Palace of Versailles

The **Palace of Versailles** ([/vɛərˈsaɪ, vɜːrˈsaɪ/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA/English) *[vair-SY, vur-SY](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3APronunciation_respelling_key%22%20%5Co%20%22Help%3APronunciation%20respelling%20key)*;[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-1) [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language): *Château de Versailles* [[ʃɑto d(ə) vɛʁsɑj]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA/French) ([listen](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5f/LL-Q150_%28fra%29-Jules78120-Versailles.wav))) is a former royal residence located in [Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Versailles%2C_Yvelines), about 12 miles (19 km) west of [Paris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris), France. The palace is owned by the French Republic and has since 1995 been managed, under the direction of the [French Ministry of Culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Culture_%28France%29), by the [Public Establishment of the Palace, Museum and National Estate of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Establishment_of_the_Palace%2C_Museum_and_National_Estate_of_Versailles).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-2) 15,000,000 people visit the Palace, Park, or Gardens of Versailles every year, making it one of the most popular tourist attractions in the world.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-3) However, due to the [COVID-19 pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_France%22%20%5Co%20%22COVID-19%20pandemic%20in%20France), the number of paying visitors to the Chateau dropped by 75 percent from eight million in 2019 to two million in 2020. The drop was particularly sharp among foreign visitors, who account for eighty percent of paying visitors.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-4)

[Louis XIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIII) built a simple hunting lodge on the site of the Palace of Versailles in 1623 and replaced it with a small château in 1631–34. [Louis XIV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV) expanded the château into a palace in several phases from 1661 to 1715. It was a favorite residence for both kings, and in 1682, Louis XIV moved the seat of his court and government to Versailles, making the palace the [*de facto*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_facto) capital of France. This state of affairs was continued by Kings [Louis XV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XV) and [Louis XVI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XVI), who primarily made interior alterations to the palace, but in 1789 the royal family and capital of France returned to Paris. For the rest of the [French Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution), the Palace of Versailles was largely abandoned and emptied of its contents, and the population of the surrounding city plummeted.

[Napoleon Bonaparte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_Bonaparte), following [his takeover of France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coup_of_18_Brumaire), used Versailles as a summer residence from 1810 to 1814, but did not restore it. When the [French Monarchy was restored](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourbon_Restoration_in_France), it remained in Paris and it was not until the 1830s that meaningful repairs were made to the palace. A [museum of French history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%C3%A9e_de_l%27Histoire_de_France_%28Versailles%29) was installed within it, replacing the apartments of the southern wing.

The palace and park were designated a [World Heritage Site](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) by [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) in 1979 for its importance as the center of power, art, and science in France during the 17th and 18th centuries.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-unesco-5) The French Ministry of Culture has placed the palace, its gardens, and some of its [subsidiary structures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsidiary_structures_of_the_Palace_of_Versailles) on its [list of culturally significant monuments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Base_M%C3%A9rim%C3%A9e).

History[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Palace_of_Versailles&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: History)]

*Main article:*[*History of the Palace of Versailles*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Palace_of_Versailles)



Versailles around 1652, engraving by [Jacques Gomboust](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jacques_Gomboust&action=edit&redlink=1) [[fr](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Gomboust%22%20%5Co%20%22fr%3AJacques%20Gomboust)]

In 1623,[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20082-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAyers2004333-7) [Louis XIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIII), [King of France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_of_France), built a [hunting lodge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pavillon_de_chasse) on a hill in a favorite hunting ground, 12 miles (19 km) west of [Paris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris),[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20081%E2%80%932-8) and 10 miles (16 km) from his primary residence, the [Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Saint-Germain-en-Laye).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996369-9) The site, near a village named Versailles,[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-13) was a wooded wetland that Louis XIII's court scorned as being generally unworthy of a king;[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201815-14) one of his courtiers, [François de Bassompierre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_de_Bassompierre), wrote that the lodge "would not inspire vanity in even the simplest gentleman".[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAyers2004333-7)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198653-15) From 1631 to 1634, architect [Philibert Le Roy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philibert_Le_Roy%22%20%5Co%20%22Philibert%20Le%20Roy) replaced the lodge with a [château](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau) for Louis XIII,[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201815%E2%80%9316-16)[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199453-17) who forbade his queen, [Anne of Austria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_of_Austria), from staying there overnight,[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201816-18)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20083-19) even when an outbreak of [smallpox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smallpox) at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1641 forced Louis XIII to relocate to Versailles with his three-year-old heir, the future [Louis XIV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV).[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201816-18)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_History-20)

When Louis XIII died in 1643, Anne became Louis XIV's [regent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regent),[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200158-21) and Louis XIII's château was abandoned for the next decade. She moved the court back to Paris,[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201817-22) where Anne and her [chief minister](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_minister_of_France), [Cardinal Mazarin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardinal_Mazarin), continued Louis XIII's unpopular monetary practices. This led to [the Fronde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fronde), a series of revolts against royal authority from 1648 to 1653 that masked a struggle between Mazarin and the [princes of the blood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princes_of_the_blood), Louis XIV's extended family, for influence over him.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200158,_60,_66-23) In the aftermath of the Fronde, Louis XIV became determined to rule alone.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200826-24)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200166-25) Following Mazarin's death in 1661,[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199418-26) Louis XIV reformed his government to exclude his mother and the princes of the blood,[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200166-25) moved the court back to Saint-Germain-en-Laye,[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201825-27) and ordered the expansion of his father's château at Versailles into a palace.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201816-18)[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996369%E2%80%9370-28)

Louis XIV had hunted at Versailles in the 1650s,[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199453-17)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_History-20) but did not take any special interest in Versailles until 1661.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20084%E2%80%935-29) On 17 August 1661,[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonney2007223-30) Louis XIV was a guest at a sumptuous festival hosted by [Nicolas Fouquet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas_Fouquet), the [Superintendent of Finances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superintendent_of_Finances), at his palatial residence, the [Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Vaux-le-Vicomte).[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199418-26)[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200233-31) Louis XIV was impressed by the château and its gardens,[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200233-31)[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201819-32) which were the work of [Louis Le Vau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Le_Vau), the [court architect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Architect_to_the_King) since 1654, [André Le Nôtre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andr%C3%A9_Le_N%C3%B4tre), the royal gardener since 1657, and [Charles Le Brun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Le_Brun),[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199453-17) a painter in royal service since 1647.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Charles_Le_Brun-33) Vaux-le-Vicomte's scale and opulence inspired Louis XIV's aesthetic sense,[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-FOOTNOTEAyers2004333-7) but also led him to imprison Fouquet that September, as he had also built an island fortress and a private army.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200233-31)[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199418%E2%80%9319-34) Louis XIV was also inspired by Vaux-le-Vicomte,[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198641-35) and he recruited its authors for his own projects.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200240-36)[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198642-37) Louis XIV replaced Fouquet with [Jean-Baptiste Colbert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Baptiste_Colbert),[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200166-25)[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201819-32) a protégé of Mazarin and enemy of Fouquet,[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonney2007208%E2%80%9310-38) and charged him with managing the corps of artisans in royal employment.[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20085-39)[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200236-40) Colbert acted as the intermediary between them and Louis XIV,[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199420-41) who personally directed and inspected the planning and construction of Versailles.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20089-42)[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198635-43)[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199425-44)

**Construction**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Palace_of_Versailles&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Construction)]



Versailles in 1668, painted by [Pierre Patel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Patel)



Le Vau's garden façade around 1675

Work at Versailles was at first concentrated on [its park and gardens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardens_of_Versailles),[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198655%E2%80%9363-45)[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20084-46) and through the 1660s, Le Vau only added two detached service wings and a forecourt to the château.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAyers2004334-47)[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199454-48) But in 1668–69,[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20086-49)[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198667-50) as a response to the growth of the gardens,[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198662%E2%80%9363,_69-51) and victory over Spain in the [War of Devolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_Devolution),[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20086-49)[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198667-50) Louis XIV decided to turn Versailles into a full-scale royal residence.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAyers2004334-47)[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199461-52) He vacillated between replacing or incorporating his father's château, but settled on the latter by the end of the decade,[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20086-49)[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198667-50)[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199461,_64-53) and from 1668 to 1671,[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAyers2004334%E2%80%9335-54) Louis XIII's château was encased on three sides in a feature dubbed the *[enveloppe](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/enveloppe%22%20%5Cl%20%22French%22%20%5Co%20%22wikt%3Aenveloppe)*.[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198667-50)[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199464-55) This gave the château a new, [Italianate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italianate_architecture) façade overlooking the gardens, but preserved the courtyard façade,[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996370-56)[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20087-57) resulting in a mix of styles and materials that dismayed Louis XIV[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20087-57) and that Colbert described as a "patchwork".[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201824-58) Attempts to homogenize the two façades failed, and in 1670 Le Vau died,[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20087%E2%80%938-59) leaving the post of First Architect to the King vacant for the next seven years.[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199422-60)

Le Vau was succeeded at Versailles by his assistant, architect [François d'Orbay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_d%27Orbay).[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger198522-61) Work at the palace during the 1670s focused on its interiors, as the palace was then nearing completion,[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996370-56)[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198691-62) though d'Orbay expanded Le Vau's service wings and connected them to the château,[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996370-56) and built a pair of pavilions for government employees in the forecourt.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_History-20)[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201822-63) In 1670, d'Orbay was tasked by Louis XIV with designing a city, also called [Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Versailles%2C_Yvelines),[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTECity_of_Versailles:_History-10) to house and service Louis XIV's growing government and court.[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20087%E2%80%938-59)[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198638-64) The granting of land to courtiers for the construction of [townhouses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%B4tel_particulier) that resembled the palace began in 1671.[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20087%E2%80%938-59)[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201827%E2%80%9328-65) The next year, the [Franco-Dutch War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Dutch_War) began and funding for Versailles was cut until 1674,[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198650%E2%80%9351-66) when Louis XIV had work begun on the [Ambassadors' Staircase](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ambassadors%27_Staircase&action=edit&redlink=1) [[fr](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escalier_des_Ambassadeurs%22%20%5Co%20%22fr%3AEscalier%20des%20Ambassadeurs)], a grand staircase for the reception of guests, and demolished the last of the village of Versailles.[[66]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20089,_11-67)



Versailles around 1682, engraving by [Adam Perelle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Perelle)

Following the end of the Franco-Dutch War with French victory in 1678, Louis XIV appointed as First Architect [Jules Hardouin-Mansart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jules_Hardouin-Mansart),[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201825-27)[[67]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198693-68) an experienced architect in Louis XIV's confidence,[[68]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger199486%E2%80%9387,_113-69) who would benefit from a restored budget and large workforce of former soldiers.[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198650%E2%80%9351-66)[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200818-70) Mansart began his tenure with the addition from 1678 to 1681 of the [Hall of Mirrors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hall_of_Mirrors),[[70]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger1994115-71) a renovation of the courtyard façade of Louis XIII's château,[[71]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201835-72) and the expansion of d'Orbay's pavilions to create the [Ministers' Wings](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ministers%27_Wings&action=edit&redlink=1) [[fr](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ailes_des_Ministres%22%20%5Co%20%22fr%3AAiles%20des%20Ministres)] in 1678–79.[[72]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Capital-73) Adjacent to the palace, Mansart built a pair of [stables](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stables) called the [Grande](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grande_%C3%89curie&action=edit&redlink=1) [[fr](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_%C3%89curie%22%20%5Co%20%22fr%3AGrande%20%C3%89curie)] and [Petite Écuries](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Petite_%C3%89curie&action=edit&redlink=1) [[fr](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petite_%C3%89curie%22%20%5Co%20%22fr%3APetite%20%C3%89curie)] from 1679 to 1682[[73]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBerger1994114-74)[[74]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Royal_Stables-75) and the [Grand Commun](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grand_Commun&action=edit&redlink=1) [[fr](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Commun%22%20%5Co%20%22fr%3AGrand%20Commun)], which housed the palace's servants and general kitchens, from 1682 to 1684.[[75]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Grand_Commun-76) Mansart also added two entirely new wings in Le Vau's Italianate style to house the court,[[76]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200810%E2%80%9311-77) first at the south end of the palace from 1679 to 1681[[77]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201843-78) and then at its north end from 1685 to 1689.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_History-20)

War and the resulting diminished funding slowed construction at Versailles for the rest of the 17th century.[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198650%E2%80%9351-66) The [Nine Years' War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nine_Years%27_War), which began in 1688, stopped work altogether until 1698.[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200818-70) Three years later, however, the even more expensive [War of the Spanish Succession](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_the_Spanish_Succession) began and,[[78]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198651-79) combined with poor harvests in 1693-94 and 1709–10,[[79]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201852-80)[[80]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDoyle2001190-81) plunged France into crisis.[[80]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDoyle2001190-81)[[81]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198651%E2%80%9352-82) Louis XIV thus slashed funding and canceled some of the work Mansart had planned in the 1680s, such as the remodeling of the courtyard façade in the Italianate style. Louis XIV and Mansart focused on a permanent palace chapel,[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198650%E2%80%9351-66)[[82]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200817%E2%80%9319-83) the construction of which lasted from 1699 to 1710.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996370-56)[[83]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201853-84)



A masked ball in the [Hall of Mirrors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hall_of_Mirrors) (1745) by [Charles-Nicolas Cochin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles-Nicolas_Cochin)

Louis XIV's successors, [Louis XV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XV) and [Louis XVI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XVI), largely left Versailles as they inherited it and focused on the palace's interiors. Louis XV's modifications began in the 1730s, with the completion of the [Salon d'Hercule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salon_d%27Hercule), a [ballroom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballroom) in the north wing, and the expansion of the [king's private apartment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petit_appartement_du_roi),[[84]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201859%E2%80%9360,_65-85)[[85]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200820%E2%80%9321-86) which required the demolition of the Ambassadors' Staircase.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20089-42) In 1748, Louis XV began construction of a palace theater, the [Royal Opera of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Opera_of_Versailles) at the northernmost end of the palace,[[86]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200821-87)[[87]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Royal_Opera-88) but completion was delayed until 1770;[[87]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Royal_Opera-88)[[88]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201861-89) construction was interrupted in the 1740s by the [War of the Austrian Succession](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_the_Austrian_Succession) and then again in 1756 with the start of the [Seven Years' War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Years%27_War).[[86]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200821-87)[[88]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201861-89) These wars emptied the royal treasury and thereafter construction was mostly funded by [Madame du Barry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madame_du_Barry), Louis XV's favorite mistress. In 1771, Louis XV had the northern Ministers' Wing rebuilt in Neoclassical style by [Ange-Jacques Gabriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ange-Jacques_Gabriel), his court architect, as it was in the process of falling down. That work was also stopped by financial constraints, and it remained incomplete when Louis XV died in 1774. In 1784, Louis XVI briefly moved the royal family to the [Château de Saint-Cloud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Saint-Cloud) ahead of more renovations to the Palace of Versailles, but construction could not begin because of financial difficulty and [political crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causes_of_the_French_Revolution).[[89]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200821%E2%80%9324-90) In 1789, the [French Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) swept the royal family and government out of Versailles forever.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996370-56)[[90]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200824-91)

**Role in politics**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Palace_of_Versailles&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Role in politics)]

[*Reception of the Grand Condé at Versailles*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reception_of_the_Grand_Cond%C3%A9_at_Versailles), painted by [Jean-Léon Gérôme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-L%C3%A9on_G%C3%A9r%C3%B4me)

The Palace of Versailles was key to Louis XIV's politics, as an expression and concentration of French art and culture, and for the centralization of royal power.[[91]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200233%E2%80%9340-92)[[92]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200161%E2%80%9364-93) Louis XIV first used Versailles to promote himself with a series of nighttime festivals in its gardens in 1664, 1668, and 1674,[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20084%E2%80%935-29) the events of which were disseminated throughout Europe by print and engravings.[[93]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200249-94)[[94]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198657,_59-95) As early as 1669,[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth20086-49) but especially from 1678,[[95]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201826-96) Louis XIV sought to make Versailles his seat of government, and he expanded the palace so as to fit the court within it.[[96]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200162-97)[[97]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201842-98)[[98]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDoyle2001173-99) The moving of the court to Versailles did not come until 1682,[[98]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDoyle2001173-99) however, and not officially, as opinion on Versailles was mixed among the [nobility of France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobility_of_France).[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWalton198653-15)[[99]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200814-100)

By 1687, however, it was evident to all that Versailles was the [*de facto*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_facto) capital of France,[[72]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Capital-73)[[100]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200815-101) and Louis XIV succeeded in attracting the nobility to Versailles to pursue prestige and royal patronage within a strict court etiquette,[[92]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonaham200161%E2%80%9364-93)[[97]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201842-98)[[101]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBlanning200231%E2%80%9334,_40-102)[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-104) thus eroding their traditional provincial power bases.[[97]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201842-98)[[98]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDoyle2001173-99)[[103]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESwann2001143,_145-105) It was at the Palace of Versailles that Louis XIV received the [Doge of Genoa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doge_of_Genoa) in 1685,[[104]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Reception_of_the_Doge_of_Genoa-106) [an embassy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siamese_embassy_to_France_%281686%29) from the [Ayutthaya Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayutthaya_Kingdom) in 1686,[[105]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Reception_of_the_Ambassador_of_Siam-107) and [an embassy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_embassy_to_Louis_XIV) from [Safavid Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safavid_Iran%22%20%5Co%20%22Safavid%20Iran) in 1715.[[106]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Reception_of_the_Ambassadors_of_Persia-108)

Louis XIV died at Versailles on 1 September 1715 and was succeeded by his five-year-old great-grandson, Louis XV,[[79]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201852-80)[[107]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Death_of_Louis_XIV-109) then the [duke of Anjou](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_of_Anjou),[[108]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201857-110) who was moved to [Vincennes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincennes) and then to Paris by Louis XV's regent, [Philippe II, Duke of Orléans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippe_II%2C_Duke_of_Orl%C3%A9ans).[[107]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Death_of_Louis_XIV-109) Versailles was neglected until 1722,[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_History-20) when Philippe II removed the court to Versailles to escape the unpopularity of his regency,[[109]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth200820-111)[[110]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJones201858-112) and when Louis XV began his majority.[[111]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESwann2001201-113) The 1722 move, however, broke the cultural power of Versailles,[[112]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-FOOTNOTEDoyle200191-114) and during the reign of Louis XVI, courtiers spent their leisure in Paris, not Versailles.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_History-20)

In 1783, the Palace was the site of the signing of the last two of the three treaties of the [Peace of Paris (1783)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_of_Paris_%281783%29), which ended the [American Revolutionary War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War). On September 3, British and American delegates, led by [Benjamin Franklin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Franklin), signed the [Treaty of Paris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_%281783%29) at the Hôtel d'York (now 56 Rue Jacob) in Paris, granting the United States independence. On September 4, Spain and France signed separate treaties with England at the Palace of Versailles, formally ending the war.[[113]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-115)

The King and Queen learned of the storming of the [Bastille](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bastille) in Paris on 14 July 1789, while they were at the Palace, and remained isolated there as the Revolution in Paris spread. The growing anger in Paris led to the [Women's March on Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_March_on_Versailles) on 5 October 1789. A crowd of several thousand men and women, protesting the high price and scarcity of bread, marched from the markets of Paris to Versailles. They took weapons from the city armory, besieged the Palace, and compelled the King and royal family and the members of the National Assembly to return with them to Paris the following day.[[114]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTELacaille201216%E2%80%9317-116)

As soon as the royal family departed, the Palace was closed. In 1792, the [National Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Convention), the new revolutionary government, ordered the transfer of all the paintings and sculptures from the Palace to the [Louvre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louvre). In 1793, the Convention declared the abolition of the monarchy and ordered all of the royal property in the Palace to be sold at auction. The auction took place between 25 August 1793 and 11 August 1794. The furnishings and art of the Palace, including the furniture, mirrors, baths, and kitchen equipment, were sold in seventeen thousand lots. All fleurs-de-lys and royal emblems on the buildings were chambered or chiseled off. The empty buildings were turned into a storehouse for furnishings, art and libraries confiscated from the nobility. The empty grand apartments were opened for tours beginning in 1793, and a small museum of French paintings and art school was opened in some of the empty rooms.[[115]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTELacaille201218-117)

**19th century – history museum and government venue**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Palace_of_Versailles&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: 19th century – history museum and government venue)]



Banquet for Queen Victoria hosted by [Napoleon III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_III) in the [Royal Opera of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Opera_of_Versailles), August 1855 by [Eugene Lami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_Lami)



*Proclamation of the*[*German Empire*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire)*, 18 January 1871*, 1877 by [Anton von Werner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_von_Werner)

When [Napoleon Bonaparte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_Bonaparte) became Emperor of the French in 1804, he considered making Versailles his residence but abandoned the idea because of the cost of the renovation. Prior to his marriage with Marie-Louise in 1810, he had the Grand Trianon restored and refurnished as a springtime residence for himself and his family, in the style of furnishing that it is seen today.[[116]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTELacaille201219-118)

In 1815, with the final downfall of Napoleon, [Louis XVIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XVIII), the younger brother of Louis XVI, became King, and considered returning the royal residence to Versailles, where he had been born. He ordered the restoration of the royal apartments, but the task and cost was too great. Louis XVIII had the far end of the south wing of the *Cour Royale* demolished and rebuilt (1814–1824) to match the Gabriel wing of 1780 opposite, which gave greater uniformity of appearance to the front entrance.[[117]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTESpaworth2008244-119) Neither he nor his successor [Charles X](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_X_of_France) lived at Versailles.[[116]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTELacaille201219-118)

The [French Revolution of 1830](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution_of_1830) brought a new monarch, [Louis-Philippe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Philippe_I) to power, and a new ambition for Versailles. He did not reside at Versailles but began the creation of the [Museum of the History of France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%C3%A9e_de_l%27Histoire_de_France_%28Versailles%29), dedicated to "all the glories of France", which had been used to house some members of the royal family. The museum was begun in 1833 and inaugurated on 30 June 1837. Its most famous room is the [Galerie des Batailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galerie_des_Batailles%22%20%5Co%20%22Galerie%20des%20Batailles) (Hall of Battles), which lies on most of the length of the second floor of the south wing.[[118]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoog1996369%E2%80%93374-120) The museum project largely came to a halt when Louis Philippe was overthrown in 1848, though the paintings of French heroes and great battles still remain in the south wing.

Emperor [Napoleon III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon_III) used the Palace on occasion as a stage for grand ceremonies. One of the most lavish was the banquet that he hosted for [Queen Victoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Victoria) in the [Royal Opera of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Opera_of_Versailles) on 25 August 1855.[[119]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-121)

During the [Franco-Prussian War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Prussian_War) of 1870–1871, the Palace was occupied by the general staff of the victorious German Army. Parts of the château, including the Gallery of Mirrors, were turned into a military hospital. The creation of the [German Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire), combining Prussia and the surrounding German states under [William I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_I%2C_German_Emperor), was formally proclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors on 18 January 1871. The Germans remained in the Palace until the signing of the armistice in March 1871. In that month, the government of the new [Third French Republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_French_Republic), which had departed Paris during the War for Tours and then Bordeaux, moved into the Palace. The National Assembly held its meetings in the Opera House.[[120]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTELacaille201212-122)

The uprising of the [Paris Commune](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Commune) in March 1871, prevented the French government, under [Adolphe Thiers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolphe_Thiers%22%20%5Co%20%22Adolphe%20Thiers), from returning immediately to Paris. The military operation which suppressed the Commune at the end of May was directed from Versailles, and the prisoners of the Commune were marched there and put on trial in military courts. In 1875 a second parliamentary body, the [French Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Senate), was created and held its meetings for the election of a President of the Republic in a new hall created in 1876 in the south wing of the Palace. The [French Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Senate) continues to meet in the Palace on special occasions, such as the amendment of the French Constitution.[[121]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTELacaille201220-123)

**20th century**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Palace_of_Versailles&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: 20th century)]



[*The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 28 June 1919*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Signing_of_Peace_in_the_Hall_of_Mirrors%2C_Versailles%2C_28_June_1919) by [William Orpen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Orpen)

The end of the 19th and the early 20th century saw the beginning of restoration efforts at the Palace, first led by [Pierre de Nolhac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_de_Nolhac), poet and scholar and the first conservator, who began his work in 1892. The conservation and restoration were interrupted by two world wars but have continued until the present day.[[122]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTELacaille201213-124)

The Palace returned to the world stage in June 1919, when, after six months of negotiations, the [Treaty of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles), formally ending the First World War, was signed in the [Hall of Mirrors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hall_of_Mirrors). Between 1925 and 1928, the American philanthropist and multi-millionaire [John D. Rockefeller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_D._Rockefeller) gave $2,166,000, the equivalent of about thirty million dollars today, to restore and refurbish the palace.[[123]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-125)

More work took place after World War II, with the restoration of the [Royal Opera of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Opera_of_Versailles). The theater was reopened in 1957, in the presence of Queen [Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II_of_the_United_Kingdom).[[124]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-126)

In 1978, parts of the Palace were heavily damaged in a [bombing committed by Breton terrorists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1978_Palace_of_Versailles_bombing).[[125]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-127)

Starting in the 1950s, when the museum of Versailles was under the directorship of [Gérald van der Kemp](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=G%C3%A9rald_van_der_Kemp&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Gérald van der Kemp (page does not exist)), the objective was to restore the palace to its state – or as close to it as possible – in 1789 when the royal family left the palace. Among the early projects was the repair of the roof over the Hall of Mirrors; the publicity campaign brought international attention to the plight of post-war Versailles and garnered much foreign money including a grant from the [Rockefeller Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockefeller_Foundation).

One of the more costly endeavors for the museum and France's Fifth Republic has been to repurchase as much of the original furnishings as possible. Consequently, because furniture with a royal provenance – and especially furniture that was made for Versailles – is a highly sought-after commodity on the international market, the museum has spent considerable funds on retrieving much of the palace's original furnishings.[[126]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-128)

**21st century**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Palace_of_Versailles&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: 21st century)]

In 2003, a new restoration initiative – the "Grand Versailles" project – was started, which began with the replanting of the gardens, which had lost over 10,000 trees during [Cyclone Lothar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyclone_Lothar) on 26 December 1999. One part of the initiative, the restoration of the [Hall of Mirrors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hall_of_Mirrors), was completed in 2006.[[127]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-129) Another major project was the further restoration of the backstage areas [Royal Opera of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Opera_of_Versailles), which was completed on 9 April 1957.[[87]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPalace_of_Versailles:_Royal_Opera-88)

The Palace of Versailles is currently owned by the French state. Its formal title is the [Public Establishment of the Palace, Museum and National Estate of Versailles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Establishment_of_the_Palace%2C_Museum_and_National_Estate_of_Versailles). Since 1995, it has been run as a Public Establishment, with an independent administration and management supervised by the [French Ministry of Culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Ministry_of_Culture).[[128]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles#cite_note-130)

**FACTS:**

**From hunting lodge to palace**

France's kings were first attracted to Versailles because of the area's prolific game. Louis XIII, who lived 1601-1643, bought up land, built a chateau and went on hunting trips. At the time, much of the land around Versailles was uncultivated, allowing wild animals to flourish.

The chateau Louis XIII built was little more than a hunting lodge having enough space to house the king and a small entourage. It was his successor, Louis XIV (1638-1715), the "Sun King," a ruler who chose the sun as his emblem and believed in centralized government with the king at its center, who would radically transform Versailles making it the seat of France's government by the time of his death.

Versailles features many fountains that were technological marvels for their time. (Image credit: [Joan Quevado Fle](https://shutterstock.7eer.net/c/221109/42119/1305?subId1=livescience-row-5413889724417943000&sharedId=livescience-row&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.shutterstock.com%2Fgallery-129619p1.html) [Shutterstock](https://shutterstock.7eer.net/c/221109/42119/1305?subId1=livescience-row-1301183962801823700&sharedId=livescience-row&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.shutterstock.com%2F))

Louis XIV ruled France for 72 years, and in that time transformed Versailles by encompassing Louis XIII's chateau with a palace that contained north and south wings, as well as nearby buildings housing ministries.

Versailles was built to impress. "The most important message Louis XIV sent through the architecture of Versailles was his ultimate power," said Tea Gudek Snajdar, an Amsterdam-based art historian, museum docent and a blogger at [Culture Tourist](http://culturetourist.com/). "He is an absolute monarch, untouchable and distant. But, even more then that, he is the Sun King. That symbolism of the Sun King is very visible in the architecture of the Versailles. The painter Lebrun, who designed the iconographic program of the Palace, focused paintings, sculptures and the architecture to one goal only — celebrating the King."

A series of gardens, created in a formal style, stood to the west of the palace (one of them today is in the shape of a star) and contained sculptures as well as the pressurized fountains capable of launching water high into the air. The formality and grandeur of the gardens symbolized Louis XIV's absolute power, even over nature, according to Gudek Snajder.

"From the outset Louis attached a supreme importance to these water effects. Their virtuosity formed the star turn of a tour of the gardens," writes Tony Spawforth, a professor at Newcastle University, in his book "Versailles: A Biography of a Palace" (St. Martin's Press, 2008). "The effects were the work of engineers whose machines made Versailles a hydraulic as much as an artistic wonder." Unfortunately, Spawforth notes, problems supplying water meant that the fountains could only be turned on during special occasions.

In addition a grand canal, constructed to the west of the garden and running about a mile long, was used for naval demonstrations and had gondolas, donated by the Republic of Venice, steered by gondoliers.

Building such a lavish complex was an important part of Louis XIV's style of rule and beliefs about monarchy, which we would call absolutism, said Schmidt. "As king of France he was the embodiment of France — and his palace was meant to display the wealth and power of his nation," she said. "Furthermore, it was vital to him to enhance France's status in Europe; not just by military feats but in the arts as well. For instance, when the Hall of Mirrors was built, mirrors were usually imported from Italy at a great cost. Louis XIV wanted to show that France could produce mirrors just as fine as those produced in Italy, and consequently, all the mirrors of that hall were made on French soil."

Louis also insisted on moving the French government to Versailles. Scholars have suggested a number of factors that led him to build a great palace complex at Versailles and move the French government there. It's been noted that by keeping the king's residence some distance from Paris, it offered him protection from any civil unrest going on in the city. It also forced the nobles to travel to Versailles and seek lodging in the palace, something that impeded their ability to build up regional power bases that could potentially challenge the king.

As the French government moved into Versailles, and the king found himself swamped by work in his palace, he built himself the Grand (also called Marble) Trianon, a more modest palatial structure, about a mile (1.6 kilometers) to the northwest of the palace as a private retreat where only he and those invited could visit.

|  |
| --- |
| **Palace of Versailles** |
| *Château de Versailles*  ([French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language)) |
| Versailles-Chateau-Jardins05.jpgChateau Versailles Galerie des Glaces.jpgAppartement du Roi (Versailles).jpgGarden facade and fountain; [Hall of Mirrors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hall_of_Mirrors); Apartment of the King |
|

|  |
| --- |
| show**Map location and basic information** |

 |
|  |
| [**UNESCO World Heritage Site**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) |
| **Official name** | Chateau and Park of Versailles |
| [**Criteria**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site#Selection_criteria) | Cultural: i, ii, vi |
| **Reference** | [83](https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/83) |
| **Inscription** | 1979 (3rd [Session](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Committee)) |
| **Area** | 1,070 ha |
| **Buffer zone** | 9,467 ha |