

UNWTO's Best Tourism Villages to be Celebrated in AlUla

***Madrid, Spain 10 March:** UNWTO will celebrate tourism as a major factor of sustainable rural development at a special Best Tourism Villages ceremony to be held in AlUla, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (12-13 March).*

Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO (BTV) is the flagship initiative of the Organization's wider work to advance tourism as a pillar of rural development and opportunity. Since 2021, BTV has produced an annual list of destinations which stand out for their commitment to sustainability in all its aspects - economic, social and environmental - and the preservation and promotion of community-based values. The ceremony will bring together Ministers of Tourism alongside representatives of the most recent villages recognized by UNWTO, including AlUla Old Town District itself.

"It is a great honour that AlUla is among this year's award recipients. We look forward to continuing to raise awareness about the transformative role of tourism through our support for meaningful initiatives such as this," said **H.H. Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Farhan Al- Saud**, Minister of Culture of Saudi Arabia, Member of Board of Directors, and the Governor of the Royal Commission for AlUla.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "Tourism is a leading pillar of growth and opportunity for villages, supporting rural businesses, providing jobs for local communities, and celebrating traditions and heritage. Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO recognises those destinations that are showing what tourism can offer, both for tourists as well as for the communities themselves."

"We are delighted to host the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages 2022 Ceremony in Saudi Arabia this year. We look forward to sharing the rich history and heritage of the Kingdom with event attendees and participants," said **H.E. Ahmed Al Khateeb**, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

About AlUla

AlUla Old Town District will be recognized at the prestigious ceremony. An ancient crossroads of civilisations and home to Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, AlUla is a leading example of the far-reaching benefits tourism can bring to rural communities as it is comprehensively regenerated into the world's largest living museum by the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU).

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For a complete list of the UNWTO's Best Tourism Villages 2022 visit [here](#).

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