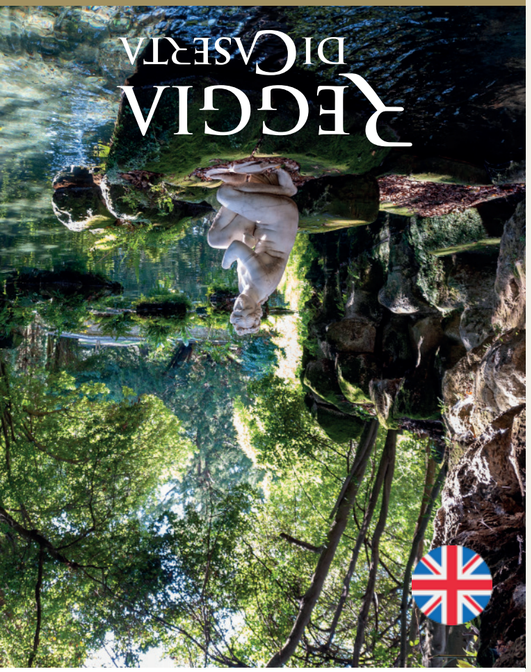
VISITOR'S GUIDE TO THE
ROYAL PARK AND ENGLISH GARDEN

REGGIA DI CASERTA



ENGLISH GARDEN

Fed by the Caroline Aqueduct, the English Garden contrasts with the geometric rigor of the "Italian-style" garden designed by Luigi Vanvitelli. Between wild landscapes and dreamlike architecture, it hosts an **exceptional variety of exotic plants** and bears witness to the Bourbons' interest in botany. At the origins of the project, in the years of Carlo Vanvitelli, and on the initiative of Queen Maria Carolina and Lord Hamilton, we find the botanist **John Andrew Graefer**. Followed by his sons - who took care of the property during the years of the French occupation - Graefer personally took charge of the selection of botanical species, carrying out numerous inspections on the Campania coasts, and activating a thriving import business: the first foreign species arrived from Netherlands in 1793.

MASONIC ITINERARY — **Duration 2h - medium difficulty**

The English Garden is a Masonic garden with symbolic elements - statues and buildings - which constitute the stages of the initiatory path that the adept had to complete. The natural environment with slopes, ponds and paths hides Queen Maria Carolina's masonic beliefs.

Gardener's House

Not far from the ancient greenhouses stands the Gardener's House or **Palazzina Inglese**, designed by Carlo Vanvitelli and built between 1790 and 1794. The ground floor initially housed services used by the court, while the first floor was used as a **home by the botanist John Andrew Grafer**. The underground rooms were also intended for the conservation of seeds, which Graefer collected on his numerous excursions to the Kingdom or had them imported from various parts of the world, giving life to rare specimens which enrich the English Garden.

Accessible only during special openings





Aperia

Conceived as a water basin in the original Vanvitelli project, this area was used during the French period for the **beekeeping and the production of honey**, taking the name of Aperia. In 1826 it was transformed into a greenhouse, with the construction of the current structure in the shape of a neoclassical hemicycle, decorated in the central niche with a statue of Ceres in gray and white marble from the Farnese collections.

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Cammelias

The English Garden houses the first *Camellia japonica* to arrive in Continental Europe. It was brought by the botanist John Andrew Graefer, who arrived in Caserta as a British gardener and nursery man, in April 1786. This camellia, known today as the **"Mother Camellia"**, is a five-metre-tall specimen with a simple red flower, which blooms again abundantly every year, then covering itself with fruit. The collection of nineteenth-century camellias, made up of about eighty cultivars, is housed in an area known as "scolle delle camelie"

Eucalyptus camaldulensis

The *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, also called red or rostratus eucalyptus, is one of the English Garden's valuable monumental trees and was planted behind the "Serra Grande" in the early nineteenth century. **Originally from Australia**, the Eucalyptus was described for the first time by the German botanist Friedrich Dehnhardt, inspector of the Botanical Garden of Naples after 1813. It is distinguished by its grey-green aromatic leaves and spotted bark.





Cryptoporticus

Inside an ancient pozzolana quarry is the Cryptoporticus, a **fake semicircular nymphaeum** with tufa walls marked by columns, pillars and niches with classical statues, stemming from the Bourbons' archaeological excavations and from the Farnese collection. The gashes in the vault, the uneven floor and the *opus reticulatum* that can be glimpsed on the walls were specially designed to convince visitors that they were in an authentic Roman ruin.

Greenhouses

In addition to being a place of pleasure, the English Garden was a **center for botanical experimentation** that revolved around the greenhouses. Two Bourbon greenhouses with the ancient heating systems are still on site, a post-unification greenhouse known as the "Serra Grande" and another dating back to the end of the nineteenth century. Already in the Bourbon era, the plant collections were a source of pride and offered the opportunity to strengthen political ties with the other European courts: the rulers regularly exchanged specimens of local production with those of other aristocratic houses.





Platanus x acerifolia

It is among the most beautiful and photographed plants in the English Garden. It is located in the flat area south of the lake formerly called "**Palco**", which contains many plants of spectacular size. The Platanus x Acerifolia was known among the old royal gardeners as the **Indian plane tree** and is a hybrid obtained from *Platanus orientalis* and *Platanus occidentalis*. The branching trunk has grey-green bark which flakes off in fine plates revealing the creamy-brown coloring of the trunk.



Taxodium mucronatum

The Neapolitan botanist Nicola Terracciano in his *Schema intorno al Giardino Inglese della Real Casa di Caserta* of 1876 describes the Taxodium Mucronatum as a plant with a height of 25.50 meters and a stem with a circumference of 3.95 meters, with branches that start 5 meters above the ground and which give the plant a regal bearing. This species, originally **from Mexico and Texas**, where it grows spontaneously, is commonly called Montezuma Cypress. The specimen arrived in the English Garden at the end of the eighteenth century and was described for the first time as a new species by another Neapolitan botanist: Michele Tenore, director of the Botanical Garden of Naples since 1810.



Bath of Venus

The semicircular profile of the Cryptoporticus, by Carlo Vanvitelli, embraces the so-called Bath of Venus, a suggestive glimpse characterized by the presence of a Carrara marble statue, sculpted by **Tommaso Solari** in 1762. Placed on site in the first half of the 19th century, it represents the goddess Venus in the act of coming out of the water. The body of water's banks are animated by dense vegetation, among which ferns and maidenhair ferns stand out, as well as a monumental specimen of *Taxus baccata.*



Lake and the Ruined Temple

An artificial spring, located at the base of the centuries-old yew plant planted by the gardener John Andrew Graefer near the Bath of Venus, feeds a stream that flows into the so-called Swan Lake. On its two islands there is a small pavilion called **Casa dei cigni** and the false ruins of a **temple** which, like the Cryptoporticus, synthesizes authentic archaeological elements, such as capitals and column drums, with ex novo ruined walls.

REGGIA DI CASERTA

INFO FOR YOUR VISIT

PARK AND ENGLISH GARDEN TIMES

Opening: **8.30**
Closing: it varies according to the current season.
To check the correct closing times, please consult reggiadicaserta.cultura.gov.it
Some areas may be banned for maintenance works.

AVERAGE VISIT TIMES

Royal Park and English Garden: **4 h**

VISITS

Apartments adults audioguides: **€ 5**
Royal Park adults audioguides: **€ 5**
Children audioguides: **€ 4**
Educational visits with headphones (1 h and 20 minutes): **€ 10 per person**
Group audio guide rental: **€3 per person** (available in Italian, English, French, German, and Spanish)
Apartments audio guide + Park Card: **€8.00 per person**
In ear noise silencers (compulsory for guided groups of more than 6 visitors): **€ 2 per person**

PARK SHUTTLE

Transport service inside the Royal Park: **€ 3** round trip.

BIKE RENTAL

Hourly bike rate: **€ 5**
Hourly bike with pedal assistence rate: **€ 6**
It is forbidden to access the English Garden with bicycles

GOLF CAR

Royal Park: **€ 10 round trip**
English Garden: **€ 10 round trip**
Royal Park and English Garden: **€ 15 round trip**

TICKET OFFICE

The purchase of the ticket implies the acceptance of the Visitor Regulations, which can be consulted on reggiadicaserta.cultura.gov.it

RESTAURANT

BOOKSHOP

TOILETS

CLOAK ROOM

The service, located at the entrance of the Royal Palace, is free of charge and open every day from **8.30**

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

School activities
reservation required.
For info and reservations
+39 0823 448084
or send an email to
caserta@operalaboratori.com

RELAX AREA

Where it is possible to consume food and beverages while respecting the environment.

MOUNTED POLICE

STATE POLICE HORSE HANDLING AREA

The Direction reserves the right to close parts of the Museum whenever there is a danger to the safety of people and the safeguard of the Monument.

Piazza Carlo di Borbone 81100 Caserta CE
re-ce@cultura.gov.it
reggiadicaserta.cultura.gov.it
More info and reservations
+39 0823 448084

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MUSEI ITALIANI | unesco World Heritage Site | We support the Sustainable Development Goals

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ROYAL PARK

Water itinerary, walking time: 3 hours
Old Wood and Castelluccia itinerary, walking time: about 2 hours

The Royal Park, an integral part of the project presented by the architect **Luigi Vanvitelli** to the sovereigns, is inspired by the gardens of the great European residences of the time, merging the Italian tradition of the Renaissance garden with the solutions introduced in **Versailles by André Le Nôtre**. The works, with the delimitation of the area and the planting of the first species, began in 1753, at the same time as those for the construction of the **Caroline Aqueduct**, whose waters, from the slopes of Monte Taburno, would have fed the fountains of the royal gardens. The formal garden, as we see it today, is only partially the realization of what Luigi Vanvitelli had conceived: indeed, when he died in 1773, the aqueduct had been finished but no fountain had yet been built. The works were completed by his son **Carlo** (1740-1821), who, while simplifying his father's project, was a faithful executor, preserving the compositional rhythm of the alternation of fountains, basins of water, lawns and waterfalls.

CASTELLUCCIA AND OLD WOOD



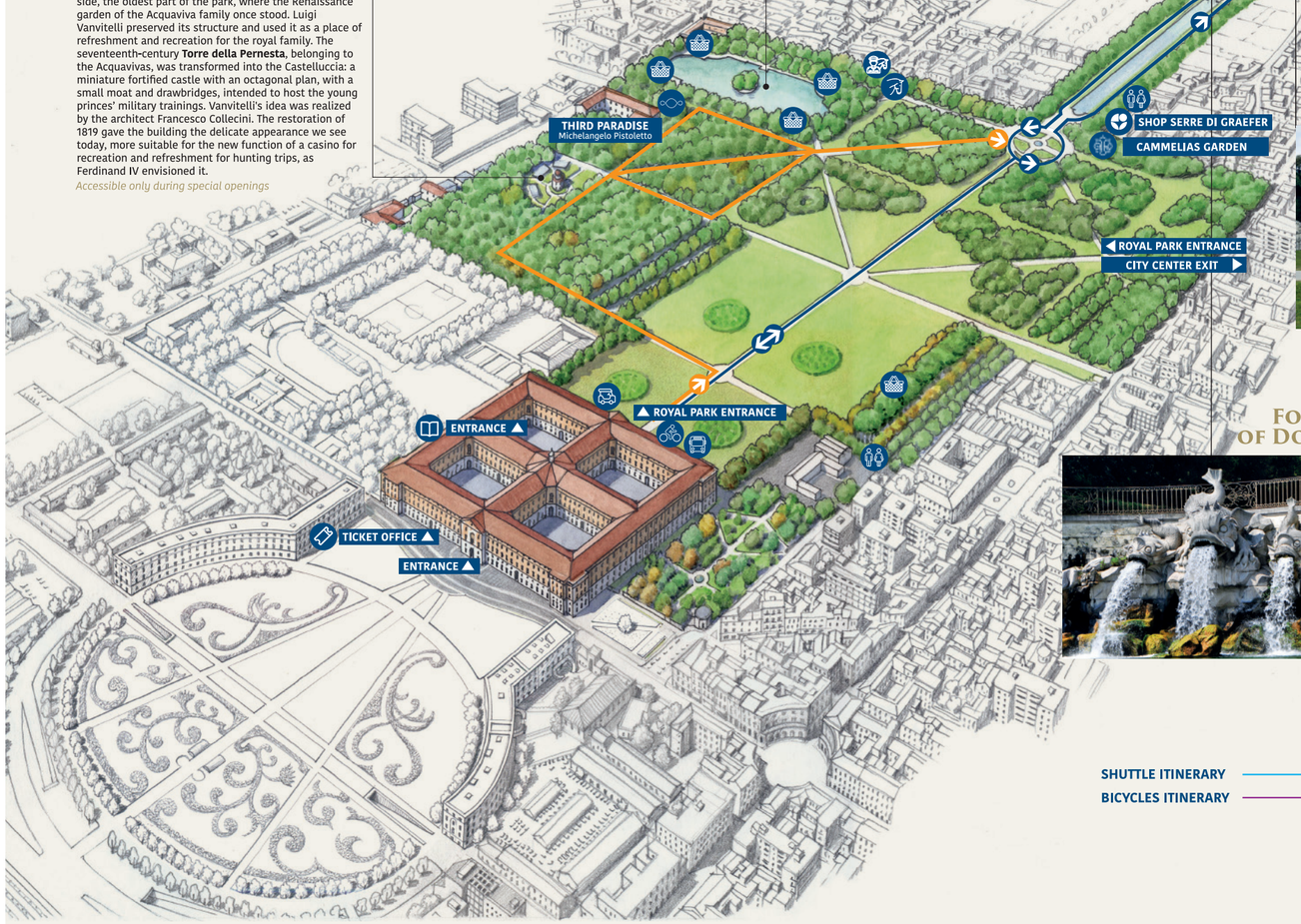
The Old Wood (*Bosco Vecchio*) extends on the western side, the oldest part of the park, where the Renaissance garden of the Acquaviva family once stood. Luigi Vanvitelli preserved its structure and used it as a place of refreshment and recreation for the royal family. The seventeenth-century **Torre della Pernesta**, belonging to the Acquavivas, was transformed into the Castelluccia: a miniature fortified castle with an octagonal plan, with a small moat and drawbridges, intended to host the young princes' military trainings. Vanvitelli's idea was realized by the architect Francesco Collecini. The restoration of 1819 gave the building the delicate appearance we see today, more suitable for the new function of a casino for recreation and refreshment for hunting trips, as Ferdinand IV envisioned it.

Accessible only during special openings

PESCHIERA



It is a large artificial basin built in 1769 by Francesco Collecini on a project by Luigi Vanvitelli inside the Old Wood. It was intended for simulations of naval battles and boardings, a *divertissement* much loved by **King Ferdinand IV**. The fort to be conquered was the islet in the center of the Peschiera, equipped with small cannons, then transformed into a place of leisure and reception of guests. In part, the rich fish fauna, transported to Caserta from the neighboring lakes and rivers and placed in the Peschiera in 1770, still survives.



FOUNTAIN OF DIANA AND ACTAEON



It's the last fountain in the Park, fed by the large artificial waterfall that descends from the slopes of Mount Briano. The work, executed by Tommaso and Pietro Solari, Paolo Persico, Angelo Brunelli and Andrea Violani, depicts an episode from **Ovid's Metamorphoses** in two sculptural groups: on one side Diana bathing with her retinue of nymphs, on the other the young Actaeon transformed into a deer and mauled by his own dogs for daring to spy on the goddess.



ENGLISH GARDEN

The English Garden is located in the north-eastern part of the Park, on an area of about 25 hectares, delimited by the Puccianiello village and the ancient Via dei Mulini. Wanted by the wife of Ferdinand IV, **Maria Carolina of Habsburg-Lorraine**, on the advice of the British plenipotentiary minister **William Hamilton**, its building started on 24 July 1786. With a setting close to the romantic French taste, already taken up in Versailles in the Petit Trianon's *Anglo-Chinois* garden, the English Garden of Caserta is characterized by apparently wild glimpses where, between reliefs and water courses, there are presumed archaeological ruins, which evoke the exciting Pompeian discoveries.

FOUNTAIN OF CERES



FOUNTAIN OF AEOLUS

FOUNTAIN OF DOLPHINS

VIA D'ACQUA

The long avenue that leads from the parterre of the Royal Park to the Fountain of Diana and Actaeon is known as the "Via d'Acqua" due to the fountains that adorn it, inspired by themes from **classical mythology**. The route begins with the Margherita fountain, continues with the Fountain of Dolphins, followed by those of Aeolus, Ceres and Venus and Adonis. The project, conceived by **Luigi Vanvitelli** and completed by his son Carlo, also involved the Caroline Aqueduct, whose waters feed all the fountains.

