



The definitive answer to Khalessi's question, "Where are my dragons?"

Thanks to a certain hit TV show whose main female character is known as the "Mother of Dragons," the legendary creatures have invaded millions of people's minds in recent years. But you don't have to watch *Game of Thrones* to find them: dragons have played a starring role in the folklore and art of many cultures since the dawn of time. To Europeans, the mythical serpent-like beasts generally symbolized evil and sin due to references to serpents in the Old Testament. To Asians, they were usually auspicious, even celestial.

Some experts surmise so many ancients imagined dragons because they saw dinosaur fossils. Others aren't sure. Regardless, here's a list of places to hunt dragons and dinosaurs around the world.

Dragons Near and Far

WHERE: China

Historically, the dragon symbolized power, strength, good luck and prosperity, particularly for the Emperor, in China. Dragons, usually portrayed as snake-like with four legs, are everywhere in paintings, sculptures, ceramics, silk robes, from the Nine Dragon Wall in [Beijing](#) (a 1756 relief on blue glazed tile) to [Suzhou Silk Museum](#) and [Suzhou Museum](#) in Suzhou (a half-hour from Shanghai by bullet train). The founder of China's Han Dynasty even claimed he was conceived after his mother dreamed of a dragon. Five-clawed dragon motifs were reserved for the Emperor (anyone else was punished) and four-clawed dragons for princes and other nobles. Chinese dragons greatly influenced other Asian cultures. In dragon dance at Chinese New Year and other celebrations, a long, ornate dragon prop is held aloft and moved by men holding poles.