'Best Tourism Villages’ of 2022 Named by UNWTO

**Madrid/Riyadh, 20 December 2022** - From Austria to Vietnam, 32 destinations from all around the world have been named as ‘Best Tourism Villages 2022’ by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The accolade recognizes rural destinations that are embracing tourism as a driver of development and new opportunities for jobs and income, while preserving and promoting community-based values and products. The initiative also recognizes villages for their commitment to **innovation and sustainability** in all its aspects – economic, social and environmental – and a focus on developing tourism in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2022, a total of **32 villages from 18 countries** across the five world regions were awarded the recognition. The villages were evaluated by an independent Advisory Board based on a set of criteria covering nine areas:

1. Cultural and Natural Resources
2. Promotion and Conservation of Cultural Resources
3. Economic Sustainability
4. Social Sustainability
5. Environmental Sustainability
6. Tourism Development and Value Chain Integration
7. Governance and Prioritization of Tourism
8. Infrastructure and Connectivity
9. Health, Safety, and Security

Welcoming the news, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “For rural communities everywhere, tourism can be a true gamechanger in providing jobs, supporting local businesses and keeping traditions alive. The Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO showcase the power of the sector to drive economic diversification and create opportunities for all outside of big cities.”

A total of 136 villages were put forward for consideration by 57 UNWTO Member States (each Member State could nominate a maximum of three villages) for the 2022 edition. From these, 32 were recognized as Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO.
A further 20 villages will enter the Upgrade Programme. All 52 villages will also become part of the **UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Global Network** created in 2021 which from this date gathers 115 villages from the five continents. The Network provides a number of benefits including onsite and online training, sharing of good practices and international brand recognition and awareness.

**Tourism as a driver of rural development and inclusion**

The Best Tourism Villages initiative is the flagship project of the **UNWTO Tourism for Rural Development Programme**. The Programme aims to ensure tourism contributes to reducing regional inequalities in income and development, fighting depopulation, progressing gender equality and women’s and youth empowerment, advancing innovation and digitalization, improving connectivity, infrastructure, access to finance and investment, innovating in product development and value chain integration, promoting sustainable practices for more efficient use of resources and a reduction of emissions and waste and enhancing education and skills. The Programme promotes multi-level governance and partnerships and the active involvement and empowerment of communities.

**Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO**

The Best Tourism Villages initiative includes three pillars:

1. **The ‘Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO’**: Recognizes villages that are an outstanding example of a rural tourism destination with accredited cultural and natural assets, that preserve and promote rural and community-based values, products, and lifestyle and have a clear commitment to innovation and sustainability in all its aspects – economic, social and environmental.

2. **The ‘Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO’ Upgrade Programme**: The Upgrade Programme benefits a number of villages that do not fully meet the criteria to receive recognition. These villages receive support from UNWTO and its Partners in improving elements of the areas identified as gaps in the evaluation process.

3. **The ‘Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO’ Global Network**: The Network provides a space for exchanging experiences and good practices, learnings, and opportunities. It includes experts and public and private sector partners engaged in the promotion of tourism for rural development, as well.

The Award Ceremony will take place in AlUla, Saudi Arabia on 27-28 February 2023 back-to-back with the first presential meeting of the UNWTO Network of Best Tourism Villages.

The next edition of the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO will open in February 2023.
List of Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO 2022:

Zell am See, Austria
Wagrain, Austria
Puqueldón, Chile
Dazhai, China
Jingzhu, China
Choachí, Colombia
aguacal, Ecuador
Angochagua, Ecuador
Choke Mountains Ecovillage, Ethiopia
Mestia, Georgia
Kfar Kama, Israel
Sauris-Zahre, Italy
Isola del Giglio, Italy
Umm Qais, Jordan
Creel, Mexico
El Fuerte, Mexico

Ksar Elkhorbat, Morocco
Moulay Bouzerktoune, Morocco
Lamas, Peru
Raqchi, Peru
Castelo Novo, Portugal
Pyeongsa-ri, Republic of Korea
Rasinari, Romania
AlUla Old Town, Saudi Arabia
Bohinj, Slovenia
Rupit, Spain
Alquézar, Spain
Guadalup, Spain
Murten, Switzerland
Andermatt, Switzerland
Birgi, Türkiye
Thái Hái, Vietnam

Additionally, UNWTO will work with the following villages participating in the Upgrade Programme:

Trevelin, Argentina
Krupa na Vrbasu, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Fontainhas, Cabo Verde
Ninhue, Chile
San Vicente de Chucuri, Colombia
Barichara, Colombia
Kalopanagiotis, Cyprus
Pissouri, Cyprus
Adaba, Ethiopia
Khonoma, India

Neot Semadar, Israel
Otricoli, Italy
Il Ngwesi, Kenya
Grand Baie, Mauritius
Bella Vista, Paraguay
Istebna, Poland
Farraria de São João, Portugal
Castara, Trinidad and Tobago
Anıtlı, Türkiye
Cumalıkızık, Türkiye
Applications in 2021 and 2022 were evaluated by an independent Advisory Board. The composition of this multidisciplinary board for 2021-2022 is as follows:

- Federico de Arteaga (PhD, Innovation Sustainability, 2022)
- Joel Callañaupa (Planeterra, 2022)
- Mari Dunleavy (ICCA Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, 2022)
- Ahmed Eiweida (World Bank, 2022)
- Elena García Garrido (ENRD, 2022)
- Christian Gsodam (ECR European Committee of the Regions, 2021-2022)
- Amran Hamzah (CIPD Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2021-2022)
- Ena Harvey (ICCA Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, 2021)
- Lázaro Israel (Member of the Panel of Experts International Fund for Cultural Diversity at UNESCO, 2021-2022)
- (Dr.) Manal Kelig (ATTA Adventure Travel Trade Association, 2021-2022)
- Judy Kepher Gona (STTA Sustainable Travel & Tourism Agenda, 2021-2022)
- Fergus Maclaren (ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee, 2021-2022)
- Joxe Mari Aizega (BCC Basque Culinary Center, 2021)
- David Mora Gómez (BCC Basque Culinary Center, 2022)
- Ximena Muñoz Vivas (Instituto Design Thinking, 2021-2022)
- Fabrizio Angelo Orlando (TripAdvisor, 2021-2022)
- Helena Rey de Assis (UNEP – UN Environment Programme, 2021)
- Jacqui Taylor (Agritourism Africa, 2022)
- Peter Wostner (Researcher and Policy Expert. Chairman of the Working Party on Rural Policy at OECD, 2021)
- (Dr.) Endo Yoshihide (FAO Food and Agriculture Organization, 2021-2022)

**Related Links:**

- Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO
- Rural Tourism
- Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO - 2022 (video)