

# AUSTRIAN VERSAILLES: RECONSTRUCTED SCHLOSS HOF WELCOMES VISITORS



Austrian Schloss Hof, reminding of Versailles, was reopened in 2005 to the public. Today the visitors enjoy the tours around the palace and extensive gardens as well as historical markets and summer festivals.

The charming baroque palace Schloss Hof in Austria located close to the Slovakian border reminds the visitors of the glorious days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The palace was built by one of the monarchy's most successful military leaders, Prince Eugene of Savoy in the 18th century.

The architect responsible for the construction, Johann von Hildebrandt, made an excellent job on the 50 hectare parcel of land. The palace was monumental from the very beginning and it was true not only about the buildings but also about the spacious gardens. **Many of the visitors say that the palace reminds them of the famous French Versailles. The resemblance is strongest in the gardens with orangery, fountains and a pool.**

The luxury palace was often visited by courtiers and even by the empress Maria Theresa herself since Schloss Hof is not far from the capital Vienna. The palace thus saw many great events and luxurious shows and Schloss Hof was known as the most beautiful and the biggest baroque complex of the empire.

After the death of the Prince, Maria Theresa became the owner of the complex but at the end of 18th century Habsburgs lost their interest in the palace and provided it to the army. The palace then became a schooling center and an exercising ground. All the fine pieces of art, furniture and other valuable items were moved to Vienna and the glory of the palace was gradually diminishing.

The palace dilapidated for many years but in 2002 it became a private property and the Austrian government decided to grant a generous subsidy of 30 million EUR for reconstruction of Schloss Hof, reported Sme.sk. The palace saw its grand reopening to the public in 2005.

**Today it is a favorite destination not only for Austrian travelers but many visitors come also from Slovakia.** Next year a new cycling bridge over the Morava River is to be opened, which will make the Austrian palace easily accessible for bikers from Slovakia. The visitors enjoy not only the unique art collections and architecture of the palace but also the extensive gardens. In the summer the palace also attracts with its historical shows and festivals including actors dressed in period costumes and weekly markets.

Photo: Imperial Festival Palace Hof

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