

TOP 7 OFFICIAL WORLD LEADER RESIDENCES TOURISTS CAN VISIT



More and more official residences belonging to world leaders are opening their doors to tourists. For the world leaders, it's a great way to lift the building's world heritage status and show people one of their country's architectural treasures. For tourists, it's a great opportunity to explore an iconic national building first-hand, and for many, has become a key attraction to check out when visiting a country. Tourism Review introduces a list of seven world leader residences around the globe available for tourists.

The White House, the USA

Any tourist going to Washington D.C. should certainly visit the White House. This iconic building can be found at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW in the city of Washington D.C. It is home to the US President, who lives and works there. The White House was built between 1792 and 1800, and designed by James Hoban, an Irish architect. It was built in the Neoclassical style from Aquia Creek sandstone painted white.

President John Adams was the first President to reside within its walls in 1800 - since then, all US Presidents have. When it was first built, the White House was open for the public to visit, since it was common back in those days for similarly styled country houses in England and Ireland to be open to the public. In 1805, an open house was held by President Thomas Jefferson in celebration of his second inaugural.

Prague Castle, Czech Republic

Prague Castle, situated in the Hradčany district of Prague, dates back to the 9th century. Through its history, the castle has served as the headquarters for Bohemian kings, Roman emperors, and Czechoslovakian presidents. Now it serves as the residence and workplace of the Czech Republican President. It is also said to house the Crown Jewels from Bohemia in a secret room.

Prague Castle has the special status of being the world's biggest castle from antiquity, a status given by the Guinness Book Records. It certainly has impressive dimensions - taking up nearly 7 hectares in area, and its approximate length and width is 570 meters by 130 meters. The castle, which consists of Romanesque Basilica of St George, Gothic St Vitus Cathedral, a monastery, palaces and defense towers, showcases almost all architecture styles that were used in the last 1000 years. Prague Castle also has extensive gardens and most castle areas open to the public.

The Quirinal Palace, Italy

This historical building is situated on the highest hill in Rome, Quirinal Hill, and is currently the official residence of the Italian President. Popes, kings and presidents have each had their share of dwelling in the palace over the years. Quirinal Palace is the 6th biggest palace in the world, occupying a lofty area of 110,500 square metres. It is also the biggest residence that belongs to a Head of State. The palace is open to tourists from 8.30am to noon on Sundays.

Papal Palace of Castel Gandolfo, Vatican

This 17th century palace, which is located in Castel Gandolfo in Italy, has functioned as a summerhouse for popes for centuries. Despite its location, the palace does not fall under Italian jurisdiction and is considered the property of the Holy See. Following Pope Francis' refusal to make use of it, tourists have been allowed to visit the palace since March 2014.

Fort de Bregancon, France

Fort de Bregancon is a 17th century fortified castle that is situated on a small island next to the French Mediterranean coast. From the time of Charle de Gaullea's presidency, the castle served as the official retreat of France's Presidents, but wasn't used much. In 2013, it was announced it would become open to the public - a move partly owing to the high maintenance costs amounting to around 200,000 euros annually. On June 29 of 2014, the castle received its first tourists, and access can be gained by registering on the Bormes-les-Mimosa tourist department website.

Casa Rosada, Argentina

Casa Rosada is certainly "The Pink House", as it is translated in English, with its characteristic baby pink color. It is the Argentinian President's mansion and workplace, and is situated in Plaza de Mayo's eastern end, close to many other key political buildings which have been built since the establishment of Buenos Aires in 1580. Casa Rosada is one of Buenos Aires' most iconic buildings, and has the officially declared status of a National Historic Monument. It also contains a national museum, which displays items linked with former Argentinian Presidents. Tourists can visit Casa Rosada every Saturday and Sunday, and during the holidays, from 10am to 6pm.

Palacio do Planalto, Brazil

Located in Brazil's capital Brasilia, the Palacio de Planalto serves as the Brazilian President's official workplace. The palace was a key part of the grand scheme Lucio Costa had in mind for the new capital of the country. As a security measure, and also to address humidity concerns during Brasilia's dry season, a reflecting pool was created in 1991. The palace takes up 36,000 square metres of space and it's main building has five floors, including an underground level. Tourists are welcome to visit every Sunday from 9.30am to 2pm.

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