

WALKS THROUGH MARIE ANTOINETTE'S PARIS

by Diana Reid Haig

- ◆ A guided tour through sites associated with the most famous queen of France
- ◆ Packed with elegant history and itineraries for the modern visitor
- ◆ Delightfully illustrated and complete with maps

As a young Austrian archduchess Marie Antoinette's future was arranged for her and in 1770, aged 14, she was despatched to France to wed the French Dauphin, the awkward Louis, in a ceremony of pomp and splendour. Showered with jewels, fine clothes and admiration, she indulged in all the riches Versailles had to offer. All was to change, however, when revolution turned that world upside-down and the mob vented its fury on the Austrian archduchess. Arrested and tried by her enemies, she was executed at what is now the Place de la Concorde in Paris in October 1793.

In this stylish book Diana Reid Haig takes us on a guided tour, giving us the history, telling us the anecdotes, and showing us where Marie Antoinette spent good times as well as bad. We go from the palace and gardens of Versailles, where the Queen of France played at shepherdess, to central Paris and the churches, theatres, shops and boutiques, and the prisons and courts, touched by the history of Marie Antoinette.

Walks through Marie Antoinette's Paris presents the reader with four guided tours. Each walk explores scenes from Marie Antoinette's life; we see the famous sites, and less well-known landmarks are revealed, as we are taken on a journey through the life and times of France's most famous queen. Lavishly illustrated in colour, and including colour maps, this elegant pocket-sized book will delight travellers and lovers of history.

Diana Reid Haig is the author of *Walks through Napoleon and Josephine's Paris* and is a successful writer and broadcaster. She lives in New York.

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6 colour maps
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The Wedding

'Soon it was time for the evening's final event: the ritual of the royal couple's bedding. The Dauphin and Dauphine walked to their room as the bands of the Swiss and French Guard played a lively air. The most important courtiers watched as the Archbishop of Rheims blessed the bed and the newly married couple were handed their nightclothes. The Dauphin seemed sleepy and withdrawn while Marie-Antoinette smiled engagingly at him. They climbed into bed; the room was filled with silence as the curtains were closed, then reopened to show the bride and groom in bed together. The court bowed and left the bedchamber. Louis-Auguste quickly fell asleep and snored loudly.'

Marie Antoinette was bewildered by her husband's behavior. She was not ignorant about sex and, before leaving Austria, had been told what to expect on her wedding night. She knew it was her duty to provide France with an heir, and her mother had emphasized that the future of the Austrian and French alliance hinged upon her marital success. Although the rest of her education had been ignored, the fourteen-year-old received elaborate instructions from the Empress about the importance of pleasing the Dauphin. Maria Theresa, who had borne sixteen children, instructed her daughter that, "the woman must be completely submissive to her husband and have no other occupation than to please and obey him..."

The next morning most of Versailles knew the marriage had not been consummated. Not only had the pyrotechnics display celebrating the wedding been cancelled, there had been no fireworks between the bride and groom. Chambermaids working in the couple's bedroom acted as spies and reported on the status of the nuptial sheets. In his little grey diary, Louis-Auguste's entry for that day consisted of one word: "rien" ("nothing").'

