



Schönbrunn Group

KAISERLICHES ÖSTERREICH ENTDECKEN

MEDIA INFORMATION

Vienna Hofburg: On the Trail of Sisi, Franz Joseph and Imperial Housekeeping

The Vienna Hofburg formed the hub of the Habsburg Monarchy for several centuries. Besides its function as official residence and administrative centre, the Hofburg was also the winter residence of the imperial family – the Court spent summers from the mid-eighteenth century on in Schönbrunn Palace. Three museum attractions in the Hofburg under the administration of the Schönbrunn Group provide historically authentic inside views into courtly traditions and the everyday imperial lifestyle: the Sisi Museum, installed since 2004, the Imperial Apartments, mainly furnished faithful to the original accoutrements, and the Silver Collection, which presents its extensive collection pertaining to imperial dining culture.

The Vienna Hofburg was the imperial residence for six hundred years. The former medieval castle complex was constantly enlarged in order to meet the demands of a prestigious imperial court and ceremonial with banqueting halls and state rooms. Meanwhile the Hofburg had to accommodate living apartments for each individual member of the family and facilities for the many court offices within the imperial household, including kitchens, wine cellar and storage rooms for provisions, also a chamber for the court silver and tableware. The Hofburg has a total of eighteen sectors containing 2,600 rooms. It offers three different touristic attractions in the Imperial Chancellery Wing and the Amalienburg surrounding the inner courtyard, which provide an authentic inside view of the imperial lifestyle.

Sisi Museum

In the year 2004 on the occasion of the 150th wedding anniversary of the imperial couple Franz Joseph and Elisabeth the Sisi Museum was opened in the Vienna Hofburg. The museum has been sensitively designed in a scenario after a concept of Prof. Rolf Langenfass, a renowned theatrical set designer, and it provides a close-up view for visitors of the empress's fascinating personality. The museum's concept consists of an approach to the Sisi legend that is not uncritical, but aims to present a true-to-life portrait of the empress, off the beaten track of conventional clichés. The extensive collection of the Schönbrunn Group has enabled the museum since then to focus on the history of this complex woman by means of a great many objects owned by the empress. Original pieces of clothing and matching accessories such as umbrellas, fans, gloves, etc., and also the mantle that covered her after her assassination take visitors on a time trip into a past world. More than three hundred exhibits bear witness to joy and sorrow, yearning, fears and blows of fate of an empress, who still casts her spell today over many people.

Imperial Apartments

Corresponding to court ceremonial, each member of the imperial family had an apartment at his and her disposal in one of the many wings. While not only various museums but also offices, ministries and not least (since 1947) the President's Chancellery are accommodated in most of the facilities, the former apartments of the imperial couple Franz Joseph and Elisabeth can be viewed in the Imperial Chancellery Wing and in the Amalienburg.

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The [Imperial Apartments](#) cover 24 rooms in which Emperor Franz Joseph and his spouse Elisabeth resided. These can be viewed for the most part in their original state, reconstructed through extensive restorations. The interior design of the private quarters reflects the modesty of the long-reigning monarch in the second half of the nineteenth century until his death in 1916: they impress with imperial brilliance, but without extravagant pomp. Highlights of the tour are the bedroom and the study where Franz Joseph surrounded himself with a great many pictures and souvenirs of family members. The gymnastics room, dressing room and the bathroom reflect the personal lifestyle of the beauty-conscious Sisi; the empress's Grand Salon with its golden furnishings showcase the exquisite handicrafts of the Viennese Court. The dining hall displays the famed dining culture of the Viennese Court with a table spread with original holdings from the Silver Collection.

Silver Collection

The [Silver Collection](#) on the ground floor is one of the largest collections on display in the world that has as its theme the culture of a court household. Exquisite individual pieces used by members of the Imperial House from the holdings of the former Court Silver and Table Room are on show as well as comprehensive ensembles and services that impressively manifest the wealth of the imperial household. The exhibition covers a floor space of 1,300 square metres, containing a total of 150,000 collection pieces on show. Cooking pots from the court kitchen, baking tins and forms from the court confectioners, table linen, glass services, table silver, porcelain tableware and epergnes of gilt bronze can be seen amongst the breathtaking diversity of the original objects and artworks. Pieces of particular brilliance are the resplendent Milan epergne, the Viennese Court silver, the Grand Vermeil Service and Maria Theresa's personal "Mundzeug", her cutlery.

Interactive web portal "World of the Habsburgs"

An optimal supplement to the attractions in the Vienna Hofburg was created with the interactive web portal "[The World of the Habsburgs](#)" with a virtual exhibition on the history of the Habsburg Monarchy including a wide-ranging spectrum of topics, and breathing life also into the living habits and worlds of the Habsburgs. Detailed text and pictorial material casts a critical light on the leading ruler personalities and describes the historical backgrounds. The website has meanwhile become a reference project and has received many awards. It is continually augmented. Since 2014, the virtual exhibition on the 1914-1918 war, "[The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy](#)", has been available for viewing online.

The **Schönbrunn Group**, in administering Schönbrunn Palace, the Vienna Furniture Museum, the Sisi Museum in the Vienna Hofburg, also the Schloss Hof Estate, has in its charge the leading attractions of Austria's Imperial heritage. The Schönbrunn Group is responsible for the preservation and revitalisation of the cultural assets entrusted to it. The necessary funds are provided in toto by the revenue earned by the Schönbrunn Group itself.

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