Habsburg family jewelry, considered lost for over 100 years, to be exhibited publicly; collection to remain in Canada

- Family jewelry was kept in a secure location for the past century
- Heirs of last Austrian emperor saved family jewelry while fleeing the Nazi regime during the Second World War
- Surviving pieces of jewelry include the famous “Florentine” diamond and other personal belongings of Empress Maria-Theresia, Queen Marie-Antoinette and Emperor Franz I.
- Family will publicly exhibit the property in Canada in gratitude for the country and its people’s protection of their family

06 November 2025: After a century, the last Austrian emperor´s family has announced plans to publicly display its personal jewelry, a collection that has been considered lost for decades. During their escape from persecution by the Nazi regime at the outbreak of the Second World War, members of the Habsburg family, one of the most influential and enduring dynasties of European history, managed to save important pieces of the family’s private jewelry and bring them to safety in Canada in 1940. The items have been kept safe in the country ever since.

In recognition of the jewelry’s cultural and historical significance, the direct descendants of the imperial family have chosen to make the pieces accessible to the world. The items have been carefully preserved over the years and are in the condition in which they were brought to Canada in 1940. The authenticity of the jewelry has been independently examined and certified by a third-party expert.

Preservation of historical objects marked by exile and persecution
Following their exile in 1919, the family of the last Austrian emperor was forced to abandon most of their belongings, with only a small amount of personal property allowed to be relocated to Switzerland.

Empress Zita, the widow of Emperor Karl I, and her children later faced persecution by the Nazi regime due to their outspoken opposition to Hitler’s dictatorship. Shortly before the “Luftwaffe” bombed their home in exile in Belgium in May of 1940, the family managed to escape to Canada via France and Portugal. From their new home, they continued to advocate for Austrian independence and the liberation of Central Europe. Fortunately, parts of the family’s private jewelry collection, which holds cultural and historical value, managed to survive the turmoil of World War II and its aftermath.

In light of the threats to her family, Empress Zita instructed her descendants for security reasons to keep the existence of the items in the collection private for at least 100 years following Emperor Karl´s I death in 1922. With the passing of this milestone, the direct descendants of the imperial family are now honoring Empress Zita’s wishes and fulfilling their responsibility to share this important part of their family’s history.

Karl von Habsburg, grandson of Emperor Karl I and Head of the Habsburg Family, said in a statement on behalf of the family: “As the descendants of Emperor Karl I and Empress Zita, we are deeply proud and honored to share our culturally and historically significant private jewelry with the public. We would like to extend our gratitude to the people of Canada, who provided a safe haven for our family in 1940, protecting them from extremely challenging circumstances. In appreciation to this country and its people, we are pleased to exhibit the preserved family jewelry in Canada, where it has found a new home.”

Private jewelry to be exhibited in Canada for the public
To protect and preserve the cultural and historical significance of the jewelry, the private collection is now held in a Canadian trust, with the direct descendants of Emperor Karl I and Empress Zita as beneficiaries.

The collection will remain in Canada for the foreseeable future and will be made accessible to the public as soon as possible.

Additional information can be found at the following dedicated website: www.habsburg-heritage.com

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