

WORLD HERITAGE

2019-2020



Coordinated by the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO

Set amongst rice, tea and tobacco fields, the 46 multi-family homes of Fujian Tulou ("earthen houses") nests in the green hillsides of southeastern China. From the 15th to the 20th centuries, they were built of wood, stone and mud along an inward-looking, circular or square floor plan as housing for up to 800 people each. In contrast with their plain exterior, the inside of the Tulou were built for comfort and were often highly decorated. They were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2008 as exceptional examples of a building tradition and function exemplifying a particular type of communal living and defense organization, and, in terms of their harmonious relationship with the natural environment, an outstanding example of human settlement.

Title photo: U'Yuanxing

The World Heritage emblem symbolizes the interdependence of the world's natural and cultural diversity. The central square represents the achievements of human skill and inspiration, and the circle celebrates the gifts of nature. The emblem is round, like the world, a symbol of global protection for the heritage of all humankind.

The Earthen Architecture Conservation Programme works toward conserving and revitalizing earthen architecture, which is threatened by natural disasters and industrialization. Currently, some one hundred properties on the World Heritage List are partially or totally built with earth.

World Heritage sites are inscribed on the List on the basis of their merits as forming a significant contribution to the cultural and natural heritage of the world. Their outstanding universal value is considered to go beyond national boundaries and to be of importance for future generations.

Conserving the diversity of life on Earth is critical to global human welfare. With the support of the World Heritage Convention, the most important biodiversity sites receive international recognition as well as technical and financial assistance to deal with threats such as agricultural encroachment, alien species and poaching.

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, at its General Conference, Paris, 16 November 1972.

EXTRACTS

... parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of humankind as a whole.

... [with] the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening... [the world's heritage], it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value...

An Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, called "the World Heritage Committee", is... established within UNESCO.

... the Committee shall establish... under the title of "World Heritage List", a list of the properties forming part of the cultural heritage and natural heritage... which it considers as having outstanding universal value...

The grand historic landmarks of Paris, from the Eiffel Tower to Notre Dame Cathedral and Sainte Chapelle, overlook the curved banks of the Seine. For centuries, stone and iron bridges across the liquid heart of the city have linked the people, commerce and culture of the Left and Right Banks.



Tens of millions of years of geological history are visible in the 712 Caves of Agafreik Karst and Slovak Karst on the border of Hungary and Slovakia. The subterranean wonderland of stalactites, stalagmites and lakes draws 300,000 visitors each year, but 99 percent of the caves remain in pristine condition.



Petrified camel from trees stand like sentinels among the red dunes of the Namib Desert Sea. Covering over 30,000 square kilometers along Namibia's coast, the desert is often blanketed in fog, providing moisture for plants and animals adapted to the extreme environment.

A gallery of more than 4,000 paintings covers the gray and copper-colored rocks of the Tsoelike Hills in northern Botswana. The images preserve the history of humans and animals in the area, which spans at least 100,000 years. The quartzite hills are sacred to the indigenous Hamarabula and San people.



Yemen's Socotra Archipelago is known as the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean because the islands are a haven for unique plants, birds and reptiles, many of which live nowhere else. The red sap of the dragon's blood trees has been prized for its medicinal and other uses since ancient times.



From 626 to 539 B.C., Babylon was the capital of a great empire, though its history stretches back to the third millennium B.C., and it evolved into a center of Mesopotamian civilization from the 19th century A.C. After years of conflict and instability, its archaeological treasures are now better protected.



Over 5,000 Komodo dragons, the largest lizards in the world, roam the park's islands, sport divers can swim among hundreds of species of fish, corals and sharks—and may glimpse grazing dugongs, known as "sea cows."

From the vast plains of the Serengeti to historic cities such as Vienna, Lima and Kyoto; from the prehistoric rock art on the Iberian Peninsula to the Statue of Liberty; from the Kasbah of Algiers to the Imperial Palace in Beijing — all of these places, as varied as they are, have one thing in common. All are World Heritage sites of outstanding cultural or natural value to humanity and are worthy of protection for future generations to know and enjoy.

- Key
- Cultural property
 - Natural property
 - Mixed property (cultural and natural)
 - Transnational property
 - Property currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

See country index on the back side of map for site listings.

Number indicates site order by year of inscription within each country. Letters are assigned to transnational properties in the order of their inscription on the List. Only States Parties to the World Heritage Convention are labeled on this map.

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