

France

History

10 Facts About the French Revolution You Need to Know



Eugène
Delacroix
- La liberté
guidant le
people
(1830) | ©
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PAUL
MCQUEEN

**Save to
Wishlist**

The
French
Revolution
began,
as
everyone
knows,
in
1789
and
lasted
for a
decade.
In
that
time,
the
citizens
of
France
demolished
and
rebuilt
their
nation's
institutions
and

the
changes
they
wrought,
often
bloodily,
persist
as a
reminder
of
the
power
of
the
people.
Though
it is
studied
in
classrooms
everywhere
and
depicted
in
countless
works
of
art,
perhaps
these
10
curious

facts
about
the
Revolution
have
escaped
your
attention.



Sign

Up Ge Mo Do Mo

Re
the
Cul
Trip
nev
Be
you
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to
see
wh
out
the



For
mor
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hov
we
use
you
dat
see
our
[poli](#)
Uns
in
one
clie
To
see
wh
our

nev
incl
her

**Bread
cost
an
arm
and
a
leg
(and
subsequently
a
head
or
two)**

By
1787,
France
was
teetering
on
bankruptcy
and
the
price
of a
loaf

of
bread
had
skyrocketed
to a
week's
wage
for
the
average
worker.
This
was
practically
all
people
ate
and
so
going
without
or
replacing
it
with
something
else,
say,
cake,
wasn't
an
option.

Even
if
Marie
Antoinette
never
suggested
anything
of
the
sort
(and
mos
t
histo
rians
agre
e
she
didn'
t),
the
fact
remains
that
making
your
subjects'
single
source
of
sustenance
exorbitantly

expensive

is a

sure

way

to

ensuring

they

lose

their

minds

and,

shortly

thereafter,

you

lose

your

head.

Bread

prices

also

inspired

a

Wo

men'

s

Marc

h on

Vers

aille

s in

October

1789.

Anonymous

-

Women’s

March

on

Versailles,

5-6

october

1789

(1789)

| ©

Anonymous

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The king and queen starred in Superbad-dick doodles

Long before the Revolution, the monarchy was subject to

public
derision,
namely
through
racy
pamphlets
known
as
libelles.
These
frequently
pornographic
publications
intended
to
erode
the
power
the
royal
family
held
over
the
population
and
didn't
hold
back
when
it
came

to
their
intimate
affairs.
The
reasons
why
the
couple
appeared
not
to
have
consummated
their
marriage
during
its
first
seven
years
being
a
popular
topic
for
speculation.
Even
then,
wo
men
had

a
hard
er
time
with
the
medi
a
than
men
and
Marie
Antoinette
bore
the
brunt
of
the
attacks.
However,
the
king's
many
perceived
inadequacies,
sexual
and
otherwise,
were
roundly
mocked.

Political
cartoons
from
the
time of
the
French
Revolution
| ©
Anonymous,
Anonymous,
M.P. /
WikiCommons

**Sorry,
John
McEnroe,
but
tennis
has
never
been
more
badass**

On
June
20th,
1789,
just
over
a
month

into
the

Revolution
(no,
it
didn't
begin
with
the
storming
of
the
Bastille),
members
of
the
Third
Estate,
which
is to
say,
commoners,
gathered
for a
meeting
of
the
newly
formed
National
Assembly.
Having

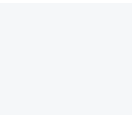
been
locked

out
of
the
Salle
des
États
by
the
king
(he
said
he
had
the
interior
decorators
in)
and
forced
indoors
by
inclement
weather,
they
instead
made
do
with
a
sporty

makeshift
venue.

In
taking
the
Tennis
Court
Oath
they
swore
not
to
disperse
until
they
had
drafted
a
cons
tituti
on
for
Fran
ce,
with
or
without
the
participation
of
the
clergy

and
nobility.



Jacques-
Louis
David -
Serment
du Jeu
de
Paume
(1791)
| ©
Jacques-
Louis
David /
WikiCommons

The storming of the Bastille was a bit of a bust

In
most
imaginations,
when
the
guards
of

the
Bastille
were
overwhelmed
on
July
14th,
1789,
a
flood
of
wrongly
interred
prisoners
poured
into
the
streets
of
Paris.
The
real
scale
of
the
breakout,
however,
is
somewhat
disappointing:
only
seven

people
were
being
held
captive
at
the
time.
One
of
them
was
the
notorious
Mar
quis
de
Sad
e,
but
still.
In
fact,
it
was
the
huge
store
of
arms
and
gunpowder

that
was
of
interest
to
the
revolutionaries.

More
impressively,
the
fortress
was
dismantled
entirely
by
hand
and
the
bricks
were
given
away
or
sold
as
symbols
of
tyranny's
inevitable
downfall.



Having his face on money wasn't Louis XVI's smartest move

As
strange
as it
might
seem
for
those
of us
who
grew
up
with

textbooks
and

national
galleries
filled
with
portraits
of
loved
and
loathed
monarchs,
unless
you
were
living
in

Vers

aille

s at

the
time,
it

was
unlikely
you
had

a
clue
what

Loui

s

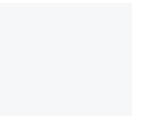
XVI

or

Marie-
Antoinette
really
looked
like.
Keeping
their
true
identities
hidden
from
the
lower
classes
in
case
they
one
day
needed
to
escape
a
bloody
revolution
could
have
been
history's
most

brilliant
piece

of
forward
planning
had
the
king
not
had
his
face
stamped
all
over
the
nation’s
gold
coins.
Remarkably,
they
still
made
it to
the
border
before
being
identified.



Retour
de
Varennnes.
Arrivée
de
Louis
Seize à
Paris,
le 25
juin
1791
(1791)
| ©
Jean
Duplessis-
Bertaux
/
WikiCommons

**Louis
XVI
nearly
avoided
the
guillotine
and
Marie
Antoinette
took
it
in
her
stride**

During
the
Revolution,

approximately
18,000
people
were
beheaded
by
the
‘national
razor’,
though
some
estimates
run
as
high
as
40,000.
Louis
XVI
was
the
first
of
the
royal
couple
to
go
on
January
12th,
1793,

but
his
execution
was
only
secured
by a
narrow
majority:
361
votes
for
and
288
against.
Unluckily
for
him,
even
his
cousin,
Louis
Philippe
d'Orléans,
didn't
want
to
see
him
live.

The
last

recorded
words
of
Marie
Antoinette
on
October
16th,
1793,
were
‘I’m
sorry’
—
not a
reference
to
any
crimes
against
the
republic
but a
polite
necessity
after
having
trod
on
the
executioner’s
foot.

Charles Benazech - Louis XVI et l'abbé Edgeworth de Firmont au pied de l'échafaud, le 21 janvier 1793 (1793) | © Charles Benazech / WikiCommons

The revolutionaries were the original men’s fashion tribe

What you wore had never said more about

you
than
at
the
time
of
the
Revolution.

The
militiamen
of
the
lower
classes
styled
themselves
as
the
*sans-
culottes*,

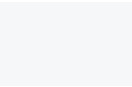
a
title
in
direct
opposition
to
the
fashions
preferred
by

the
French

nobility,
principally
their
knee-
length
silk
breeches.
Instead,
they
wore
long
trousers
called
pantalons,
short-
skirted
coats
known
as
carmagnoles,
clogs
called
sabots,
and
caps
colored
red
to
symbolize
liberty.

To
this

day,
the
Rue
du
Chapeau
Rouge
is a
popular
street
name
in
France,
derived
from
the
finishing
touch
to
the
revolutionary
getup.



Charles
Moreau-
Vauthier
- Mort
de
Joseph
Bara |
©
Charles
Moreau-
Vauthier
/

Telling the time was totally different from today

For
12
years
between
late
1793
and
1805,
the
French
Revolutionary
Calendar
replaced
the
Gregorian
calendar.
There
were
still
12
months
but

they
were
divided
into
three
ten-
day
weeks,
each
ending
in a
day
of
rest
and
festivity
equivalent
to
Sunday.
Each
day
was
split
into
ten
hours,
every
hour
into
100
minutes,

and

each
minute
lasted
100
seconds.
The
remaining
five
or
six
‘complementary
days’
needed
to
match
the
solar
year
were
placed
at
the
end
of
the
twelfth
month.
Almost
identical
to
the

calendar

used
by
the
Anci
ent
Egyp
tians,
the
main
difference
was
that
it
began
on
the
autumn
equinox
instead
of
the
summer
solstice.

Calendrier
et
horloge
républicain
français
| ©
WikiCommons

The
French

**Revolution
gave
the
world
its
first
public
zoo**

A
1793
decree
from
the
National
Assembly
required
all
privately
owned
exotic
animals
to
be
transferred
to
the
menagerie
at
the
Pala

ce of
Vers
aille
s or
killed,
stuffed
and
donated
to
the
scientists
of
Paris'
Jard
in
des
Plant
es.
Thankfully,
the
animals'
lives
were
spared
and,
before
long,
the
old
menagerie
was

closed

down
and
a
new
zoo
opened
within
the
park.
In its
early
days,
the
Mén
ageri
e du
Jardi
n
des
Plant
es
was
free
to
the
public
because
its
founder,
Jacques-
Henri
Bernardin

de
Saint-
Pierre,
believed
that
the
public
should
be
educated
about
exotic
animals
kept
in
their
natural
environment.

Anonymous
- Les
artistes
animaliers
au
Jardin
des
Plantes.
Magazine
«
L'Illustration
» du 7
août
1902
| ©
Anonymous
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The

guillotine endured long after the Reign of Terror

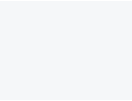
For more than two centuries after the French Revolution began, the guillotine remained a legal form of execution in France.

The country

finally
abolished
capital
punishment
in
1981,
making
it the
last
Western
European
nation
to
do
so.
Hamida
Djandoubi
was
the
last
person
to
be
beheaded
on
this
side
of
the
continent

on
September

10th,
1977.
The
convicted
murderer
was
27
years
old.



Anonymous
- The
execution
of
Robespierre
and his
supporters
on 28
July
1794
(1794)
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Save to
Wishlist





**Sign Up
Up
Ge
Mo
Do
Mo**

Re
the
Cul
Trip
nev
Be
you
wa
to
see
wh
out
the



For
more
info
on
how
we
use
your
data
see
our
[privacy policy](#)
Unsubscribe
in
one
click
To
see
what
our
new
includes
[here](#)

