**Notre-Dame**

**Notre-Dame de Paris**, also called **Notre-Dame Cathedral**, [cathedral](https://www.britannica.com/topic/cathedral-Christian-church) [church](https://www.britannica.com/topic/church-architecture) in Paris. It is the most famous of the [Gothic](https://www.britannica.com/art/Gothic-architecture) cathedrals of the [Middle Ages](https://www.britannica.com/event/Middle-Ages) and is distinguished for its size, antiquity, and architectural interest.

Notre-Dame lies at the eastern end of the [Île de la Cité](https://www.britannica.com/place/Paris/Climate#ref60491) and was built on the ruins of two earlier churches, which were themselves predated by a Gallo-Roman temple dedicated to [Jupiter](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Jupiter-Roman-god). The cathedral was initiated by [Maurice de Sully](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Maurice-de-Sully), bishop of Paris, who about 1160 conceived the idea of converting into a single building, on a larger scale, the ruins of the two earlier basilicas. The foundation stone was laid by [Pope Alexander III](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alexander-III-pope) in 1163, and the high altar was [consecrated](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consecrated) in 1189. The [choir](https://www.britannica.com/topic/choir-church-architecture), the western facade, and the [nave](https://www.britannica.com/topic/nave) were completed by 1250, and porches, chapels, and other embellishments were added over the next 100 years.

Notre-Dame Cathedral consists of a choir and [apse](https://www.britannica.com/topic/apse-church-architecture), a short [transept](https://www.britannica.com/technology/transept), and a nave flanked by double aisles and square chapels. Its central [spire](https://www.britannica.com/technology/spire) was added during restoration in the 19th century, replacing the original, which had been completely removed in the 18th century because of instability. The interior of the cathedral is 427 by 157 feet (130 by 48 metres) in plan, and the roof is 115 feet (35 metres) high. Two massive early Gothic towers (1210–50) [crown](https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/crown) the western facade, which is divided into three stories and has its doors adorned with fine early Gothic carvings and surmounted by a row of figures of [Old Testament](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Old-Testament) kings. The two towers are 223 feet (68 metres) high; the spires with which they were to be crowned were never added. At the cathedral’s east end, the apse has large clerestory windows (added 1235–70) and is supported by single-arch [flying buttresses](https://www.britannica.com/technology/flying-buttress) of the more daring [Rayonnant Gothic style](https://www.britannica.com/art/Rayonnant-style), especially notable for their boldness and grace. The cathedral’s three great [rose windows](https://www.britannica.com/technology/rose-window) alone retain their 13th-century glass.

Notre-Dame Cathedral suffered damage and deterioration through the centuries. After the [French Revolution](https://www.britannica.com/event/French-Revolution) it was rescued from possible destruction by [Napoleon](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Napoleon-I), who [crowned](https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/crowned) himself emperor of the French in the cathedral in 1804. Notre-Dame underwent major restorations by the French architect [Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eugene-Emmanuel-Viollet-le-Duc) in the mid-19th century. The popularity of [Victor Hugo](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Victor-Hugo)’s [historical novel](https://www.britannica.com/art/historical-novel) [*Notre-Dame de Paris*](https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Hunchback-of-Notre-Dame) (1831), wherein the cathedral is the setting, was said to have inspired the renovations. During a restoration campaign in 2019, a fire broke out in the cathedral’s attic, and the massive blaze destroyed most of the roof, Viollet-le-Duc’s 19th-century spire, and some of the rib vaulting

**10 Remarkable Facts About Notre Dame**

* It was founded by Louis VII. ...
* It is a triumph of Gothic architecture. ...
* An English king was crowned here. ...
* The largest bell is named Emmanuel. ...
* It was dedicated to the Cult of Reason. ...
* Napoleon was crowned Emperor here. ...
* Victor Hugo wrote a novel to save it from demolition.

## 1. It was founded by Louis VII

Notre Dame was commissioned by King Louis VII, who ruled from 1120-1180. As a champion of French Gothic architecture, he wanted this new cathedral to symbolise Parisian supremacy. Louis had been married to Eleanor of Aquitaine, although they had no children, and Eleanor went on to marry Henry Plantagenet, later Henry II.

Louis is famed for establishing the University of Paris, overseeing the disastrous Second Crusade, and championing French Gothic architecture.

## 2. It is a triumph of Gothic architecture

Notre Dame asserted a key innovation in Gothic architecture: the flying buttress. Before the buttresses, the weight of the roof structures pressed outwards and down, requiring thick wall support.

## 4. The largest bell is named Emmanuel

The two towers on the west façade date from the early 13th century, and measure 69 metres high. The south tower is home to 10 bells. The largest, the bourdon, is named Emmanuel. It has tolled to mark the coronations of kings, papal visits, the end of the world wars, and the events of 9/11.

## 5. It was dedicated to the Cult of Reason

After the French Revolution in 1789, Notre Dame was seized and nationalised. Many of the treasures were either destroyed or plundered – the 28 statues of biblical kings were beheaded.

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| **History** |
| Style | French Gothic |
| Years built | 1163–1345 |
| Groundbreaking | 1163 |
| Completed | 1345 |
| **Notre-Dame de Paris** |
| South façade and the nave of Notre-Dame in 2008 |
| [Wikimedia](https://foundation.wikimedia.org/wiki/Maps_Terms_of_Use) | © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright) |
| [48.8530°N 2.3498°E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Notre-Dame_de_Paris&params=48.853_N_2.3498_E_type:landmark_region:FR)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): [48.8530°N 2.3498°E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Notre-Dame_de_Paris&params=48.853_N_2.3498_E_type:landmark_region:FR) |
| **Location** | [Parvis Notre-Dame – Place Jean-Paul-II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parvis_Notre-Dame_%E2%80%93_Place_Jean-Paul-II), [Paris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris) |
| [**Denomination**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denomination) | [Roman Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic) |
| [**Tradition**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_tradition) | [Roman Rite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Rite) |
| **Website** | [www.notredamedeparis.fr](http://www.notredamedeparis.fr/) |
| **History** |
| **Status** | Closed/Under renovation after the 2019 fire |
| **Architecture** |
| [**Style**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_architecture) | [French Gothic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Gothic_architecture) |
| **Years built** | 1163–1345 |
| [**Groundbreaking**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groundbreaking) | 1163 |
| **Completed** | 1345 |
| **Specifications** |
| **Length** | 128 m (420 ft) |
| **Width** | 48 m (157 ft) |
| [**Nave**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave)**height** | 35 metres (115 ft)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre-Dame_de_Paris#cite_note-1) |
| **Number of**[**towers**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower) | 2 |
| **Tower height** | 69 m (226 ft) |
| **Number of**[**spires**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spire) | 0 (There was one before the fire of April 2019) |
| **Spire height** | 91.44 m (300.0 ft) (formerly)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre-Dame_de_Paris#cite_note-partofspirecollapses-2) |
| **Bells** | [10](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bells_of_Notre-Dame_de_Paris) |
| **Administration** |
| [**Archdiocese**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocese) | [Paris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Paris) |
| **Clergy** |
| [**Archbishop**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop) | [Michel Aupetit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Aupetit) |
| [**Rector**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rector_%28ecclesiastical%29) | Patrick Chauvet |
| [**Dean**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dean_%28Christianity%29) | Patrick Chauvet |
| **Laity** |
| [**Director of music**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_director) | Sylvain Dieudonné[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre-Dame_de_Paris%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-3) |
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| [**UNESCO World Heritage Site**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) |
| **Criteria** | i, ii, iii |
| **Designated** | 1991 |
| **Part of** | Paris, Banks of the Seine |
| **Reference no.** | [600](https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/600) |
| [**Monument historique**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument_historique) |
| **Official name** | Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris |
| **Type** | Cathédrale |
| **Designated** | 1862[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notre-Dame_de_Paris#cite_note-4) |

## 3. An English king was crowned here

On 16 December 1431, 10-year-old Henry VI of England was crowned King of France in Notre Dame. This followed the success of Henry V at the [Battle of Agincourt](https://www.historyhit.com/10-facts-about-the-battle-of-agincourt/) in 1415, which bolstered his position at the Treaty of Troyes in 1420.