

7 MOST OPULENT OPERA HOUSES IN EUROPE



Fans of classical music, Opera and European architecture should seriously consider visiting at least a few of Europe's most prestigious Opera houses. Although trips to Opera houses are rarely featured as part of organized tours the tourists who make an effort to explore Europe's many Opera houses often rave about their experiences, citing them as trip highlights. Here are just a few of the top rated Opera houses which tourists should consider and add to their Europe trip itinerary. Brought to you by Tourism-Review.com.

The Royal Opera House - London, England

The current Opera house is the third to be built at Convent Garden, the first of which was built in 1732. For its first hundred years the Opera house served mainly as a playhouse, although it's now home to an Orchestra and a Ballet company as well as an Opera company. Some of the Opera house's most memorable performances were Operas written by George Handel, some of which were written specifically for the Opera House itself.

The Royal Theatre of Saint Charles (Teatro di San Carlo) - Naples, Italy

The Teatro di San Carlo was commissioned in 1737 by King Charles of Bourbon and holds the title of being the worlds oldest working theater. Prior to the construction of La Scala the Teatro di San Carlo was the most prestigious theatre in Italy. The Teatro di San Carlo has hosted a plethora of Operas, perhaps most notably Operas composed by Gioachino Rossini.

The Royal Opera (The Opéra Royal de Versailles) - Versailles, France

The Royal Opera was constructed within the Palace of Versailles in 1769 by architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel to celebrate the marriage between the dauphin, King Louis XVI and his bride Marie-Antoinette an Austrian princess. Today visitors are able to visit the Royal Opera for special gala performances or as part of a tour of the palace.

The Royal Opera is ornately decorated in keeping with the rest of the palace, although Ange-Jacques creatively used a few substitutions for materials. As an example, the walls look to be marble but are actually wooden and painted to resemble marble. The Royal Opera is also famous for its sky blue curtains and harmonious blend of gold, pink and green decorations. The Royal Opera also boasts two balconies and a colonnade which doesn't seem to end, thanks to the careful placement of mirrors.

La Scala (Teatro alla Scala) - Milan, Italy

La Scala was built in 1778 and is arguably the most famous Opera house in the world. La Scala is closely associated with many of the world's great composers including Rossini, Donizetti and Verdi.

To this day many of the worlds most respected Opera singers have performed at La Scala, perhaps as it boasts unbeatable acoustics due to the concave tunnel which was installed under the orchestra's wooden floor.

The Bolshoi Theatre - Moscow, Russia

Although the Bolshoi Theatre closed briefly for refurbishment in 2005 it has since been reopened in 2012. The Bolshoi Theatre was built in 1825 and opened with a performance of Fernando Sor's ballet Cendrillon. Throughout its extended history the Bolshoi Theatre has staged a plethora of world class ballets, perhaps most notably Yuri Grigorovich's productions of Romanda, Swan Lake and The Golden Age.

Visitors to Russia shouldn't leave Moscow without visiting the Bolshoi Theatre as it boasts four balconies and an impressive neoclassic portico which features a statue of the mythological god Apollo and his chariot. The theatre also houses a top gallery where all the authentic Chippendale seats are covered in red damask.

The Vienna State Opera (Vienna Staatsoper) - Vienna, Austria

The Vienna State Opera house was built in 1869 and opened with a performance of Mozart's Opera Don Giovanni. Sadly much of the Opera house was destroyed during WW2, when the Allied forces bombed Vienna in 1945. Fortunately its famous grand staircase survived along with other parts of the building. To gain a sense of the Vienna State Opera's original splendour make sure to walk through the main doors where you'll find the splendid box office foyer.

The Paris Opera House (The Palais Garnier) - Paris, France

The Paris Opera House was built in 1875 as a permanent home for Paris's most successful Opera company the Opéra de Paris. The Opera house is distinctly recognizable for it's spectacular domed roof, which stands out, even in a city of extraordinary buildings. The interior of the Opera house is just as impressive and features grand staircases, exquisite statues, frescoes and chandeliers. Each year a variety of classic Operas are still performed at the Paris Opera House which has a seating capacity of 1875.

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