# Versailles

## Slides 1, 2, and 3

Hi, today we’re going to look at Versailles, which is located southwest of Paris, France, just a metro ride away. Versailles began as a hunting lodge for King Louis XIII, but it was his son Louis XIV, the Sun King, who transformed it into a palatial estate and moved his court and government there. Louis XV and XVI also lived in the palace. The first three images show the entrance gate to Versailles and two images of the main palace. Note the classical façade and extreme gold ornamentation of the Baroque style. The estate also includes stables, smaller palaces, gardens, and fountains.

## Slide 4

First, we’ll look at the Dauphin’s Apartment or the heir to the throne. The royals were afforded apartments that consisted of a number of salons or rooms such as a guard room, the bedchamber, a meeting room or study, and a receiving or entertaining space. This image shows the Dauphin’s bedchamber. Notice the curtained bed with feathered plumes on top, the fabric wallpaper, hanging portraits, and chandelier. Nothing but the best for the future king!

## Slide 5

Next is a sitting room from the Dauphin’s Apartment. Again, take note of the gilded moulding surrounding the doors and ceiling as well as the huge globe and regal sofa and chairs. I couldn’t figure out if the small chairs at the foot of the sofa were footstools or simply toddler sized chairs!

## Slide 6

This is the Queen’s bedchamber from her apartment. The gilded baluster that divides the room was not installed to keep tourists from climbing into the bed - they were actually used by the royals to separate public and private space. Marie Antoinette (queen to Louis XVI) redecorated this bedchamber using silk hangings on the bed, curtains, walls, and footstools. Nineteen royal children were born in this room including King Louis XV.

## Slide 7

This image shows the Queen’s bed again but look closely at the wall to the left. You can see the outline of the door that Marie Antoinette used to escape on October 6, 1789 when rioting reached the palace. She and her husband were both victims of the French Revolution which occurred when the residents of Paris couldn’t afford bread and the royals were living well, like kings and queens!

## Slide 8

Next, we’ll look at the King’s bedchamber. Similar to the Queen’s, it features a curtained bed, gilded baluster, footstools, and an elaborate chandelier.

## Slide 9

The King’s Apartment is connected to the magnificent Hall of Mirrors. The shared wall of the Hall and the King’s Apartment is lined with arched mirrors that reflect the view of the gardens from the opposite wall’s matching arched windows. What a view the King was treated to every day.

## Slide 10

Not only are the walls and chandeliers spectacular, but the ceiling of the Hall of Mirrors is gilded and painted as well. In fact, maintaining just the Versailles estate and caring for the royal family is estimated to have cost between 7-25% of France’s total income. It kind of helps one understand why the people of France revolted!

## Slide 11

Every room in the palace is more stunning than the next. And since the Baroque style was dramatic and over the top, every inch of space is decorated. Notice the colored marble panels, gilded doors and figures, painted ceiling and chandelier.

## Slide 12

Our last room of the palace is the Royal Chapel where the Kings attended daily mass. The chapel is dedicated to Saint Louis who was King Louis IX during the crusades. The predominant color is white, allowing the gilded gold altar and painted ceiling to stand out.

## Slide 13

As one leaves the palace through the back door, the gardens and Grand Canal stretch out endlessly. This image shows the back of the Palace with the Chapel on the left. You can also see the staircase and a small portion of the gardens.

## Slide 14

French gardens differ from other European gardens in that they are not left to grow naturally, but rather are carefully manicured. Gardens were designed for walking and thus the Versailles gardens contain many paths, various statues to admire, and fountains to enjoy.

## Slide 15

This image shows an elaborate fountain with the Grand Canal centered in the background. The Grand Canal covers 105 acres and it takes at least an hour to walk from the Palace to the end of the Canal. Due to the size of Versailles, it was impossible to get adequate water pressure to all of the fountains at the same time. When the king went for a walk, gardeners would rush ahead and turn on the fountain until the king had passed and then turn it off!

## Slide 16

The Versailles Estate encompasses more than the Palace and gardens. Louis XIV also built the Grand Trianon, which was a mini-palace, set deep in the gardens where he could be less formal than the court demanded at the palace. The Grand Trianon consists of two wings linked by a colonnade.

## Slide 17

The interior of that colonnade features colored marble and allows for a splendid view of the groves and gardens.

## Slide 18

While not the formal main palace, the Grand Trianon was decorated in the same lavish style. This image shows a salon, or room for family of the king. Note the green marble fireplace, chandelier, paintings, and matching wallpaper and furniture.

## Slide 19

Louis XV commissioned the Petit Trianon, which was completed in 1768. The smallest palace, it was designed in the Neo-Classic style and afforded yet another means of escaping courtly life. As Louis XVI’s queen, Marie Antoinette received the Petit Trianon from her husband as a gift. It is her decoration and taste that visitors see on display.

## Slide 20

This is the interior staircase of the Petit Trianon; again, notice the gilding and marble.

## Slide 21

Marie Antoinette favored florals and color for the interior of the Petit Trianon.

## Slide 22

Even though the French Revolution was looming, Marie Antoinette seemed oblivious, and embarked on a building program. She had the Temple of Love, seen here, constructed on a small island surrounded by a stream.

## Slide 23

The last part of the Estate that we’ll look at is the Queen’s Hamlet. Marie Antoinette had it constructed in honor of her Austrian birthplace and so that she and her children could play in their own little village and farm. It consisted of a handful of buildings in the style of Normandy farmhouses with thatched roofs.

## Slide 24

The Queen’s House in the Hamlet was connected to a billiards room by an arched, wooded gallery. The village is quite picturesque with streams, lakes, bridges, and fenced in areas for animals.

## Slide 25

The interiors, however, were still fit for a queen utilizing white marble. Marie Antoinette may have created a playhouse, but it was a very comfortable playhouse!

Thanks for joining me on this look at the Versailles Estate.

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