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FREE GUIDE · VERSAILLES

# Palace of Versailles

The Hall of Mirrors, the Royal Apartments, Le Nôtre's Gardens and Marie Antoinette's Hamlet — the 7 must-see stops of the Sun King's palace, explained one by one

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## Your visit at a glance

What began as a modest hunting lodge of Louis XIII ended up, under Louis XIV, the Sun King, as the most dazzling palace in Europe and the very stage of absolute power. Versailles is far more than a building: it's a universe of gilded salons, endless gardens and ponds that reflect three centuries of French history. A World Heritage Site since 1979, the whole complex —palace, gardens, Trianon and the Queen's Hamlet— is so vast that it pays to choose well what to see. This guide gathers the seven must-see stops of the estate, from the Hall of Mirrors to the Queen's Hamlet, with the context to understand each one and routes by time so you can decide according to the day you have.

### At a glance

#### PRICE

Passport ~€25-35 (whole estate)

#### HOURS

Palace 9:00-18:30 · closed Mon

#### WHAT TO SEE

The 7 must-see stops

#### FREE

Gardens free except fountain days

#### TIME

3-4 h the palace; a day with the Trianon

#### GETTING THERE

RER C · about 40 min from Paris



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*With this free guide you already do a great visit: the essentials, with a route. If you want to make the most of it, at the end I'll show you the complete version.*

## Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket

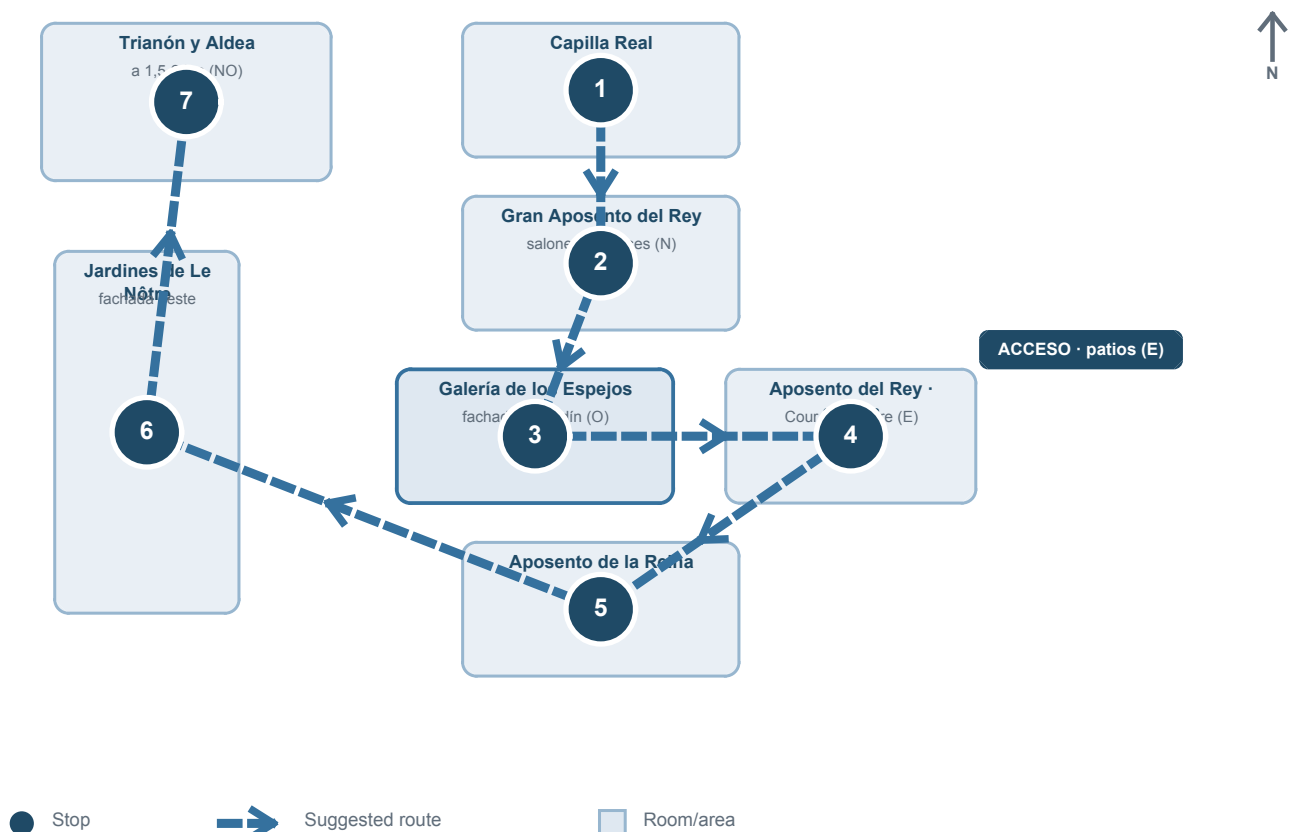
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## The map and the route

The palace visit follows a fixed circuit: it starts at the Royal Chapel (1), threads through the seven State Apartments (2) until it opens onto the Hall of Mirrors (3) and continues through the King's (4) and Queen's (5) apartments. Then you step out into Le Nôtre's Gardens (6) and, if you have time and the Passport, you cross the park to the Grand Trianon and the Queen's Hamlet (7). Follow the numbers on the stops: they run in the most comfortable order for making your way around the estate, from the palace to the gardens.

PALACIO DE VERSALLES · PALACIO, JARDINES Y TRIANÓN (ESQUEMA, NO A ESCALA)



El palacio abre su U hacia el este (la ciudad); el Aposento del Rey queda al norte y el de la Reina al sur, con la Galería de los Espejos al centro mirando a los jardines (oeste). El Trianón, lejos, al NO. No a escala.

**Visiting order: THE PALACE: 1 The Royal Chapel › 2 The State Apartments › 3 The Hall of Mirrors › 4 The King's Apartments › 5 The Queen's Apartments — TO THE GARDENS — 6 Le Nôtre's Gardens — TO THE FAR END OF THE PARK — 7 The Grand Trianon and the Queen's Hamlet**

Schematic layout by area; the number shows the visiting order. Not to scale: follow the museum's own floor plans and signs on the day.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

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## The Hall of Mirrors

First floor, west front · 20-30 min

73 metres, 17 windows and 357 mirrors reflecting the gardens; ceiling painted by Le Brun. The summit of court art and the setting for the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War.



*The Hall of Mirrors, 73 m and 357 mirrors*  
Photo: Myrabella · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons



### WHAT TO LOOK AT

The reflection of the gardens in the wall of mirrors and Le Brun's ceiling

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: why 357 mirrors were a diplomatic weapon, what Le Brun's ceiling hides and the two times this room redrew the map of Europe.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

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## The King's Apartments and Louis XIV's Bedchamber

Centre of the palace, beyond the Gallery · 15-20 min

The bedchamber occupies the exact centre of the palace and faces the rising sun. Here the king's 'lever' and 'coucher' were staged before the court. Louis XIV died in this bed in 1715, after 72 years on the throne.



*Louis XIV's bedchamber, at the centre of the palace*  
Photo: Jorge Láscar from Melbourne · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons



### WHAT TO LOOK AT

The gilded balustrade that framed the royal bed and the eastward orientation

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: why the king slept at the geometric centre of the palace, what a duke was playing for by holding a candle, and how a waking-up became a ceremony of state.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

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## The Queen's Apartments

First floor, south wing · 15-20 min

Marie Antoinette's chamber, with flowered textiles reproduced to her taste. Here the queens gave birth in public. A hidden door let her escape the revolutionary assault of October 1789.



*The Queen's chamber, Marie Antoinette's apartments*

Photo: Super nabra · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



### WHAT TO LOOK AT

The ceiling, the jewel cabinet and the secret door camouflaged in the wall

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: why queens gave birth in public, what tastes of Marie Antoinette the chamber hides, and where the secret door led the night the Revolution came knocking.

## THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

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## Le Nôtre's Gardens and the fountains

West front of the palace · 45-90 min

The greatest 'jardin à la française', Le Nôtre's work from 1661: endless axes, parterres, more than 50 fountains and the 1.6 km Grand Canal. The Apollo Fountain crowns the Sun King's solar axis.



*Le Nôtre's Gardens and the Latona Fountain*  
Photo: ToucanWings · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons



### WHAT TO LOOK AT

The vista from the terrace towards Latona, Apollo and the Grand Canal

### » IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

In the premium guide: how millions of litres of water were moved without electricity, why the Apollo Fountain is a self-portrait of the king and which groves almost everyone skips.

## Practical tips

### Best times

Come first thing (9:00) or after 15:00-16:00, when the crowds ease off. Avoid Tuesday, the day many tourists switch here because the Louvre is closed, and remember Versailles closes on Mondays. The Musical Fountains run only on select days: check them before choosing your date.

### Buy your ticket in advance

Versailles is one of the most visited sites in France and the ticket queue can eat up part of your morning. The Passport includes the palace, gardens and Trianon estate, and is the most complete option; in every case you must book a time slot to enter the palace. Get it online and arrive a few minutes before your time to use the reserved access.

### Getting around the estate

The grounds are enormous and it's 1.5-2 km from the palace to the Trianon. You can walk through the gardens, take the little train, hire a bike or row along the Grand Canal by boat. Judge the distances well: almost all the tiredness of Versailles comes from walking, not from queuing.

### With children

The gardens are the best ally: space to run, rowing boats on the Grand Canal, bikes and the little train to the Trianon. The Queen's Hamlet, with its farm animals, usually delights them more than the gilded salons.

### Accessibility and services

The palace has accessible routes and lifts and lends wheelchairs; there's free entry for people with disabilities and their companion. Around the estate you'll find cafés, toilets and shops, plus an electric vehicle for getting around the gardens. Confirm the services on the official website.

### Combine it

You can get here by train from Paris in about 40 minutes (RER C to Versailles Château Rive Gauche). Set aside a full day: the palace in the morning, lunch or a picnic in the town, and the gardens and Trianon in the afternoon, once the Trianon has opened.

### Practical info

Getting there: from Paris, RER C to the 'Versailles Château Rive Gauche' station, a 10-minute walk from the palace (about 40 min journey). Guide price: Passport with access to the whole estate around €25 in low season (Nov-Mar) and €35 in high season (Apr-Oct), when the Musical Fountains run (about €22/€32 for EU/EEA residents). You must book a time slot to enter the palace, ideally buying online. Hours: palace 9:00 to 18:30 (last entry 16:45); gardens from 7:00-8:00 and the Trianon estate from 12:00. Closed on Mondays, 1 January, 1 May and 25 December. Prices and hours can change: always confirm them on the official website before you go.

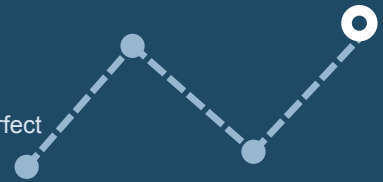
**Official website:** [www.chateauversailles.fr](http://www.chateauversailles.fr)

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## THE COMPLETE VERSION

## Take the complete visit

With this free guide you already cover the essentials. The PREMIUM is your complete visit to Palace of Versailles: every work with its story, a 3-step looking guide for every painting, the cheat-sheet for your phone and the tips to skip the queues. For less than the price of a coffee.

In the free guide you miss out on:

- 1 The Royal Chapel**  
North wing, start of the route · 10-15 min
- 2 The King's State Apartments**  
First floor, north wing · 25-30 min
- 7 The Grand Trianon and the Queen's Hamlet**  
North of the estate, 1.5-2 km from the palace · 60-90 min

### PREMIUM Guide · Palace of Versailles

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*For comparison: a guided tour costs €30-60 per person. This guide walks you through with the same detail, everyone travelling with you can use it, and it's yours forever.*

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» **Check availability and prices**

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