

HISTORY MAKERS

Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Revered throughout Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh - or Uncle Ho - created possibly the most successful anti-colonial organisation in modern history, defeating the French, the Americans and then the Chinese. Attributed with unbounded intelligence (I was reliably informed he spoke 87 languages), his signature beard is still seen on chins throughout Vietnam. Ignoring his final wishes to be cremated, his body is now displayed in a Hanoi mausoleum, except for October and November when they take him to Russia for a makeover.

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Mahatma Gandhi, India

Mahatma Gandhi, or India's "Great Soul", was one of the 20th century's most influential advocates of freedom, equality and peace. It is possible to visit the towns of Porbander and Rajkot in the state of Gujarat and see his birthplace, family home and where he went to school. In the state capital, Ahmedabad, pilgrims and visitors alike flock to the Sabarmati Ashram, home to a collection of over 1,000 Gandhi manuscripts and from where the famous 400-kilometre march to

the Dandi was launched in 1930 to protest against the British salt tax. Also in Ahmedabad there is the chance to see the Vidyar Pith, the university founded by Gandhi, or to enjoy the atmospheric night market.

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Alexander The Great, Egypt

Leaving behind one of the most famous cities of antiquity as your legacy is some achievement, but then Alexander the Great never did things by halves. The modern city of Alexandria has almost entirely subsumed the Classical city, although the artefacts of Graeco-Roman museum give a good idea of how she must have looked in her pomp. A day's drive into the desert is the oasis of Siwa, where Alexander consulted the oracle of Amun. His question and the response have not been recorded, but he did go on to conquer most of the known world by the age of 33...

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Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran

Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini was born in 1900. He was a relatively obscure figure outside of Iran's clerical class until his exile to the



Maori statue

holy city of Najaf in Iraq in 1964, where he lived for 13 years until being expelled by the then Vice-President Saddam Hussein and received by France. On February 1st 1979, two weeks after the Shah had fled to Egypt, Khomeini re-entered Iran and became the Supreme Leader of the world's first Islamic Republic. Possibly his most lasting legacy is Iran's demographic profile - the country's population has more than doubled since 1979 due to official encouragement of large families.

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Simon Bolívar, South America

Few people have travelled quite as far across South America as Simon Bolívar, and no one has had as much influence in shaping the modern continent. During the early part of the 19th century, Bolívar fought countless battles against Spanish colonial rule. Beginning with his native Venezuela, he fought and gained independence for the countries we now call Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Bolivia. Anyone interested in finding out more about Bolívar would do well to read Gabriel García Márquez's novel 'The

General in his Labyrinth' (1989), a fictionalised account of El Libertador's last days.

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Hone Heke, New Zealand

In 1840 the British signed the Waitangi Treaty with 35 Maori chiefs that declared New Zealand a British colony. The first Maori to sign, Hone Heke, was a fearsome and intelligent warrior, a Christian man of letters and a revered hero. Later feeling the government had reneged on its promise to observe Maori equality, rights and trusteeship of the land he daringly cut down the British flagpole not once but four times and organised successful defences against the ensuing fury of the army while striving to guarantee the safety of settlers, whom he saw as distinct from the Crown. Such was his standing that flesh from a wound he received in battle was buried near the healing waters of Ngawha at Ohaeawai, with the ground still considered 'tapu' (sacred) to this day. You can visit the Treaty House - in whose grounds the Waitangi Treaty was signed - on the Bay of Islands in northern New Zealand.

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Hotel La Cienega, Ecuador, one of Simon Bolivar's many stop-off points



The house of Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi, Vietnam

Our specialists look back at some of the figures who have helped shaped the countries to which we travel



Mahatma Gandhi, India's "Great Soul"