

The White House Tour

By Karen Zhang

白宫是美国总统居住和办公的地方，白宫一词常用来代指美国总统及其执政团队。白宫始建于1792年，由著名的美籍爱尔兰人建筑师詹姆斯·霍本根据18世纪末英国乡间别墅的风格设计而成，是一幢白色的新古典风格砂岩建筑物。它包括了主楼和东西两个侧翼，其中东翼供游客参观，西翼是办公区。主楼底层有外交接待大厅，主楼的第二层是总统家庭居住的地方，主楼中还有图书室、地图室、金、银、瓷器陈列室等。此外，白宫的东侧有“肯尼迪夫人花园”，西侧有“玫瑰园”。下面我们来看下Karen两次游白宫的经历吧！

Along with New York's Statue of Liberty, the White House shares the equivalent fame worldwide as one of the few iconic^[象征性的] American landmarks. When you hear the address: 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, District of Columbia, you know it refers to the one-and-only White House, where Presidents of the United States live and work.

Every day tens of thousands of visitors take photos outside this famous building. And a small number of them are fortunate enough to tour the inside after signing up for the White House public tour at least a month in advance!

I was one of the lucky visitors. In fact, I've been to the White House twice—the first time was only for the Rose Garden tour in the spring; the second time was the interior public tour. Both occasions were impressive, and I was thrilled to set foot on the ground where the First Family lives. Many visitors felt the same way. We took pictures outside like maniacs^[疯子]! (My tour happened just weeks before the White House lifted a camera and photo ban on public tours.)

The garden of the White House is open to the public twice a year, spring and fall.

Tickets are free but they are handed out on a first-come-first-serve basis. To avoid waiting in a long line, it's wise to get to the site fairly early. I was among one of the early birds, so I saw things that not many people did—for instance, the famous “First Dog” Bo. He's a Portuguese Water Dog with furry black hair on his back and white hair on his chest and front legs. Bo was probably finishing his first romp^[嬉戏] and poop^[排便] of the day. His handler was leading him away from the crowd.

From its gorgeous garden to the colorful rooms on the second floor, everything at the White House is well-tended and in exquisite detail. The building itself is small compared to the palaces where dignitaries^[显要人物] and royals usually live. I bet even China's Zhongnanhai is much larger than the White House. But what surprised me was how vigilant^[警惕的] and yet friendly the White House staff are to ordinary folks. They answered questions from the visitors with great pleasure.

Indeed, not many heads of state will open the doors of their residence to the public. And the public tour of the White House made me feel up close and personal with the Obamas. 🇺🇸

