

Press information

Schönbrunn Palace

Palace

Maze and Labyrinth

Gloriette

Privy Garden

Children's Museum „Schloss Schönbrunn Experience“

Schönbrunn Palace Conference Centre

Schönbrunn: imperial attractions in palace and gardens

The Cultural World Heritage Site of Schönbrunn Palace is Austria's most frequently visited tourist attraction. In the palace the residential and state rooms with their original furnishings and decorations convey an authentic impression of the imperial lifestyle. The park and gardens surrounding the palace make Schönbrunn a unique synthesis of Baroque art as well as providing a convenient and highly popular recreational area for Vienna's population.

The history of Schönbrunn and the buildings that stood on this site before the present palace dates back to the Middle Ages. Originally part of the manor of the monastery of Klosterneuburg, the estate passed into the ownership of the Habsburgs in 1569. Initially a hunting lodge, then a summer palace, it eventually became the main residence of the imperial dynasty. As one of the most important Baroque palaces in Europe, Schönbrunn represents the rise and splendour of the Habsburg empire. After the devastation of the Turkish siege in 1683 the architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach designed a grandiose new palace, while plans for the gardens were drawn up by Jean Trehet at approximately the same period, in 1695. In 1740 Maria Theresa ascended the throne, marking the start of a glorious epoch for Schönbrunn. The palace became the centre of court and political life, and under the supervision of court architect Nikolaus Pacassi was enlarged and altered to become a residential palace in the Rococo style. The original Baroque furnishings from the time Maria Theresa have been largely preserved to this day.

The empress also had the gardens extended and redesigned. They were conceived as an exterior continuation of the statley rooms within the palace. The landscaping of Schönbrunn Hill with the Neptune Fountain and the Gloriette, which stands on a visual axis to the palace and affords a view over the whole complex, was carried out according to plans drawn up by court architect Johann Ferdinand Hetzendorf von Hohenberg.

At the end of the monarchy the complex passed into the ownership of the Federal Republic of Austria and was opened to the public shortly afterwards. Since it was hived off from federal administration in 1992, the funds for the maintenance and revitalisation of the palace have been generated by the Schloss Schönbrunn Kultur- und Betriebsges.m.b.H. (SKB) from touristic use of the complex that is, however, concerned to have the least possible impact on the historical fabric. Palace and park cover an area of over 1.5 km² and draw 8-9 million visitors annually.

Of the total of 1,441 rooms in the palace complex 40 state rooms in the main building are open to the public. Beginning with the residential apartments of Emperor Franz Joseph and his consort Elisabeth in the west wing of the palace which are furnished in 19th-century style, the tour continues through the state rooms in the central wing (also known as the 'State Wing') and on into the guest apartments. The so-called Franz Karl Apartments which were occupied by the parents of Emperor Franz Joseph, Archduchess Sophie and Archduke Franz Karl, complete the tour. On the ground floor a children's museum has been set up partly in the suite of rooms decorated with frescos by Johann Wenzel Bergl. The museum gives a vivid impression of life in imperial times, with exhibits for young and old to touch, try out and try on!

Both palace and park have had their original imperial appearance restored over the past few years. Apart from the repairing of war damage, little in the way of building maintenance was carried out for decades. Since 1992 Schönbrunn has experienced the most costly construction phase in its history: 'To date, we have invested just below €138 million in construction work related to the preservation and faithful restoration of the palace complex', says Franz Sattlecker, managing director of Schönbrunn. In the case of large-scale projects the SKB carries out its own

research in order better to explore the history of these buildings. 'This means that the renovation work is founded on a solid scientific basis and can be carried out with as little disturbance to the historic fabric as possible', explains joint managing director Wolfgang Kippes.

Architectural features in the park such as the Gloriette, the Neptune Fountain or the Roman Ruin can be viewed in their historically authentic state; however, there are also new attractions, based largely on historical models, such as the Maze and the Privy Garden. Covering a total area of roughly 7,000 m², the Maze, Labyrinth and Labyrinthikon Playground have a range of playful activities to discover and explore. These attractions can be booked individually or with combination tickets such as the Schönbrunn Pass Classic or Gold. These include a visit to the Schönbrunn Court Bakery where visitors can watch a demonstration of how to make a classic Viennese apple strudel. Besides a tour of the palace, the Sisi Ticket also includes admission to two other attractions managed by the SKB in Vienna: the Hofburg with the Imperial Apartments, Sisi Museum and Imperial Silver Collection, and the Imperial Furniture Museum.

With the opening in 2008 of the Schönbrunn Palace Conference Centre in the former Apothecaries' Wing on the east side of the palace grounds, SKB has ventured into an entirely new field of business. The centre extends over a total area of 2,700 m² and has eight rooms offering 870 m² of space in a variety of sizes and ambiances for conferences, symposia and events, providing the perfect setting for private and business functions of all kinds. Located within the historic complex of Schönbrunn Palace, the centre combines historical charm with state-of-the-art equipment and technology such as WiFi communication or an innovative adiabatic ventilation system which ensures optimum temperature and humidity. In order to enhance the feeling of well-being, the ambience has been carefully designed to activate the five senses in accordance with *feng shui* principles. Variable coloured lighting can be deployed to create a particular mood or individual ambience. Another attractive feature is the access to the adjacent Baroque Orangery Garden and several planted inner courtyards. Participants can also relax by strolling in the palace grounds with their attractions. Guided tours of Schönbrunn Palace and/or its park can be booked as part of an accompanying programme of events.

In developing the park and palace for purposes of culture, tourism and leisure, the management is concerned to integrate the necessary modern touristic infrastructure as sensitively as possible. In dealing with thousands of visitors every day, the SKB prides itself on providing the best possible service and security. Electronic ticketing with the precise time of admission on the ticket coupled with specially trained personnel help to cope with the large numbers of visitors during the summer months and to avoid long waiting times. The system allows visitors to book in advance via Internet. The SKB provides audio guides in 12 languages and/or tour descriptions in 17 languages free of charge.

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Schönbrunn Palace

Facts & figures

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Proprietor

100% Republic of Austria
Represented by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour

Management

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Opening hours

Palace

1/4 - 30/6	8.30 am to 5 pm
1/7 - 31/8	8.30 am to 6 pm
1/9 - 31/10	8.30 am to 5 pm
1/11 - 31/3	8.30 am to 4.30 pm

Privy Garden

1/4 - 30/6	9 am to 5 pm
1/7 - 31/8	9 am to 6 pm
1/9 - 2/11	9 am to 5 pm

Maze & Labyrinth, Gloriette Panorama Terrace

1/4 – 30/6 9 am to 6 pm

1/7 – 31/8 9 am to 7 pm

1/9 – 31/10 9 am to 6 pm

1/11 – 31/3 9 am to 5 pm

Children's Museum / The Schönbrunn Palace Experience

During the school year on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays

10 am to 5 pm

During Viennese school holidays daily

10 am to 5 pm

(last admittance: 4 pm)