

1. Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood in St. Petersburg, Russia

The church stands on the spot where Emperor Alexander II was assassinated in 1881 – hence, “spilled blood.” Built between 1883 and 1907, the church’s mosaic beauty is largely due to the funds supplied by the Imperial family and private donors. If the exterior leaves your jaw agape, step inside ... and look up.

2. Las Lejas Sanctuary in Narino, Colombia

Here’s a new one – crossing a river canyon just to get to church. The contrast of a church in the woodlands, stone amidst greenery, steeple amidst trees, makes this an illustrious sight. There’s beauty in the untraditional.

3. Church of the Transfiguration on Kizhi Island, Russia

The remote, island location – perhaps more so than the 22 bulbs on the building – makes this church worthy of a second look. This piece of literal 18th century woodwork is a summer church, meaning it’s only open in the summer months because of the climate. The heated, winter church – Church of the Intercession – is located on the south side of the island.

4. Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain

Sagrada Familia is magnificent, despite the fact that it’s unfinished – and will be until about 2026. Construction of the basilica continues today, more than 130 years after the first stone was laid.

5. Eldridge Street Synagogue in New York, New York

*Synagogue added by editor.

6. Church of Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem

The church stands on the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane – the garden in which the Bible says Jesus and his disciples prayed. But in addition to the biblical significance of its placement, the church’s towering golden domes makes it an easy landmark to recognize in Jerusalem.

7. Thorncrown Chapel in Eureka Springs, Arizona

Largely due to its awe-inspiring architecture, the chapel was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2000, just 20 years after it opened. The chapel is composed of 425 windows and over 6,000 square feet of glass, melding worship with nature.

8. Matthias Church in Budapest, Hungary

Matthias Church hasn't always been a beautiful church. It was built in the 13th Century, renovated according to the latest fads, stripped into a mosque and then fashioned into its current state in the late 1800s. The roof may be the real stunner with its Zsolnay ceramic tiles.

9. Notre-Dame Basilica of Montreal in Quebec, Canada

Grand is too little a word to describe the beauty of this basilica. Crafted in the style of Gothic Revival architecture, its interior is laden with radiating blues and golds, inspired by Paris' Sainte-Chapelle.

10. Nauvoo Temple in Nauvoo, Illinois

*Temple added by editor.

11. Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, France

The inspiration for Montreal's Notre-Dame Basilica, Sainte-Chapelle – the “Holy Chapel” – has stood tall since the 13th Century. Its stained glass windows are where the real beauty lies. The more than 6,000 square feet of stained glass windows depict over 1,000 figures from the Bible.

12. Cadet Chapel at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado

Though not necessarily stunning from the outside, Cadet Chapel's 17 spires get it noticed. It's the most popular man-made attraction in the state. Made of aluminum, steel and glass, the interior's Protestant chapel is one to behold. Cadet Chapel also includes Catholic, Jewish, and Buddhist chapels, as well as “all-faiths rooms.”

13. Duomo di Milano in Milan, Italy

The grandiosity of this cathedral is supported by its size. The largest church in Italy and the fifth largest church in the world, Milan Cathedral took nearly 600 years to complete.

14. Masjid Kristal in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia

*Mosque added by editor.

15. San Diego Temple in San Diego, California

This 72,000 square foot double-towered temple was the third temple to open in California. A garden-filled atrium connects the two towers, which are finished with marble chips.

16. The Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes in Canela, Brazil

It's no wonder this "Cathedral of Stone" is a major tourist attraction. It's simple, yet ornate.

17. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Peterhof, Russia

Built in 1905, the Cathedral was shut down in 1935 and severely damaged during World War II. Thanks to the reconstruction efforts of the community of believers, the Cathedral is now a fully functioning church and a sight to behold.

18. St. John Cantius Church in Chicago, Illinois

*Church added by editor.

19. Rosary Chapel in the Church of Santo Domingo in Puebla, Mexico

*Church added by editor.

20. Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

Since the first stone was set in place in 1907, the Cathedral has held the funerals of American Presidents Eisenhower, Reagan and Ford. You can chalk up the Cathedral's beauty to its 83 years of construction.

21. Shipka Memorial Church in Shipka, Bulgaria

Dedicated to the soldiers that died for the liberation of Bulgaria in the Russo-Turkish War, Shipka Memorial Church includes the remains of the slain in the church's crypt. Names of regiments and volunteers are inscribed on marble plates within the temple.

22. Chapel on the Rock (St. Catherine of Siena Chapel) in Allenspark, Colorado

Located on a literal rock – and the grounds of the Saint Malo Retreat Center – the Chapel has survived both fire and flood, which caused the Retreat Center to close. The chapel remains open and is a popular site for pictures and weddings.

23. Gloucester Cathedral in Gloucester, United Kingdom

Christians have worshiped for over 1,300 years in Gloucester Cathedral, though the religious affiliation of those who meet here has changed hands a few times. Fun fact: Harry Potter movies and the 2008 *Dr. Who* Christmas special have filmed within the Cathedral.

24. St. Basil Cathedral in Moscow, Russia

The Red Square's gum drop-topped cathedral, which dates back to the 1500s, doesn't have such a sweet history. The Cathedral's construction was ordered by Ivan the Terrible, set for destruction – courtesy of Stalin – and later turned into a museum, as it now stands.

25. St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, Italy

The interior is what's worth talking about. If a picture is worth 1,000 words, words may not be necessary when there's 8,000 square meters of mosaics to look at.

26. Canterbury Cathedral in Kent, England

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* tell of this cathedral. At 1,400 years, it's the oldest Cathedral still in use in England. Nearly 2,000 services are held at this bastion every year.

27. St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City

St. Peter's Basilica is well-known by the Catholic Church. Located within Vatican City, St. Peter's Basilica is one of the two largest churches in the world, and it dates back to the 17th Century.

28. Blue Mosque in Yerevan, Armenia

Built in the 18th Century before the Soviet Union fiasco occurred, Blue Mosque is the only surviving mosque in Yerevan today.

29. Paoay Church in Ilocos Norte, Philippines

A simple, stone-and-brick church, Paoy Church has stood in its place – largely resistant to earthquakes – since the 1700s. The church was built in the style of European Baroque

architecture, which was adapted to include the two dozen buttresses necessary to support the church during earthquakes.

30. Holy Trinity Church in Gergeti, Georgia

*Church added by editor.

31. St. Clement Church in Chicago, Illinois

*Church added by editor.

32. Neue Synagoge in Berlin, Germany

Built as the main synagogue for the Berlin Jewish community, it seats 3,000 – the largest synagogue in Germany at the time of its construction. Neue Synagoge includes terracotta and colored, glazed bricks at its front.

33. La Enseñanza Church in Mexico City, Mexico

*Church added by editor.

34. Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France

Notre Dame took some 300 years to complete and continues to draw eyes for its fine French Gothic architecture. The Cathedral's structure suffered from the French Revolution but was restored.