

Our Concept

2.1. Highlights	Dimensions of Travel Quality (TQ) The whole process of TQ The components of TQ The list of 5000 highlights	25 26 27 28
2.2. Styles	Styles of Traveling Pioneering spirit Traveling in Time Intensity and luxury	30 34 35 36
2.3. Limits	Enhanced intensity Ready for the limit How much stress is reasonable The Limits – The top 32	37 38 39 40
2.4. Completeness	Concepts of completeness The Lists The World Heritage List Misunderstandings of quality	41 43 44 48

2.1. Highlights:

Four dimensions of Travel Quality

- (1) **Focusing on „Highlights“**
- (2) **...of the whole world**
- (3) **...visited with passion**
- (4) **...reflected with interaction.**



1. Highlights - beyond quantity : “Most traveled” is based on quantity. However, “Best traveled” is ranked on quality. We believe that it is not the number of regions that define it, but the amount of highlights. They can be defined objectively and systematically. We will present this highlight list in about 2 years. “Best traveled” are those who have seen most of the highlights – the unique places. Augustinus and later Marco Polo said: “The world is a book. Those who don’t travel read only one page.” - The “best traveled” have read the whole book. It can only be a book of highlights.

2. The whole world – comprehensive - in 10 years: We are striving for a list, complete with all countries, relevant regions, administrative units and all highlights: A System of the World Highlights. By investigating the relevant sources like the World Heritage List and by traveling we define a traveler’s life list, an objective and systematic list that answers the question: What is the whole world? We want to answer this core question comprehensively: What should you have seen if you want to say: I have seen “the whole world” - unique sites, superlatives, defined by clear criteria - the top 5 for about 1.000 categories - about 5.000 places. We have proven that you can visit all of them in 10 years. But our top rankings in quantity show that this seems to be the maximum. And the 10 years timeframe requires ideal conditions.

3. Passion - dedicated to traveling and the UNESCO World Heritage: Traveling is the only thing we do, and it is fun... most of the time. It is the best we can think of, thus the passion. Traveling enlivens our mind to preserve the beauty of our planet. We are contributing to the preservation by supporting the World Heritage Sites. But our selection goes much further - all inspiring and interesting travel destinations.

4. Interaction - coping with intensity: The challenge of the intensity of our traveling is coping with the continuous inflow of information and impressions. We try to solve this problem through systematic documentation, which comprises not only photos, but a comprehensive database and interaction. We share our information on Facebook: Search for “Teodoro Murallon” and in the near future visit our blog “Defining travel quality”

The Process of Travel Quality

- 1) **Selecting Highlights**
- 2) **Optimizing the itinerary to the sites**
- 3) **Enjoying the experience**
- 4) **Contributing to the preservation**
- 5) **Sharing the experience**



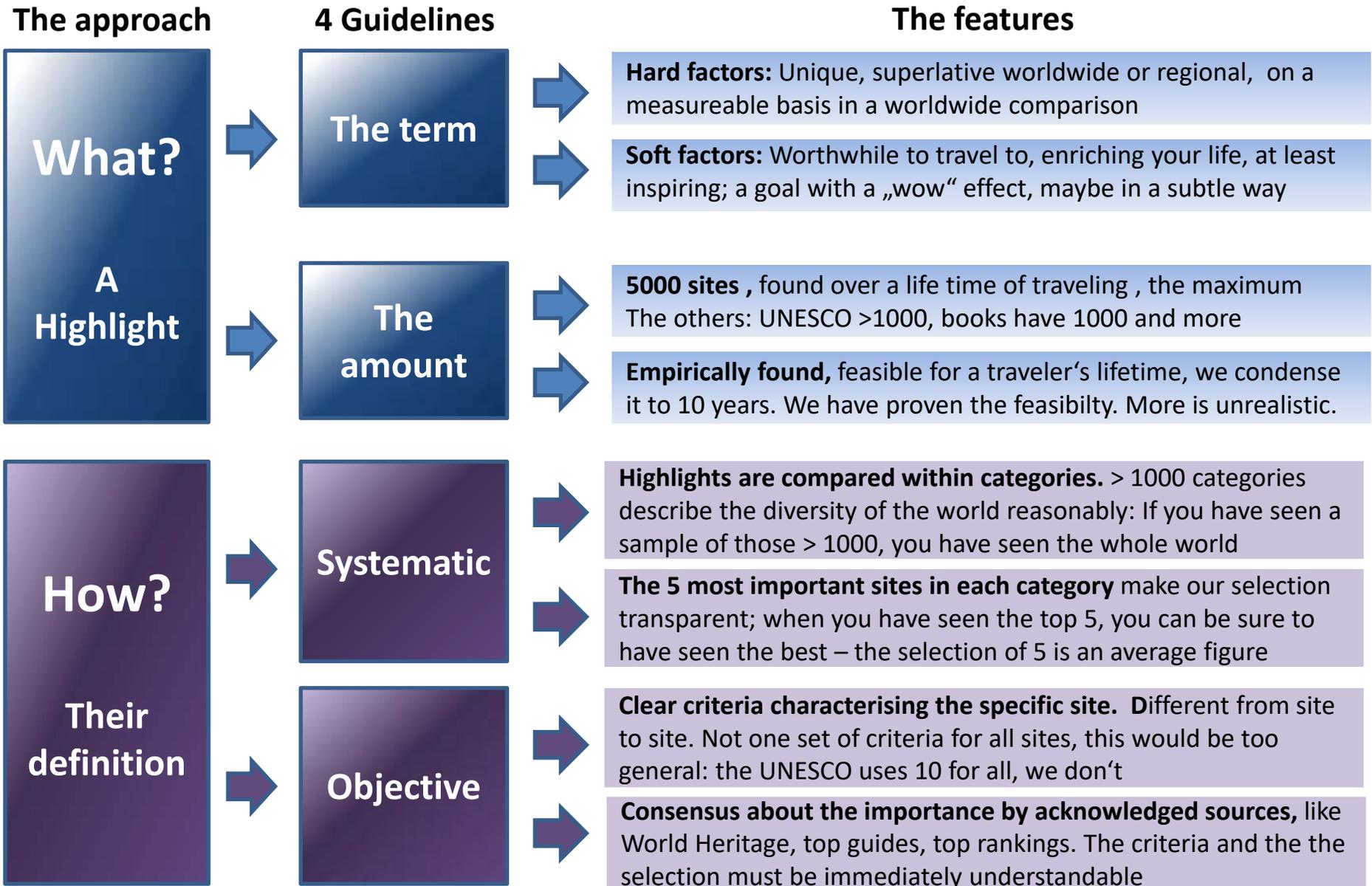
In the Congo River, DRC,
2015, Frank and Teo

- Travel quality is based on a convincing **process for the selection of objectives** and an **effective process for managing the traveling**.
- The objectives must lead a traveler to sites which epitomize the beauty of nature and the important expressions and traces of human life. We call them **highlights**.
- The quality of their selection stems from an **objective and systematic approach**. Objectivity is an ambition which is for most people very provocative. We go for superlatives, worldwide or valid at least for an important region. The criteria must be clear. A waterfall has height, volume, width, volume and amount of falls. A town has a unique setting of architecture, planning, infrastructure and history, the uniqueness must be convincing. Evaluations by institutions help. The beauty of a painting can not be objectified? It is in the eye of the beholder? It can: The amount of visitors (the eyes of all beholders). Mona Lisa wins. In case of doubt we take all candidates to avoid any quarrel. In discussions many are lost in theoretical debates, in practice all the problems of selecting can be solved rather easily.
- **Defining highlights** is the ground for travel quality.
- The implementation into a process of traveling is not only about the efficiency of logistics, it aims to **enliven** and to augment the **enjoyment** of the experience of the highlights.
- The transformation of these highlights into an **efficient itinerary, contributing to the preservation** of the highlights and **sharing the experiences** with others is the **implementation** of the concept into travel action.

The Key Components of TQ



The Key Components of a Highlight



At present a data base

“The List” is our collection of travel objectives, outstanding sites, superlatives and/or unique sites. The list is part of a travel concept that we explain in this presentation. It is **not a stand-alone list**, the travel concept is the framework for the list. Sites are not on the list which don't fit in the travel concept. This is the most important perspective in understanding the list. For the time being the list is an ACCESS data base in all the formats this software allows. The 5.000 list is almost finalized in the draft version, that means in a state which allows to say, yes it is about this number, that we are talking about.

The explanation is the key

But there is a lot of work about the final **definition of the categories** (around 1.500), because that is one of the key ideas: To rank the highlights by category. If you line the highlights in a row – the top 5 – than the highlight definition becomes plausible and transparent.

The list of names wouldn't help very much. Everyone can set up a list of 5.000 sites. But you have to **explain the uniqueness**. Some rough numbers: The names of list is only 10% of the work, 20% is the categorization, 80% is the explanation.

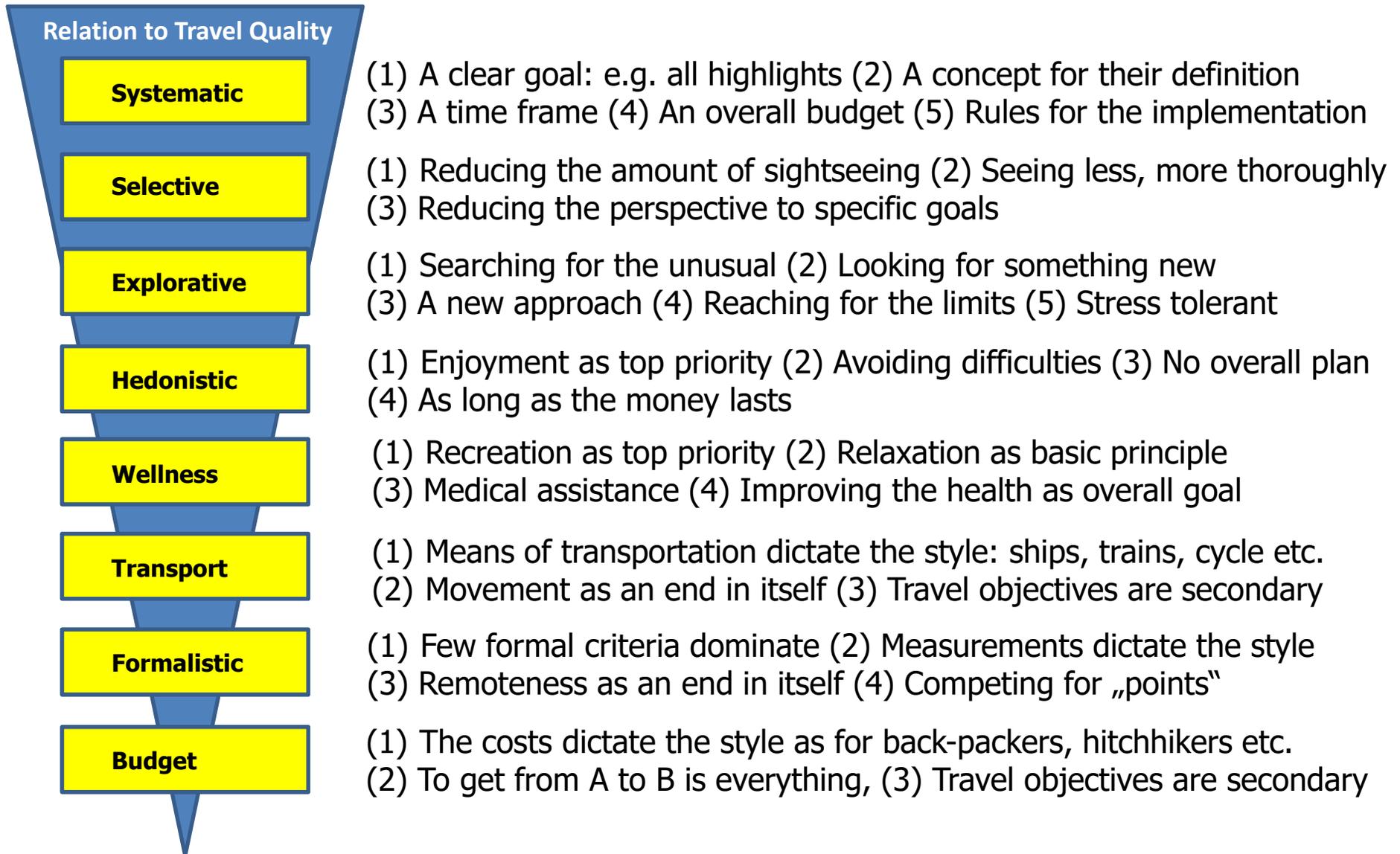
The form of the list is not clear because the **conditions are not clear yet**. A book or an Internet site? If it is a book it is realistic to talk about a maximum of 1000 pages. In the case we can only put 5 highlights on one page. Name, location and categorization. A small picture and the explanation.



Convincing in 12 lines

Our **ambition for the explanation** is quite high. We want to convince everybody with just about 12 lines that this site is unique or is one or more superlatives. Note that we postulate that our list is objective. And we really mean it. Not just simple marketing. And that doesn't come for free – at least that is the present state. Everybody can set up a list, but not of this quality, this takes a lot of work and of personal checking on site. And here we have an advantage due to our extreme traveling.

There are different travel styles because of different goals and therefore different logistics. We explain the definitions and a schematic relationship with Travel Quality. The reality is more complex. Our key point: **TQ cannot be assigned to one style alone, it is multi-stylistic**, depending on the individual situation.



Examples for Travel Styles

Some travelers represent one style in a very typical form. A typification can be drawn from material in the Internet, e.g. Facebook and the travel clubs, especially TBT Series, biographies, travel stories. For the time I will mention only some names because the „outing“ would take too much time. The debate would be about style and quality. So we characterize in general. You find extreme travelers for all styles, but not for „Hedonistic“ and „Wellness“. Clear: This is not meant to be extreme.

Systematic

This website makes it clear, that Teo and I travel very systematically. It is the origin of our quality. William Baekeland is the best candidate for „the most systematic“. His travel list of 12.000 objectives, his means and connections will enable him to outperform everybody. I will support him on the system.

Selective

This group is by far the biggest. If you sort the criteria in TBT you will find travelers with very specific preferences. They don't have the broad spectrum of the systematic travelers who travel globally and with many criteria, but they are very focused. The selective style has a big advantage: Less, but thoroughly. Some focus on the World Heritage Sites, others on festivals or dangerous places etc.

Explorative

The great examples are found in history. See our page on important books. But exploration is not only history. Michael Martin is not only a great photograph, they call him the king of slide presentation, his desert crossings and motor cycle rides are spectacular. Kolja Spöri and Artemy Lebedev did remarkable winter travels to Oymyakon. Patrick Woodhead and Viktor Boyarsky traversed the Antarctic. **This is the real traveling. The style which creates the travel dreams.**

Hedonistic

This is what we are going to do when we reach 80, after the phase „Extremes“: We'll start with crossing the North Atlantic on the Queen Mary II: Celebrating our travel career. And then only wellness will be reasonable. But we cannot kill the bug: We will find out the nicest wellness resorts.

Wellness

Transport

If you go to „TBT Series“ and look for trains and airlines then you will find the travelers who focus on transport: The train buffs and aviation freaks. We know people who travel 14 days on the Transsib and return as soon as possible if they arrive in Vladivostok without having seen the beautiful harbor and the highlights along the tracks. They prove the definition: Sightseeing is secondary, the most.

Formalistic

All the travelers who go for points, who are ticking-off. But there are some who bring the form to the extreme: The most countries per day, the most countries in 80 days, the most in one year, all the provinces. Roman Brühwiler used to be the extreme, he has changed from ticking-off to enjoying. Bravo!

Budget

You can call it backpacker style as well. We mean lots of traveling and little sight-seeing. Heinz Stücke, p. 23 is the example. The **alternative is cheap traveling and good sightseeing**. But then you need time. This would be my favorite if I would be young. See p. 67. I confess, I envy backpackers.

Travel Style Changes over the Life Span

2.2. Styles:

- Some travelers represent **one style** in a very typical form throughout their travel career.
- Some **changes their style** over the life span.
- Some changes their style but still a typical style prevails all the time, the one that is in their genes. In my case it is the systematic style. In other cases it is the transport dominated style: What ever they do they stay ship, aircraft or train buffs. Teo travels systematically, but his prime motive is to share traveling with his community. There are not so many styles, but there are many different motives for traveling.
- The travel style changes with preferences due to age, availability of money and fulfilled dreams.
- I use myself because I don't have any other example: I want to show that quality traveling is multi-stylistic.

Profession	My years in college and university	My post graduate years	Researcher	Teaching, consulting	Retirement Entrepreneur	Retirement Active	Retirement Aging
Travel Style	Budget	Selective Transport		Systematic		Transport	Hedonistic Wellness
Travel Quality (TQ)				TQ prevails Going for intensity and the extremes		TQ as a system	
Travel Area	A bit of everything: Europe, Africa	Focus on sailing in Europe, globally selective	Focus on motorcycle Europe and Africa, glob selective	Focus on systematic, globally	Focus on systematic, globally, extremes	Focus on systematic, globally, a bit explorative by ship	Focus on wellness and opportunistic

The Social Dimension of Travel Styles

There is another dimension of travel styles, not the logistical but the **social dimension**

- Traveling builds up **knowledge**. We have learned in 12 years of traveling as much as during our studies.
- Knowledge reduces **prejudices**, thus traveling contributes to **tolerance**
- Traveling creates a feeling of **satisfaction**, because the whole world gets familiar
- Traveling promotes universal **ethics**

Egoistic travel styles:

- **Records**: I have achieved
- **Show**: I have been there
- **Enjoying**: I had fun
- **Learning**: Now I know

Altruistic travel styles:

- **Learning**: Now I understand
- **Informing**: Now you understand
- **Discovery**: Providing resources
- **Campaigning**: Triggering action
- **Preserving**: Ensuring sustainability
- **Helping**: Reducing poverty



Understanding climate change:

The polar bear is arguably that animal which is affected by climate change the most. He jumps from one ice shelf to the next one to find food. For how long if the ice is melting? Longer, if Trump would travel more and better

Top travelling should have an element of pioneership, a **pioneering spirit**. You should leave the mainstream occasionally and go off the beaten track.

But: How much room for pioneering has been left? Has the whole world been traveled? Not yet. Spots for pioneers still exist, but they become very rare - and getting less and less. Some examples:



In 2016:

- **Darfur** (we were among the few, see page 59),
- **Sahrawi Republic - Agounit** (we were second),
- **Puntland - Qhardo** (we were first, see page 35)

What remains?

Antarctica, remote islands in Antarctica, atolls in the Pacific.

How efficient is a trip to these spots?

Try pioneering with **a new approach**:

- **Circumnavigating** the Southern Ocean with boat and heli
- **Crossing ice fields** with kite skiing
- **Heli Safari** in Southern Africa
- **Balooning** nature parks and rivers
- **New dives**: For best ideas – especially innovative ones - see world champion Karin Sinniger: diveandtraveltheworld.com

Traveling in Time – A Key Competence

2.2. Styles:

An old dream of mankind: Traveling through different times. You remember „Back to the Future“? Not possible? On the contrary, it is a key prerequisite for the quality traveler. The simple traveler perceives traveling as movement between locations, **a quality traveler sees the locations in their evolution over time**. He can **imagine**, he sees behind the obvious - by knowledge and imagination. How much richer is his experience! But that doesn't come for free, you have to get the knowledge. Often the travel guide book is enough. The imagination is for free – that is the good news. **When Charles Darwin sailed with the „Beagle“ his companions saw only shores and waves, he saw the evolution in the biggest time span imaginable.**

What do you see? Stones? ▶



1
The foundation of the Temple of Gwendu
The 2 sites are part of the World Heritage Site „Gyeongju Historic Areas “

Korea: King Munmu unified the 3 kingdoms in the 6th ct. into the „Unified Silla Kingdom“. The birth of a nation. He could have done it only with the help of China, the Tang dynasty. After the unification the Tang showed their true face, they wanted to annex Korea. King Munmu fought back and won. Protecting Korea from Chinese and Japanese aggression marked his life and death. He wanted to be buried on the rocks (3) and to be reborn as a dragon able to protect Korea. His son fulfilled his wish and created the only sea tomb in the world (3). The father wanted his son to play the flute to call him in case of future invasions (2). He would then return as a powerful dragon to protect Korea (5). There is no story in Korea which characterizes the fate of Korea better. So have you seen the bottom of the temple (1), or the dragon coming under these stones (2) into the temple (4)? The rocks (3), or the dragon protecting the temple (5) and Korea? You should see the spirit of Munmu, the creator of Korea.

Or this? The story behind! ▶



What do you see? Rocks? ▶



3
The underwater tomb of King Munmu



4
This is left: the 2 pagodas of the Temple

Or this? The importance! ▶



5

2.2. Styles:

Intensity and Luxury

Travel Quality can go without luxury. But it is nice to have it. But **not as an end in itself** but always for the purpose of **experiencing the highlight with higher intensity**. Usually we only go for luxury if we get a top view this way. For us a good view is among the most important criteria for our choice of hotels. We negotiate hard for a good view.

Travel quality: Luxury (Hotel Cathedral) to be as close as possible to the Semana Santa: Sevilla's best view, 4.2014 - We negotiated for half a year to get this view; the procession got almost into our suite, we watched with a glass of wine – the essence of life.



Hotels that facilitate extreme experiences

- Serena in der Masai Mara in Kenia
- Abu Camp in the Okavango Delta, Botswana
- Salt hotels at the Lake Uyuni, Bolivia
- Ice hotel in Jukkasjärvi, Sweden (the oldest)

Boats with a helicopter

- True North in Broome
- Ortelius in Antarctica
- Icebreaker Cpt Klebnikov

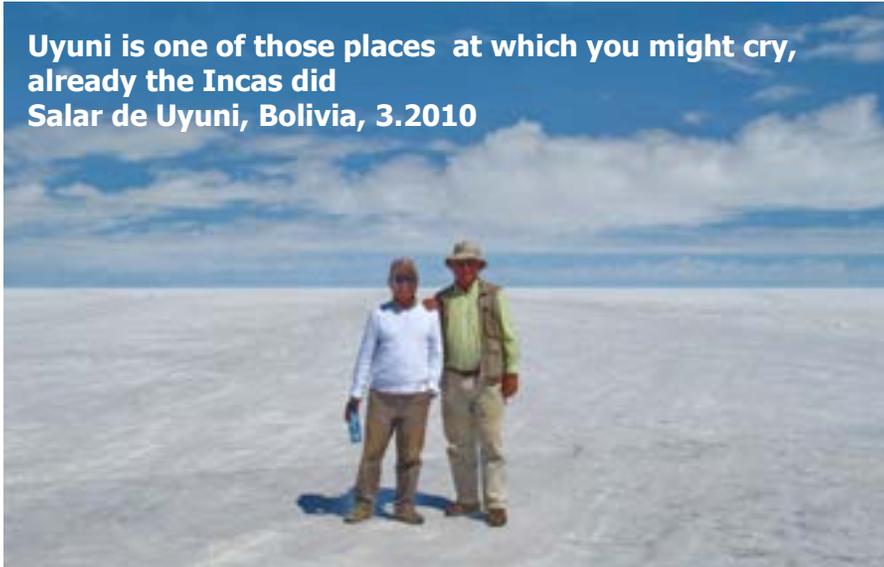
Hotels with a view to

- the key sight of an event
- a panorama of a city
- the shoreline of an ocean
- the heart of a nature park

The list for top views is long, only a few

- Ngorongoro Crater Lodge
- Ritz Carlton in Hong Kong
- Hyatt in Shanghai
- The Stamford in Singapore
- Marina Bay Sands in Singapore
- Leopard Hills in Sabi Sabi
- Alfonso VI in Toledo
- Hotel Cathedral in Sevilla
- Parador in Santiago de Compostella
- Hotel Empire Riverside in Hamburg

Uyuni is one of those places at which you might cry,
already the Incas did
Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia, 3.2010



Traveling to highlights should always have an emotional experience

- they might not capture your interest, but they will **not leave you indifferent**,
- if they do, they are not a highlight or you don't have an open mind.

They will touch you, astonish you or entertain you, some will move you to tears, some magic places will bewitch you, some leave you speechless. But all of them will pull out a „wow“ from you.

The degree to which you experience these emotions we call **intensity**, the key to TQ

Traveling to highlights is always **demanding**

- On your attitude - so be open
- On your mindset - so be prepared
- on your body - so be fit

It is never easy, but the degree varies a lot, some highlights will bring you to your **limits**

Travel Quality is about highlights and emotions, about the intensity in experiencing a site, world-class quality traveling brings you to the limits



- ❑ Intensity is normally **positive**: You want to have an intensive experience of the site you are going to visit.
- ❑ But too much intensity can turn into **stress**: The question is how much stress are you willing to take? The **limits are subjective**.
- ❑ If you are striving for world-class travel quality, willing to see all the highlights, then you are **going to the limits**, because many highlights are superlatives, the oldest, biggest etc. Some are difficult to access. You have to train your mind to be ready for it. You pay a lot, not only money. Overcoming challenges must be fun.

World-class quality traveling raises three questions:

- **Traveling at the limit – how much stress is reasonable?**
- **Traveling to the extremes – which completeness is reasonable?**
- **Traveling with enhanced risk – which risk is reasonable?**

Traveling should be joy and pleasure - but things are not that simple



- Traveling often creates **temporary stress**, a tension because of the hardships of getting to the site, this is part of the game. Coping with this can be mentally trained.
- And there can be stress during the experience of the site:
 - (1) Environment: Weather, altitude, temperature.
 - (2) Movement: Motion, trekking, diving, caving etc.
 This **positive stress** can increase intensity and awareness. Preparation and equipment can at least partially cope with it.
- Highlights are often superlatives. Going for **all** includes those which are difficult, those which define the limits. Some create **negative stress**, which is lack of control. That makes one sick. Everybody should think about how far he can go. Teo came out of this Zodiac, I didn't. In the Ross Sea we had up to 97 kn and 12 m waves. Enough.
- **Quality traveling does not come stress-free.**

Traveling at the Limit – The Top 32

Here are **32 most stressful trips**, all highlights, all famous, some difficult, some extreme. The Takla Makan on foot has been done only by Sven Hedin and (100 years later) Teo Baumann. We did it too, on the road... the Chinese say: The most expensive road in the world, argued by Russia and Norway.

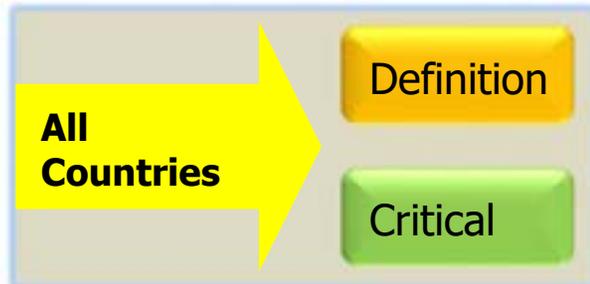
Driving roads	4	1. India: Sources of the Ganges – 2. Russia: Yakutsk to the cold pole (Oymyakon) in winter – 3. Tajikistan: Pamir H'way – 4. China: Aksai Chin
Trekking	4	Nepal: 5. Everest Base Camp; 6. Lo Mantang – 7. China: Circumnavigation of Mt. Kailash – 8. Canada (Vancouver Island): West Coast Trail
Diving*	4	9. Cocos Island: Hammer sharks – 10. Philippines: Tubataha Reef – 11. Truk: Battle wreck diving – 12. Bikini Atoll: Bomb test wreck diving
Flights	4	Antarctica: 13. South Pole; 14. Dry Valleys - 15. Bolivia: Noel-Kempff NP – 16. Venezuela: <u>Into</u> the Tepuis by heli
Exploring Islands	4	17. West Antarctica: Peter I – 18. Atlantic: Bouvet – 19. Pacific: Malpelo (extr. landing), 20. Niue: Exploring the coastal landscapes (hard balancing)
Rivers**, Caving	3	21. Venezuela: Canoeing to the Angel Falls (water level) – 22. USA: Rafting the Colorado - 23. Malaysia: Mulu caves (hard in the main cave)
Crossing deserts	6	24. Australia: Simpson Desert – 25. Niger: Tenéré – 26. Algeria: Hoggar 27. Chad: Ennedi - 28. China: Takla Makan – 29. Oman: Rub al-Khali
Extreme means of transportation	3	Russia: 30. By Tricol on the Yamal or Taimyr Peninsula – 31. By Hovercraft into the Komi Forests – 32. By heli onto the Putorana Plateau

* See Karin Sinniger, p. 34

** See Vladimir Lysenko, p.18

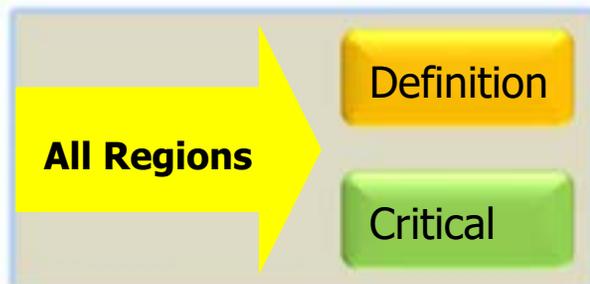
Formal Concepts of Completeness

„All countries“ is by far the most popular concept of completeness. But you have to define what that means.



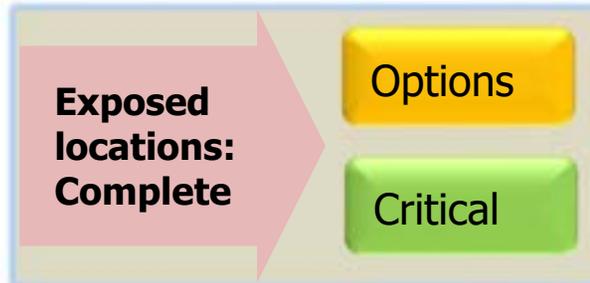
(1) All UN countries: 193 or more: Further degrees of dependency
The basic concept for completeness, the most accepted, but only political
(1) All TCC countries: 325
The best country definition: Political, ethnological, and geographical

TCC: Reasonable, if the countries have highlights. In Wake or Chagos there are no highlights. So why go? For „country collectors“ no question.



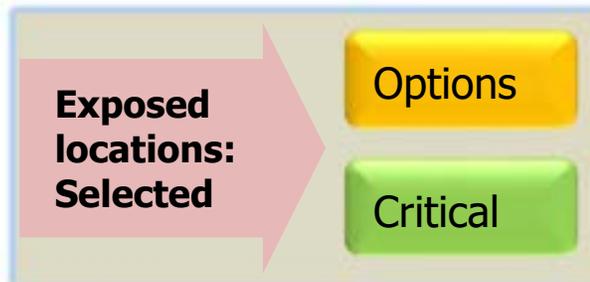
Official subdivisions according to ISO: USA: States & specials 51. Russia: Republics, Krai, Oblasts & specials: 85, Canada 13, China 34, Germany 16.
The Clubs define the subdivisions specifically.

The official list: ISO, there are different versions of this lists because some subdivisions don't make any sense. So TBT has a special version. Roman Brühwiler plans to do it now in 25 years. Subdivisions don't make sense for small countries. But already the 9th biggest country, Algeria, is critical.



(1) On all 7 continents the highest mountains.
Climbing them: The goal of the Club „7 Summits“.
(2) But it could also be: Their extreme capes or extreme land positions.

If climbing, the first is only for specialists, the second for everyone. All exposed land locations are highlights if they are extreme, that includes the locations of lakes, highest, deepest. Viewing is enough. Not for Karin Sinniger, she will dive those lakes, see p. 34. But again, that is for specialists.



Geodatically selected: The Poles, important latitudes (Polar circles, equinox etc.)
Geographically selected: Remote islands (Bouvet, Peter I, Bellany, Zavodovski)

Remote islands: Chesterfield, Johnston Atoll, Rockall, Canton (Phoenix Isl.) have nothing to offer. Clipperton and Ashmore are doubtful. Some, like Marion, have plenty of sea animals, but nothing unique. But some islands are for some travelers trophies, like Paracel, because of the difficulty to access. For them this is a quality, but is this objective?

Quality Concepts of Completeness

2.4. Completeness:

- ❑ 5.000 highlights can be considered as being the **whole world**. This number stems from systematic research as well as travel experience. As a travel concept – a traveler's life list – it is the maximum.
- ❑ For 500 places we are not sure if they can be defined objectively or if it is reasonable to travel to them. So 4.500 is the „**whole world**“ for us, our concept for completeness.
- ❑ The 500 will be defined by each person differently.



**No list is complete without these two, the top of the top
Angkor Wat, Machu Picchu**

We have traveled extremely: 10 years non-stop. We have proven that it is almost impossible to visit 5.000 sites if you want to do it reasonably. We did 4.700 so far. The key of our list is that it is an integrated part of our TQ concept. Not a stand-alone list. All the sites are worthwhile to see – not only remote sites for their own sake.

The alternative to our concept is **The World Heritage List**. All sites 6.2017: 1.052. The tourist appeal of each site is very different. But we will not argue. 192 countries have agreed on their global value. That is it.

All sites are on our list. If you are going for this, you are only going for a smaller number (1.052 not 5.000), but not for the more attractive ones.

Another alternative is the **Tentative List** of the UNESCO, the proposal of each country, not the world's view.

All other alternatives are **formal**: Here an overview:

- **All countries**: UN-countries (193) or TCC*-countries (325)
- **All subdivisions**: Concept of the clubs: MTP** (875) and TBT*** (1281)
- **Exposed locations** (like remote islands): For some individual extreme travelers

*TCC Travelers' Century Club (the oldest), **MTP Most Traveled People (American; with inconsistencies), ***TBT The Best Travelled (European; more systematic)

2.4. Completeness:

The travel clubs use 9 lists in total. The following table shows **the top 10 travelers in each list**.

On the website „worldsextremetravelers.com“ I describe the procedure of comparing these lists in order to get **one final list**. Note that this ranking is valid for May 1, 2017 and that at this time not all travelers have filled out all the lists. Some don't want to fill them out, some because they can't make it to the top, some because it is a lot of work. So the comparison is not complete and in this sense not fully fair, but updating will not change the ranking dramatically.

The lists in the order of the sites covered:

1. TBT Series is the accumulation of 9 specific lists, a dynamic process
2. ISO is the official list of subdivisions of all countries, often revised, SISO a special revision
3. The Tentative List shows the candidates for the WHS, but only the view of the particular countries, not the world
4. TBT is the list of this travel club, their structuring of the world in regions
5. Globetrotters is a similar lists which emphasizes the fact of have traveled to and from the region by land
6. The WHL
7. MPT is the list of this travel club, their structuring of the world in regions
8. TCC is the country list of this travel club defined not only from a political, but from an ethnological and geographical perspective as well

We take all lists as being equal and take them as they are. We think this is the **most objective way to measure travel performance** so far.

TBT Series	SISO	Tentative List	TBT	Globetrotters	World Heritage	MTP	TCC	UN+
16.136	3.978	1.642	1.281	1.268	1.052	875	325	266
Grosse-1 Oetringhaus	1 Shea	Grosse-1 Oetringhaus	1 Stücke	1 Stücke	Grosse-1 Oetringhaus	1 Parrish	1 Parrish	1 Parrish
2 Runkel	Grosse-2 Oetringhaus	2 Runkel	2 Sanchez	2 Brugiroux	2 Murallon	2 Bonifas	2 Hardenmark	2 Sanchez
3 Newcomer	3 Büchler	3 Newcomer	3 Hardenmark	3 Shea	3 Büchler	3 Veley	3 Altaffer	3 Lundgren
4 Lundgren	4 Newcomer	4 Goldstein	4 Junge	4 Hardenmark	4 Valtari	4 Altaffer	4 Lundgren	4 Mitsidis
5 Buechler	5 Newckij	5 Lundgren	Grosse-5 Oetringhaus	5 Sanchez	5 Els Slots	5 Bruehwiler	5 Rainer	5 Lebedev
6 Mitsidis	6 Siivonen	6 Newckij	6 Brugiroux	6 Antuna	6 Runkel	6 Sanchez	6 Sanchez	Grosse-6 Oetringhaus
7 Newckij	7 Mitsidis	7 Jelinek	7 Mitsidis	7 Lundgren	7 Newckij	7 Hackley	7 Siby	7 Newcomer
8 Sheppard	8 Lundgren	8 Baravalle	8 Grabow	Grosse-8 Oetringhaus	8 Moyano	8 Allen	8 Walker	8 Hardenmark
9 Baekeland	9 Sheppard	9 Wacht	9 Valtari	9 Mitsidis	9 Laurent	9 Srinivasar	9 Reynolds	9 Stücke
10 Goldstein	10 Jelinek	10 Martino	10 Leventhal	10 Büchler	10 Jelinek	10 Leventhal	Grosse-10 Oetringhaus	10 Siby

Apart from our „highlights concept“, there is **only one qualitative alternative for completeness: The World Heritage List (WHL)**.

Its quality: It is the most respected list in the world, the only globally acknowledged qualitative list so far. The list is a big marketing booster. If it is on „the List“, not only the Chinese would flock in by the thousands to get a photo in front, no matter what it is. It is on „the List“, that is sufficient for the photo. With the selfie you can't see it anyhow.



Inside the UNESCO logo at a Hawsun dolmen site in South Korea, 5.2016

Our relationship: We have seen more WH sites than anybody in the world, maybe questioned by only one. We work or have worked on 23 projects to improve the situation. We know about the political and bureaucratic problems. We do respect the list indeed. The list is a core of our list, of our traveling.

The limits: Despite this, we say: This list cannot be a target list for travelers. A part of it yes, maybe an important one, but it is for sure not enough. It has 1052 (6.2017), we have almost 5.000. The Brandenburger Gate, the main temples of Bangkok, the White House - not on the WHL, like thousands more of this calibre. But more so: The 10 best restaurants, hotels, beaches, shopping sites, sex sites, cruises, sport sites, adventure rides, all that people are interested in, not on the list: So, in its totality, for us not the „ultimate list“.

The difference:

UNESCO wants to protect. A selective view. **We take the holistic view: What is attractive?**

The World Heritage List has no fun factor. But people want to have fun. It is that simple.

The WHL: Criticism and Examples

2.4. Completeness:

Criticism:

(1) The World Heritage List is not done with a homogeneous global perspective but is a sum of very different national perspectives. There is **a lack of global coordination enforcing global standards**. Although the criteria are globally equal, their interpretation is very different from country to country. In Papua New Guinea is allowed what is unthinkable in Germany.

(2) The **criteria are general** (like „biological diversity“), and the uniqueness stems from adjectives like „outstanding“ or „important“ leaving a vast room for interpretation. We don't use them. We use specific criteria characterizing each site, e.g. for a waterfall the height and others, 910 m for the Angel Falls cannot be interpreted. Totally different in the scientific approach.

(3) The definition is done by specialists with a specific view which leads quite often to sites which are **not attractive for travelers**. We don't question the WHL definition, we don't argue, but we comment about the attractiveness on a solid basis.

Examples:

- Struve Geodetic Arc. 34 locations in 10 countries, we did 13, often we asked why? In a Finnish forest even the best informed had no idea, till we found it, a small plaque on a small post. There is no way to justify this one as an objective.
- The Vrededome in South Africa: A crater of 180 km is invisible for tourists, the interpretative center (empty, overgrown) is just a fraud, never checked
- Rock art on the Iberic Peninsula: 700 locations, none of them is really a highlight, scribbles only, no „Wow effect“: All of them? 700? We would never even consider that.
- Quite a few sites cross borders, which leaves the question when have you visited this WHS. If it is in three countries, do you have to see all 3? The quality answer is, when you have seen the core of the site, maybe one is enough, but maybe you have so see 2 or all 3. Our interpretation is stricter than usual, as most people would argue that one is enough, as the clubs do.
- The WHL lumps very different sites together into one in quite a few places. An area like „The Western Rockies“ is huge and diverse. Where will you go? Multi-locations are ok for protection, but not for itineraries. The 2 „Mammal Fossils“ sites in Australia are 2000 km apart, for us 2 highlights. We often cannot accept the definition of the UNESCO. But we always translate.
- Practical aspects: Some are dangerous: Los Katios, Erbil Citadel, Dairen (but doable). Some are very burdensome: Rio Abieso, Central Amazon, Malpelo (are they worth it? Some parks require a lot of effort to see the attractions.)
- Some are inaccessible. Guantanamo, Nimba Mountains from Guinea

Some sites show a trend: Competitive Rankings. Jesu is in this criterion the No. 1



Jeju has positions in 4 rankings

The World Heritage List is the only quality list which is **globally acknowledged**. So two travel clubs incorporate this list as one list for measuring travel performance. This is good because there is no alternative so far.

We respect that list and work for it. We acknowledge their aim: **Protection**. But we criticize the list as a list for tourists, because we see its **limitations**. Quite a few sites are selected by specialists and are not attractive for tourists.

Our criticism is fundamental, it is about the **criteria** the WHL uses. They use general criteria for all sites, we use site-specific criteria, which is a fundamental difference. But: We don't want to argue with the WHL so we take all WHS on our list. But we will explain them differently. And we want to explain how strict we are in selecting our „Highlights“.

This page and the following is only for „specialists“ – a digression (excursus).

But since the WHS has such a tremendous importance it is only consequent to dig here a bit deeper, explaining the shorter formulations from the previous page now a bit longer. Please accept some redundancy.

The WHL applies 10 „selection criteria“ which in fact only **categorize** the site, like biological diversity, cultural tradition, evolution of ecosystems etc. They aim at a vague overall criterion: **„Outstanding global value“** which describes, but does not justify the selection. For that it must be unique. If adjectives describe the importance like „outstanding, exceptional, important“ they don't justify the selection. For that they must explain why one site is more outstanding than the other. You have to compare and select the best, the superlative or unique ones. Each year we have around 200 candidates and only about 20 are selected. The World Heritage Association has administrative rules which are relatively easy to apply. But they don't justify the **selection**. The traveler wants to know why he goes to this place and not to the other. His problem is **selection** (if he goes for quality and not only for fun). He trusts the name WHS. Not so seldom he will be disappointed.

With our selection he will never be disappointed. Why? We will concentrate on **criteria which are site-specific**, not general: A waterfall by volume, height, width and number of falls. These are all the waterfall specific criteria, there are no more. They are specific, not general like in the WHL „impressive scene“ (for Iguacu). They are suitable for selection, for differentiation the best one from the good ones, they don't categorize, they select. The 10 general WHL criteria don't specify why one is more „outstanding“ than the other. But only this would justify the selection. In our criteria we measure for the best. We select the superlative or unique.

We incorporate the World Heritage List in our List because it is acknowledged, but often we cannot accept their definition. We either change the definition (mostly splitting it) or comment on it if we have strong reasons for it.

Analysis of the Criteria of the WHL

2.4. Completeness:

Digression:

- If you read the WHS criteria you have a hard time to memorize. We condense the formulations to **three elements**.
- And we condense the „criteria for inscriptions“ **for three examples**, 2 cultural ones and one natural one.
- Important are the **adjectives** because they select. You see that the adjectives are all general with the exception of two: „Unique“ and „superlative“. But next to them: „Exceptional“ is allowed as well.
- How are these criteria applied? You see that the examples repeat these adjectives more or less. The **object** is for example 1 (Jam) only in criterion 3 unique: Ghurid civilization. For example 2 (Bamiyan) the object is for 3 criteria unique (Gandharan, Silk road, pilgrimage center). For Iguacu no **adjective** is unique. The **object** is only for one criteria (10) unique: 15 endangered species.
- Not one example gets to the point: **Superlatives and uniqueness**: Example 1: Location (Silk road and isolation), Example 2: Height and age of Buddha statues, amount of cliff dwellings for pilgrims, history, Example 3: Highest amount of waterfalls: 285; 2 WHS in one fall. These criteria differentiate these three examples from all similar ones. Not „one of“, but unique. And that makes a highlight a highlight on our list. The WHS gives valuable input. But it is not sufficient for the selection.

The 10 Criteria of the World Heritage				A WHS must meet at least one		
The three main elements of the 10 general criteria			Reasons for inscription			
			Jam, Ref 211 Afghanistan	Bamiyan, Ref 208 Afghanistan	Iguacu, Ref 555 Brazil	
action	adjective	object				
1 represents	Masterpiece (here synonymous)	Human genius		outstanding, Buddha sculptures, Gandharan school		
2 exhibits	important	human values	significant, innovative architecture	important, exceptional Buddhist center on the Silk road, interchange of 6 cultures; Gandharan school		
3 testifies	unique or exceptional	cultural tradition	exceptional testifies Ghurid civilization in 12/13 ct.	exceptional cultural tradition		
4 illustrates	outstanding	human history	outstanding Islamic architecture	outstanding significant period in Buddhism		
5 exemplifies	outstanding	human settlement				
6 exemplifies	outstanding	artistic traditions		most monumental western Buddhism, centre of pilgrimage, destruction		
7 contains	superlative or exceptional	natural phenomena			one of the largest and most spectacular, impressive scene	
8 represents	outstanding	earth's history				
9 represents	outstanding	evolution of ecosystem				
10 conserves	most important, outstanding	biological diversity			one of largest paranaense subtropical forest, rich biodiversity of 15 endangered species	

What it is not: Traveling for Formalities



We do it too: Most northerly land border, 8.2015

Traveling needs certain statistics, but when they become an end in itself dominating the journey, traveling is about formalities without substance

- Collecting entry and exit stamps
- Traveling for border crossing
- Taking photographs in front of landmarks and border signs: I was here
- Measuring the distances traveled as a dominant goal
- Just ticking off objectives
- Striving for points in Travel Clubs

Travel quality is about contents and not formalities

You don't travel to England, but to Westminster Abbey;
It is not the border of Rwanda, but the eyes of a Gorilla.

But: Traveling for Content

What it is not: Traveling with a Narrow View



Ultimate luxury in Australia, The Kimberleys aboard „True North“, Total immersion into nature - in style, 7.2014

Travel quality keeps an eye on style, comfort and safety, but as a means to enjoy the objectives, thus it is not

- Staying on cruise ships - if there are more intensive ways to experience a site
- Traveling just for fun - without caring about the destination
- Traveling only for comfort and luxury - as an end in itself
- Traveling in pursuit of a specific hobby, e.g. playing golf, climbing mountains, bird watching etc.

Travel quality takes always

- **a broad view,**
- **a broad knowledge after having explored the relevant sources of information**
- **an open mind,**
- **seeing the whole picture**

But: Traveling with a Holistic View