

# TOP 7 EXTRAORDINARY LIBRARIES IN EUROPE



For centuries, libraries have served as a sacred place to preserve knowledge and share it with the contemporaries. Even today, they are still considered temples of knowledge and intellectual refuges. In addition to being these magnificent domes of wisdom, libraries are, in some cases, remarkably beautiful buildings and manage to attract crowds of visitors admiring the architectural aspects. Tourism-Review.com presents the most fascinating libraries in Europe.

## National Library of the Czech Republic

(Czech Republic)

The National Library of the Czech Republic located in Clementinum, Prague, is the central and most important library of the country. Currently, it is directed by the Ministry of Culture and is the oldest of the Czech libraries. Housing a collection of about 6 million documents that grows every year with the addition of 70,000 new titles, the library has been recognized as the largest one in the country.

## Library of Trinity College Dublin

(Ireland)

The Library of Trinity College Dublin is the largest research library in Ireland. Because of its historical significance, Trinity is considered a national library of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, and it legally holds both statuses under Irish law. Therefore, the college has the legal right to a copy of all books published in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and as a result it receives more than 100,000 new volumes each year. Currently, the library houses over 4.25 million books, including 30,000 current serials and important collections of manuscripts, maps and printed music sheets.

## Library of the Royal Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial

(Spain)

One of the most fascinating libraries in Europe, Library of the Royal Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, commonly known as the library of the Escorial, is a large Spanish Renaissance library founded by Felipe

II. It is located in the town of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Madrid, as a part of the heritage of the Monastery and Site of the Escorial. The monastery and its historic surroundings were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. The library houses a rare collection of more than 4,700 manuscripts, many of them illuminated, and 40,000 printed books.

## **Library of Admont Abbey**

(Austria)

The Library of Admont Abbey is the largest monastic library in the world. The monastery is located in the small town of Admont. It was built in 1776, and contains around 200,000 volumes, showcasing the significant artistic and historical evolution of literature over the centuries, with over 70,000 restored books and thousands of manuscripts that are kept under its baroque-styled dome and 530 incunabula stored in its shelves. The library is illuminated by 48 windows, with its architecture and design being a testimony of the Enlightenment ideals which is contrasted by "The Four Last Things", a striking sculpture by Josef Stammel.

## **Joanina Library**

(Portugal)

The Joanina Library is a historic library of the University of Coimbra, built in the 18th century by King John V of Portugal. Located in the courtyard of the Faculty of Law, it's considered part of the General Library of the University of Coimbra. Its style is noticeably influenced by late Baroque (Rococo), being recognized as one of the most original and spectacular Baroque libraries in Europe. In addition to being a research area for many scholars, the location is frequently used as a concert hall, as well as for exhibitions and other cultural events.

## **Library of Wiblingen Abbey**

(Germany)

The majestic and sumptuous hall of the Wiblingen Abbey Library still houses original manuscripts, even though most of the books have already been transferred to larger libraries. The interior of the library is considered to be one of the finest examples of Rococo architecture. The numerous statues and sweeping ceiling fresco represent the architect's vision that the library be a place for preserving "treasures of wisdom and science".

# Sainte-Geneviève Library

(France)

Sainte-Geneviève Library is located in Paris, in the Pantheon Square, and contains around two million documents and volumes. The library is also part of the Paris-Sorbonne University.

The building was designed and constructed under direction of Henri Labrouste, in the mid-nineteenth century, and the project was finished in 1861. Its architectural relevance lies in being one of the few examples of Cast-iron Architecture of that century. Although the structure's exterior mimics a Renaissance style, the cast-iron columns that support the building can be seen inside.

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