

UNESCO IN ITALY: CULTURAL SITES TO VISIT

Italy is the country where the highest number of UNESCO sites is concentrated. After the new additions to the list of Italian sites awarded UNESCO World Heritage status came into effect in July 2021, the total number of Italian sites amounts to 58, making up over 5% of UNESCO's global list.

A particular interest to the topic is derived from the dramatical tourist decline witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the CEIC recent data, the number of tourists in 2020 dropped almost in 4 times in comparison with the previous year. Hence, the aim of the present research paper is to provide reasonable and well-thought-out ideas on why one should visit Italy and thereby contribute to the country's economy resuscitation. Needless to say, all 58 properties have a Conservation state, which means either they have faced or are currently facing some threats. At the same time 31 properties are included into the Tentative List. Therefore, it should be said that all sites in Italy are of paramount importance and are thoroughly protected.

Italian sites may be divided into two large groups: cultural sites (53) and natural (5) ones. Since the natural sites represent the minority, we suggest quickly mentioning them: the Aeolian Islands (included in 2000), the Dolomites (included in 2009), Monte San Giorgio (included in 2010), Mount Etna (included in 2013) and Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (included in 2017).

Based on the geographic position, most sites are centralized in the following three regions – Tuscany (8), Sicily (7), Veneto and Lombardy (6). Taking into consideration both the degree of meaningfulness of Italian UNESCO sites and their relatively close proximity, it has been decided to elaborate a tour around 9 Italian cultural landmarks, all located within three regions – Veneto, Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna. It should be mentioned that two out of three newly adopted sites (Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles and the Porticoes of Bologna) are included in the tour, so as to raise greater awareness of them.

The tour suggests visiting the following sites: Venice and its Lagoon – Botanical Garden and Padua's fourteenth-century fresco cycles – City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto – City of Verona – Mantua and Sabbioneta – Cathedral, Torre Civica and Piazza Grande in Modena – the Porticoes of Bologna – Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna.

Italy has much more to offer and is ready to accept tourists all over the globe after the Covid-19 hit. This is just a modest part of its recognizable landmarks one is recommended to visit. After all, Italy is projected to have its UNESCO sites increased in the future years.