

## Spain gets most entries to world's best tourist villages ranking

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Madrid : Three remote Spanish communities have been named as among the best villages in the world for tourists - the most entries for a single country.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) recently revealed its annual list of the best tourism villages across the globe, with those included in the list scoring highly on social and environmental sustainability as well as their tourism work.

The 32 destinations are in countries including Austria, Vietnam, China, Israel and Italy. Spain is represented with the medieval Catalan village of Rupit; Alquézar, in the Sierra de Guara mountains in Aragon; and Guadalupe, known for its monastery, in the Extremadura region.

Manuel Butler, Director of the Spanish Tourist Office in London, said, "We are delighted that the UNWTO has placed Spain as the country with the most appearances in its list. We aim to promote community-led tourism across Spain and are thrilled at the international recognition."

The accolade recognises rural destinations that are embracing tourism as a driver of development and new opportunities for jobs and income, while preserving and promoting community values.

The 32 award-winning villages are in 18 countries in South America, Asia and Africa as well as Europe. They were evaluated by an independent advisory board on criteria including culture, natural resources and sustainability - be that economic, social or environmental.

For the 2022 awards, a total of 136 villages were put forward for

consideration by 57 UNWTO member states (each could nominate up to three villages).

"For rural communities everywhere, tourism can be a true gamechanger in providing jobs, supporting local businesses and keeping traditions alive," said UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. "The UNWTO Best Tourism Villages list showcases the power of the sector to drive economic diversification and create opportunities for all outside big cities."

The awards ceremony will take place in Al'Ula, Saudi Arabia, in February 2023.