

Castles through the ages

A castle is a large, strong building where important people once lived. Castles kept people safe because they had thick walls, were often built on a hill, had a gate and tall towers. Read on to find out how castles changed over time!

Wooden motte and bailey castles

thatched roof

Soldiers hid behind **battlements** and shot arrows through the gaps.

A **motte** was a big hill with a wooden tower at the top.

battlements

A **stone keep** was tall and had lots of levels where people lived.

ditch

bailey

motte (mounds of earth)

Some motte and bailey castles had a **ditch** around them for **extra** protection.

The villagers lived in a fenced **bailey** at the bottom of the **motte**.

Brick palaces

bricks

glass windows

Many palaces were built with patterned bricks and had stained-glass windows.

950-1070 CE

1070-1350

1350-today

1000

CE



Wooden motte and bailey castles

950-1070 CE

In the past, villages were easy to attack. Lords had wooden castles built so that soldiers could live nearby. These castles were called mottes.

If the soldiers saw raiders approaching, they rode down from the motte, through the bailey and chased the raiders away.

William I built lots of **motte and bailey castles**. They were quick to build because the planks were cut to size and carried to the right place.

These castles had a huge problem because of the material they were made from! What are you thinking it was? That's right! They **caught fire** easily.

I've got a better idea!
We should build castles from stone instead of wood!

Stone keeps

1070-1350

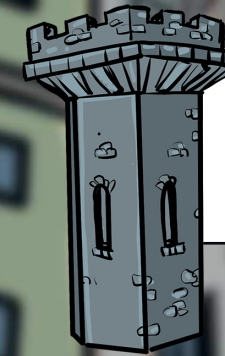
Later, castles were built from stone and had a **keep**. A keep was a safe place to live, but it could be dark and smoky inside. Some keeps stood on their own, but others had a strong outer wall too.

Across the country, wooden mottes were replaced with stone **shell keeps**. A shell keep had a round, stone wall on top of a mound of earth. The wall was called a **curtain wall**. People lived in smaller buildings on the inside of the curtain wall.

Brick palaces

1350-today

Over time, there were fewer raids and battles, so castles could change from strong fortresses to beautiful homes called palaces. Monarchs and lords built palaces with decorated walls, pretty gardens and lots of big bedrooms for guests. A grand palace showed that a person was rich and important, so they were filled with expensive furniture, paintings and treasures.



Mural towers were built into castle walls. Soldiers watched for danger from on top and inside them.

curtain wall

Curtain walls were **2-5 metres thick!**

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