

## UNESCO HERITAGE SITES OF INDIA

India is home to several UNESCO World Heritage Sites; ranging from natural wonders to architectural marvels. While some are keepers of the magnificence of history, others are a safe and lush haven for biodiversity to flourish. There are 42 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India. Santiniketan, established by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, becomes the 41st site to be declared a world heritage site in India in September 2023. The UNESCO also included the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas in Karnataka in the list in September 2023. A World Heritage Site is a landmark or area with legal protection by an international convention administered by the UNESCO. World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, scientific or other forms of significance. World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, scientific or other forms of significance. The sites are judged to contain "cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity". To be selected, a World Heritage Site is nominated by their host country and determined by the international committee to be a unique landmark which is geographically and historically identifiable and having a special cultural or physical significance. For example, World Heritage Sites might be ancient ruins or historical structures, buildings, cities, deserts, forests, islands, lakes, monuments, mountains, or wilderness areas. A World Heritage Site may signify a remarkable accomplishment of humanity, and serve as evidence of our intellectual history on the planet, or it might be a place of great natural beauty. As of September 2023, a total of 1,199 World Heritage Sites (933 cultural, 227 natural, and 39 mixed cultural and natural properties) exist across 168 countries. With 59 selected areas, Italy is the country with the most sites; followed by China with 57, then France and Germany with 52 each. The sites are intended for practical conservation for posterity, which otherwise would be subject to risk from human or animal trespassing, unmonitored, uncontrolled or unrestricted access, or threat from local administrative negligence. Sites are demarcated by UNESCO as protected zones. The World Heritage Sites list is maintained by the international World Heritage Program administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 "states parties" that are elected by the UN General Assembly, and advised by reviews of international panels of experts in natural or cultural history, and education. The programme catalogues, names, and conserves sites of outstanding cultural or natural importance to the common culture and heritage of humanity. The programme began with the "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage", which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972. Since then, 195 states have ratified the convention, making it one of the most widely recognised international agreements and the world's most popular cultural programme. To be considered, the properties must be under some form of state protection or conservation and be nominated by the host member country. The display shows some of the Indian UNESCO Heritage sites out of 42 and India Post had released the stamps on them.

Out of the 42 sites in India, 34 are cultural, seven are natural, and one, Khangchendzonga National Park, is of mixed type. India has the sixth-most sites worldwide.

This is the second in a series and concentrates on natural sites and depicts wildlife found in those sites. They feature Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks, Western Ghats, Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, Great Himalayan National Park on the stamps denominated with Rs.5, or Rs. 12.

