

# UNESCO'S World Heritage Programme and Tourism

Today there are over 750 World Heritage Sites around the globe including such varied sights as the pyramids in Egypt, Vatican City and the Mount Kenya National Park. How did this all come about?

1972 saw the introduction of UNESCO'S International Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage. The aim of this convention was to lay down rules for the protection of unique cultural and natural treasures worldwide. Up to the present day, these guidelines have been signed by 178 countries, binding them to protect and keep World Heritage Sites that lay within their borders for future generations.

## Worth protecting

UNESCO cultural heritage includes listed buildings, groups of buildings and cultural landscapes, as well as industrial monuments and cave drawings. Natural heritage refers to geological formations, fossil finds, natural landscapes and nature reservations for animals and plants that are on the verge of extinction.

Every year a UNESCO committee made up of the different nations decides which sites are to be entered on to the World Heritage list. Some of the criteria that stipulate whether a new entry is made include, for example, 'uniqueness' and 'authenticity', that is, the historical originality of a cultural monument, the current 'state of preservation' or the existence of a convincing preservation plan of for a Natural Inheritance Site.

## Tourism as an opportunity

Tourism can be a danger as well as an opportunity for the preservation of a World Inheritance Site. This is why the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC), which functions – in Paris - as the central location for coordinating all World Heritage Sites, developed since 1991 a World Heritage Tourism Programme.

This is not just intended to generate funds for the preservation of culture and nature. Sites that tourists have actually visited themselves stay in their memories as worth preserving and protecting. Tourism thereby effectuates a great understanding in the public for preserving World Heritage.

And the advantages for tourism? Through the support it gives today, it ensures that wonderful sights are preserved for the future.

## Working together for World Heritage: UNESCO and LTU Touristik

Through the programmes of its brands ITS Reisen, Jahn Reisen and Tjaereborg, LTU Touristik offers round journeys and trips to numerous World Heritage Sites. The travel company sees as UNESCO does, that tourism is a chance for World Heritage. This is why WHC and LTU Touristik have entered into a partnership in order to stand together for the preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage. Tourism should help to protect World Heritage under the principle of protection through tourism.

