

## Seven Wonders of the Modern World

In 2007, the list of the seven wonders of the world was updated. Around 100 million votes from all over the world were cast to select the seven most recognisable, man-made monuments of artistic or architectural value that reflect and celebrate culture and social diversity.

The Great Pyramid of Giza wasn't voted into the top seven, but was named an 'honorary candidate'.



## Taj Mahal

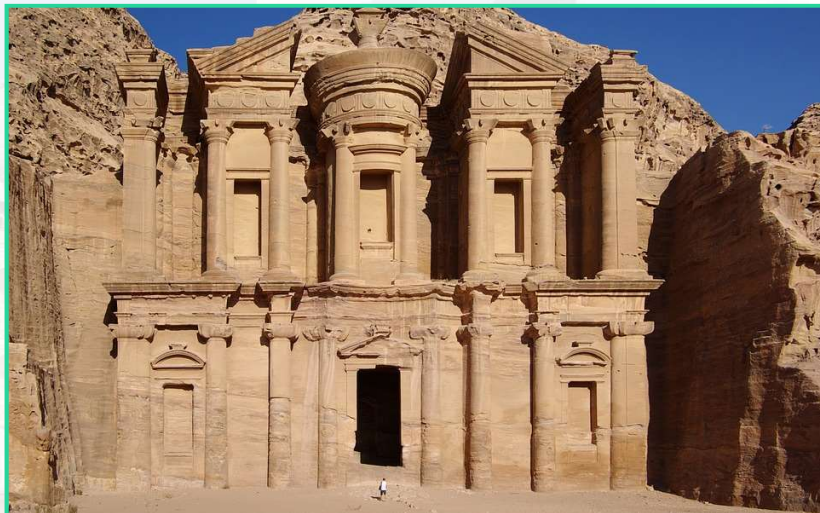


## Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal is a grand tomb, built by Emperor Shah Jahan for his favourite wife. The structure is made of marble and took 20,000 artisans and architects 21 years to complete, finally being finished in 1653. It is estimated that it cost around 32 million rupees to build (equivalent of over \$800 million today). It is considered to be a global masterpiece, perfectly symmetrical and framed by a specially designed 'reflecting pool' in front, and the Yamuna River to the side. The art, beauty and love story surrounding the Taj Mahal are thought to enchant the eight million tourists who visit it every year. The Taj Mahal received the most votes out of any candidate in the selection process for the list of seven wonders, making it the most popular of the seven wonders of the modern world.



## Petra





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Petra is a city carved out of the rocks in Jordan. The central point of the city, the temple, has been featured in many Hollywood films, including 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade'.

Until 30 years ago, Petra remained home to cave-dwelling natives. The Bedouin people who lived there were eventually relocated to caves nearby in order to preserve the site of Petra; however they remain the only people allowed to work and trade within the city. It is rumoured that some lucky tourists manage to find a cave to sleep in for a night, although this is not official practice!

Petra has become a focal point for the incredible abilities of the Nabatean people to carve buildings out of solid rock and construct a working water system in the middle of a dry desert.

Petra was used to attracting around 800,000 visitors per year; however, owing to political unrest and war in neighbouring countries such as Syria, tourist numbers have dwindled in recent years.



## Machu Picchu



## Machu Picchu

Machu Picchu is a historical settlement, now largely in ruins (although 30% of the site has now been restored to its original condition for tourists). It is made of stone and is built on terraces – man-made 'steps' in the hillsides. It is considered to be the best example of Incan engineering and boasts a running water system stretching over one kilometre long.

Originally built as a citadel (a fortress on high ground) for an Incan Emperor, the estate in the Andes, Peru was abandoned just 100 years after it was built when the Spanish conquered the country. Machu Picchu then remained isolated and deserted, widely unknown about (apart from by local, native communities) until 1911, when it was brought to the attention of the world by a historian.

Since 1983, Machu Picchu has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



## Great Wall of China





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Originally built as a way to defend and protect China's northern borders, the Great Wall of China has been standing since 220-206BC. It is made of stone, brick, earth and wood and runs east-to-west across the country. The top of the wall is very wide, allowing people, animals and carts to travel along it. Regular towers built into the wall act as watch towers and accommodation for troops. It is also a relatively easy route to travel along the mountainous region, transporting goods for trade. Today, the Great Wall is one of the world's most popular tourist attractions, receiving approximately 10 million visitors per year. The wall runs for 5500miles – this is made up of 3889 miles of actual wall plus trenches, hills and rivers.



## The Colosseum



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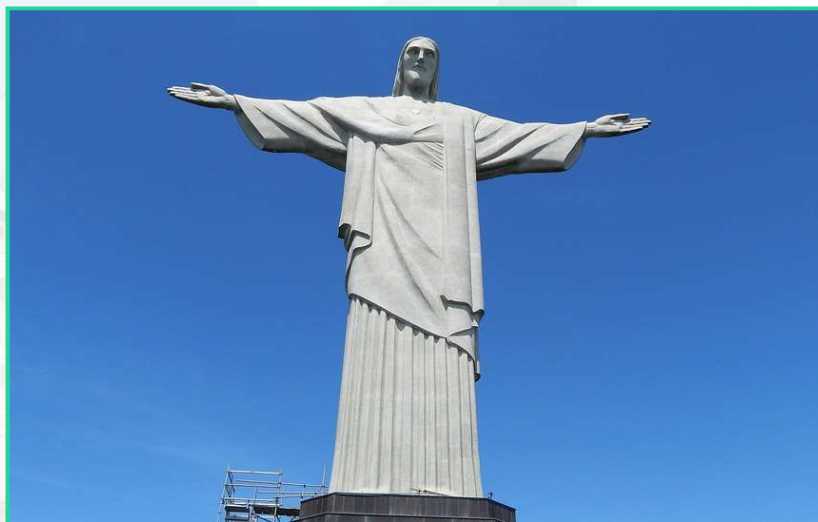
The Colosseum was built between AD72 and AD80 and is the largest amphitheatre ever built. (An amphitheatre is a round performance space usually used for theatre or sports, with banks of seats for the audience around the outside.)

The Colosseum could seat up to 80,000 spectators and was famous for gladiator contests, public executions and dramatic re-enactments of battles. They also used the Colosseum for drama and Greek plays. It hasn't been used as an entertainment venue since medieval times and is now mainly a religious venue and a tourist destination, welcoming approximately 4.2 million visitors every year.

The structure is made of concrete and sand and has been damaged over time by vandalism and earthquakes. The majority of the Colosseum remains intact and remains the focal point of Rome, Italy's capital city.



## Christ the Redeemer



## Christ the Redeemer

Christ the Redeemer is a 30-metre statue of Jesus Christ standing on top of the Corcovado Mountain overlooking Rio de Janeiro. The statue shows Jesus with his arms outstretched, spanning 28 metres across. This symbolises the welcoming of all who pass by as well as the image of Jesus being crucified on a cross.

The statue was completed in 1931 and has undergone regular maintenance and repairs ever since. It is a clear representation of the Roman Catholic religion widely practised in Brazil and a symbol for Christianity around the world.

Approximately 1.8 million tourists visit the statue every year and it has become one of the most recognisable features of Rio and Brazil.



## Chichén Itzá





## Chichén Itzá

Chichén Itzá is an archaeological site in Yucutan, Mexico. The central structure of the site is the Temple of Kukulcan, a steep-sided pyramid. The pyramid stands 24m high and has steps leading up each of its four sides to the altar on the top. It was built around the 12<sup>th</sup> century by the Mayan people. It has a total of 365 steps – the same number of days in the Mayan calendar year. Twice a year, at the summer and winter equinox, the pyramid casts unusual and mythical shadows that look like feathered serpents crawling down the sides. This is a popular tourist attraction today and has always been considered to be a special and mythical quality of the religious structure. There are various other ruins at the site of Chichén Itzá, one of which is a ball court where teams (sometimes including prisoners) would compete to get a small rubber ball through stone circles on the walls, positioned eight metres off the ground. The winning team were highly celebrated and given trophies ranging from skulls to feather belts and headdresses.

