

SEVEN WONDERS OF WORLD

COLOSSEUM:

The Colosseum, also named the Flavian Amphitheater, is a large amphitheater in Rome. It was built during the reign of the Flavian emperors as a gift to the Roman people.



Construction of the Colosseum began sometime between C.E. 70 and 72 under the emperor Vespasian. It opened nearly a decade later and was modified several times in the following years. The massive structure measured approximately 189 by 156 meters (620 by 513 feet), towered four stories high, and included eighty entrances to the amphitheater—seventy-six for the patrons, two for participants of events, and two exclusively for the emperor to use. The sheer number of entrances proved to be necessary: the

Colosseum could hold more than 50,000 spectators at its maximum capacity.

When the Colosseum first opened, the emperor Titus celebrated with a hundred days of gladiatorial games. Emperors traditionally attended the games. The emperor Commodus is known to have performed in the arena on hundreds of occasions. Aside from the games, the Colosseum also hosted dramas, reenactments, and even public executions.

Eventually, the Romans' interest in the games waned. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Colosseum began to deteriorate. A series of earthquakes during the fifth century C.E. damaged the structure, and it also suffered from neglect. By the 20th century, nearly two-thirds of the original building had been destroyed. Nevertheless, a restoration project began in the 1990s to repair the Colosseum. Today it is one of modern-day Rome's most popular tourist attractions, hosting millions of visitors a year.

PETRA:

A person standing in the doorway of the Monastery at Petra, Jordan, shows the enormity of the ancient building's entrance. Carved into the sandstone hill by the Nabataeans in the second century A.D., this towering structure, called El-Deir, may have been used as a church or monastery by later societies, but likely began as a temple. The "Lost City" still has secrets to reveal: Thousands of years ago, the now-abandoned city of Petra was thriving. Carved directly into vibrant red, white, pink, and sandstone cliff faces, the prehistoric Jordanian city of Petra was "lost" to the Western world for hundreds of years.



Located amid rugged desert canyons and mountains in what is now the southwestern corner of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Petra was once a

thriving trading center and the capital of the Nabataean empire between 400 B.C. and A.D. 106.

The city sat empty and in near ruin for centuries. Only in the early 1800s did a European traveler disguise himself in Bedouin costume and infiltrate the mysterious locale.

In 1985, the Petra Archaeological Park was **declared a UNESCO World Heritage site**, and in 2007 it was named one of the new seven wonders of the world.

History

The Nabataeans, before they were conquered and absorbed into the Roman Empire, controlled a vast tract of the Middle East from modern-day Israel and Jordan into the northern Arabian peninsula. The remains of their innovative networks of water capture, storage, transport, and irrigation systems are found to this day throughout this area.

Scholars know the Nabataeans were in Petra since at least 312 B.C., says archaeologist Zeidoun Al-Muheisen of Jordan's Yarmouk University.

Al-Muheisen, who has been excavating in Petra since 1979 and specializes in the Nabataean period, says no one has yet found any archaeological evidence dating back to the fourth century B.C.

TAJMAHAL:

The Taj Mahal is located on the right bank of the Yamuna River in a vast Mughal garden that encompasses nearly 17 hectares, in the Agra District in Uttar Pradesh. It was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in

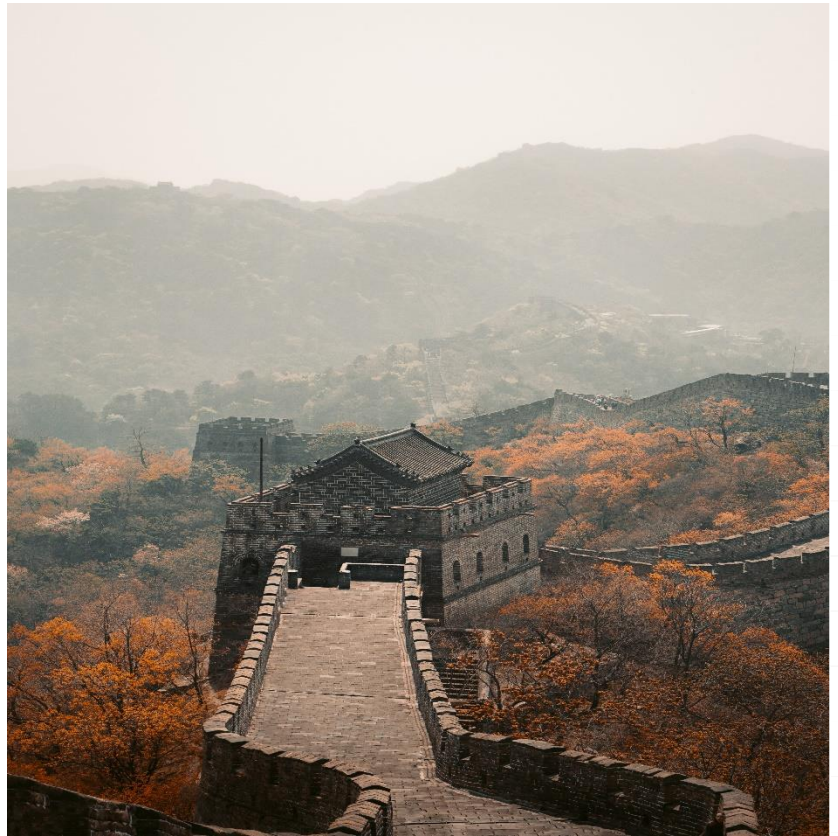


memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal with construction starting in 1632 AD and completed in 1648 AD, with the mosque, the guest house and the main gateway on the south, the outer courtyard and its cloisters were added subsequently and completed in 1653 AD. The existence of several historical and Quranic inscriptions in Arabic script have facilitated setting the chronology of Taj Mahal. For its construction, masons, stone-cutters, inlayers, carvers, painters, calligraphers, dome builders and other artisans were requisitioned from the whole of the empire and also

from the Central Asia and Iran. Ustad-Ahmad Lahori was the main architect of the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal is considered to be the greatest architectural achievement in the whole range of Indo-Islamic architecture. Its recognised architectonic beauty has a rhythmic combination of solids and voids, concave and convex and light shadow; such as arches and domes further increases the aesthetic aspect. The colour combination of lush green scape reddish pathway and blue sky over it show cases the monument in ever changing tints and moods. The relief work in marble and inlay with precious and semi precious stones make it a monument apart.

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA:

The one thing most people “know” about the Great Wall of China—that it is one of the only man-made structures visible from space—is not actually true. Since the wall looks a lot like the stone and soil that surround it, it is difficult to discern with the human eye even



from low Earth orbit, and is difficult to make out in most orbital photos. However, this does not detract from the wonder of this astounding ancient structure.

For millennia, Chinese leaders instituted wall-building projects to protect the land from northern, nomadic invaders. One surviving section of such an ancient wall, in the Shandong province, is made of hard-packed soil called “rammed earth” and is estimated to be 2,500 years old. For centuries during the Warring States Period, before China was

unified into one nation, such walls defended the borders.

Around 220 B.C.E., Qin Shi Huang, also called the First Emperor, united China. He masterminded the process of uniting the existing walls into one. At that time, rammed earth and wood made up most of the wall. Emperor after emperor strengthened and extended the wall, often with the aim of keeping out the northern invaders. In some places, the wall was constructed of brick. Elsewhere, quarried granite or even marble blocks were used. The wall was continuously brought up to date as building techniques advanced.

Zhu Yuanzhang, who became the Hongwu Emperor, took power in 1368 C.E. He founded the Ming Dynasty, famous for its achievements in the arts of ceramics and painting. The Ming emperors improved the wall with watchtowers and platforms. Most of the familiar images of the wall show Ming-era construction in the stone. Depending on how the wall is measured, it stretches somewhere between 4,000 and 5,500 kilometers (2,500 and 3,400 miles).

In the 17th century, the Manchu emperors extended Chinese rule into Inner Mongolia, making the wall less important.

CHICHEN ITZA:

Chichen Itza was a Mayan city on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. Although it's an important tourist attraction, Chichen Itza also remains an active



archeological site. New discoveries are still being unearthed in the area, providing even more insight into the culture and accomplishments of the Mayan people, who ruled much of present-day Mexico and Central America prior to the arrival of European colonists. Chichen Itza was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988 and, in 2007, it was voted in a global survey as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Chichen Itza is located about 120 miles from the modern-day resort town of Cancun, on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

The name Chichen Itza is a Mayan language term for “at the mouth of the well of the Itza.” The Itza were an ethnic group of Mayans who had risen to power in the northern part of the Yucatan peninsula, where the city is located.

The well in the name refers to a number of underground rivers that run beneath the region and likely served as the source of water for the city. This easy access to water made the location perfect for a city the size of Chichen Itza.

Pyramids at Giza:

The Giza Pyramids, built to endure an eternity, have done just that. The monumental tombs are relics of **Egypt's Old Kingdom** era and were constructed some 4,500 years ago.



Egypt's pharaohs expected to become gods in the afterlife. To prepare for the next world they erected temples to the gods and massive pyramid tombs for themselves—filled with all the things each ruler would need to guide and sustain himself in the next world.

Pharaoh Khufu began the first Giza pyramid project, circa 2550 B.C. His Great Pyramid is the largest in Giza and towers some 481 feet (147 meters) above the plateau. Its estimated 2.3 million stone blocks each weigh an average of 2.5 to 15 tons.

Khufu's son, Pharaoh Khafre, built the second pyramid at Giza, circa 2520 B.C. His necropolis also included the Sphinx, a mysterious limestone monument with the body of a lion and a pharaoh's head. The **Sphinx** may stand sentinel for the pharaoh's entire tomb complex.

The third of the Giza Pyramids is considerably smaller than the first two. Built by Pharaoh Menkaure circa 2490 B.C., it featured a much more complex mortuary temple.

Each massive pyramid is but one part of a larger complex, including a palace, temples, solar boat pits, and other features.

MACHU PICCHU:

Machu Picchu stands 2,430 m above sea-level, in the middle of a tropical mountain forest, in an extraordinarily beautiful setting. It was probably the most amazing urban creation of the



Inca Empire at its height; its giant walls, terraces and ramps seem as if they have been cut naturally in the continuous rock escarpments. The natural setting, on the eastern slopes of the Andes, encompasses the upper Amazon basin with its rich diversity of flora and fauna. Embedded within a dramatic landscape at the meeting point between the Peruvian Andes and the Amazon Basin, the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu is among the greatest artistic, architectural and land use achievements anywhere and the most significant tangible legacy of the Inca civilization. Recognized for outstanding cultural and

natural values, the mixed World Heritage property covers 32,592 hectares of mountain slopes, peaks and valleys surrounding its heart, the spectacular archaeological monument of “*La Ciudadela*” (the Citadel) at more than 2,400 meters above sea level. Built in the fifteenth century Machu Picchu was abandoned when the Inca Empire was conquered by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. It was not until 1911 that the archaeological complex was made known to the outside world.

CHRIST THE REDEEMER:

Christ the Redeemer is an Art Deco statue of Jesus Christ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, created by Polish-French sculptor Paul Landowski



and built by the Brazilian engineer Heitor da Silva Costa, in collaboration with the French engineer Albert Caquot. The face was created by the Romanian artist Gheorghe Leonida. The statue is 30 metres (98 ft) tall, not including its 8-metre (26 ft) pedestal, and its arms stretch 28 metres (92 ft) wide. By comparison, it is approximately two-thirds the height of the Statue of Liberty's height from base to torch.

The statue weighs 635 metric tons (625 long, 700 short tons), and is located at the peak of the 700-metre (2,300 ft) Corcovado mountain in the Tijuca Forest National Park overlooking the city of Rio. A

symbol of Christianity across the world, the statue has also become a cultural icon of both Rio de Janeiro and Brazil, and is listed as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. It is made of reinforced concrete and soapstone, and was constructed between 1922 and 1931.