

Wonders of the World

Subjects: History

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Various lists of the Wonders of the World have been compiled from antiquity to the present day, to catalogue the world's most spectacular natural wonders and manmade structures. The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World is the first known list of the most remarkable creations of classical antiquity; it was based on guidebooks popular among Ancient Greece sightseers and only includes works located around the Mediterranean rim and in Mesopotamia. The number seven was chosen because the Greeks believed it represented perfection and plenty, and because it was the number of the five planets known anciently, plus the sun and moon. Many similar lists have been made.

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1. Seven Wonders of the Ancient World



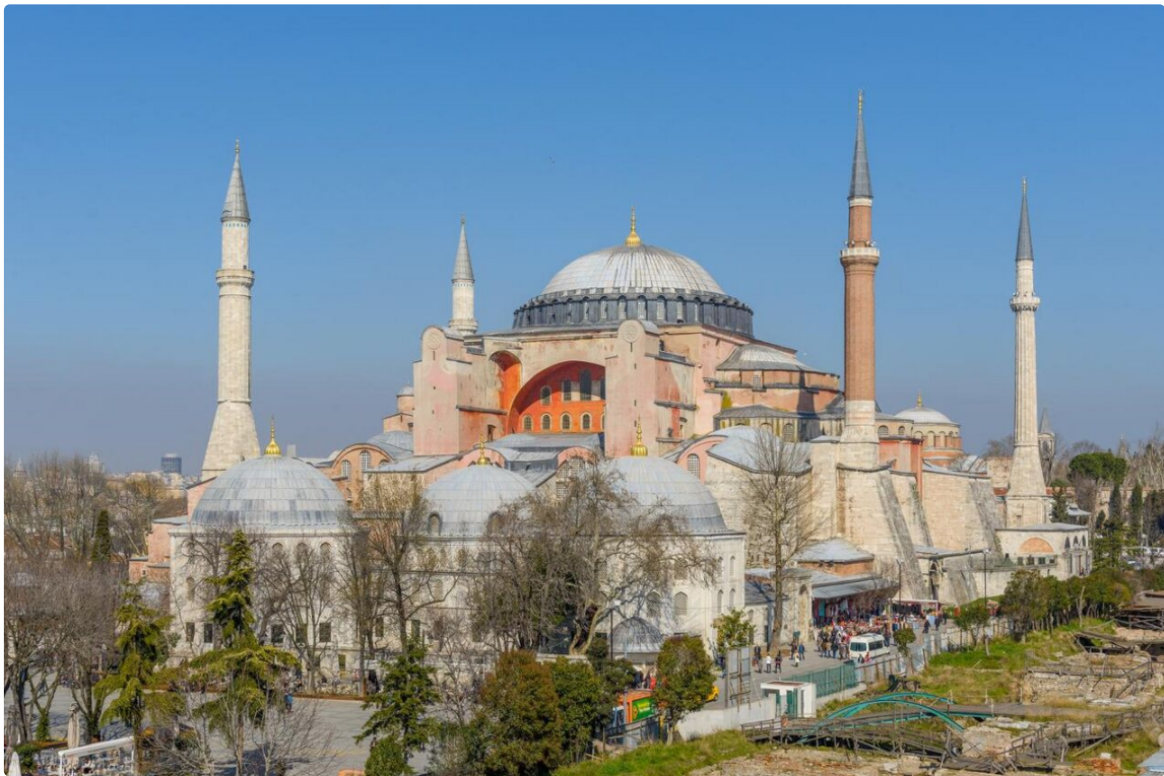
The Great Pyramid of Giza, the only wonder of the ancient world still in existence. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1590110>



The Colosseum in Rome. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1523904>



The Great Wall of China. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1147695>



Hagia Sophia. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1139153>



Stonehenge. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1162032>



Machu Picchu. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1370002>



Taj Mahal. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1174472>



Empire State Building. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1642630>





The Victoria Falls contain the largest sheet of falling water in the world in terms of area.

<https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1514282>



The Great Barrier Reef. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1907018>



CN Tower. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1749303>



Chichen Itza. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1861147>



Ely Cathedral. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1449342>



Old City of Jerusalem. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1719678>



The Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1177655>



Grand Canyon. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1133663>



The London sewerage system's original Abbey Mills pumping station. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1891108>



The Sydney Opera House. <https://handwiki.org/wiki/index.php?curid=1746731>

The historian Herodotus (484 – ca. 425 BC) and the scholar Callimachus of Cyrene (ca. 305–240 BC), at the Museum of Alexandria, made early lists of seven wonders. Their writings have not survived, except as references.

The classic seven wonders were:

- Colossus of Rhodes
- Great Pyramid of Giza
- Hanging Gardens of Babylon
- Lighthouse of Alexandria
- Mausoleum at Halicarnassus
- Statue of Zeus at Olympia
- Temple of Artemis at Ephesus

The only ancient world wonder that still exists is the Great Pyramid of Giza.

2. Lists from Other Eras

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, some writers wrote their own lists with names such as Wonders of the Middle Ages, Seven Wonders of the Middle Ages, Seven Wonders of the Medieval Mind, and Architectural Wonders of the Middle Ages. However, it is unlikely that these lists originated in the Middle Ages, because the word "medieval" was not invented until the Enlightenment-era, and the concept of a Middle Age did not become popular until the 16th century. *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* refers to them as "later list[s]",^[1] suggesting the lists were created after the Middle Ages.

Many of the structures on these lists were built much earlier than the Medieval Ages but were well known.^{[2][3]}

Typically representative are:^{[1][2][4][5]}

- Catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa
- Colosseum
- Great Wall of China
- Hagia Sophia
- Leaning Tower of Pisa
- Porcelain Tower of Nanjing
- Stonehenge

Other sites sometimes included on such lists:

- Cairo Citadel^[6]
- Cluny Abbey^[7]
- Ely Cathedral^[8]
- Taj Mahal^[9]

3. Recent Lists

Following in the tradition of the classical list, modern people and organisations have made their own lists of wonderful things ancient and modern. Some of the most notable lists are presented below.

3.1. American Society of Civil Engineers

In 1994, the American Society of Civil Engineers compiled a list of Seven Wonders of the Modern World, paying tribute to the "greatest civil engineering achievements of the 20th century".^{[10][11]}

Wonder	Date started	Date finished	Location	Significance
Channel Tunnel	December 1, 1987	May 6, 1994	Strait of Dover, between the United Kingdom and France	The longest undersea portion of any tunnel in the world.
CN Tower	February 6, 1973	June 26, 1976	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	Tallest freestanding structure in the world 1976–2007.
Empire State Building	March 17, 1930	April 11, 1931	New York City , New York, U.S.	Tallest structure in the world 1931–1954, Tallest freestanding structure in the world 1931–1967, Tallest Building in the world 1931–1970. First building with 100+ stories.
Golden Gate Bridge	January 5, 1933	May 27, 1937	Golden Gate Strait, north of San Francisco , California , U.S.	The longest suspension bridge main span in the world from 1937 to 1964.
Itaipu Dam	January 1970	May 5, 1984	Paraná River, between Brazil and Paraguay	The largest operating hydroelectric facility in the world in terms of annual energy generation.
Delta and Zuiderzee Works	1920	May 10, 1997	Zeeland, South Holland, North Holland, Friesland and Flevoland, Netherlands	The largest hydraulic engineering project undertaken by the Netherlands during the twentieth century.
Panama Canal	January 1, 1880	January 7, 1914	Isthmus of Panama	One of the largest and most difficult engineering projects ever undertaken.

3.2. USA Today's New Seven Wonders

In November 2006 the American national newspaper *USA Today* and the American television show *Good Morning America* revealed a new list of New Seven Wonders as chosen by six judges.^[12] An eighth wonder was chosen on November 24, 2006 from viewer feedback.^[13]

Number	Wonder	Location
1	Potala Palace	Lhasa, Tibet, <i>China</i>
2	Old City of Jerusalem	Jerusalem ^[14]
3	Polar ice caps	Polar regions
4	Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument	Hawaii, <i>United States</i>
5	Internet	Earth
6	Mayan ruins	Yucatán Peninsula, México
7	Great Migration of Serengeti and Masai Mara	Tanzania and Kenya
8	Grand Canyon (viewer-chosen eighth wonder)	Arizona, <i>United States</i>









3.3. Seven Natural Wonders of the World

Similar to the other lists of wonders, there is no consensus on a list of seven natural wonders of the world, and there has been debate over how large the list should be. One of the many existing lists was compiled by CNN:^[15]

- Aurora
- Grand Canyon
- Great Barrier Reef
- Harbor of Rio de Janeiro
- Mount Everest
- Parícutin volcano
- Victoria Falls

3.4. New7Wonders of the World

In 2001 an initiative was started by the Swiss corporation New7Wonders Foundation to choose the New7Wonders of the World from a selection of 200 existing monuments.^[16] Twenty-one finalists were announced January 1, 2006.^[17] Egyptians were not happy that the only surviving original wonder, the Great Pyramid of Giza, would have to compete with the likes of the Statue of Liberty, the Sydney Opera House, and other landmarks, calling the project absurd. In response, Giza was named an honorary Candidate.^[18] The results were announced on July 7, 2007, in Lisbon, Portugal:^[19]

Wonder	Date of construction	Location
Great Wall of China	Since 7th century BC ^[20]	 <i>China</i>
Petra	c. 100 BC	 <i>Jordan</i>
<i>Christ the Redeemer</i>	Opened October 12, 1931	 <i>Brazil</i>
Machu Picchu	c. AD 1450	 <i>Peru</i>
Chichen Itza	c. AD 600	 <i>Mexico</i>
Colosseum	Completed AD 80	 <i>Italy</i>
Taj Mahal	Completed c. AD 1648	 <i>India</i>
Great Pyramid of Giza (honorary candidate)	Completed c. 2560 BC	 <i>Egypt</i>

3.5. New7Wonders of Nature

New7Wonders of Nature (2007–11), a contemporary effort to create a list of seven natural wonders chosen through a global poll, was organized by the same group as the New7Wonders of the World campaign.

- Iguazu Falls
- Hạ Long Bay
- Jeju Island
- Puerto Princesa Underground River
- Table Mountain
- Komodo
- Amazon rainforest

3.6. New7Wonders Cities

New7Wonders Cities is the third global vote organized by New7Wonders.

- Durban, *South Africa*
- Vigan, *The Philippines*
- Havana, *Cuba*
- Kuala Lumpur, *Malaysia*
- Beirut, *Lebanon*
- Doha, *Qatar*
- La Paz, *Bolivia*

3.7. Seven Wonders of the Underwater World

The Seven Underwater Wonders of the World was a list drawn up by CEDAM International, an American-based non-profit group for divers, dedicated to ocean preservation and research.

In 1989 CEDAM brought together a panel of marine scientists, including Dr. Eugenie Clark, to pick underwater areas which they considered to be worthy of protection. The results were announced at The National Aquarium in Washington DC by actor Lloyd Bridges, star of TV's *Sea Hunt*.^[21]

- Palau
- Belize Barrier Reef
- Great Barrier Reef
- Deep-Sea Vents
- Galápagos Islands
- Lake Baikal
- Northern Red Sea

3.8. Seven Wonders of the Industrial World

British author Deborah Cadbury wrote *Seven Wonders of the Industrial World*, a book telling the stories of seven great feats of engineering of the 19th and early 20th centuries.^[22] In 2003, the BBC aired a seven-part docudrama exploring the same feats, with Cadbury as a producer. Each episode dramatised the construction of one of the following industrial wonders:^[23]

1. *SS Great Eastern*
2. Bell Rock Lighthouse
3. Brooklyn Bridge
4. London sewerage system
5. First Transcontinental Railroad
6. Panama Canal
7. Hoover Dam

3.9. Seven Wonders of the World Film

Seven Wonders of the World is a 1956 film in which Lowell Thomas searches the world for natural and man made wonders and invites the audience to try to update the ancient Greek Wonders of the World list.

3.10. Seven Wonders of the Solar System

In a 1999 article, *Astronomy* magazine listed the "Seven Wonders of the Solar System". This article was later made into a video.^[24]

- Enceladus, a moon of Saturn
- The Great red spot of Jupiter
- The Asteroid belt
- The surface of the Sun
- The Oceans of Earth
- The Rings of Saturn
- Olympus Mons on Mars

3.11. Other Lists of Wonders of the World

Numerous other authors and organisations have composed lists of the wonders of the world. For example:

- British biographer, science writer, and novelist Ronald W. Clark published a book of man-made and natural wonders titled *Wonders of the World*, which lists 52 wonders, one for each week of the year.^[25]
- Travel writer Howard Hillman published two books on the subject, one with 10 man-made wonders,^[26] and one with 10 natural wonders.^[27]

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