

Château de Fontainebleau



In 2021, visitors will be able to meet Napoleon I at the Château de Fontainebleau!

Napoleon I brought Fontainebleau back to life after the French Revolution. When visiting the palace, which he restored, furnished and inhabited, visitors will learn about the statesman, the warlord, the head of household and the promoter of the arts.

NAPOLEON IN FONTAINEBLEAU

There is no place in France where Napoleon I made his mark more than in Fontainebleau. Although he did not stay there as long as in the Tuileries, he came there over ten times between 1803 and 1815.

Napoleon Bonaparte chose the Château de Fontainebleau as one of his residences. On the eve of his coronation in 1804, he ordered the renovation of the palace to accommodate Pope Pius VII who had come to crown him: the palace was refurbished in just nineteen days. He was aware of the historical significance of Fontainebleau, the "House of the ages, the true home of kings", and he carefully restored and arranged the palace. The jewel of the Crown's possessions turned into a platform for the display of imperial power and a showcase for holding court. He redesigned the gardens, luxuriously refurbished the Grands Appartements, and re-established the etiquette of monarchical life. The former King's bedroom was turned into the Throne Room, with imperial symbols and emblems of the monarchy now standing side by side.

Visitors will also encounter the tireless worker in Fontainebleau. The administration of the Empire kept Napoleon I so busy that he had a bed installed in his study. He would be signing his abdication in the parlour just next to it in April 1814. Finally, this is where he would bid farewell to his country and to his most faithful companions in the Cour d'Honneur, now called the Cour des Adieux. In doing so, he turned the remarkable horseshoe staircase, an architectural feat dating back to the 17th century, into a place of remembrance that would be forever attached to the memory of the most moving time in his destiny.

THE EMPEROR'S PETITS APPARTEMENTS

The Emperor's private life is unveiled in the Petits Appartements on the ground floor. Napoleon would make sure these areas were carefully adapted to his habits and working methods. Whether it was in his library, which was conceived as an arsenal of books, or in his topographical cabinet, where he could spread out maps to sketch phenomenal campaigns, he worked with great determination.

Visitors can also learn about the private life of the two empresses. It was here that Josephine, who couldn't give him an heir, found out about the inevitable separation. After her, Marie-Louise, who was pregnant with the future king of Rome, would wander in them.

THE NAPOLEON I MUSEUM

The Napoleon I Museum sheds a light on the visit of the palace and provides an extensive synthesis of Napoleon's history and work, interspersed with masterpieces such as the Coronation sword and tunic, the Emperor's famous bicorne hat, his campaign furniture, the official state silverware (the "Grand Vermeil" service), the cradle of the King of Rome and the portraits of the princesses of the imperial family.

The museum traces back historically the vast, complex "system" imagined by Napoleon to establish his power in France and in Europe: he reorganised institutions, reformed society, overhauled law and education, controlled cults and redrew the map of the continent.

Room after room, members of his family, dignitaries and officers of the Empire are depicted in portraits and busts. These were the figures to whom Napoleon distributed the thrones or entrusted the administration of the kingdoms he conquered or created in Europe. Luxurious weapons, refined artwork and promising sketches tell the story of what they did.

The scope of the museum mirrors the European dimension of the Empire and shows how the Emperor of the French was perceived by European sovereigns and populations. Over 700 works, most of which were commissioned to serve Napoleon's political project, tell the dazzling epic of a man who reshaped France and Europe.

IN 2021, THE CHÂTEAU DE FONTAINEBLEAU COMMEMORATES THE BICENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

With historical reenactments, exhibitions, symposia, podcasts, concerts and tours, visitors can meet the Emperor in the palace he created in his own image!

- Reopening of the redesigned and extended Napoleon I Museum: 7th May
- Reopening of the restored Emperor's Library: 7th May
- "Napoleon I in Fontainebleau" tour: from May to December
- "One destiny, eight works" (podcasts): from May to December
- Colloquium on "La Seine-et-Marne et Napoléon : intimité, pouvoirs, mémoires" ("The Seine-et-Marne and Napoleon: intimacy, powers, memories"): 18th, 19th and 20th May
- "Napoleon in Fontainebleau" application by Little Globe Trotter
- Exhibition on "Un palais pour l'Empereur. Napoléon à Fontainebleau" ("A palace for the Emperor. Napoleon in Fontainebleau"): from 14th September 2021 to 4th January
- Residency of Thomas Hengelbrock and the Balthasar Neumann Ensemble and Choir: from 17th to 26th September
- Historical reenactments "Napoleon I in Fontainebleau": 16th and 17th October

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