrics and metaphors through guided interpretation and observation of the inspiring scenery.

Rural Stays – Embrace Nature and Tradition

Villa Tulumba's burgeoning rural tourism scene presents visitors with the opportunity to enjoy personalized experiences in serene natural settings. Local establishments, such as Guayascate, Los Chañares, and Alpa Lodge & Family Retreat, offer not just accommodation but also engaging activities that highlight the region's environmental commitment. Guests can partake in horseback riding, guided historical tours to indigenous settlements, birdwatching, and photographic safaris, all while indulging in regional and pre-Hispanic cuisine.



Chile

Ralco

Ralco, the capital of the Pewenche territory in Alto Biobío, Chile, stands out as a vibrant tourist hub in the Biobío region. With 76% of the area's tourism infrastructure, Ralco serves as an ideal starting point for exploring the rich natural and cultural heritage of the ancestral Mapuche Pewenche community. The town's commitment to hospitality, coupled with its diverse tourism offerings, provides visitors with a unique opportunity to engage with the authentic lifestyle of the local people while participating in sustainable economic practices.

Cultural Immersion and Local Artisanal Products

Ralco offers visitors a chance to connect deeply with the Pewenche culture through local artisanal products. The Tienda Ruka Pewenche Kudaw, an artisan store and tourist information center, showcases crafts and agro-pastoral products from over 200 local producers. This initiative not only supports the local economy but also allows tourists to appreciate the craftsmanship and traditions of the Pewenche people.

Community-Based Tourism Initiatives

Community-driven tourism is a hallmark of Ralco, where local initiatives focus on equitable revenue distribution and respect for the indigenous governance structures. These community-managed tourism enterprises provide visitors with authentic experiences and foster meaningful connections between tourists and the Pewenche culture, enriching both the visitor's experience and the community's economic resilience.

Pewenche Museum

The Pewenche Museum of Ralco offers an insightful glimpse into the vibrant culture of the Pewenche community. Curated by local guides, the museum showcases artifacts that represent various aspects of Pewenche life, including spirituality, work systems, gastronomy, and traditional medicine. This cultural narrative enhances visitors' understanding of the community's heritage and fosters a deeper appreciation for their way of life.



Colombia

Jardín

Nestled in the lush mountains of Antioquia, Jardín stands as one of Colombia's 18 Heritage Towns, celebrated for its vibrant natural beauty, warm hospitality, and rich coffee traditions. Located 137 kilometers from Medellín, this municipality has a history spanning 160 years and covers an area of 201 square kilometers, with elevations ranging from 1,400 to 3,200 meters above sea level and an average temperature of 19°C. Before its establishment, the region was home to various indigenous groups, including the Embera-Chamí tribe, who continue to preserve their cultural heritage today. Jardín is increasingly recognized for its eco-tourism and cultural offerings, making it an ideal destination for travelers seeking adventure and immersion in Colombia's diverse landscapes.

Etnotourism and Cultural Immersion

Jardín features the Nabera O Route, the first etnotourism path in Antioquia, developed in collaboration with the indigenous community. This initiative allows visitors to engage directly with local traditions, rituals, and gastronomy through immersive experiences. The community shares their knowledge of the territory and cultural practices, enriching tourists' understanding of indigenous heritage. This project has garnered recognition, winning awards for its commitment to inclusion and social sustainability.

Nature and Adventure Tourism

The municipality has become a hub for nature and adventure tourism, offering activities like birdwatching, hiking, visits to coffee farms, and paragliding. These experiences are designed to promote environmental conservation while enabling visitors to connect with rural life and the natural splendor surrounding Jardín. Additionally, initiatives such as tree planting and river cleaning foster awareness of environmental issues and contribute to sustainable development in the area.

Quality Tourism Certification

Jardín has implemented the "Rosa de Oro" Quality Tourism Certification, enhancing the efficiency of tourist service providers and the local tourism authority. This project aims to formalize the tourism sector through a secure and effective virtual management system. By improving service quality and mitigating the risks of gentrification, Jardín strives to protect local heritage while promoting sustainable tourism practices.



Ecuador

El Tambo

Nestled in the stunning Andes of Ecuador, El Tambo is a vibrant community that celebrates its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. Known for its commitment to sustainable rural tourism, El Tambo offers visitors the chance to engage deeply with the traditions of the Cañari people. The region boasts a rich tapestry of landscapes, archaeological sites, and cultural practices that together create a unique experience for travelers.

Killa Raymi Festival

Every September, El Tambo hosts the Killa Raymi festival, an ancestral celebration in honor of the moon. This vibrant event showcases traditional music, dance, and rituals, attracting approximately 2,500 tourists from around the world. Celebrations take place at the Coyoctor Archaeological Complex, providing visitors with a chance to witness and participate in this deeply-rooted cultural experience.

Sustainable Ecotourism

El Tambo promotes ecotourism by offering activities that highlight the area's natural resources while preserving the environment. Visitors can enjoy hiking, horseback riding, and fishing, all while engaging with the local community. This approach ensures that tourism not only benefits visitors but also empowers local residents and supports their livelihoods.

Cultural Immersion and Community Engagement

The community of El Tambo actively involves visitors in cultural experiences that promote the Cañari way of life. Tourists can participate in traditional rituals, culinary workshops, and artisan crafts, fostering a genuine connection with the local culture. By focusing on community engagement, El Tambo aims to enhance cultural understanding and provide meaningful interactions between visitors and residents.



Ecuador

Mindo

Established as a parish on May 20, 1861, during the presidency of Gabriel García Moreno, Mindo has a rich history as a vital link between coastal and highland communities. Originally populated by the Yumbo-Nigua settlements, this area attracted residents from Esmeraldas, Carchi, and Colombia, contributing to its cultural diversity. Over the years, Mindo evolved from a center for rubber and incense collection to a thriving community focused on conservation, tourism, and local development.

Historical Significance and Cultural Diversity

Mindo's historical roots trace back to early agricultural practices and trade, with inhabitants engaging in the collection of valuable resources like rubber, starch, and fine timber. The establishment of roads facilitated economic growth, leading to deforestation and a shift towards cattle farming. In response to environmental degradation, local initiatives emerged to promote conservation and sustainable development, highlighting Mindo's resilience and commitment to its natural heritage.

Ecotourism and Sustainable Practices

Today, Mindo is renowned for its ecological and cultural tourism, showcasing agroecological farms producing healthy foods and artisan goods. The community actively promotes conservation efforts in the cloud forest, creating a harmonious balance between tourism and environmental stewardship. Local tours emphasize the significance of preserving biodiversity, fostering appreciation for the unique flora and fauna found in this enchanting region.

Adventure Tourism Experiences

Mindo offers a range of thrilling activities for visitors seeking adventure. Guided night walks allow tourists to explore the rich biodiversity of the cloud forest, while extreme sports like canopy and tubing provide adrenaline-fueled experiences. With expert guides like Edyton Arias leading nighttime excursions and entrepreneurs like Manuel Sibaja introducing exhilarating outdoor activities, Mindo is quickly becoming a hotspot for eco-adventurers and nature enthusiasts alike.



Ecuador

San Rafael de la Laguna

Nestled in the breathtaking foothills of the Andes, San Rafael de la Laguna is a charming parish located in the Otavalo Canton of Imbabura, Ecuador. Situated just 90 km from Quito and 7.5 km from Otavalo, this picturesque community boasts a population of 6,417 residents. With its rich cultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, and commitment to sustainable tourism, San Rafael de la Laguna invites visitors to immerse themselves in its vibrant traditions and serene environment.

Celebrating Ancestral Traditions

San Rafael de la Laguna is steeped in cultural heritage, celebrated through various traditional festivals and ceremonies such as aawkar Raymi and Inty Raymi. These vibrant events showcase the community's pride and connection to its indigenous roots. The parish is also known for its unique crafts, particularly those made from totora reeds, which have become iconic symbols of local artistry. Visitors can engage with the community through workshops, learning about traditional crafts while contributing to the preservation of these vital cultural practices.

Eco-Tourism Adventures Await

The region is home to stunning natural attractions, including the renowned Lago San Pablo, known as ImbaKucha, or "lake of the gods." This geosite offers opportunities for eco-tourism, where visitors can explore its beauty via guided tours on totora boats, spotting local wildlife such as herons and ducks along the shores. The area also features cycling routes that connect the breathtaking landscapes of Cajas Otavalo, providing adventure seekers with ample opportunities to immerse themselves in the lush surroundings.

Artisanal Excellence

The artisans of San Rafael de la Laguna are dedicated to creating beautiful totora crafts that reflect their cultural identity. From decorative pieces to practical household items, these handcrafted goods highlight the community's commitment to sustainability and economic growth. Workshops allow visitors to experience the craft-making process firsthand, fostering a deeper appreciation for local artistry while promoting responsible tourism that benefits the artisans and their families.



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Guatemala

San Juan del Obispo

Nestled at the foot of the Volcán de Agua in La Antigua Guatemala, San Juan del Obispo is a picturesque village rich in history and agricultural heritage. Founded by the first Bishop of Guatemala, Francisco Marroquín, in 1538, this charming community is known for its vibrant cultural traditions, including its renowned agricultural products like coffee, avocado, and nispero. With a population of around 5,524 inhabitants as of 2024, San Juan del Obispo is committed to sustainable tourism, offering visitors an authentic experience rooted in local customs and community engagement.

Cultural Heritage and Traditions

San Juan del Obispo plays a vital role in preserving and promoting its rich cultural heritage, particularly during significant events such as Semana Santa (Holy Week), which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage tradition. The village serves as a gateway to the historic beauty of La Antigua Guatemala, enhancing the area's appeal as a cultural tourism destination.

Agricultural and Artisan Experiences

The village's agricultural focus allows visitors to participate in hands-on experiences, such as nispero and avocado harvesting. Guests can engage in workshops led by local artisans, learning about traditional crafts, organic farming, and culinary practices, which highlight the region's unique agricultural bounty.

Sustainable Tourism Development:

San Juan del Obispo aims to strengthen its position in the Best Tourism Villages network through the exchange of best practices, collaborative projects, and community-led initiatives. This includes promoting local traditions, organizing joint events, and developing sustainable tourism strategies that benefit both residents and visitors.



Guatemala

Uaxactún

Uaxactún is nestled in the Heart of the Maya World, located in the Flores municipality of Petén, Guatemala. Positioned just 86 km from the departmental capital and 23 km north of Tikal National Park, Uaxactún is situated within the Multiple Use Zone of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. This strategic location places it at the center of significant Maya cities, including Tikal National Park, El Mirador – Río Azul, San Bartolo, and El Zotz. The village's unique geographical advantage enhances its rich cultural and natural heritage, making it an important site for sustainable forest resource management.

Spring Equinox Festival: Celebrating Maya Culture

The Spring Equinox Festival is a vibrant astronomical and cultural event that energizes the local economy of Aldea Uaxactún. This festival highlights community traditions, gastronomic delights, and ancient Maya ceremonies, all while promoting forest conservation through community-led forestry models. The celebration not only attracts visitors but also emphasizes the importance of preserving the region's rich cultural heritage.

Biking Through Nature

The Bici Treck is an exciting tourism product that offers guided mountain biking itineraries through various local attractions, such as the archaeological site of Uaxactún, El Ramonal, and El Zotz, all under the lush canopy of the tropical forest. This immersive experience allows visitors to enjoy the area's biodiversity while reducing their carbon footprint. With personalized guidance, food options, and accommodation services, tourists can fully appreciate the beauty and human warmth that characterizes Aldea Uaxactún.

Community Artisan Workshops

Brisas de la Selva Maya is an artisan initiative where local women create crafts using forest products like seeds, mushrooms, and flowers. Workshops are available for visitors, offering a unique opportunity to engage with the community and learn about traditional crafting techniques. This hands-on experience not only enriches the visitor's journey but also strengthens the local economy and promotes sustainable practices.



Mexico

Capulálpam de Méndez

Capulálpam de Méndez is an ancestral town located in the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca, Mexico. Its name, derived from the Nahuatl language, translates to “Land of the capulin tree,” reflecting the area’s abundant presence of this tree. Designated as a Magical Town by the Mexican Ministry of Tourism in 2008, it is home to Zapotec people, the third largest indigenous group in Mexico.

The town’s natural resources have enabled the growth of rural tourism, which complements and diversifies forestry and other primary economic activities. Capulálpam aims to establish itself as a sustainable destination through a circular and solidarity economy that fosters cultural preservation and sustainable production practices. The community governance model is distinctive, preserving culture through a system of “uses and customs.” Efforts are underway to develop rural community ecotourism, promote local investment, strengthen tourism service providers, integrate tourism products, and implement traditional and digital marketing strategies.

Circular economy

Historically, the community has maintained self-sufficiency in food production. The sale of organic products within the community supports local businesses and tourist services, fostering a circular and solidarity economy by incorporating local suppliers and resources to fulfill the needs of tourism. Additionally, tourism allows us to share our barter practices.

Skills development

Form strategic partnerships with the public, private, and academic sectors to enhance the local capacities of tourism service providers. Since 2008, a range of training courses, projects, and targeted programs have been introduced to strengthen and improve the quality of services offered.

Collaborative management

A key feature of the town is its management, utilization, and conservation of natural resources. For over 15 years, the community has engaged in experience-sharing with other communities at the state, national, and international levels. These initiatives serve as a unique tourist attraction and are highlighted to visitors, fostering development and learning while building collaborative relationships.



Mexico

Cuatro Ciénegas de Carranza

Located in the Central Desert region of Coahuila, Mexico, Cuatro Ciénegas spans approximately 10,670 square kilometers and boasts an impressive array of aquatic environments and complex subterranean water systems. Recognized as one of the world's most biodiverse areas, this living laboratory is home to ancient stromatolites, some dating back 3.6 billion years. In 1994, Cuatro Ciénegas was declared a Natural Protected Area and is classified as a vital wetland under the RAMSAR Convention. The area not only supports ecological conservation but also promotes tourism and agriculture, offering visitors a chance to experience its natural and cultural wealth.

Unique Ecotourism Experiences

Cuatro Ciénegas is renowned for its stunning landscapes, including the white sand dunes of the former Tethys Sea. Visitors can indulge in a multisensory Sunset Picnic while sipping wine and enjoying breathtaking views. The area also offers various innovative experiences through Hacienda 1800, such as an astronomy evening, romantic dinners, and adventurous outdoor activities like hiking and safari truck tours.

Ecological Wonders at Las Playitas

Home to exclusive species like the "Cachorrito de Cuatro Ciénegas" and the "Tortuga Trompa de Cochino," Las Playitas is an ecotourism destination where visitors can kayak, explore natural trails, and participate in stargazing nights. A significant aspect of this venture is that 100% of profits support the Cuatro Ciénegas 2040 Plan, contributing to sustainable tourism and conservation efforts.

Educational Journey at Génesis 4C - Museo Vivo

This innovative museum located in the historic center offers a captivating exploration of the universe's history, showcasing its significance in understanding life on Earth. Visitors can interact with bacterial and archaea cultures in a state-of-the-art laboratory while engaging in various workshops designed to educate and inspire about the ecological treasures of Cuatro Ciénegas.



Mexico

Palizada

Palizada is a charming village where time seems to stand still, celebrated for its rich history and stunning natural beauty. Designated a Pueblo Mágico in 2010, Palizada captivates visitors with its vibrant culture, nestled within the Protected Natural Area of Laguna de Términos. This coastal town, once a bustling riverside port, boasts extensive wetlands perfect for ecotourism activities. With its blend of traditional Mayan and Chontalpa culinary influences, unique architecture featuring baroque-style homes, and enchanting riverside promenades, Palizada invites travelers to immerse themselves in its serene atmosphere, vibrant community, and culinary delights.

Ecotourism and Natural Wonders

Palizada is surrounded by a wealth of natural resources, making it an ideal destination for ecotourism. The region's extensive wetlands offer opportunities for birdwatching, kayaking, and exploring diverse ecosystems. Visitors can navigate the tranquil river, engage in sustainable fishing practices, and visit environmental management units dedicated to protecting endemic species, such as freshwater crocodiles and turtles. These experiences allow travelers to connect with the region's biodiversity while promoting conservation efforts.

Culinary Heritage and Unique Flavors

The village's gastronomic offerings are a delightful blend of Mayan and Chontalpa traditions. Visitors can savor local specialties like pejelagarto (a regional fish), traditional chocolate, and unique confections such as fruit-filled meringues. The culinary scene reflects the town's rich cultural heritage, providing an opportunity for food lovers to embark on gastronomic tours that showcase Palizada's distinctive flavors and culinary techniques.

Cultural Festivals and Community Spirit

The annual International Sport Fishing Tournament attracts participants and visitors alike, highlighting Palizada's commitment to sustainable fishing practices. This event not only promotes conservation by implementing strict guidelines but also fosters community engagement and economic growth. Additionally, the town's charming architecture, with its baroque-style houses and vibrant streets, creates an inviting atmosphere for leisurely walks and exploration, encouraging visitors to embrace the warmth of local culture and hospitality.



Panama

El Valle de Antón

Nestled within the caldera of a collapsed volcano, El Valle de Antón is a unique community in the province of Coclé, Panama, with over a century of history. This enchanting valley is home to diverse ecosystems and cultural heritage, making it a hotspot for ecotourism and scientific research. As the birthplace of the Golden Frog, a national symbol, El Valle de Antón is not only rich in biodiversity but also steeped in historical significance, being a crucial site during Panama's resistance against Spanish conquest.

Biodiversity and Conservation

El Valle de Antón is renowned for its ecological richness and is a hub for amphibian conservation. The Centro de Conservación de Anfibios educates visitors about local species, particularly the Golden Frog, while conducting vital research and conservation efforts. The region also hosts festivals aimed at raising awareness for amphibian protection.

Adventure Tourism

With its stunning landscapes, El Valle de Antón offers various outdoor activities, including hiking, mountain biking, and archaeological tours. The newly created Ruta de La Caldera, a 30-kilometer trail connecting several communities, has gained recognition as one of the top adventure tourism spots for 2024, as featured by National Geographic.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

A recently constructed ciclovía (bicycle path) spans 2.2 kilometers along the main road, enhancing accessibility for both locals and visitors. This inclusive space not only supports the primary transportation method for residents but also features ramps for individuals with disabilities and a designated route for the visually impaired, making El Valle de Antón a model for inclusive tourism. El Valle de Antón stands as a testament to the harmonious coexistence of nature, culture, and adventure, inviting visitors to explore its vibrant offerings while promoting sustainability and conservation.



Panama

Portobelo

Nestled in the Province of Colón, Portobelo is a vibrant village steeped in history and culture, home to around 10,320 residents as of the 2023 census. Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1502, this picturesque coastal town has evolved into a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognized for its unique architectural heritage and rich cultural traditions, including the vibrant Congo dance and pirate lore. With its breathtaking Caribbean beaches and expansive natural park spanning over 35,000 hectares, Portobelo embodies a commitment to sustainable tourism, conservation, and community engagement, welcoming travelers who appreciate authentic experiences and local heritage.

Cultural and Historical Significance

Portobelo boasts a rich history, prominently featured in the restoration of the Royal Customs House, now home to the Afro-Panamanian Memory Museum. This historical site showcases three exhibition halls detailing the experiences of enslaved individuals, the town's cultural heritage, and its colonial architecture. The museum is designed for inclusivity, providing braille displays for visually impaired visitors, reflecting Portobelo's dedication to preserving its history while fostering an accessible cultural experience for all.

Sustainable Tourism Initiatives

As part of the Tourism, Conservation, and Research (TCR) strategy, Portobelo emphasizes sustainable development that integrates local communities. Through initiatives led by the Bahía de Portobelo Foundation, children and young people are actively engaged in preserving their cultural identity through dance, art, and music. This community-driven approach not only enhances cultural pride but also fosters a sustainable tourism model that respects local traditions and promotes economic growth.

Marine Conservation and Ecotourism

Portobelo's natural beauty extends to its marine ecosystems, which are being leveraged for sustainable tourism activities like diving and snorkeling. The Reef 2 Reef Restoration Foundation is spearheading projects to restore coral reefs and create an underwater trail, promoting educational and scientific tourism. This innovative approach alleviates tourist pressure on sensitive areas, allowing visitors to explore the stunning coastal landscapes while contributing to marine conservation efforts. Additionally, water taxis provide convenient access to pristine beaches and guided tours through the lush forested areas of the nearby national park, enriching the visitor experience with opportunities to connect with nature.



Peru

Huancaya

Nestled in the Yauyos Province of Lima, the village of Huancaya is a hidden gem known for its breathtaking natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage. As the heart of the Nor Yauyos Cochas Landscape Reserve, Huancaya boasts stunning turquoise lagoons, deep canyons, cascading waterfalls, and ancient Inca ruins. This picturesque village offers visitors an array of eco-tourism activities, including boat rides, kayaking, sport fishing, and canopy adventures, all while immersing themselves in local myths and legends. Key attractions such as Laguna Huallhua and the Cabracancha viewpoint highlight the region's remarkable beauty and biodiversity.

Natural and Cultural Richness

Huancaya is renowned for its extraordinary landscapes, featuring a stunning array of turquoise lagoons, lush valleys, and archaeological remains. Visitors can explore endemic species, native plants, and unique floating cages used for aquaculture. The village's captivating scenery and historical significance make it a perfect destination for nature lovers and history enthusiasts alike. Activities such as eco-tourism, kayaking, and guided tours of ancient ruins provide immersive experiences that connect visitors with the region's vibrant culture and natural beauty.

Community-Based Tourism Strategy

As part of the MINCETUR Community Tourism Strategy, Huancaya is actively promoting sustainable development in the area. Local entrepreneurs have received training to enhance the quality of their tourism services, enabling them to offer authentic experiences rooted in the region's rich cultural and natural heritage. This initiative not only supports economic growth but also fosters a sense of pride and responsibility among residents, ensuring that visitors enjoy a meaningful connection to the local culture while helping to preserve it for future generations.

Recognition as a Charming Village

Currently, Huancaya is in the process of being recognized as a "Pueblo con Encanto" (Charming Village) by MINCETUR. This initiative aims to create a sustainable tourism development model that emphasizes the conservation of heritage while promoting social and economic growth. Through this recognition, Huancaya aspires to attract more visitors, enhancing its appeal as a destination that cherishes and shares its unique cultural and natural resources.



Peru

Leymebamba

Leymebamba, located in the breathtaking headwaters of the Utcubamba River in the Amazonas Region of Peru, is a destination steeped in the rich history and traditions of the ancient Chachapoyas civilization. Known for its stunning landscapes and archaeological wonders, Leymebamba offers a unique blend of cultural heritage, natural beauty, and community-driven tourism experiences that reveal the mysteries of this ancient land.

Cultural Heritage Sites

Leymebamba is home to significant archaeological treasures, including the Laguna de los Cóndores and the Matriz Temple, both of which are recognized as National Cultural Heritage. The Leymebamba Museum serves as a vital institution that preserves and showcases local cultural expressions, offering visitors a deeper understanding of the Chachapoyas civilization..

Community-Based Ecotourism

The village thrives on community-based tourism initiatives that blend adventure and cultural immersion. Visitors can engage in guided tours, horseback riding, and enjoy authentic home-cooked meals, all while learning about traditional crafts and practices from local families. This approach not only enhances the local economy but also fosters a strong sense of community.

Conservation and Sustainable Practices

Leymebamba is committed to environmental preservation, highlighted by the Valle de los Chilchos Private Conservation Area. This region promotes ecotourism and organic coffee production, encouraging locals to adopt sustainable practices that protect biodiversity. Visitors can participate in outdoor activities while experiencing the region's rich flora and fauna, including the endangered Yellow-Tailed Woolly Monkey.



Peru

Pueblo de Maras

Nestled at an elevation of 3,380 meters in the Sacred Valley of Urubamba, Pueblo de Maras, Peru is a captivating village in the Cusco region, approximately 48 kilometers from the city of Cusco. Founded in 1556 by Pedro Ortiz de Orué under the patronage of San Francisco de Asís, Pueblo de Maras, Peru showcases a rich tapestry of natural and cultural attractions, including archaeological sites, colonial architecture, and stunning salt mines. This village has a vibrant tradition of food production and artisan crafts, serving as a hub for community-based tourism that preserves its unique heritage and promotes local identity.

Cultural Heritage and Artisan Craftsmanship

Maras is renowned for its artisanal production, featuring four main crafts: weaving, pottery, stone carving, and salt production. The village plays a significant role in preserving its cultural identity through community-driven initiatives, including theatrical performances in Quechua that narrate local myths and legends. Workshops offer visitors the opportunity to learn traditional crafts, such as corn husk art and the making of traditional hats and Andean instruments, fostering a deeper connection with the local culture.

Sustainable Community Tourism

Maras has emerged as a leading destination for community tourism, integrating local customs and traditions into visitor experiences. This initiative allows travelers to engage with the community through hands-on activities, helping to sustain local traditions while supporting economic development. As a pioneer of community-based tourism in the Cusco region, Maras emphasizes the importance of preserving its cultural heritage, providing an immersive experience that showcases the rural lifestyle and agricultural practices of the area.

Astrotourism and Natural Attractions

Recognized as the first “Starlight Place” by a Spanish foundation, Maras has begun to develop astrotourism as a unique offering. This innovative tourism segment complements traditional community tourism, allowing visitors to explore the Inca worldview through astronomy. Additionally, the village’s famous salt ponds, which are UNESCO World Heritage candidates, attract visitors for their cultural significance and scenic beauty. The salt production process, involving 633 local families, not only sustains the community economically but also enhances the local cuisine, incorporating traditional salt into various dishes enjoyed by residents and tourists alike.



Peru

Quinua

Quinua, located in the province of Huamanga in the Ayacucho region, boasts a rich history that dates back to 550 AD, marked by the presence of the great Wari Empire. Recognized as the “Cradle of American Liberty,” Quinua is celebrated for its pivotal role in the Battle of Ayacucho, which secured Peru’s independence. This picturesque village is characterized by its stunning Andean landscapes, colonial architecture, and vibrant local culture, making it an ideal destination for visitors seeking authentic experiences.

Cultural and Historical Significance

Quinua is steeped in history, highlighted by significant sites such as the Pampas de Ayacucho Historical Sanctuary and the Wari Archaeological Complex. The village is renowned for its traditional pottery, a craft passed down through generations, which has been recognized as a Cultural Heritage of the Nation. Visitors can explore the local history through its cobbled streets and unique ceramic church, experiencing the deep-rooted traditions that define this remarkable community.

Experiential and Community Tourism

Quinua offers immersive living experiences for tourists, allowing them to engage with daily life through workshops in traditional crafts, cooking classes, and guided tours of the Wari complex. This experiential tourism fosters meaningful connections between visitors and locals, enabling travelers to appreciate and understand the cultural wealth of the region. Traditional Andean ceremonies and artisan encounters further enrich the experience, offering insight into the local way of life.

Ecotourism and Adventure Activities

The natural beauty of Quinua is complemented by a range of ecotourism and adventure programs. Visitors can embark on guided hiking routes through the majestic Pampa de la Quinua, the stunning Loro Canyon, and the Usquwillca Forest, all while enjoying panoramic views and opportunities to observe diverse bird species in their natural habitats. Mountain biking trails have also been established, promoting conscious and sustainable tourism that connects adventurers with the breathtaking landscapes of the region.



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Peru

Sibayo

Nestled within the breathtaking depths of the Colca Canyon in Arequipa, Peru, the Pueblo de Sibayo, also known as the “Stone Village,” is a remarkable destination steeped in history and culture. Established in 1776, Sibayo showcases its unique architectural heritage through traditional stone and adobe structures adorned with straw roofs. With its preserved historical layout and vibrant local traditions, Sibayo offers visitors an authentic glimpse into the life of the Andean community. Recognized as one of Peru’s “Pueblos con Encanto,” the village embraces community tourism that fosters economic development while honoring its rich cultural identity.

A Commitment to Sustainable Rural Tourism

Sibayo actively promotes sustainable rural tourism that harmonizes with the daily lives of its residents. The village integrates traditional crafts and cultural practices into its tourism offerings, ensuring respect for its indigenous identity, customs, and traditions. This approach emphasizes the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of tourism, making it a vital part of the community’s growth.

Preserving and Promoting Local Culture

The village prioritizes the promotion of its cultural identity through collaborative actions with various stakeholders, including educational institutions and the private sector. By highlighting traditional customs, artisanal crafts, folklore, cuisine, and unique architecture, Sibayo fosters a deeper appreciation for its rich heritage among visitors, thereby enriching the cultural experience for all.

Engaging Communities in Economic Development

Sibayo is part of the Community Tourism Strategy promoted by MINCETUR, focusing on activities that support sustainable tourism development. This initiative encourages the integration of traditional economic practices with tourism, enhancing the community’s identity and quality of life. The village also actively involves families in tourism activities, ensuring that the benefits of tourism contribute to the community’s overall prosperity.



China

Azheke

Azheke, nestled within the heart of the Honghe Hani Rice Terrace—a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site—boasts a rich historical legacy spanning over 160 years. This village is renowned for its remarkable conservation efforts, exemplified by the harmonious relationship between its natural elements (forest, water system, terraced fields, and village), unique traditional architecture, and the vibrant living culture of the Hani people. Through dedicated efforts, Azheke has become one of five key villages integral to the inscription of the Honghe Hani Rice Terrace, a landscape cultivated by the Hani ethnic group for over 1,300 years.

Community-Driven Tourism Initiatives

Azheke has established a collective enterprise involving local villagers, which emphasizes active participation in tourism development. By creating profit-sharing rules, the community has enhanced living conditions while preserving traditional architecture and farming practices. This initiative not only boosts per capita income but also fosters ethnic pride and a strong sense of community among the villagers, ensuring that they benefit directly from the tourism industry.

Collaboration with Higher Education Institutions

The village actively collaborates with higher education institutions, deploying graduate students to provide technical support in various areas such as skills training, product development, and management. These students also engage with local children through academic guidance and extracurricular activities, enhancing their communication and practical skills. To date, 22 graduate students have spent extended periods in Azheke, contributing significantly to community development and knowledge transfer.

Experiential Tourism and Cultural Heritage Preservation

Azheke has developed experiential tourism offerings designed to preserve and promote the Hani ethnic lifestyle and culture. Initiatives like handicraft workshops not only create employment opportunities for local elders but also ensure the transfer of traditional skills to younger generations. This collaborative process of creating tourism products encourages villagers to reflect on their rich history, fostering a sense of identity while restoring iconic tools and practices, such as water mills. Through these innovative practices, Azheke exemplifies how tourism can be a vehicle for heritage conservation and sustainable community development.



China

Guanyang

Nestled in the western part of Nanjing County, Fujian Province, Guanyang Village is a treasure trove of history and culture, boasting a legacy that spans over 600 years. Renowned for its Hakka heritage, this ancient settlement is home to stunning earthen buildings, known as Tulou, which date back to the Ming Dynasty. With six certifications in Intangible Cultural Heritage, Guanyang Village offers visitors a unique glimpse into the customs and traditions that have shaped the lives of its residents. The village harmoniously blends its rich cultural tapestry with natural beauty, featuring ancient banyan trees and winding streets that invite exploration.

Cultural Heritage and Culinary Delights

Guanyang Village is a custodian of its Hakka roots, celebrated for its six Intangible Cultural Heritage certifications. This recognition underscores the village's commitment to preserving its unique traditions. Visitors can indulge in a variety of local specialty cuisines, which are integral to Hakka culture, offering an authentic taste of the region's history. The rich culinary experiences are complemented by various cultural attractions, including the Earthen Building Cultural and Creative Museum and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition Hall, making the village a hub for cultural enthusiasts.

Innovative Homestay Experiences

In a creative fusion of history and modernity, Guanyang Village is transforming its traditional earthen buildings into charming homestays. This initiative allows tourists to immerse themselves in the unique architectural style of the Tulou while enjoying modern amenities. Guests can experience the historical charm of these structures firsthand, gaining deeper insights into the cultural significance of earthen buildings. This innovative approach not only preserves the village's heritage but also enriches the visitor experience, providing a comfortable and authentic stay.

Night-time Economy and Cultural Activities

The "Night Tour of Yunshuiyao" project offers visitors a captivating evening experience, featuring illuminated nightscapes, cultural performances, and distinctive dining options. Regular events such as food festivals and the Earth Building Light and Shadow Music Show enhance the cultural vibrancy of the village after sunset. This initiative not only boosts the local economy but also fosters a lively atmosphere where visitors can enjoy the cultural richness of Guanyang Village long after the sun goes down.



China

Shibadong

Nestled in the karst landscapes of Huayuan County, Shibadong is an ancient Miao village group with a rich history spanning over 400 years. Situated at an average altitude of 700 meters, this captivating destination comprises four villages—Pear, Bamboo, Flying Insect, and Dangrong—built along the mountainside. Shibadong's architecture harmoniously integrates with its natural surroundings, utilizing locally sourced materials that promote good ventilation and lighting. Renowned for its well-preserved heritage, Shibadong boasts unique intangible cultural treasures, including the Autumn Festival, songs, embroidery, and drumming, making it a must-visit for those seeking an authentic Miao cultural experience.

Agricultural Traditions

Experience the essence of rural life in Shibadong Village by engaging in traditional farming activities. Visitors can participate in essential farming processes such as plowing, sowing, transplanting, harvesting, and picking. This hands-on experience not only provides insight into agricultural practices but also encourages tourists to appreciate and conserve food, deepening their connection to the land.

Miao Heritage Transformed

Shibadong Village showcases the artistry of the Miao people through the commercialization of daily necessities. Visitors can explore a variety of cultural and creative products, including silver jewelry, intricate embroidery, traditional clothing, and batik. These items are transformed into unique tourism commodities, allowing tourists to take home a piece of the village's rich heritage while supporting local artisans.

Ecological Tourism Experiences

The village is dedicated to the protective development of its natural resources, including forests, canyons, streams, and caves. Tourists can indulge in various ecological tourism products, such as canyon tracing, cave exploration, mountain sports, and natural science studies. These activities not only highlight the village's breathtaking landscapes but also promote environmental awareness and conservation efforts.



China

Taoping

Nestled in Lixian County within the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, Taoping Village is a historic Qiang settlement located 139 kilometers from Chengdu City. Home to 1,258 residents, the village boasts a rich heritage dating back to 111 BC with the Taoping Qiang Castle, the most well-preserved ancient Qiang watchtower complex in the world. The villagers engage in agriculture and animal husbandry, cultivating crops like corn and cherries, while also embracing tourism. With its labyrinthine alleys, traditional customs, and vibrant cultural practices, Taoping Village has become a must-visit destination for those seeking to explore Qiang culture.

Living Museum of Qiang Culture

Taoping Qiang Castle spans 40,000 square meters and is home to 462 Qiang people. This living museum showcases 15 ancient buildings and features unique architectural elements, including integrated watchtowers, an intricate underground water system, and a network of 1,960-meter-long alleyways. Visitors can immerse themselves in traditional Qiang life through rituals, weddings, and other ceremonies, making it a living testament to the region's rich cultural heritage.

Promotion of Culinary Tourism

To enhance traditional culinary tourism, Taoping Village has introduced incentives that blend cultural heritage with culinary innovation. This includes crafting promotional materials to highlight local ingredients and a specialized award system to encourage local participation. Rewards such as a 5,000 Yuan prize for declaring a local dish as heritage cuisine and an additional 10,000 Yuan for food series achieving over 200,000 Yuan in annual sales aim to promote sustainable use of local resources and attract visitors.

Engaging Study Tour Initiatives

Local residents are actively developing specialized study tour courses, incorporating Qiang cultural elements and utilizing the region's natural resources. Seven villagers have been trained as guides, leading initiatives to create immersive heritage-based projects. These educational programs not only strengthen the conservation of Qiang culture but also diversify tourism offerings, attracting more visitors and enhancing the quality of study tours.



China

Xiaogang

Nestled in the historic Fengyang County of Anhui Province, Xiaogang Village is a cultural gem with over 2000 years of heritage. Known as a cradle of both traditional and modern innovations, the village is famed for its unique flora, such as metasequoia and ginkgo, and its rare wildlife, including the Eastern Buzzard and Oriental Scops Owl. As the birthplace of rural reform in China, Xiaogang embodies a harmonious blend of ancient heritage and forward-thinking developments, making it a quintessential model of rural tourism and sustainable growth.

A Treasure Trove of Tradition

Xiaogang Village is rich in intangible cultural heritage, from the rhythmic Fengyang Flower Drum to vibrant Fenghua paintings. Visitors can explore its two rural museums and eight handicraft workshops, which offer immersive experiences, including performances and art creation. These cultural attractions ensure Xiaogang's history is celebrated and actively passed on, providing a window into ancient Chinese folk traditions.

The “Digital Xiaogang” Governance Model

At the forefront of technological advancement, Xiaogang Village has pioneered the “Digital Xiaogang” platform, utilizing big data and internet technologies for effective tourism governance. This innovative cloud platform seamlessly integrates tourism management, cultural exhibitions, and community services, enabling efficient, smart tourism that enhances visitor experiences and promotes rural revitalization.

Empowering Locals through Shared Development

Xiaogang's tourism model is built on community involvement, inviting social capital and institutions to co-invest in local tourism services. Through targeted initiatives, residents receive training and support to expand agritourism and homestay businesses, helping them actively participate in the village's tourism growth. This model ensures that tourism's economic benefits are shared across the community, fostering a resilient, inclusive rural economy.



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China

Xitou

Established over 1,400 years ago, Xitou is a tranquil haven nestled within Qianjiangyuan-Baishanzu National Park in Zhejiang, China. Renowned for its pristine ecology, with 92% forest coverage and remarkable air and water quality, Xitou is home to more than 1,270 living species, including the rare black muntjac and giant salamander. The village's dedication to preserving its natural and cultural heritage is exemplified by its traditional firing technique for Longquan celadon, which was recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. This artistry not only symbolizes Chinese cultural heritage but also serves as a centerpiece for the village's eco-tourism initiatives.

Revitalizing Culture Through Innovation in Tourism

Xitou Village has embraced innovative cultural events to drive rural tourism, such as the "Everlasting Kiln Fire," which showcases the traditional firing technology of Longquan celadon. The village also hosts the International Biennial of Bamboo Architecture and the National Village Spring Festival Fair. These activities attract a younger generation and heritage inheritors back to the village, enriching the visitor experience and enhancing local cultural confidence. The vibrant tourism scene has engaged over 70% of villagers in tourism-related activities, with a significant number of women and young entrepreneurs leading the charge.

Fostering Collaboration for Community Growth

To ensure the benefits of tourism development reach every villager, Xitou has established the Alliance for Rural Tourism Development. This collaborative initiative invites all community members to participate, fostering shared resources and localized tourism programs with 22 neighboring villages. Since the alliance's inception, Xitou and its partners have welcomed over 200,000 visitors annually, significantly contributing to regional tourism growth and the vitality of rural communities.

Harmonizing Development and Conservation

Xitou is deeply committed to environmental protection, integrating flora and fauna conservation and resource management into local regulations. The community has created a low-carbon educational showroom to promote sustainable lifestyles and established low-carbon point redemption centers to encourage eco-friendly practices. Regular ecological inspections ensure that tourism development aligns with the preservation of the village's natural environment, creating a harmonious coexistence between the local community and nature.



China

Yandunjiao

Nestled at the eastern tip of the Shandong Peninsula in Rongcheng City, Yandunjiao has a rich history spanning over 640 years. This unique locale, surrounded by mountains and the sea, has fostered a vibrant fishing culture deeply intertwined with respect for nature. The village is particularly famous for its traditional “seaweed houses,” characterized by stone walls and roofs made of seaweed, showcasing the exceptional craftsmanship passed down through generations. These structures serve as a tangible link between Yandunjiao’s past and present, reflecting the community’s enduring connection to maritime life.

Revitalizing Cultural Heritage Through Art and Innovation

Yandunjiao is committed to preserving its cultural heritage by building a cultural and artistic center and promoting the protection of its ancient dwellings. The village is expanding its research bases and fostering a creative industry that invites domestic and international art institutions to engage with the community. This initiative includes developing leisure tourism experiences centered around fishing traditions, seaweed coffee, and local cuisine, creating a unique blend of tradition and modernity that attracts tourists while enhancing community identity.

Infrastructure Improvements for Sustainable Living

The village has seen significant improvements in living conditions through the renovation of essential infrastructure such as sewage systems, potable water, toilets, and roads. Additionally, Yandunjiao is exploring low-carbon aquaculture models for marine ranches to boost output efficiency while minimizing carbon emissions. These upgrades not only enhance the environment but also support sustainable practices that align with the village’s commitment to ecological balance.

Digital Transformation in Rural Development

To empower its rural construction, Yandunjiao has focused on enhancing broadband and mobile communication networks, ensuring comprehensive network coverage and information exchange. The village has utilized big data technology to modernize its industries, culminating in the creation of smart tourism service platforms. These platforms streamline marketing and management, offering tourists one-stop services that enhance their experience and promote local attractions.



Indonesia

Jatiluwih

Perched at approximately 685 meters above sea level in the Penebel District of Tabanan Regency, Jatiluwih Tourism Village is a breathtaking destination on the slopes of Batukaru Mountain, celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes. Recognized by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage site on June 29, 2012, Jatiluwih is home to the Subak irrigation system, a traditional practice that dates back to the 11th century. This system, grounded in the Tri Hita Karana philosophy of Hinduism, emphasizes the balance between humans, nature, and spirituality, showcasing the community's commitment to sustainable agricultural practices.

Community-Based Ecotourism

Jatiluwih's ecotourism initiatives empower local communities by involving them in the management of tourism activities. Visitors have the opportunity to engage in traditional farming practices and learn about the significance of the Subak irrigation system, fostering a deeper appreciation for local culture and sustainability. This approach not only enriches the tourist experience but also ensures the preservation of the Subak tradition for future generations.

Cultural Heritage Living Museum (CHLM)

As the heart of the Subak culture, Jatiluwih Village is being developed into a 'Cultural Heritage Living Museum.' This initiative aims to create an interactive platform for visitors to experience and learn about local customs, agricultural practices, and traditional rituals. By immersing tourists in the living culture of Jatiluwih, this museum concept strengthens the village's cultural identity and promotes the preservation of its heritage.

Agritourism Initiatives

Committed to sustainable tourism development, Jatiluwih integrates agritourism into its growth strategy. This program features educational tours and hands-on activities in the rice fields, along with culinary experiences that highlight local produce. By promoting sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing the livelihoods of local communities, Jatiluwih ensures that its natural and cultural resources are preserved for future visitors. Jatiluwih Tourism Village stands as a testament to the harmonious relationship between cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. With its stunning terraced rice fields and rich traditions, it offers a unique travel experience that connects visitors to Bali's vibrant cultural landscape.



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Indonesia

Wukirsari

Just a short 17 kilometers south of Yogyakarta, Wukirsari Tourism Village is a serene destination set against a backdrop of hills and valleys. Known for its batik-making heritage, Wukirsari has transformed from a village of batik laborers to an innovative tourism community, renowned for blending cultural heritage with sustainable practices. Honored with multiple national awards, including first place in the Advanced Tourism Village category at the ADWI awards, Wukirsari embodies a forward-thinking approach to community-driven tourism. The village preserves its traditional arts while prioritizing eco-conscious and inclusive practices that empower both locals and visitors.

Experience a Living Legacy in Giriloyo Batik Village

Wukirsari's famed Batik Tulis (hand-drawn batik) traces back to the Islamic Mataram Kingdom. Sultan Agung Hanyokrokusumo commissioned the Mataram Kings' Mausoleum on Merak Hill in 1634, inspiring artisans to develop this intricate art form. Visitors can immerse themselves in hands-on batik workshops in Giriloyo Batik Village, gaining a deeper appreciation of this UNESCO-recognized craft, which has been preserved across generations.

A Zero-Waste Movement

Wukirsari has become a model for sustainable tourism with its "Becik Resik Karangkulon" initiative, which promotes waste management and zero-plastic policies. Local markets like Sor Jati and Jolontoro showcase traditional values by using leaves and natural wrappers, avoiding plastic. The village also emphasizes water conservation and biodiversity protection to maintain its beautiful natural environment. This commitment has solidified Wukirsari as a certified Sustainable Tourism Village by the Indonesia Sustainable Tourism Council (ISTC).

Operational Excellence with a Personal Touch

Wukirsari sets high service standards through a quality management system based on ISO 9001:2015 guidelines, ensuring that visitors receive top-tier hospitality while experiencing local culture. Every aspect of tourism operations follows detailed procedures to provide an organized, welcoming, and memorable stay. This structure allows the village to combine authentic cultural hospitality with reliable quality, ensuring each visitor leaves with a meaningful experience and a deep connection to Wukirsari's charm and history.



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Islamic Republic of Iran

Esfahak

Esfahak is a remarkable desert village located in Tabas County, South Khorasan Province, northeastern Iran, characterized by its 1,000-year-old clay architecture. Following the devastating earthquake in 1978, which severely damaged the village and discouraged its residents, a transformative journey began. In 2008, a group of young villagers collaborated with research institutions to restore Esfahak, leading to its recognition as a national tourist destination. The village's recovery became a model for communities affected by natural disasters, showcasing how tourism can be leveraged for economic and social benefits.

Revitalization of Heritage

The earthquake of 1978 destroyed much of Esfahak, but after decades, descendants of the victims began revitalizing their ancestors' homes into rural residences. They established a clay workshop, applying principles of sustainable architecture to preserve their cultural heritage. This effort earned Esfahak the Asian Architecture Award in 2017, solidifying its status as a notable tourist destination.

Hope Tours and Community Development

In an inspiring move, the youth of Esfahak initiated Hope Tours to promote resilience and hope among earthquake-affected communities across Iran. By forming cooperatives and focusing on tourism, they transformed the village into a hub for scientific research, including a seismological center capable of predicting natural hazards. Their dedication led to the village winning the TO DO Award in Germany in 2020, recognizing their innovative approach to recovery and community empowerment.

Astronomy Tourism

Esfahak boasts a pristine dark sky, making it an ideal location for astronomy tourism. The village management, under the guidance of its youth, implemented regulations to minimize light pollution, enhancing the stargazing experience. They established an observatory, positioning Esfahak as a pioneer in the Dark Sky Project and attracting visitors interested in astronomical tours. Esfahak exemplifies resilience and innovation, transforming adversity into opportunity while preserving its rich cultural heritage and embracing sustainable tourism. This desert village not only serves as a beacon of hope for earthquake-affected communities but also enriches the experience of visitors drawn to its unique offerings.



Japan

Amagi

Amagi is nestled in the northwest of Tokunoshima, one of the remote islands in Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan. Known for its stunning natural landscapes, rich biodiversity, and traditional culture, Amagi offers a unique experience that harmonizes outdoor adventure with local heritage. The village is surrounded by a mountain range and features a subtropical climate, making it an ideal spot for agriculture and tourism alike. It has recently gained recognition for its commitment to sustainability and conservation, attracting visitors interested in both nature and culture.

World Natural Heritage Status

Amagi Village is part of the Tokunoshima World Natural Heritage Site, designated in July 2021. This designation highlights the village's remarkable biodiversity, which includes endemic species like the Amami rabbit. The lush subtropical rainforest and the unique ecosystem provide a vital habitat for various flora and fauna, making conservation efforts a priority for the community.

Cultural and Agricultural Heritage

The village boasts a rich agricultural tradition, characterized by sustainable practices that include mixed farming with sugarcane, livestock, and various crops. These practices reflect the local community's deep connection to the land and its resources. By preserving traditional farming methods, Amagi Village not only supports its economy but also enhances its cultural identity, allowing visitors to experience authentic local customs.

Sports Tourism Hub

Amagi Village is well-known for hosting the annual "Triathlon in Tokunoshima," a prestigious middle-distance race that attracts athletes from across Japan. This event showcases the village's beautiful landscapes and warm climate, making it a prime location for sports training camps. The influx of athletes and tourists contributes to the local economy and promotes a healthy, active lifestyle within the community.



Japan

Nishikawa

Nishikawa, a charming town nestled within the Bandai-Asahi National Park, is renowned for its breathtaking natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Dominated by the sacred Mt. Gassan, which, alongside Mt. Yudono and Mt. Haguro, has been considered a divine abode since the late 16th century, Nishikawa has long served as a pilgrimage destination. The town is blanketed by more than six meters of snow each winter, creating an idyllic setting for a unique mountain cuisine that features local vegetables and mushrooms. As the seasons change, so too do the activities available, from thrilling summer skiing to immersive cultural experiences that highlight the historical significance of the area. Nishikawa is actively pursuing sustainable tourism initiatives and renewable energy projects to enhance the local economy and foster a deeper connection between visitors and the town's friendly residents.

Rich Cultural and Historical Significance

The Three Mountains of Gassan, Yudono, and Haguro are not just scenic landmarks; they are deeply entrenched in the local culture and spirituality of Nishikawa. This historical significance has allowed the town to thrive as a resting point for pilgrims over the centuries. Visitors can explore the cultural narratives of the area through various programs, immersing themselves in the traditions and practices that have flourished around these sacred peaks.

Innovative Snow Tourism and Gastronomy

Nishikawa's unique snow conditions—boasting snow depths of over six meters for up to nine months—make it an exceptional destination for winter tourism. Activities such as summer skiing and the innovative Snow Inn experience offer visitors distinct ways to enjoy the winter landscape. Additionally, the town is capitalizing on its culinary heritage with initiatives like ONSEN Gastronomy Tourism, which highlights local ingredients and traditional cooking methods.

Sustainable Development and Community Engagement

Nishikawa is actively pursuing a comprehensive Tourism Action Plan aimed at achieving 1,000,000 annual visitors and 30,000 event attendees by 2030. This plan emphasizes community involvement, fostering connections between tourists and locals to create memorable experiences. The town is also transitioning to renewable energy, with plans for a wood biomass power plant to support local agriculture, particularly mushroom cultivation. Recognized as a "Biomass Industrial City," Nishikawa's commitment to environmental sustainability is woven into its tourism strategy, encouraging collaboration among government, businesses, and the community to promote inclusive tourism initiatives.



Thailand

Bo Suak

Bo Suak village is a tranquil area located just 15 minutes from Nan City in Northern Thailand, where ancestral wisdom is preserved and shared across generations. The artistic heritage of the locals has been revitalized through the discovery of ancient kilns, leading to the creation of a museum that showcases the pottery unearthed during excavations. This museum also highlights the lifestyle of the Bo Suak people and emphasizes the strong community bonds among its members. Bo Suak is recognized for its historical significance, particularly its 750-year-old ancient kiln, and boasts a variety of historical artifacts beyond just the kiln and pottery. Among these is the Huan Bansuak Saen-Chuen Museum, which houses relics and ancient utensils found at the site, as well as items from local temples. Pottery and weaving are key components of the community's cultural identity, noted for their unique craftsmanship and distinctive weaving patterns prevalent in Nan Province. Additionally, the community practices organic farming and embraces the principles of sufficient economy. It also features a rich array of historical beliefs and practices, including Thai blessing ceremonies and spiritual bamboo weaving intended to ward off negative influences and spirits.

Community-based Tourism

The Community Benefiting through Tourism (CBTT) program aims to establish sustainable connections between community-based tourism and local communities by leveraging existing local resources, including residents, raw materials, vegetables, and local products. This approach maximizes tourism benefits and ensures a fair distribution of income throughout the community. By sourcing raw materials from within the community rather than from supermarkets or external suppliers, local businesses can thrive.

Bosuak Cultural Festival

This initiative seeks to foster awareness among community members and outsiders regarding the value of local resources, promoting pride, appreciation, and wisdom within the community. An annual event known as the "Kong Dee Bo Suak Festival" showcases local culture through competitions that highlight traditional knowledge. This festival not only preserves local wisdom but also facilitates knowledge sharing between neighbouring communities.

Women Empowerment

The Nan-Ner-Jaow Brand is dedicated to enhancing career opportunities and increasing income for women's groups in Bo Suak village. Established by local housewives passionate about weaving, this brand aims to preserve traditional weaving techniques while developing unique designs and marketing handwoven products. This initiative generates income for local women, enabling them to enhance their skills and knowledge, thus contributing to the preservation of art and culture. It aligns with the long-term goals of sustainable development (SDGs).



Viet Nam

Trà Que Vegetable Village

Trà Que Vegetable Village, located just 3 km north of Hoi An Ancient Town in Vietnam, is a remarkable destination steeped in agricultural tradition and cultural heritage. Established over 500 years ago, this village evolved from a fishing community to a thriving agricultural hub known for its unique, high-quality vegetables. Surrounded by the Co Cò River and Trà Que Lagoon, it boasts 202 households cultivating 55 different vegetable varieties across 18 hectares, producing around 800 tons of vegetables annually that meet Vietgap standards..

Preserving Tradition: A Cultural Heritage Recognized

In April 2022, Trà Que was officially recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage by Vietnam's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. This accolade underscores the village's commitment to traditional farming methods, which include using only seaweed from Trà Que Lagoon and organic fertilizers, while strictly avoiding mechanization and chemical pesticides.

Empowering the Community Tourism

Community tourism activities in Trà Que have become a vital source of income for the local population. With 326 workers directly involved in vegetable cultivation and tourism services, initiatives like farm visits, cooking classes, and homestays have created jobs and boosted incomes. Infrastructure improvements and the preservation of traditional festivals not only enhance the village's appeal but also elevate the quality of life for residents, promoting a sustainable and vibrant community.

Cultivating a Greener Future

Trà Que is committed to sustainable tourism that emphasizes environmental protection and green consumption trends. The village's organic vegetable products cater to health-conscious consumers, particularly tourists seeking safe and nutritious options. Collaborating with the Swiss Tourism for Sustainable Development Project (ST4SD), Trà Que is implementing initiatives to alleviate overcrowding at popular attractions while providing visitors with unique, sustainable experiences. Furthermore, QR-code technology is being utilized to offer tourists detailed information about the village's history, culture, and attractions, enhancing their overall experience and supporting digital transformation in tourism.



**BEST
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Austria

St. Johann in Tirol

Nestled at an altitude of 659 meters in the stunning Kitzbühel Alps, St. Johann in Tirol is a vibrant market town covering 59.16 km². With a rich history dating back to the 6th and 7th centuries, when Bavarians first settled the valley, St. Johann has developed into a community of 9,885 residents. The town is named after the church dedicated to St. John the Baptist, built by missionaries in the 8th century. Today, it offers an array of year-round activities, from winter sports on perfectly groomed pistes to summer hiking and mountain biking. Known for its unique natural beauty, cultural heritage, and engaging community events, St. Johann embodies the spirit of Tyrolean hospitality.

Strengthening the Regional Economy through Tourism

Tourism in St. Johann is pivotal in creating jobs and supporting local businesses. The town promotes a lively and sustainable economic structure, particularly in the town center, which features a variety of shops offering personalized service to both residents and visitors. This economic boost is essential for the development of the rural economy.

Innovative Digital Traffic Guidance System

To enhance mobility for locals and tourists, St. Johann has implemented a cutting-edge digital traffic guidance system. Utilizing GPS technology, the system optimizes traffic flow and provides real-time information about traffic conditions. Initial installations include AI-integrated cameras at strategic locations, which feed data into a dynamic parking guidance system and a mobility dashboard accessible to all road users.

“Space” Co-Working Initiative

St. Johann introduces the “Space” co-working concept, providing locals and visitors with a modern and inspiring workplace. This facility features state-of-the-art communication equipment, fast internet, and a variety of workspaces, including fixed stations and meeting rooms. Located in the town center, it enables guests to balance work and leisure seamlessly while enjoying an extended holiday.



Cyprus

Kalopanagiotis

Kalopanayiotis is situated at an elevation of 700 meters in the lush Marathasa valley, on the steep banks of the Setrachos River that flows through the area. Marathasa, part of the Troodos UNESCO Geopark, is home to fourteen picturesque villages in a remote and sparsely populated mountainous region, featuring a diverse ecosystem of forests, springs, and natural vegetation interspersed with small agricultural plots of deciduous trees and vineyards. This charming village boasts traditional architecture, narrow cobblestone streets, and stunning views of the river and tranquil valley landscape. With mild winters and cool summers, it offers year-round opportunities for tourism focused on nature, culture, and tradition.

Team Building Package

The village's main resort is leveraging the serene natural surroundings of the valley to provide an ideal environment for business team-building activities. This tourist package includes wine tasting, culinary workshops, and nature trail walks, creating the perfect backdrop to foster an entrepreneurial spirit during team-building exercises.

Interactive Experiences with Traditional Food and Wine Tasting

The village offers immersive activities that include hands-on experiences in making traditional halloumi cheese, a full-day workshop on producing grape must products, an educational tour focused on beekeeping and honey extraction, wine tasting, and walks through high-altitude vineyards. The village's traditional character merges with the authentic gastronomy of Cyprus, providing visitors with both interactive learning experiences and opportunities to savour and enjoy the island's culinary delights.

Therapeutic Sulphur Springs

The therapeutic springs of Kalopanayiotis have been recognized since ancient times. This region was once part of the ancient Kingdom of Soli, where kings frequented the area as a wellness retreat during their hunting excursions. Today, this heritage is complemented by luxurious spa treatments, offering relaxation and revitalization experiences along with stunning panoramic views of the lush valley.



Cyprus

Pissouri

The village showcases specialized tourism products such as cycling and hiking routes, religious sites, water sports, diving, conference tourism, horseback riding, bird watching, and stargazing. Highlight local culture through products like halloumi, soultanina, and wine, alongside local arts workshops, traditional cuisine, rural activities, and cultural events. Promote tourism as a catalyst for economic growth while empowering women and youth to create local products, preserve local arts, and enhance environmental sustainability.

Green initiative

The community received the Green Community Award and was recognized as the “Cyprus Green Capital 2020-2021,” earning the Golden Mufion Award for developing thematic routes, including nature trails, cycling paths, mountain biking trails, cultural routes, and sea kayaking routes, all accessible via Google Maps. These initiatives prioritize environmental respect by minimizing interventions and offering digital tools for visitors to explore the area.

Soultanina Route

Visitors can explore various vineyard cultivation practices within the community and discover the differences between traditional and modern methods. The only boutique winery in the area, G. Theophanous Winery (Ktima Theophanous Ltd), offers guided tours to showcase the practical aspects of seasonal activities. Guests also have the chance to observe and engage in the grape harvesting and vinification process while learning about the history of the Sultanina grape in Pissouri and the art of winemaking.

House of Halloumi

The Pissouri Council, in collaboration with tourism authorities, plans to establish an Interactive Museum dedicated to promoting Halloumi cheese and dairy products from the region, as part of the Heartland of Legends Milky Way initiative. Additionally, the Council will work with neighboring villages to highlight the heritage and culture of Halloumi as a National Product, in accordance with PDA legislation.



Greece

Anogeia

Nestled on the slopes of Mt. Psiloritis, Anogeia, meaning “Highlands” in Greek, is a village steeped in myth and history. Known for its unique culture and the resilience of its inhabitants, Anogeia is a significant location on Crete. This rugged mountain terrain is not only the birthplace of ancient legends but also hosts Zominthos, a key Minoan archaeological site. Visitors to Anogeia can immerse themselves in the local traditions, enjoy the vibrant music scene, and savor the delicious local cuisine, all while surrounded by stunning natural beauty.

Ecotourism Adventures with Nature Guides

Anogeia is actively training residents as certified nature guides, who will lead visitors through the breathtaking landscapes of the Psiloritis UNESCO Global Geopark. This initiative emphasizes responsible ecotourism, minimizing environmental impact while educating visitors about the unique ecosystems found in the area. The hiking trails are well-maintained and cater to all skill levels, providing a fantastic opportunity for families and experienced hikers alike to explore the natural wonders of Anogeia.

Interactive Living History

Just outside Anogeia, visitors can experience traditional livestock farming at the open-air museum known as “Shepherd’s Land.” This immersive experience allows guests to engage with the daily lives of Anogeian shepherds, learn about traditional cheese-making techniques, and participate in various music and dance events. This living history museum provides a unique insight into the customs and traditions that shape the identity of Anogeia.

Educational Centre of Astronomy & Astrophysics

Perched at an altitude of 1,750 meters on Skinakas Peak, the Skinakas Observatory serves as a hub for astronomy enthusiasts. Home to three telescopes, including one shared with the University of Crete, the observatory is open to visitors during the summer months, allowing them to explore the wonders of the cosmos. A new “School of Stars” is being established at the summit, which will feature additional educational facilities, making it a perfect destination for those interested in astronomy and astrophysics.



Italy

San Casciano dei Bagni

San Casciano dei Bagni (SCDB), a charming municipality of around 1,600 residents, thrives on its rich thermal and historical heritage, positioning itself as a premier wellness destination in Europe. Renowned for its therapeutic thermal waters and significant archaeological discoveries, SCDB offers a unique blend of rural tourism and cultural experiences. Visitors seeking tranquility and authenticity are drawn to this hidden gem, where sustainability and community integration play pivotal roles in enhancing the tourism experience.

Archaeological Marvels at Santuario Ritrovato

SCDB has gained international attention for its impressive archaeological site, Santuario Ritrovato, where the discovery of 24 beautifully preserved bronze statues has captured the public's imagination. These findings, dating from the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD, will soon be showcased in a National Museum, supported by significant funding from the Italian Ministry of Culture. This museum promises to elevate SCDB's status as a cultural destination, attracting visitors intrigued by its historical significance.

Innovative Cultural Events

The village hosts La Terrazza, a unique cultural event where renowned personalities engage with visitors and locals through a series of thought-provoking talks. Past speakers have included influential figures such as Romano Prodi and Massimo Osanna, enriching the community's cultural landscape and fostering connections between tourists and residents. This initiative not only highlights SCDB's commitment to cultural exchange but also enhances the village's appeal as a destination for intellectually curious travelers.

Sustainable Rural Bike Sharing Project

SCDB is one of ten municipalities participating in a pioneering Rural Bike Sharing Project, promoting sustainable tourism in the Valdichiana and Val d'Orcia regions. By offering e-bikes and traditional bicycles for rent, the project encourages visitors to explore the stunning countryside while minimizing their environmental impact. This initiative aligns with the municipality's goal of fostering responsible tourism and enhancing accessibility to the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage.



**BEST
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Portugal

Óbidos

Nestled just 80 kilometers north of Lisbon, Óbidos is a captivating medieval village that enchants visitors with its well-preserved cultural heritage and stunning natural scenery. Encircled by formidable high walls, Óbidos boasts an impressive castle that stands as a testament to its historical significance, offering panoramic views of the picturesque whitewashed buildings and winding cobblestone streets below. The village's artistic legacy is evident in its Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque architecture, which reflects centuries of rich history. With a vibrant cultural scene bolstered by a diverse array of events and festivals, Óbidos has positioned itself as a prime destination for those seeking both adventure and a glimpse into Portugal's past.

A Living Museum of History and Architecture

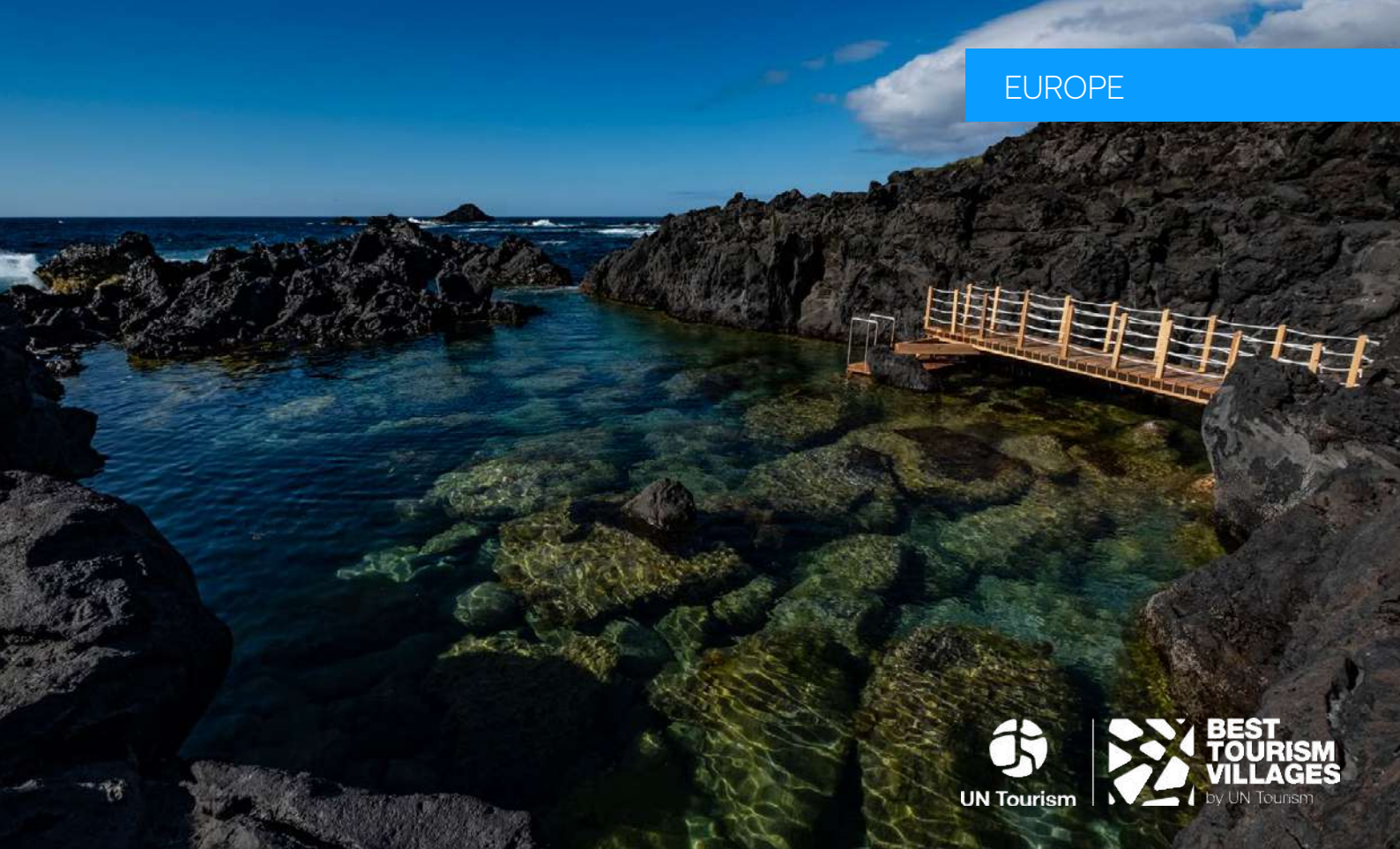
Óbidos is often described as an open-air museum, where every corner reveals a piece of its storied past. The castle, with its thick, imposing walls, serves as a reminder of the village's defensive origins and provides a breathtaking backdrop to the enchanting narrow streets lined with traditional whitewashed houses. Visitors can explore an array of architectural styles, from Gothic to Baroque, which tell the tale of Óbidos' evolution through the ages. This blend of history and artistry makes a stroll through the village a unique journey back in time, where the charm of medieval life is still palpable.

Vibrant Festivals Celebrating Culture and Community

The Municipality of Óbidos is dedicated to showcasing its cultural assets through a lively calendar of events that draw both locals and tourists alike. Signature celebrations such as the Chocolate Festival, Medieval Market, International Literature Festival, and Óbidos Christmas Town transform the village into a festive hub, enriching the visitor experience with local traditions, flavors, and creativity.

Adventure and Scenic Beauty

Beyond its historical allure, Óbidos offers a wealth of outdoor activities for adventure seekers. Visitors can engage in cultural experiences, embark on outdoor adventures, or enjoy a round of golf while taking in the breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean and the nearby Lagoon of Óbidos, one of the largest in Europe. The combination of natural beauty and recreational opportunities makes Óbidos an ideal destination for travelers looking to immerse themselves in both culture and the great outdoors, creating lasting memories against the backdrop of stunning landscapes.



Portugal

Santa Cruz da Graciosa

Perched on the northeast coast of Graciosa Island, Santa Cruz da Graciosa is a historic town that embodies the rich heritage of the Azores. Established in the 15th century, it boasts stunning panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean and a cultural landscape deeply rooted in Portuguese colonization. The town features traditional architecture, including the impressive Church of Santa Cruz and the Solar da Graciosa, alongside the informative Graciosa Museum, which highlights the island's local history and vibrant culture. With a local economy primarily centered around agriculture and fishing, Santa Cruz da Graciosa is renowned for its exceptional Graciosa cheese and Verdelho wine. Visitors can immerse themselves in the island's natural beauty through diverse outdoor activities, cultural celebrations, and culinary experiences that reflect the region's unique traditions.

Cultural Heritage: A Tapestry of Traditions

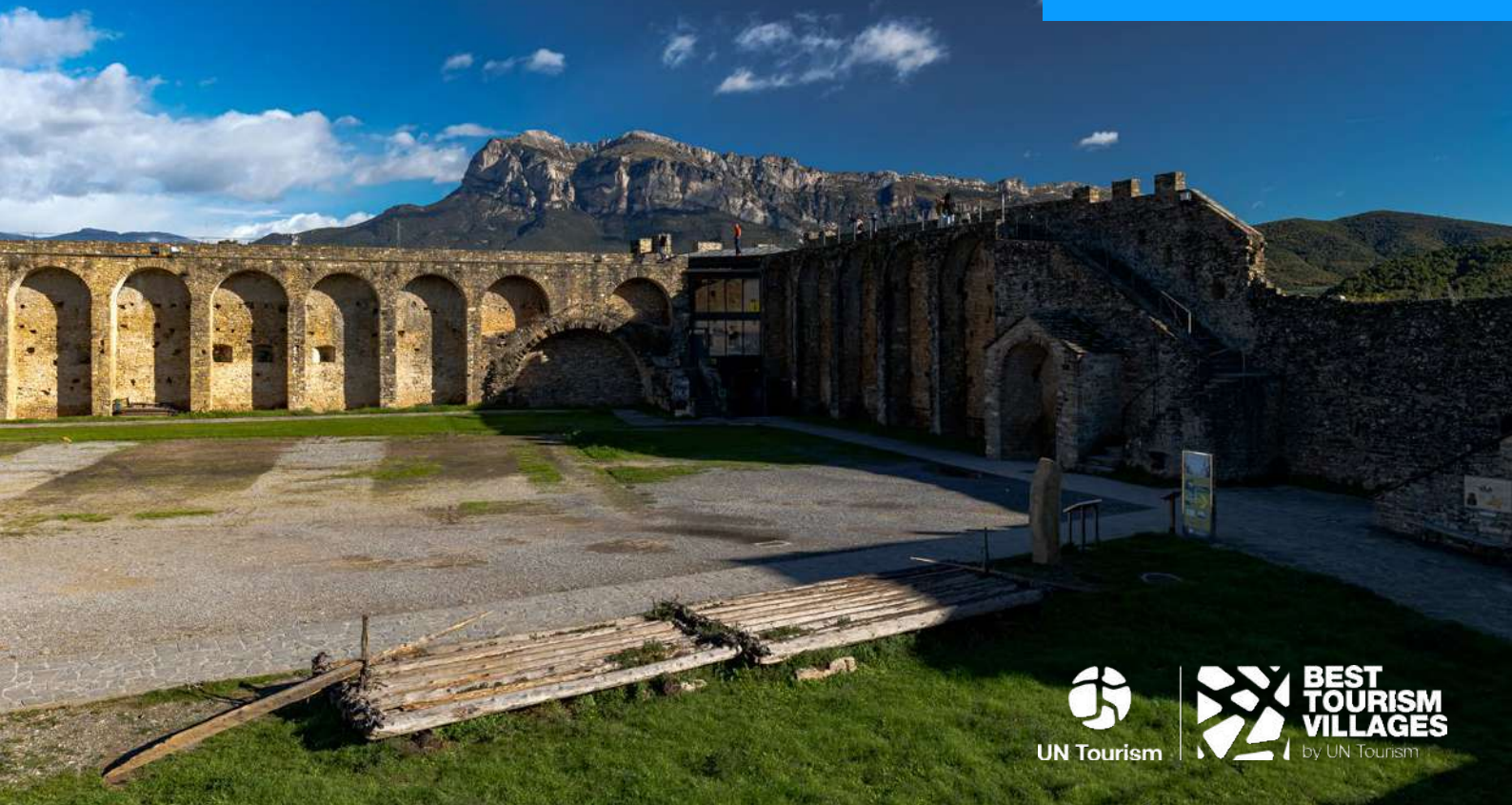
Santa Cruz da Graciosa is a living testament to the Azores' cultural richness. The town hosts a variety of cultural and gastronomic festivals throughout the year, allowing visitors to experience local traditions and flavors firsthand. With its historic architecture and vibrant community events, visitors can delve into the unique heritage that shapes the identity of the island.

Natural Wonders: Exploring the Great Outdoors

For outdoor enthusiasts, Santa Cruz da Graciosa offers an array of activities to enjoy the island's stunning landscapes. Boat trips along the rugged coastline provide breathtaking views of the Atlantic, while opportunities for diving reveal the underwater beauty of the Azorean marine life. Hiking trails lead through lush vegetation and rolling hills, offering scenic views and a chance to observe the island's diverse birdlife. The blend of adventure and natural beauty makes Santa Cruz da Graciosa a perfect destination for those seeking both relaxation and exploration.

Sustainable Tourism: Balancing Economy and Environment

Santa Cruz da Graciosa is committed to advancing tourism as a driver for rural development, focusing on three main objectives: economic sustainability, environmental conservation, and cultural promotion. The local economy benefits from tourism-related activities, providing revenue and employment opportunities for residents. Environmental initiatives are in place to protect the island's natural resources while promoting sustainable practices. Furthermore, efforts to showcase the unique heritage and cultural identity of the region encourage visitors to appreciate and engage with the local community, fostering a sense of respect and connection to the land.



Spain

Aínsa

Nestled in the picturesque Sobrarbe region of Huesca, Aínsa is a captivating village with a rich natural and cultural heritage, cherished by its residents. Home to around 2,297 people spread across 22 municipalities, Aínsa is defined by its historic charm, surrounded by the scenic Ara and Cinca river valleys. The village, enclosed within medieval walls, is a treasure trove of Romanesque architecture, offering delightful surprises at every corner. Known for its stunning natural beauty, Aínsa boasts access to the Río Vero Cultural Park and the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park, drawing in nature lovers from around the world.

Evolving Ecomuseum

Originally conceived in Aínsa a decade ago, Zona Zero Pirineos is a pioneering mountain biking network designed to promote sustainable tourism. This initiative has set an example across the Sobrarbe region, focusing on environmental preservation, job creation, and expanding the area's tourism offerings. Recently honored with the Social Merit Medal by the Government of Aragón, Zona Zero Pirineos continues to attract eco-conscious visitors and adventure seekers.

Birdwatching

Aínsa is renowned for its unique bird-watching experience, especially at its vulture feeder, where visitors can witness majestic birds like griffon vultures, Egyptian vultures, and bearded vultures in their natural habitat. This ecological site allows tourists to observe and admire these remarkable species, enriching the area's biodiversity while fostering appreciation for avian wildlife.

Expanding Coscojuela de Sobrarbe Aerodrome

Located in the scenic Coscojuela de Sobrarbe municipality, Aínsa's aerodrome has grown by 30%, thanks to internal agreements and municipal support. As one of the world's most beautiful areas, the aerodrome's expansion aims to enhance tourism facilities, offering travelers an exceptional entry point to explore the cultural and natural beauty of Aínsa and the greater Sobrarbe region.



Spain

Mura

Mura, a picturesque municipality in the Bages region of Barcelona, sits at an altitude of 454 meters and encompasses a diverse landscape of 47.8 square kilometers, with 89% of its area designated as part of the stunning Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac Natural Park. This beautiful village is not only a gateway to breathtaking natural scenery, including mountains, forests, and serene water bodies, but it also boasts a rich historical tapestry. Mura's past is deeply intertwined with viticulture, showcased by its unique stone lagares (wine presses) that reflect its winemaking heritage. Recognized for its commitment to sustainable tourism and cultural preservation, Mura is a haven for nature lovers and history enthusiasts alike, offering a blend of outdoor activities and cultural experiences.

Natural Wonders and Outdoor Activities

Mura is surrounded by an incredible array of natural attractions, including lush landscapes, dramatic cliffs, and tranquil pools. The municipality offers a variety of trails and paths that enable visitors to explore the rich biodiversity of the area. Hiking enthusiasts can immerse themselves in the scenic beauty of the region, with routes that cater to different skill levels, allowing everyone to enjoy the serene atmosphere and panoramic views that Mura has to offer.

Cultural Heritage and Historical Significance

The charm of Mura extends beyond its natural beauty; it is steeped in history, featuring a historic center characterized by narrow streets, quaint squares, and charming passageways. The remnants of its vinicultural past are evident in the unique tines, traditional stone structures used in winemaking, which can be found amidst the vineyards. Mura's dedication to preserving its cultural heritage is reflected in its participation in various sustainability initiatives, showcasing its commitment to maintaining the authenticity of its historical landscape.

Innovative Tourism Initiatives

Mura is actively enhancing its tourism offerings through innovative projects aimed at sustainability and visitor engagement. The introduction of the "Mura Running Trail" caters to runners of all levels, featuring specially designed routes that highlight the area's stunning scenery. Additionally, the implementation of a smart parking sensor system improves visitor experience by providing real-time information about parking availability, which helps manage tourist flow and minimizes environmental impact. Furthermore, the restoration of traditional dry stone constructions by local associations demonstrates Mura's dedication to preserving its unique architectural heritage while promoting eco-friendly tourism practices.



Switzerland

Romoos

Nestled within the breathtaking UNESCO Biosphere Entlebuch, the charming vacation village of Romoos embodies the essence of sustainable and decentralized tourism. Renowned for its striking Napf mountain landscape, Romoos celebrates its rich natural heritage and local culture, showcasing the proud traditions of its residents through various sustainable practices. This idyllic destination not only offers visitors a unique experience but also serves as a model for integrating environmental stewardship with community-driven tourism development.

Sustainable Development Initiatives

Romoos stands out as an exemplary village for sustainable tourism, supported by the UNESCO Biosphere Entlebuch. With projects focused on biodiversity, education, and sustainable mobility, the village actively engages local communities and tourism organizations in promoting eco-friendly practices. This holistic approach fosters a sense of identity and pride among residents while providing visitors with an authentic experience in harmony with nature.

Community Involvement in Tourism

The local population plays a crucial role in the development of Romoos as a tourist destination. By prioritizing the needs and input of residents, the village enhances its tourism offerings while preserving cultural heritage. Initiatives such as the renovation of the historic Hotel Kreuz, funded through community-driven campaigns, exemplify how locals collaborate to support tourism and improve their quality of life, thereby enriching the visitor experience.

Innovative Eco-Friendly Infrastructure

Romoos has embraced innovative building practices, as seen in the Nature Lodge constructed in 2019 using the environmentally conscious Truberholz system. This technique utilizes untreated local wood, emphasizing sustainability and ecology. Additionally, the collaboration with Swiss Federal Railways to enhance luggage transport promotes public transport convenience, making it easier for travelers to explore the region while minimizing their carbon footprint.



Switzerland

Splügen

Perched at an altitude of 1,450 meters, Splügen serves as the economic and cultural heart of the Rheinwald region in the Swiss Alps. This picturesque village, which has a rich history of trade and tourism, lies along the historic routes of the Splügen and San Bernardino passes. Known for its stunning natural landscapes, including crystal-clear lakes and a glacial environment, Splügen is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts year-round. Since becoming part of the Beverin Nature Park in 2020, the community has committed to promoting sustainable tourism that honors the area's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage.

A Sustainable Hospitality Project

Set to open in 2025, the Speluca brewery and hotel will revitalize an underused area on the village's outskirts. The project combines an old barn, an abandoned hotel from the 1960s, and new structures designed by Iseppi&Ganzoni, ensuring that the architecture reflects the historic village landscape. This initiative aims to attract sporty guests passionate about culture and cuisine while fostering local production and hospitality.

New Accommodation Initiatives

The Rheinwald Resort AG is developing a tourist accommodation project at the valley station of the cable cars. This ambitious plan includes a mix of managed accommodations, diverse infrastructure, and a new campsite to encourage longer stays. The initiative has garnered community support for expanding three-season tourism, and the design, influenced by the old village's aesthetics, will be executed by the renowned Herzog & de Meuron architecture firm.

Naturpark Beverin

The Beverin Regional Nature Park, encompassing 515 km² around Piz Beverin, includes the Rheinwald since 2020. The park focuses on sustainable economic and social development in partnership with the local community and canton authorities. Its goals are to enhance the local economy and promote nature-friendly tourism while preserving the area's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage.



Türkiye

Ormana

Ormana is a captivating village that embodies the essence of Türkiye's rich cultural heritage, steeped in Hellenistic origins and surrounded by the breathtaking Taurus Mountains. This hidden gem offers visitors a unique glimpse into the past, featuring architectural wonders such as the Button Houses, which reflect a nomadic lifestyle and traditional craftsmanship. With its ancient ruins, including the Erymna Ancient City and Tol Han Caravansarai, Ormana not only showcases its historical significance but also celebrates its vibrant community through festivals and sustainable tourism initiatives. As travelers seek immersive experiences that connect them to nature and local traditions, Ormana stands out as a destination that invites exploration and appreciation of its enduring legacy.

Architectural Treasures and Cultural Significance

Ormana is distinguished by its Button Houses, which are traditional dwellings adorned with unique architectural features that echo the village's nomadic heritage. The remnants of the Erymna Ancient City and the ruins of Tol Han Caravansarai further enrich Ormana's historical tapestry, offering a fascinating glimpse into the lives of those who once inhabited this region. These sites serve as a backdrop for cultural exploration and education, inviting visitors to engage with the history that has shaped the community.

Commitment to Sustainable Tourism

Ormana is pioneering sustainable tourism practices through initiatives like the Camping and Caravan Park and the establishment of a Dark Sky Park. These efforts aim to preserve the natural beauty of the area while providing unique experiences for visitors, such as stargazing opportunities that comply with International Dark Sky Association standards. By promoting eco-tourism, Ormana not only protects its environment but also enhances the local economy, making it a model for responsible tourism development.

Community Engagement and Economic Growth

The OrmanaActive Initiative has revitalized the village by restoring its historical Button Houses into boutique accommodations, attracting both domestic and international tourists. This development has fostered a sense of community pride and engagement, creating job opportunities and supporting local artisans. Additionally, the annual Traditional Grape Festival unites the community in celebrating its agricultural heritage, further solidifying Ormana's status as a vibrant cultural hub where tradition and modernity coexist.



Ukraine

Urych

Nestled in the stunning landscapes of the Lviv region, Urych is a charming village that epitomizes the rich cultural heritage of Ukraine. Surrounded by the majestic Carpathian Mountains and the lush forests of the Skolivski Beskydy National Nature Park, Urych offers visitors a unique glimpse into the past. The village is renowned for the remnants of the Tustan fortress, a remarkable wooden rock structure from the 13th to 16th centuries that serves as a testament to the region's historical significance. Designated as a national cultural monument and part of a state historical reserve, Tustan attracts thousands of tourists each year, contributing to the village's vibrant tourism economy. Urych is also situated in the ethnographic region of Boykivshchyna, where traditional customs, dialects, and crafts are meticulously preserved. As a leader in heritage tourism, Urych not only showcases its historical and cultural treasures but also emphasizes sustainable tourism practices, creating an immersive experience for visitors while ensuring the protection of its unique heritage.

Tustan Fortress – A Historical Treasure

The medieval wooden rock fortress of Tustan stands as the central attraction of Urych, recognized as a monument of national importance. The fortress served as a vital trade and defensive site during its time and showcases the unique architectural and engineering techniques of the period. Its ruins offer visitors a glimpse into the region's historical significance and provide opportunities for exploration and learning about medieval Ukrainian culture.

Cultural Richness of Boykivshchyna

Urych is situated in the ethnographic region of Boykivshchyna, where traditional material and non-material culture are deeply preserved. The village features a beautiful wooden church and a historically significant agricultural landscape. Locals maintain the Boykiv dialect and continue to engage in traditional church rituals, providing a living connection to their heritage. This cultural richness is celebrated through various festivals and events, making Urych a vibrant destination for those interested in authentic cultural experiences.

Sustainable Tourism Development

Urych is recognized for its innovative approach to tourism, centered around a museum-tourist cluster model. Local businesses and institutions collaborate under a unified brand, enhancing marketing efforts and visitor experiences. The communal institution managing the reserve works closely with local entrepreneurs, authorities, and the religious community, ensuring a comprehensive tourist information system. This commitment to sustainability and collaboration positions Urych as a model for other villages, showcasing how traditional environments can drive sustainable development and tourism growth.



Ukraine

Vorokhta

Vorokhta is a picturesque mountain resort nestled in the Ukrainian Carpathians at an altitude of 850 meters above sea level. Located along the pristine Prut River and surrounded by majestic mountains and lush forests, this charming town offers a rich natural environment that promotes health and wellness, thanks to its vitamin D-rich climate. Vorokhta is not only a sanctuary for relaxation but also a vibrant hub for adventure, boasting a variety of accommodations, from hotels to guesthouses. It serves as a gateway for exploration, featuring scenic hiking trails, unique architectural sites, and a historic railway viaduct, making it an ideal destination for both nature lovers and thrill-seekers.

Adventure and Exploration

Vorokhta is a paradise for adventurers, with its extensive network of hiking trails, eco-trails, and cycling routes. The town has a rich sporting history, having gained popularity in the early 20th century for ski racing and ski jumping. Today, visitors can explore the stunning natural landscapes, including old wooden churches and the impressive stone viaduct bridges, offering a blend of cultural and outdoor experiences.

Cultural Heritage and Tourist Navigation

The “Promotion of the Historical and Cultural Heritage of Vorokhta” project has enhanced the tourist experience through improved navigation and information dissemination. Key initiatives include the installation of billboards with QR codes for virtual tours, tourist information pylons, and signposts directing visitors to local attractions and amenities. This comprehensive navigation system makes exploring the town’s historical sites and natural wonders more accessible and informative.

Ecological Tourism Initiatives

Vorokhta is dedicated to ecological tourism, exemplified by projects like the improvement of the Rudyak swamp area. This unique ecosystem, home to over 200 species of organisms, has been made more accessible with the restoration of a wooden pedestrian bridge, allowing visitors to explore its rich vegetation safely. The project also features benches and solar-powered lighting, enhancing the visitor experience while promoting environmental awareness. Additionally, virtual tours and a 3D map of Vorokhta have been developed as part of the “Virtual Ukraine” initiative, helping travelers plan their visits and discover the area’s natural and cultural gems.



Saudi Arabia

Abo Noghta Castles & Historic Tabab

Once the capital of Saudi Arabia's Aseer region, Abo Noghta Castles & Historic Tabab stands as a unique testament to heritage preservation and sustainable practices. This historic town is celebrated not only for its ancient castles and forts but also for the locals' commitment to eco-friendly renovation techniques. Instead of cutting down trees, the community skillfully recycles old materials, setting a remarkable standard for sustainable restoration across Aseer. Their innovative approach has not only conserved the area's history but also created new opportunities for the community to flourish.

Sustainable Heritage Restoration

The people of Abo Noghta lead the way in preserving history without harming nature. They meticulously use recycled materials to restore their castles and forts, creating a model for sustainable renovation that has been adopted throughout the Aseer region. This eco-friendly method is both a nod to their rich past and a step towards a greener future.

Thriving Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

With a legacy of thousands of years in agriculture, Abo Noghta cultivates a diverse range of crops, from wheat and corn to fruits and vegetables. Complementing its rich agricultural heritage, the community also excels in cattle rearing, making it a center for traditional and sustainable farming practices.

Ingenious Seed Storage in Rock Structures

To preserve seeds for future planting, Abo Noghta employs a centuries-old technique that involves creating rock structures of varying depths known as "Al-mdafin." These natural, cool storage spaces protect the seeds, ensuring they remain fresh and ready for the next season.



Egypt

Abu Ghosoun

Nestled within the stunning Wadi El Gemal Reserve on the Red Sea coast, Abu Ghosoun is the oldest village in the Marsa Alam region and offers an extraordinary blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and community-led sustainable initiatives. Known for its rugged mountainous terrain, lush medicinal plants, and rich wildlife, Abu Ghosoun captivates visitors with both breathtaking safari adventures and crystal-clear diving spots. This vibrant village is not only a tourist attraction but also a model of local development, supported by innovative projects that celebrate and preserve Egypt's natural and cultural heritage.

Nature's Masterpiece in Wadi El Gemal Reserve

As part of the expansive Wadi El Gemal Reserve, Abu Ghosoun is an ecological paradise featuring diverse flora and fauna, wild mountain animals, and natural springs. The village provides unique mountain safari experiences, where visitors can explore remote areas and climb peaks with knowledgeable local guides.

Empowering Community Through Sustainable Tourism

The "Haya Karima" (Decent Life) initiative elevates rural living standards, emphasizing economic empowerment through small enterprises, craft training, and social development. This transformative project not only improves quality of life but also fosters sustainable tourism that celebrates local culture.

Crafting Heritage for a Global Audience

With the Yadaweya initiative, Abu Ghosoun artisans showcase their intricate crafts to the world, preserving Egypt's artistic heritage. This project, born within the Wadi El Gemal protectorate, connects local talent with global markets, providing vital income and celebrating traditional craftsmanship.



Egypt

Gharb Suhayl

Nestled along the banks of the Nile near Aswan, Gharb Suhayl is a vibrant Nubian village that invites travelers to step into the enchanting world of ancient Nubia—one of Africa's earliest and most storied civilizations. With its colorful homes and rich cultural heritage, Gharb Suhayl is more than just a picturesque destination; it's a living testament to the traditions and customs that have shaped this region for millennia. Here, visitors can explore the captivating blend of history, art, and music that define Nubian life, making every moment spent in this charming village a unique experience steeped in authenticity.

Cultural Heritage and Music

Gharb Suhayl is a visual delight with its brightly painted homes, characteristic of Nubian architecture. The village pulsates with life, as Nubian music fills the air, featuring traditional instruments like drums, flutes, and lutes. This vibrant music is not merely entertainment; it plays a vital role in various community events such as weddings, funerals, and traditional ceremonies, allowing visitors to experience the rich cultural fabric of the Nubian people.

Ecotourism and Sustainability Efforts

The village is a proud participant in the nationwide ECO EGYPT initiative, which promotes ecotourism across Egypt's natural and protected sites. This campaign, developed by the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Egypt's Tourism Project, aims to raise awareness about sustainability and environmental protection. Gharb Suhayl also engages in the Nubia Initiative, which focuses on preserving Nubian cultural heritage through sustainable practices. This initiative fosters local involvement in green economy projects, enhancing both community livelihoods and environmental stewardship.

Diverse Tourism Opportunities

Beyond cultural tourism, Gharb Suhayl offers a variety of experiences, including fishing, desert adventures, and medical tourism. The village serves as a gateway to attractions like Gharb Suhayl Island and the Nubia Museum, providing visitors with insights into the region's rich history and natural beauty. This diversity in tourism not only supports local economies but also enriches the visitor experience, making Gharb Suhayl a captivating destination for all. Gharb Suhayl stands as a testament to the resilience and vibrancy of Nubian culture, showcasing its potential as a sustainable tourism destination that celebrates its heritage while embracing modernity. For more information, you can explore further sources that detail the village's unique offerings and initiatives.



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