

Top-Five Countdown

Most Fairy Tale-Like Castles in France

Stone Soup is a folktale that comes from France. Many other interesting folktales and fairy tales originate in France. Perhaps that is because much of France looks like it came straight out of a fairy tale. It has beautiful countryside, historic villages, and castles. In fact, France has hundreds of castles. Here is a countdown of the top five French castles that look like they came straight out of a fairy tale.

#5 Cité de Carcassonne (*SIT-ay de Car-ca-SUN*)



By Jondul | (Own work) via Wikimedia Commons

The Cité de Carcassonne is a castle in Carcassonne, France, near the border of Spain. People have lived in the city of Carcassonne for 2,500 years. Romans began to build the castle in the year 333. Rulers have added to it over the years and it was mostly finished by the 1300s. The castle was fortified, which means it was built to defend the city and keep out invaders. It had high walls and between 34 and 40 towers. By 1659, the castle was no longer considered useful and was abandoned. Over time, the castle began to fall apart. No one knows how many princesses were kept in the towers over the years. (Just kidding.)

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#4 Château de Haut-Koenigsbourg (shah-TOW deh HOTE KONE-igs-burg)



By Witalya (Own work) via Wikimedia Commons

This fortified castle was built in the 1100s on a mountaintop. It was built out of pink sandstone, which gives it a reddish glow. More than half of a million people visit this castle every year. It is located in the Alsace region of France, near the Black Forest. Alsace is on the border between France and Germany.

#3 Château de Bonaguil (shah-TOW deh bone-ah-GILL)



By offi (Own work) via Wikimedia Commons

This fairy tale castle was the last fortified castle built in France. That means it was the last castle built to defend a city or region against invaders. The castle was first built in the 1200s and French kings added to it in the early 1500s. It is located on a steep cliff between two rivers in southern France. The castle covers nearly 81,000 square feet of land. It features a deep moat, a drawbridge, and thick walls to keep out enemy fire and fire-breathing dragons.

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#2 Mont Saint-Michel (*MONE SUN mee-SHELL*)



By Andrés Nieto Porras via Flickr.com/ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0)

This fairy tale castle was built on a small island in northwest France. This region of France is known as Normandy. The castle was built at the mouth of a river that flows into the English Channel. Monks built it in the 700s. It later became a fortress for French kings. In fact, enemy forces never defeated the castle. During low tide, you can walk along the sand to get to the castle. During high tide, you cannot. Nature made it a hard castle to invade or escape. This is why France's king turned the castle into a prison in the 1400s. This castle is one of the most popular in France. More than three million people visit it every year.

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#1 Versailles (*vare-SIGH*)



By Esalca (Own work) via Wikimedia Commons

Versailles is likely the best-known castle in all of France. It is located near Paris. It was not built as a fortress. It was built as a palace. It was meant to be a place where the king could live. Versailles is luxurious and beautiful both inside and out. King Louis XIV made this palace the center of his kingdom in 1682. King Louis XIV loved beauty. He wanted only the finest clothing, art, music, and gardens in his palace. The palace has 2,300 rooms and spreads over nearly 40 square miles of land. This includes its many gardens, fountains, and various buildings. Today the castle is a museum. About five million people visit the palace every year. Between eight to ten million walk through the castle's gardens each year. This makes it the most visited castle in all of France.

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A garden at Versailles



By Myrabella via
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**Inside Versailles:
the Hall of Mirrors**