Comprehensive Guide to the 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India (2024 Update)

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India boasts a rich tapestry of cultural and natural heritage, with 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites as of December 2024. The latest additions—Santiniketan, Rabindranath Tagore's cultural and educational hub in West Bengal, and the Moidams (Mound-Burial System) of the Ahom Dynasty in Assam—highlight the nation's enduring historical and cultural significance.

Latest Additions in 2024

1. **Moidams – The Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty** (Assam): Officially added on July 26, 2024, during the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi.

2. **Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala Temples** (Karnataka): Featuring the renowned temples of Belur, Halebid, and Somanathapura.

3. **Santiniketan** (West Bengal): Celebrating Rabindranath Tagore's legacy, this cultural haven was recognized during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Saudi Arabia.

Nominees for 2024-25

India has also proposed several sites for future recognition:

- Gingee Fort (Tamil Nadu)
- Salher Fort (Maharashtra)
- Charaideo Maidam (Assam)
- Panhala Fort (Maharashtra)
- Shivneri Fort (Maharashtra)
- Additional forts in Maharashtra, including Raigad, Pratapgad, and Sindhudurg.

Key Highlights of India's World Heritage Sites

Of the 43 recognized sites, 35 are cultural, 7 are natural, and 1 is a mixed category. These include ancient caves, temples, forts, national parks, and cities that showcase India's diverse cultural and natural heritage. Here's a glimpse into some prominent sites:

1. **Taj Mahal (Agra, 1983)**: A global symbol of love, built by Emperor Shah Jahan.
2. **Ajanta and Ellora Caves (Maharashtra, 1983)**: Marvels of rock-cut architecture showcasing Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain art.
3. **Kaziranga National Park (Assam, 1985)**: Home to two-thirds of the world's one-horned rhinoceroses.
4. **Hampi (Karnataka, 1986)**: The ruins of the Vijayanagara Empire, reflecting exquisite Dravidian architecture.
5. **Western Ghats (2012)**: One of the world's "Hottest Biodiversity Hotspots," spanning multiple states.
6. **Santiniketan (West Bengal, 2023)**: A testament to Tagore's vision of a cultural and educational utopia.

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Complete List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India (2024)

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S.No	Name of Site	Year	Location
1	Ajanta Caves	1983	Maharashtra
2	Ellora Caves	1983	Maharashtra
3	Agra Fort	1983	Agra
4	Taj Mahal	1983	Agra
5	Sun Temple	1984	Orissa
6	Mahabalipuram Monuments	1984	Tamil Nadu
7	Kaziranga National Park	1985	Assam
8	Keoladeo National Park	1985	Rajasthan
9	Manas Wildlife Sanctuary	1985	Assam
10	Churches and Convents of Goa	1986	Goa
11	Monuments of Khajuraho	1986	Madhya Pradesh
12	Monuments of Hampi	1986	Karnataka
13	Fatehpur Sikri	1986	Agra
14	Elephanta Caves	1987	Maharashtra

15	Great Living Chola Temples	1987	Tamil Nadu
16	Pattadakal Monuments	1987	Karnataka
17	Sundarbans National Park	1987	West Bengal
18	Nanda Devi & Valley of Flowers National Park	1988	Uttarakhand
19	Monuments of Buddha	1989	Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh
20	Humayun’s Tomb	1993	Delhi
21	Qutub Minar and its Monuments	1993	Delhi
22	Mountain Railways of Darjeeling, Kalka Shimla & Nilgiri	1999	Darjeeling
23	Mahabodhi Temple	2002	Bihar
24	Bhimbetka Rock Shelters	2003	Madhya Pradesh
25	Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus	2004	Maharashtra
26	Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park	2004	Gujarat
27	Red Fort	2007	Delhi
28	Jantar Mantar	2010	Delhi
29	Western Ghats	2012	Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra
30	Hill Forts	2013	Rajasthan
31	Rani Ki Vav (The Queen’s Stepwell)	2014	Gujarat
32	Great Himalayan National Park	2014	Himachal Pradesh
33	Nalanda	2016	Bihar
34	Khangchendzonga National Park	2016	Sikkim
35	Architectural Work of Le Corbusier (Capitol Complex)	2016	Chandigarh
36	The Historic City	2017	Ahmedabad
37	Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles	2018	Mumbai
38	The Pink City	2019	Jaipur
39	Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple	2021	Telangana
40	Dholavira	2021	Gujarat
41	Santiniketan	2023	West Bengal
42	Hoysala Temples	2023	Karnataka

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43	Moidams	2024	Assam

This table provides an organized overview of all 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India as of 2024.

What Are UNESCO World Heritage Sites?

These sites are recognized for their outstanding universal value, deserving protection for future generations. Established under the **1972 UNESCO Convention**, these landmarks celebrate humanity’s creative genius, cultural traditions, and ecological diversity.

Criteria for Selection

A site must meet one or more of the following:

1. Represent human creative genius.
2. Exhibit significant interchange of values.
3. Bear testimony to a cultural tradition.
4. Represent a significant stage in human history.
5. Demonstrate traditional human settlement patterns.
6. Be associated with eve

   nts of universal significance.
7. Showcase natural phenomena or beauty.
8. Reflect major stages of Earth’s history.
9. Highlight significant ecological processes.
10. Preserve critical habitats for biodiversity.

India’s World Heritage Sites not only represent the country’s rich history and biodiversity but also offer a profound glimpse into its cultural soul. Whether you’re an avid traveler or a heritage enthusiast, these sites are a must-visit!

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