UNWTO Names its Best Tourism Villages 2023

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

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

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

A global network of local communities

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

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

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

9. Health, Safety, and Security

The initiative comprises three pillars:

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

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

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

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

**Best Tourism Villages 2023**

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

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

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

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

**Related Links**

Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO
25th UNWTO General Assembly
Best Tourism Villages 2023 Meeting