Château de Fontainebleau

Presse release
Thursday, 15 January 2026

Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI at the Château de Fontainebleau

In 2026, the Château de Fontainebleau presents an ambitious programme dedicated to Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI, marking the 240th anniversary of their final stay at the Château de Fontainebleau. Through exhibitions, guided tours, performances and concerts, this year-long programme highlights the royal couple's attachment to Fontainebleau—where they stayed on 17 occasions—and recalls the château's major role in the political, artistic and cultural life of the 18th century.

The celebrations devoted to the iconic royal couple Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI began as early as December 2025. From 19 December 2025 until 31 July 2026, visitors are invited to address a letter to the Queen at the Château de Fontainebleau, one of her favourite residences. The project "À vos plumes! Écrivez à Marie-Antoinette" ("To your pens! Write to Marie-Antoinette") allows young and old alike to create a unique bond in which history and contemporary voices resonate. This literary initiative was conceived by Cécile Berly, a renowned historian specialising in the 18th century and the author of numerous works on Marie-Antoinette. At the conclusion of the project, the most beautiful and moving letters received will be compiled and published in a collected volume.

From spring onwards, the public will be able to stroll through the State Apartments, exceptionally refurnished as they were in 1786, faithfully recreating the living environment of Marie-Antoinette during her final stay in Fontainebleau. For this dedicated season, her apartments—the Grand Cabinet, Bedroom and Silver Boudoir—will regain their original furnishings, including exceptional pieces created by the greatest artists of the time, such as the cabinetmaker Jean-Henri Riesener.

On 18 and 19 April 2026, the château will host historical re-enactments entitled "The Stays of Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI at the Château de Fontainebleau", reviving the refinement, art de vivre and grandeur of an era when the heart of Fontainebleau beat to the rhythm of the sovereigns. Through a range of activities and a major equestrian show led by the Alexis Grüss Company, the weekend will evoke the royal stays and recreate the atmosphere of court journeys under the reign of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette.

This year also gives pride of place to fashion, music and the performing arts—fields in which Marie-Antoinette exerted a lasting influence.

The itinerary "Marie-Antoinette: From the Avant-Garde to the Stage. Stage Costumes by Christian Lacroix", presented as part of the Festival of Art History—whose theme this year is fashion—will highlight the Queen's artistic influence, which endures two centuries after her death. As part of the château's visitor circuit, stage costumes designed by Christian Lacroix for the opera *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*, staged at the Opéra-Comique, and drawn from the collections of the National Centre for Stage Costume (Centre National du Costume de Scène), will be displayed.

On 4 July, the Château de Fontainebleau invites courtiers for a day to the Queen's picnic and ball. During this evening, the English Garden will be transformed into a bucolic setting. Visitors, invited to bring their own picnic, will enjoy demonstrations of 18th-century dances in costume, while the more daring can try their hand at the gavotte or the minuet.

Concerts held in the autumn in the Ballroom by the artistic residency of Thomas Hengelbrock and the Balthasar Neumann Ensembles will bear witness to the importance of music in court life. By honouring the Queen's favourite composers, such as Gluck, these concerts will recall the sovereign's predominant role in musical choices.

The exhibition "Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI at Fontainebleau: Splendour and the Art of Living" (11 October 2026 – 27 January 2027) will be the highlight of this commemorative year. Organised in collaboration with GrandPalaisRmn, the exhibition will bring together more than 120 works from French and international collections. It will offer a renewed interpretation of the last sovereigns of the Ancien Régime at Fontainebleau, drawing on the château's preserved interiors and extensive scholarly research.

Complementing this exhibition, a second display entitled "The Panache of the Enlightenment" (19 September 2026 – 25 January 2027) will be held in the Saint-Louis Rooms, focusing on the reappropriation of the figure of Henri IV under Louis XVI. This dossier exhibition, organised in partnership with the National Museum of the Château of Pau, will link the image of the "good king," the "father of the people" embodied by Henri IV—who became a model for Louis XVI—on the eve of the Revolution.

A source of inspiration for the greatest figures of cinema, Marie-Antoinette fascinates as much as she intrigues, and countless feature films have portrayed all or part of the Queen's life. A cycle of film screenings devoted to the Queen will be organised in partnership with the L'Hermitage Cinema in Fontainebleau, including two biopics: *Marie-Antoinette, Queen of France* by Jean Delannoy, starring Michèle Morgan in the title role, and *Marie Antoinette* by Sofia Coppola, starring Kirsten Dunst.

To relive the Queen's days at the Château de Fontainebleau, two specially designed tours will be offered during the season: "The Boudoirs of Marie-Antoinette", an exceptional tour with very limited capacity, granting access to the Queen's most intimate and rarely visited spaces, such as the Turkish Boudoir; and a theatrical tour entitled "Marie-Antoinette, Queen of Fashion."

A playful workshop will accompany these tours, entitled "French Art de Vivre under Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI," and will be led by actors.

Through this programme, the Château de Fontainebleau reaffirms its mission to pass on and enhance cultural heritage, while offering the public a sensitive and well-documented approach to the history of Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The château is open every day except Tuesdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Château and Napoleon I Museum ticket : €17 | Reduced rate: €15 | Free for visitors under 26.

ACCESS TO THE CHÂTEAU

Accessible from Paris in under one hour.
By car from Paris: Porte d'Orléans or Porte d'Italie, then A6, exit Fontainebleau.

By train (40 minutes from Paris): Accessible with the Navigo pass | Train and bus return ticket: €2.50.
Departure from Gare de Lyon (mainline trains – Line R), Fontainebleau/Avon station, then bus line 3401 towards Les Lilas (Château stop).

PRATICAL INFORMATION

The château is open daily, except Tuesdays, from 9:30 AM to 6 PM.

PRESS CONTACT

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