

History's Great
STRUCTURES

The Medieval Castle



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CA. 1230

Birth of castle designer
Master James of St. George.

1838

Renovation of
Wartburg Castle in
Germany begins.

1295

Work begins on Beaumaris Castle, the last
of Edward I's castles in Wales.

CA. 1350

End of the medieval period and the
beginning of the Renaissance.

CA. 1450

Guns become the most effective
siege weapons.

**1300****1500****1700****1900****CA. 1500**

The era of castle construction
comes to an end.

1304

Edward I captures
Stirling Castle
by means of the
trebuchet Warwolf.

**CA. 1275**

Gunpowder
is introduced
into Europe.

2006

Krak des Chevaliers
is named a
UNESCO World
Heritage Site.

1820

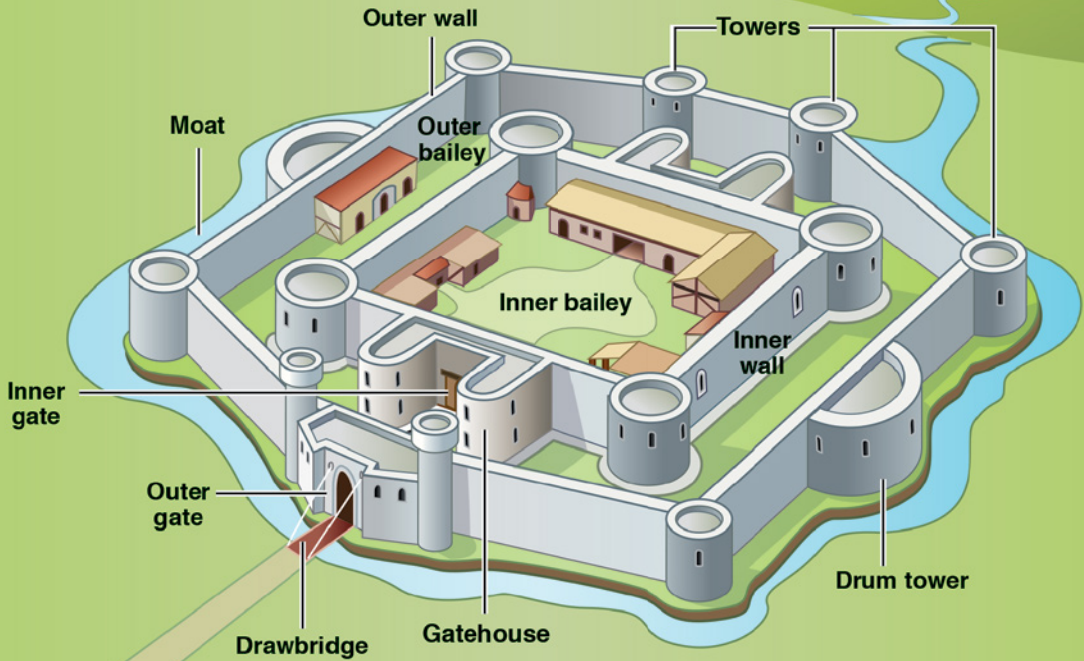
Sir Walter Scott's
nostalgic medieval
novel *Ivanhoe* is
published.



The massive walls of Chepstow Castle in Wales (pictured) offered protection from repeated attacks from battering rams and other such weapons. Thick, high walls were a common feature of castles from the 1100s on.

wearied and weakened the invading force, and the extra time gave the defenders more opportunity to respond. High walls also allowed the castle's archers to shoot from a higher angle while still being protected from enemy fire; this was an added advantage for the defenders. Some later medieval castles had walls that were only about 15 to 20 feet (4.6 m to 6 m) high, but the walls of the stronger castles typically measured about 30 feet (9 m) in height and sometimes more. The wall of England's Framlingham Castle reached 40 feet (12 m) above the ground. In general, as the medieval era wore on and weaponry improved, the walls of newly constructed castles grew ever thicker and higher.

The Concentric Castle



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., "Concentric Castle," 2006.

made of water, soil, and lime to fasten the stones end to end in each row. Once the bottom layer of stones was complete, work would begin on the second layer, with mortar serving this time to glue the layers together. When the walls had risen three or four feet (about 1 m), the space between them would be filled with rubble—random pieces of stone mixed with mortar. This connected the two edges and created the base for the completed wall. Then the process would begin again, raising the walls another three to four feet (about 1 m) at a time until the structure was the desired height.



Bran Castle in Romania (pictured) has successfully marketed itself as the home of the legendary Count Dracula. It is the most-visited site in the country.

the legendary Count Dracula; today, it is the most-visited site in the country. Windsor Castle is still the home of Britain's royal family, but parts of the complex are open to tourists, and hundreds of thousands of visitors tour these parts each year.

Other castles dating from the Middle Ages have been converted into commercial establishments. Quite a few medieval castles now serve as hotels, for example. One of the most famous of these is the Castell d'Empordà in Spain. Built originally during the 1300s, this castle became a thirty-seven-room hotel in 1999. The advertising for the hotel leans heavily on the building's historical value. "Where else

FACTS ABOUT MEDIEVAL CASTLES

Height

- Usual height for the motte of a large motte and bailey: 30 feet (9 m).
- Height of the walls of Framlingham Castle in England: 40 feet (12 m).
- Height of the keep at Dover Castle in England: 80 feet (24 m).
- Height of the tallest tower at Warwick Castle in England: 128 feet (39 m).
- Number of steps in the staircase leading to the top tower of the Alcázar de Segovia in Spain: 152.

Thickness and Length

- Average thickness of a stone castle wall: 7 feet (2 m).
- Thickness of the walls at Chepstow Castle in Wales: 20 feet (6 m).
- Thickness of some of the walls at Borl Castle in Croatia: 40 feet (12 m).
- Approximate length of the wall at Conwy Castle in Wales: 1,400 yards (1,280 m).

Area

- Area covered by the bailey in a standard motte and bailey: 3 acres (1 ha).
- Area covered by Malbork Castle in Poland: 5 square miles (13 square km).
- Approximate dimensions of the largest keeps: 100 feet by 100 feet (30.5 m by 30.5 m).
- Volume of stone contained in the keep of the Château de Langeais in France: 1,556 cubic yards (1,190 cubic m).

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