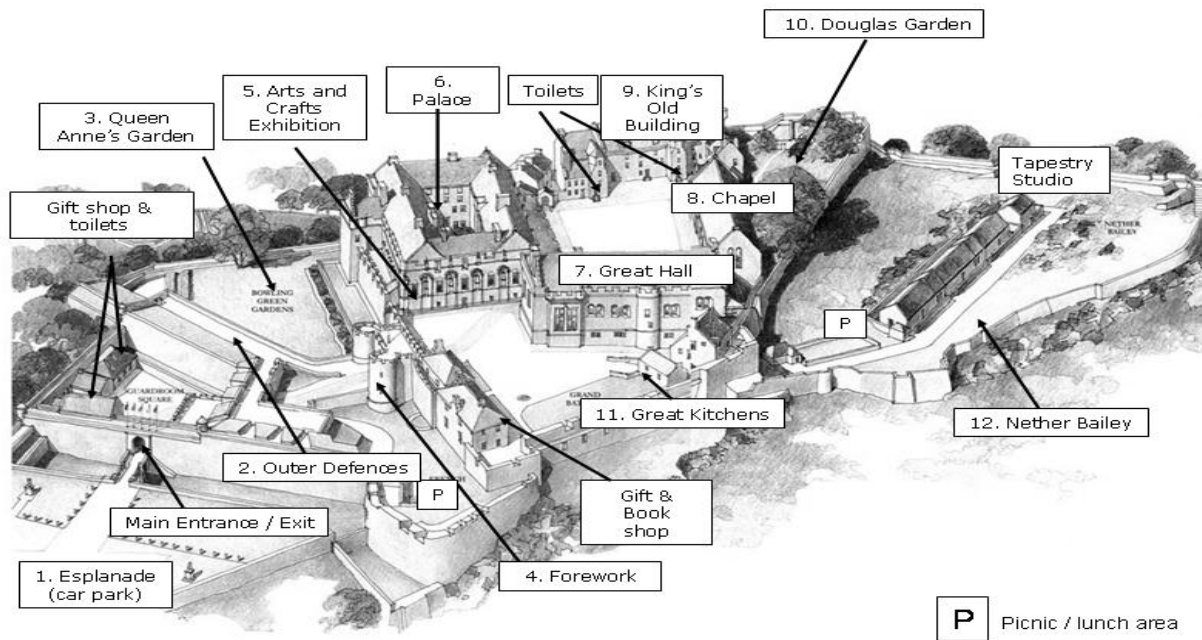


Overview Route Stirling Castle



Welcome to Stirling Castle!

This overview route will take you to the following areas of the castle:

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| 1. | Esplanade | 7. | Great Hall |
| 2. | Entrance and Outer Defences | 8. | Chapel Royal |
| 3. | Queen Anne's Garden | 9. | King's Old Building |
| 4. | The Forework | 10. | Douglas Garden |
| 5. | Arts and Crafts Exhibition | 11. | Medieval Kitchen |
| 6. | James V Palace | 12. | Nether Bailey |

Classes should be split up into groups of no more than 10 pupils with a responsible adult leader. To find each location, please refer to the map above.

1. Esplanade (Introduction)

Stirling Castle stands on a volcanic outcrop in the Forth Valley. The castle, which dominates the river crossing and the major route across the country, has played an important role in the history of Scotland. Since before written history, the site may have been used to defend the routes North, South, East and West. During the Wars of Independence, the castle continued to be vital for the control of Scotland and both William Wallace and Robert the Bruce fought for its possession. Possession of Stirling Castle was the cause of the Battle of Bannockburn.

2. Outer Defences

As you cross the bridge at the main entrance look up to your right and left for the small round towers called Gun Turrets (or pepper pots).

Q: Who do you think would be inside there?

A: Soldiers or sentries.

When the enemy was sighted, the alarm would sound and the drawbridge would be raised. Enemies trying to cross the dry ditch would come under fire from the 'caponier' or firing gallery at the left side of the ditch.

Q: What kind of weapons would they have used in these areas?

A: These defences were built in 1708 and at that time soldiers used muskets and cannons.

Walk in through the first gateway into the Guardhouse Square. Follow the path to the right and walk under the next archway.

Walk up the slope on your left and onto the top of the walls. Can you see a row of cannons called a 'battery'? They are placed behind a stone faced wall of earth with a sloping top called a 'glacis'.

Q: How would the earth and grass prevent damage to the castle from cannon balls?

A: The earth and grass would slow down a cannon ball and prevent it from damaging the walls.

3. Queen Anne's Garden

At one time (around 300 hundred years ago) this lawned area was used by Queen Anne's officers as a bowling green when off duty. The soldiers who lived and trained in this barrack manned the cannons and walls. Often two soldiers had to share the same bed, one slept during the day and one slept at night. Families were only separated from the rest by just a curtain. Imagine living here!

Before gunpowder, and the use of cannons to attack a castle, large siege engines were used to attack. Two of the siege engines could fire large stone balls at the castle walls and roofs to knock them down.

Q: Can you see any large stone balls in the garden?

A: Look towards the palace with the statues on the side and look down at the low stone wall. The stones decorate this wall.

Walk towards the end of the garden where there is a large tree. Look carefully over the wall.

Q: Why is this a good place to build a castle?

A: It is very high up, you can see for miles, and it is built on very hard volcanic rock.

Before leaving the garden, have a look through the exhibition in the vaults running down the side of the garden. This exhibition gives an overview of Stirling Castle and the work currently being done to restore the castle.

4. The Forework



Walk out of the garden and turn left up the cobbled slope. This line of defences is known as the Forework and was built by James IV around 500 years ago. This was also the original entrance to the castle at that time.

Can you see the towers on either side of the entrance? There used to be two towers on either side of the entrance and they were twice the height they are now but have been taken down around 1690 and made into platforms for cannons.

Both towers have arrow slits in them for bowmen to protect the castle.

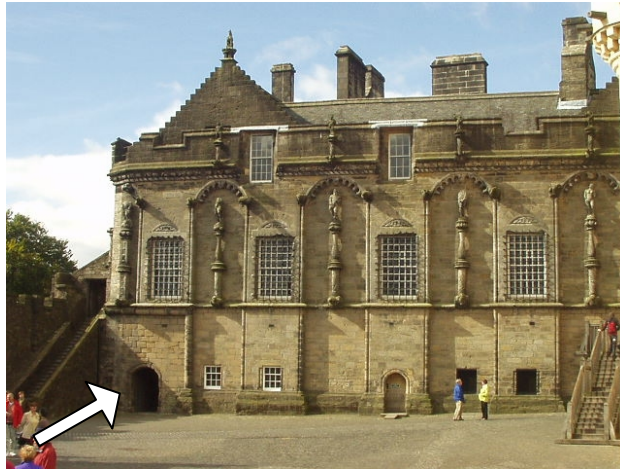
Walk through the archway and turn either left or right into one of the towers. Look out of the arrow slits.

Q: Why are the arrow slits so narrow?

A: So an attacker's arrows cannot get through the windows.

In each tower you will see a metal grill on the floor. Beneath these are the castle dungeons!

5. Arts and Crafts Exhibition



Come out of the towers and turn left. Walk through the archway into a long tunnel. You will see several rooms displaying crafts associated with castle life including costume making, wood carving, music maker, painting and entertainment.

About halfway along this tunnel you will find an archway leading into a courtyard. This courtyard became known as the 'Lion's Den' because it is said that James V (who built this building) used to keep a lion in here!

6. James V Palace

Walk back out of the tunnel the way you came in. Once outside turn around to look at the exterior of the building. This is the palace and it was built by James V (James IV's son) in the 1540s. The walls were decorated in a French style, by French stonemasons, with the carvings to impress visitors with the wealth and authority of the king. The carvings include the Devil, a selection of planetary Gods and even a statue of James V wearing ordinary clothes. As you walk around the building, have a look at the carvings.



Q: Can you see James V?

A: He is on the corner of the building between the palace and the great hall. There is a lion with a crown above his head.

He is wearing ordinary clothes as he used to enjoy going out of the castle, dressed as an ordinary landowner, and mixing with the local people of Stirling.

Q: What is the difference between a palace and a castle?

A: A palace is a luxurious residence for royal or important nobles. A castle is a fortified complex within which was the palace.

Stirling Castle is unusual because it is a castle and palace combined, with outer defences which also give it "fortress" status.

Inside the palace are the king and queens chambers, including the presence chamber and bedchamber for each.

Over the next few years Historic Scotland will be restoring all the chambers to the way they would have looked when they were first built by James V. At certain times during the restoration, some of the building may be closed to visitors so please ask castle staff what is open during your visit.

7. Great Hall



Walk under the covered bridge that joins the palace to the great hall (painted building). Follow the slope up the hill. This area is called the inner close.

Walk towards the great hall and enter through the large doorway on the left.

You are now standing in the Great Hall completed by James IV in 1503. The hall was once the scene of great banquets and meetings of parliament. Mary Queen of Scots

held a celebration in this hall for the baptism of her son James where there was lots of food and entertainment as well as the first ever fireworks display in Stirling.

For a time the Great Hall was used as a barrack for soldiers but recently has been restored to the way it looked when it was used by Scotland's Kings and Queens.

Q: How many fireplaces can you see in this room?

A: There are five fireplaces, two on each long wall and one behind the thrones.

Wall hangings were used to decorate this room and they helped to keep draughts out.

Q: What is the raised wooden area at the end of the hall for?

A: It is called the minstrels gallery and from here the musicians would have entertained the guests at a celebration or feast.

The King and Queen would sit at the other end of the hall at the main table called the high table.

If you look above your head you will see the magnificent 'hammer beam' roof. This roof was finished in 1999 and was made in the same way we think the original roof was made. If you look very carefully you will see that there are no metal screws or nails holding the roof together, only little wooden pegs called dowels.

Edinburgh Castle's Great Hall was also built by James IV and the skilled carpenters who built it were ship builders.

Could this be why the roof looks like a ship turned upside down?

8. Chapel Royal

Walk back through the large wooden door at the far end of the hall and into the inner close. The building on your right is the chapel royal. This was built in 1594 by James VI for the baptism of his son, Henry.

If you look very closely at the walls at the great hall end of the chapel, you will see little markings on some of the stones. These markings are called 'masons marks'. Some are crosses, triangles, fish shapes etc. Stonemasons were only paid for the work they did so in order to get paid, they marked every stone they laid. Can you see any other masons marks on the chapel walls?



Walk into the chapel through the double doors.

In 1996 Historic Scotland began work on restoring this chapel. The paintings you see on the walls were found during the restoration and were painted in 1628 by a man called Valentine Jenkin.

Q: Can you see the initials under the crossed swords on the wall?

They might be a C and an I standing for Charles I and the R stands for Rex which is Latin for King.

On the altar, at the right hand end of the chapel, there is an embroidered cloth made by a local women's guild. It is dedicated to the children and teacher who lost their lives in Dunblane Primary School.

On the wall in front of the double doors, you will see some completed tapestries. These tapestries are part of our project at Stirling Castle, to restore the Palace.

A group of weavers from West Dean Tapestry studio in Sussex have been making an interpretation of an existing set of seven tapestries, called the Hunt of the Unicorn, which hang in the Cloisters museum in New York. We know that our palace held a set of tapestries in the late 1500's called the hunt of the unicorn, so these tapestries, when all seven are finished, will be hung in the palace.

9. King's Old Building



The building at the top of the slope is called the King's Old Building. Although most of the outside of the building appears to date from the 1700's to 1900's, a recent examination inside shows it to be much older, probably dating from around 1500. On the front of this building there is a plaque dated 1304. This commemorates the siege of 1304 when William Oliphant defended the castle against the English under King Edward I. William Oliphant finally was forced to surrender.

Inside the building is the museum of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, a regiment dating back to 1794. This regiment were based here at Stirling Castle until 1964. Some of the buildings were converted into barracks for the soldiers to sleep in. Since 1964, Stirling Castle has been in the care of Historic Scotland. Most of the buildings have been restored back to the way they looked before the army arrived.

10. Douglas Garden

Walk through the narrow archway to the right of the King's Old Building. This path leads to the Douglas Garden.



This garden was named after William the 8th Earl of Douglas, who was murdered in Stirling Castle by James II in 1452.

The Earl of Douglas had been plotting with other Scottish Lords to get rid of James II. When King James heard of this plan he invited the Earl to dinner at Stirling Castle in order to explain himself. The Earl of Douglas was afraid that the king would harm him, so he refused to come unless the king gave him a letter promising he would come to no harm.

The king gave his promise and Douglas came to dinner. After dinner the king demanded the earl stop plotting against him but Douglas refused. The king grew so angry that he lost his temper and stabbed Douglas. The king's lords finished him off and the royal guards threw his body out of a window above the archway leading to this garden.

Look to your left and you will see the steps leading on to the wall walk around this garden. A short way around this walk you will see a small hole in the wall. The story goes, this hole was made so that an infant Mary Queen of Scots could look safely out over the area.

Please be very careful when taking this wall walk as there are no barriers at the edge.

Follow the wall walk down past the chapel and the Great Hall and you will walk out onto the Grand Battery. The Grand Battery was built by the army in 1690.

Once you have stopped to look at the cannons, the view of the Wallace monument and Stirling Bridge, follow the path towards the bookshop and to your right you will see the castle well.



The well is where the castle would get its main supply of water for cooking and washing. In the 1500's it was unsafe to drink the water from the well as it would have been very dirty and might have made people sick. People drank ale instead.

11. Medieval Kitchen Exhibition

Walk downhill from the well and on your right you will see the medieval kitchens, underneath the Grand Battery. Carefully walk down the stairs and walk straight ahead. As you enter the kitchens you will come through the serving area, where all of the prepared food would be waiting to be taken up to the great hall.

In this area we now have an audio visual display which lasts about 10 minutes, describing where the food for the kitchens came from.

From the servery, turn left and step down into the great kitchen. This exhibition has been set up to show how it would have looked 500 years ago when the kitchen was getting ready for a great feast. You will see models of workers, examples of how food was prepared, menus and even be able to smell the food!!

Please take care in the kitchens as it can be very dark and do not let pupils walk behind the tables or the statues. You may take photographs if you wish.

Can you imagine what it must have been like to work in here?



12. Nether Bailey

On exit from the Kitchens, turn right and walk through the tunnel, which is the oldest part of the castle built in 1381.

This area is called the Nether Bailey which was a walled enclosure behind the highest part of the castle. The small building on the left was used as a punishment block during the 1800's. If you have a look inside, you will see a model of a prisoner called Paddy McGuire. He was kept prisoner here in 1881.

Q: What had he done wrong? How long was he kept here?

A: Have a look on the wall display to find out all about his time here and what punishment may have been like for the soldiers who broke the rules.



Continue walking down the slope to the row of buildings on your left. Enter the very last stone building and you will see a list of rules on the wall.

The rules were very important here, as this room was used to store the gunpowder. Any breaking of the rules could mean the gun powder exploding! The building is surrounded by a wall to protect the rest of the castle if there ever was an explosion.

Walk out of the walled area and turn left towards the wooden building. This building is where the tapestry project is taking place. The tapestries are an on going project until 2013 when the set of seven tapestries should be completed and hung in the Queen's presence chamber in the palace.

In this room, you must be very quiet so as not to disturb the weavers.
Photographs are **not** allowed in this room.

Thank you for visiting Stirling Castle!
Enjoy the rest of your visit.