‘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 22 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  
Aguarico, 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  
Račchi, Peru  
Castelo Novo, Portugal  
Pyeongsa-ri, Republic of Korea  
Rasinari, Romania  
AlUla Old Town, Saudi Arabia  
Bohinj, Slovenia  
Rupit, Spain  
Alquézar, Spain  
Guadalupe, Spain  
Murten, Switzerland  
Andermatt, Switzerland  
Birgi, Türkiye  
Thái Hài, 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  
Ferraria de São João, Portugal  
Castara, Trinidad and Tobago  
Anitli, Türkiye  
Cumalıkızik, 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 (CIDP 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)](#)