Edinburgh Castle

**Edinburgh Castle** is a historic castle in [Edinburgh, Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh). It stands on [Castle Rock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_Rock_(Edinburgh)), which has been occupied by humans since at least the [Iron Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age), although the nature of the early settlement is unclear. There has been a royal castle on the rock since at least the reign of [David I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_I_of_Scotland) in the 12th century, and the site continued to be a royal residence until 1633. From the 15th century, the castle's residential role declined, and by the 17th century it was principally used as military barracks with a large garrison. Its importance as a part of Scotland's national heritage was recognised increasingly from the early 19th century onwards, and various restoration programmes have been carried out over the past century and a half.

As one of the most important strongholds in the [Kingdom of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Scotland), Edinburgh Castle was involved in many historical conflicts from the [Wars of Scottish Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wars_of_Scottish_Independence) in the 14th century to the [Jacobite rising of 1745](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacobite_rising_of_1745). Research undertaken in 2014 identified 26 sieges in its 1,100-year history, giving it a claim to having been "the most besieged place in Great Britain and one of the most attacked in the world".[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-3) Few of the present buildings pre-date the Lang Siege of the 16th century when the medieval defences were largely destroyed by artillery bombardment. The most notable exceptions are [St Margaret's Chapel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Margaret%27s_Chapel) from the early 12th century, which is regarded as the oldest building in Edinburgh,[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-eotca-4) the Royal Palace, and the early 16th-century Great Hall, although the interiors have been much altered from the mid-[Victorian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era) period onwards. The castle also houses the Scottish [regalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regalia), known as the [Honours of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honours_of_Scotland" \o "Honours of Scotland), and is the site of the [Scottish National War Memorial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_National_War_Memorial) and the [National War Museum of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_War_Museum_of_Scotland). The [British Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army) is still responsible for some parts of the castle, although its presence is now largely ceremonial and administrative. Some of the castle buildings house [regimental museums](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regimental_museum) which contribute to its presentation as a tourist attraction.

The castle, in the care of [Historic Environment Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historic_Environment_Scotland), is Scotland's most and the United Kingdom's second most-visited paid tourist attraction, with over 2.2 million visitors in 2019[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-ALVA_2019_visitor_numbers-5) and over 70 percent of leisure visitors to Edinburgh visiting the castle.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-6) As the backdrop to the [Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Edinburgh_Military_Tattoo) during the annual [Edinburgh Festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Festival), the castle has become a recognisable symbol of Edinburgh in particular and of Scotland as a whole.

History[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: History)]

**Pre-history of the Castle Rock**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Pre-history of the Castle Rock)]

**Geology**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Geology)]

*Main article:*[*Castle Rock, Edinburgh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_Rock,_Edinburgh)

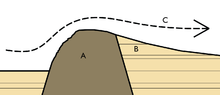
[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Crag_and_tail.png)

Diagram of a crag and tail feature, such as the Castle Rock: **A** is the crag formed from the volcanic plug, **B** is the tail of softer rock, and **C** shows the direction of ice movement. In the case of Edinburgh, the castle stands on the crag (**A**) with the Royal Mile extending along the tail (**B**)

The castle stands upon the [plug](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volcanic_plug) of an [extinct volcano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extinct_volcano), which is estimated to have risen about 350 million years ago during the lower [Carboniferous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carboniferous) period. The Castle Rock is the remains of a [volcanic pipe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volcanic_pipe), which cut through the surrounding sedimentary rock before cooling to form very hard [dolerite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolerite), a type of basalt. Subsequent [glacial erosion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glaciology) was resisted by the dolerite, which protected the softer rock to the east, leaving a [crag and tail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crag_and_tail) formation.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-7)

The summit of the Castle Rock is 130 metres (430 ft) above sea level, with rocky cliffs to the south, west, and north, rising to a height of 80 metres (260 ft) above the surrounding landscape.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-8) This means that the only readily accessible route to the castle lies to the east, where the ridge slopes more gently. The defensive advantage of such a site is self-evident, but the geology of the rock also presents difficulties, since basalt is extremely impermeable. Providing water to the Upper Ward of the castle was problematic, and despite the sinking of a 28-metre (92 ft) deep well, the water supply often ran out during drought or siege,[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-9) including during the Lang Siege in 1573.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Potter137-10)

**Earliest habitation**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Earliest habitation)]

*See also:*[*Prehistoric Scotland*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prehistoric_Scotland)*and*[*Castle of Maidens*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_of_Maidens)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edinburgh_Castle_from_Portsburgh.jpg)

The castle is built on a volcanic rock, as seen here from the [West Port](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Port,_Edinburgh) area

Archaeological investigation has yet to establish when the Castle Rock was first used as a place of human habitation. There is no record of any Roman interest in the location during [General Agricola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnaeus_Julius_Agricola)'s invasion of northern Britain near the end of the 1st century AD. [Ptolemy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy)'s map of the 2nd century AD[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle" \l "cite_note-11) shows a settlement in the territory of the [Votadini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Votadini" \o "Votadini) named "Alauna", meaning "rock place", making this possibly the earliest known name for the Castle Rock.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-12) This could, however, refer to another of the tribe's hill forts in the area. The *Orygynale Cronykil* of [Andrew of Wyntoun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_of_Wyntoun) (c. 1350 – c. 1423), an early source for [Scottish history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_history), names "Ebrawce" ([Ebraucus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebraucus" \o "Ebraucus)), a [legendary King of the Britons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_legendary_kings_of_Britain), as having "byggyd [built] Edynburgh".[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-13) According to the earlier chronicler, [Geoffrey of Monmouth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_of_Monmouth) (c. 1100 – c. 1155), Ebraucus had fifty children by his twenty wives, and was the founder of "Kaerebrauc" ([York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/York)), "Alclud" ([Dumbarton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumbarton)) and the "Maidens' Castle".[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-14) The 16th-century English writer [John Stow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stow) (c. 1525 – 1605), credited Ebraucus with building "the Castell of Maidens called Edenbrough" in 989 BC.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-15) The name "Maidens' Castle" ([Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): *Castra* or *Castellum Puellarum*) occurs frequently up until the 16th century.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-16) It appears in charters of [David I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_I_of_Scotland) (r. 1124–1153) and his successors,[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle" \l "cite_note-17) although the reason for it is not known. [William Camden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Camden)'s survey of Britain, *Britannia* (1607), records that "the Britans called [it] Castle Myned Agned [winged rock], the Scots, the Maidens Castle and the Virgins Castle, of certaine young maidens of the Picts roiall bloud who were kept there in old time".[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-18) According to the 17th-century antiquarian Father Richard Hay, the "maidens" were a group of nuns, who were ejected from the castle and replaced by [canons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_(priest)), considered "fitter to live among soldiers".[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-19) However, this story was considered "apocryphal" by the 19th-century antiquarian [Daniel Wilson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Wilson_(academic)) and has been ignored by historians since.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-20) The name may have been derived from a "Cult of the Nine Maidens" type of legend. [Arthurian legends](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthurian_legend) suggest that the site once held a shrine to [Morgain la Fee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morgan_le_Fay" \o "Morgan le Fay), one of nine sisters.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-21) Later, St Monenna, said to be one of nine companions, reputedly invested a church at Edinburgh, as well as at Dumbarton and other places.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-22) [Similar names](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maiden_Castle_(disambiguation)) are shared by many other [Iron Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Iron_Age) [hillforts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oppidum) and may have simply described a castle that had never been taken by force[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-23) or derived from an earlier [Brittonic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Brittonic) name like *mag dun*.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-24)[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-25)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edinburgh_Castle_from_the_North.JPG)

The Castle seen from the North

An archaeological excavation in the early 1990s uncovered evidence of the site having been settled during the late [Bronze Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze_Age) or early [Iron Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age), potentially making the Castle Rock the longest continuously occupied site in Scotland.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-26) However, the extent of the finds was not particularly significant and was insufficient to draw any certain conclusions about the precise nature or scale of this earliest known phase of occupation.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-27)

The archaeological evidence is more reliable in respect of the Iron Age. Traditionally, it had been supposed that the [tribes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_people) of central Scotland had made little or no use of the Castle Rock. Excavations at nearby [Dunsapie Hill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur%27s_Seat" \o "Arthur's Seat), [Duddingston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duddingston" \o "Duddingston), [Inveresk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inveresk" \o "Inveresk) and [Traprain Law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traprain_Law" \o "Traprain Law) had revealed relatively large settlements and it was supposed that these sites had been chosen in preference to the Castle Rock. However, the excavation in the 1990s pointed to the probable existence of an enclosed [hill fort](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hill_fort) on the rock, although only the fringes of the site were excavated. House fragments revealed were similar to Iron Age dwellings previously found in Northumbria.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-28)

The 1990s dig revealed clear signs of habitation from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, consistent with [Ptolemy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemy)'s reference to "Alauna". Signs of occupation included some [Roman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Britain) material, including pottery, bronzes and brooches, implying a possible trading relationship between the Votadini and the Romans beginning with [Agricola's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnaeus_Julius_Agricola) northern campaign in AD 82, and continuing through to the establishment of the [Antonine Wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonine_Wall" \o "Antonine Wall) around AD 140. The nature of the settlement in this period is inconclusive, but Driscoll and Yeoman suggest it may have been a [broch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broch), similar to the one at [Edin's Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edin%27s_Hall_Broch" \o "Edin's Hall Broch) near [Duns, Scottish Borders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duns,_Scottish_Borders) in the [Scottish Borders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Borders).[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-29)

**Early Middle Ages**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Early Middle Ages)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Yr.Hen.Ogledd.550.650.Koch.jpg)

Map of northern Britain showing the Gododdin and other tribes c.600 AD

The castle does not re-appear in contemporary historical records from the time of Ptolemy until around AD 600. Then, in the epic [Welsh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Welsh) poem [*Y Gododdin*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Y_Gododdin) there is a reference to Din Eidyn, "the stronghold of [Eidyn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eidyn" \o "Eidyn)". This has been generally assumed to refer to the Castle Rock.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-30) The poem tells of the [Gododdin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gododdin" \o "Gododdin) King [Mynyddog Mwynfawr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mynyddog_Mwynfawr" \o "Mynyddog Mwynfawr),[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-31) and his band of warriors, who, after a year of feasting in their fortress, set out to do battle with the [Angles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angles) at "Catreath" (possibly [Catterick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catterick,_North_Yorkshire" \o "Catterick, North Yorkshire)) in Yorkshire. Despite performing glorious deeds of valour and bravery, the poem relates that the Gododdin were massacred.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-32)

The [Irish annals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_annals) record that in 638, after the events related in *Y Gododdin*, "Etin" was besieged by the Angles under [Oswald of Northumbria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oswald_of_Northumbria), and the Gododdin were defeated.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-33) The territory around Edinburgh then became part of the [Kingdom of Northumbria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northumbria), which was itself absorbed by [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_England) in the 10th century. Lothian became part of Scotland, during the reign of [Indulf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indulf_of_Scotland" \o "Indulf of Scotland) (r.954–962).[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-34)

The archaeological evidence for the period in question is based entirely on the analysis of [middens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midden" \o "Midden) (domestic refuse heaps), with no evidence of structures. Few conclusions can therefore be derived about the status of the settlement during this period, although the midden deposits show no clear break since Roman times.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-DY227-35)

**David's Tower and the 15th century**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: David's Tower and the 15th century)]

The 1357 [Treaty of Berwick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Berwick_(1357)) brought the Wars of Independence to a close. David II resumed his rule and set about rebuilding Edinburgh Castle which became his principal seat of government.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-54) David's Tower was begun around 1367, and was incomplete when David died at the castle in 1371. It was completed by his successor, [Robert II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_II_of_Scotland), in the 1370s. The tower stood on the site of the present Half Moon Battery and was connected by a section of [curtain wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curtain_wall_(fortification)) to the smaller Constable's Tower, a round tower built between 1375 and 1379 where the Portcullis Gate now stands.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter46-43)[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-BoS85-86-55)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Braun_%26_Hogenberg_%27Castrum_Puellarum%27_(Edinburgh_Castle)_c.1581.jpg)

A late-16th-century depiction of the castle, from Braun & Hogenberg's *[Civitates orbis terrarum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Braun" \o "Georg Braun)*, showing David's Tower at the centre

In the early 15th century, another English invasion, this time under [Henry IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_IV_of_England), reached Edinburgh Castle and began a siege, but eventually withdrew due to lack of supplies.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter46-43) From 1437, Sir [William Crichton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Crichton,_1st_Lord_Crichton) was Keeper of Edinburgh Castle,[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle" \l "cite_note-56) and soon after became [Chancellor of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancellor_of_Scotland). In an attempt to gain the [regency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regent) of Scotland, Crichton sought to break the power of the [Douglases](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earl_of_Douglas" \o "Earl of Douglas), the principal noble family in the kingdom. The sixteen-year-old [William Douglas, 6th Earl of Douglas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Douglas,_6th_Earl_of_Douglas), and his younger brother David were summoned to Edinburgh Castle in November 1440. After the so-called "Black Dinner" had taken place in David's Tower, both boys were summarily executed on trumped-up charges in the presence of the ten-year-old [King James II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_II_of_Scotland) (r.1437–1460). Douglas' supporters subsequently besieged the castle, inflicting damage.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57) Construction continued throughout this period, with the area now known as Crown Square being laid out over [vaults](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vault_(architecture)) in the 1430s. Royal apartments were built, forming the nucleus of the later palace block, and a Great Hall was in existence by 1458. In 1464, access to the castle was improved when the current approach road up the north-east side of the rock was created to allow easier movement of the royal artillery train in and out of the area now known as the Upper Ward.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-BoS85-86-55)

In 1479, [Alexander Stewart, Duke of Albany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Stewart,_Duke_of_Albany), was imprisoned in David's Tower for plotting against his brother, [King James III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_III_of_Scotland) (r.1460–1488). He escaped by getting his guards drunk, then lowering himself from a window on a rope.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57) The duke fled to France, then England, where he allied himself with [King Edward IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_IV_of_England). In 1482, Albany [marched into Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capture_of_Berwick_(1482)) with [Richard, Duke of Gloucester](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_III_of_England) (later King Richard III), and an English army. James III was trapped in the castle from 22 July to 29 September 1482 until he successfully negotiated a settlement.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Impression_of_Edinburgh_Castle_before_the_%27Lang_Siege%27_of_1573.jpg)

Edinburgh Castle as it may have looked before the Lang Siege of 1571–73, with David's Tower and the Palace block, centre and left

During the 15th century the castle was increasingly used as an [arsenal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arsenal) and armaments factory. The first known purchase of a gun was in 1384, and the "great [bombard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombard_(weapon))" [Mons Meg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mons_Meg) was delivered to Edinburgh in 1457.[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Tabraham_1997,_p.76-58) The first recorded mention of an [armoury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armory_(military)" \o "Armory (military)) for the manufacture of guns occurs in 1474, and by 1498 the master gunner Robert Borthwick was casting bronze guns at Edinburgh.[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-59) By 1511 Edinburgh was the principal foundry in Scotland, supplanting Stirling Castle, with Scottish and European smiths working under Borthwick, who by 1512 was appointed "master melter of the king's guns".[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-60) Their output included guns for the Scottish flagship, the "[*Great Michael*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Michael)", and the "Seven Sisters", a set of cannons captured by the English at [Flodden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Flodden) in 1513.[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-61) Sir Thomas Howard, England's Lord Admiral, admired their graceful shape and brilliant finish, declaring them the most beautiful [cannon] for their size and length that he had ever seen.[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-62) From 1510 Dutch craftsmen were also producing [hand culverins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand_culverin), an early [firearm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firearm).[[63]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-63) After Flodden, Borthwick continued his work, producing an unknown number of guns, of which none survive. He was succeeded by French smiths, who began manufacturing [hagbuts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagbut" \o "Hagbut) (another type of firearm) in the 1550s,[[64]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle" \l "cite_note-64) and by 1541 the castle had a stock of 413.[[65]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-65)

Meanwhile, the royal family began to stay more frequently at the [Abbey of Holyrood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holyrood_Abbey), about 1 mile (1.6 km) from the castle. Around the end of the fifteenth century, [King James IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_IV_of_Scotland) (r.1488–1513) built [Holyroodhouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holyrood_Palace" \o "Holyrood Palace), by the abbey, as his principal Edinburgh residence, and the castle's role as a royal home subsequently declined.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57) James IV did, however, construct the Great Hall, which was completed in the early 16th century.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-BoS85-86-55) His daughter [Margaret Stewart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Drummond_(mistress)) was lodged in the castle with her servant [Ellen More](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_More).[[66]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-66)

**16th century and the Lang Siege**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: 16th century and the Lang Siege)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_William_Kirkcaldy_of_the_Grange_by_Jean_Clouet.jpg)

Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, who held the castle on behalf of Queen Mary during the Lang Siege of 1571–73. Painting by [Jean Clouet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Clouet)

James IV was killed in battle at [Flodden Field](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Flodden_Field), on 9 September 1513. Expecting the English to press their advantage, the Scots hastily constructed a [town wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_town_walls) around Edinburgh and augmented the castle's defences. Robert Borthwick and a Frenchman, [Antoine d'Arces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine_d%27Arces), were involved in designing new artillery defences and fortifications in 1514, though it appears from lack of evidence that little of the planned work was carried out.[[67]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-67) Three years later, [King James V](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_V_of_Scotland) (r.1513–1542), still only five years old, was brought to the castle for safety.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57) Upon his death 25 years later, the crown passed to his week-old daughter, [Mary, Queen of Scots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary,_Queen_of_Scots). English invasions followed, as [King Henry VIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_VIII_of_England) attempted to [force a dynastic marriage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rough_Wooing) on Scotland.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-BoS85-86-55) When the [English burnt Edinburgh in May 1544](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burning_of_Edinburgh) the gunner [Andrew Mansioun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Mansioun) firing from the castle destroyed an English cannon placed to bombard the forework.[[68]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-68) In 1547 disaffected members of the garrison who resented [Regent Arran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regent_Arran) came to [Norham Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norham_Castle" \o "Norham Castle) and offered to let the English in.[[69]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-69)

Refortification in 1548 included an earthen angle-bastion, known as the Spur, of the type known as [*trace italienne*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trace_italienne), one of the earliest examples in Britain.[[70]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-tab104-70) [Brunstane Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunstane_Castle" \o "Brunstane Castle) the home of the traitor [Alexander Crichton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Crichton_of_Brunstane) was demolished to provide building materials.[[71]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-71) The Spur may have been designed by [Migliorino Ubaldini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migliorino_Ubaldini" \o "Migliorino Ubaldini), an Italian engineer from the court of [Henry II of France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_II_of_France),[[70]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-tab104-70) and was said to have the [arms of France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_Arms_of_France) carved on it.[[72]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-72) James V's widow, [Mary of Guise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_of_Guise), acted as [regent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regent) from 1554 until her death at the castle in 1560.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57)

The following year, the [Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_Scotland) Mary, Queen of Scots, returned from France to begin her reign, which was marred by crises and quarrels amongst the powerful [Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Reformation) Scottish nobility. In 1565, the Queen made an unpopular marriage with [Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Stuart,_Lord_Darnley), and the following year, in a small room of the Palace at Edinburgh Castle, she gave birth to their son [James](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_I_of_England), who would later be King of both Scotland and England. Mary's reign was, however, brought to an abrupt end. Three months after the [murder of Darnley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Darnley) at Kirk o' Field in 1567, she married [James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hepburn,_4th_Earl_of_Bothwell), one of the chief murder suspects. A large proportion of the nobility rebelled, resulting ultimately in the imprisonment and [forced abdication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Act_Anent_the_demission_of_the_Crown_in_favour_of_our_Sovereign_Lord,_and_his_Majesty%27s_Coronation_1567) of Mary at [Loch Leven Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loch_Leven_Castle). She escaped and fled to [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_England), but some of the nobility remained faithful to her cause. Edinburgh Castle was initially handed by its Captain, [James Balfour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Balfour,_Lord_Pittendreich), to the [Regent Moray](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Stewart,_1st_Earl_of_Moray), who had forced Mary's abdication and now held power in the name of the infant King James VI. Shortly after the [Battle of Langside](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Langside), in May 1568, Moray appointed [Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Kirkcaldy_of_Grange) Keeper of the Castle.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edinburgh_Castle_during_the_%27Lang_Siege%27_(May_1573).jpg)

Detail from a contemporary drawing of Edinburgh Castle under siege in 1573, showing it surrounded by attacking batteries

Grange was a trusted lieutenant of the Regent, but after Moray's murder in January 1570 his allegiance to the King's cause began to waver. [Intermittent civil war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marian_civil_war) continued between the supporters of the two monarchs, and in April 1571 [Dumbarton Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumbarton_Castle) fell to "the King's men". Under the influence of [William Maitland of Lethington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Maitland_of_Lethington), Mary's secretary, Grange changed sides, occupying the town and castle of Edinburgh for Queen Mary, and against the new regent, the [Earl of Lennox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Stewart,_4th_Earl_of_Lennox).[[73]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-73) The stand-off which followed was not resolved until two years later, and became known as the "Lang Siege", from the [Scots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scots_language) word for "long". Hostilities began in May, with a month-long siege of the town, and a second short siege in October. Blockades and skirmishing continued meanwhile, and Grange continued to refortify the castle. The King's party appealed to [Elizabeth I of England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_I_of_England) for assistance, as they lacked the artillery and money required to reduce the castle, and feared that Grange would receive aid from France and the [Duke of Alba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fernando_%C3%81lvarez_de_Toledo,_3rd_Duke_of_Alba) in the [Spanish Netherlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Netherlands).[[74]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-74) Elizabeth sent ambassadors to negotiate, and in July 1572 a truce was agreed and the blockade lifted. The town was effectively surrendered to the King's party, with Grange confined to the castle.[[75]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-75)

The truce expired on 1 January 1573, and Grange began bombarding the town. His supplies of powder and shot, however, were running low, and despite having 40 cannon available, there were only seven gunners in the garrison.[[76]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Potter,_p.131-76) The King's forces, now with the [Earl of Morton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Douglas,_4th_Earl_of_Morton) in charge as regent, were making headway with plans for a siege. Trenches were dug to surround the castle, and St Margaret's Well was poisoned.[[77]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-77) By February, all Queen Mary's other supporters had surrendered to the Regent, but Grange resolved to resist despite water shortages within the castle. The garrison continued to bombard the town, killing a number of citizens. They also made sorties to set fires, burning 100 houses in the town and then firing on anyone attempting to put out the flames.[[78]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-78)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SirWilliamDrury.jpg)

Sir William Drury, commander of Elizabeth I of England's Protestant troops who brought the Lang Siege to an end in 1573. Unknown artist

In April, a force of around 1,000 English troops, led by [Sir William Drury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Drury), arrived in Edinburgh. They were followed by 27 cannon from [Berwick-upon-Tweed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berwick-upon-Tweed),[[76]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle" \l "cite_note-Potter,_p.131-76) including one that had been cast within Edinburgh Castle and captured by the English at Flodden.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Salter47-57) The English troops built an artillery emplacement on Castle Hill, immediately facing the east walls of the castle, and five others to the north, west and south. By 17 May these batteries were ready, and the bombardment began. Over the next 12 days, the gunners dispatched around 3,000 shots at the castle.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Potter137-10) On 22 May, the south wall of David's Tower collapsed, and the next day the Constable's Tower also fell. The debris blocked the castle entrance, as well as the Fore Well, although this had already run dry.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Potter137-10) On 26 May, the English attacked and captured the Spur, the outer fortification of the castle, which had been isolated by the collapse. The following day Grange emerged from the castle by a ladder after calling for a ceasefire to allow negotiations for a surrender to take place. When it was made clear that he would not be allowed to go free even if he ended the siege, Grange resolved to continue the resistance, but the garrison threatened to mutiny. He therefore arranged for Drury and his men to enter the castle on 28 May, preferring to surrender to the English rather than the Regent Morton.[[79]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-79) Edinburgh Castle was handed over to [George Douglas of Parkhead](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Douglas_of_Parkhead), the Regent's brother, and the garrison were allowed to go free.[[80]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-80) In contrast, Kirkcaldy of Grange, his brother James and two jewellers, [James Mossman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Mosman) and [James Cokke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Cockie), who had been minting coins in Mary's name inside the castle, were hanged at the [Cross in Edinburgh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercat_Cross,_Edinburgh) on 3 August.[[81]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-81)

**19th century to the present**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edinburgh_Castle&action=edit&section=12" \o "Edit section: 19th century to the present)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:KGIV_and_hat.jpg)

King George IV waves from the battlements of the Half Moon Battery in 1822, drawn by James Skene

A mass prison break in 1811, in which 49 prisoners of war escaped via a hole in the south wall, persuaded the authorities that the castle vaults were no longer suitable as a prison. This use ceased in 1814[[104]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-104) and the castle began gradually to assume a different role as a national monument. In 1818, [Sir Walter Scott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Scott) was given permission to search the castle for the [Crown of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crown_of_Scotland), believed lost after the union of Scotland and England in 1707. Breaking into a sealed room, now known as the Crown Room, and unlocking a chest within, he rediscovered the [Honours of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honours_of_Scotland" \o "Honours of Scotland), which were then put on public display with an entry charge of one [shilling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shilling).[[105]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Tabraham60-105) In 1822, [King George IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_IV) made a [visit to Edinburgh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visit_of_King_George_IV_to_Scotland), becoming the first reigning monarch to visit the castle since Charles II in 1651. In 1829, the cannon Mons Meg was returned from the Tower of London, where it had been taken as part of the process of disarming Scotland after "the '45", and the palace began to be opened up to visitors during the 1830s.[[106]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-MacIvor107-106) St Margaret's Chapel was "rediscovered" in 1845, having been used as a store for many years.[[105]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-Tabraham60-105) Works in the 1880s, funded by the Edinburgh publisher William Nelson and carried out by [Hippolyte Blanc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyte_Blanc" \o "Hippolyte Blanc), saw the Argyle Tower built over the Portcullis Gate and the Great Hall restored after years of use as a barracks.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-BoS85-86-55) A new Gatehouse was built in 1888. During the 19th century, several schemes were put forward for rebuilding the whole castle as a [Scottish baronial style](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_baronial_style) *château*. Work began in 1858, but was soon abandoned, and only the hospital building was eventually remodelled in 1897.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-BoS85-86-55) Following the death of [Prince Albert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert,_Prince_Consort) in 1861, the architect [David Bryce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Bryce) put forward a proposal for a 50-metre (160 ft) keep as a memorial, but [Queen Victoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_of_the_United_Kingdom) objected and the scheme was not pursued.[[107]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-107)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Soldiers_of_the_Castle_garrison,_c.1845.jpg)

Soldiers of the [92nd Regiment of Foot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/92nd_Regiment_of_Foot) (later [Gordon Highlanders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_Highlanders)) while on garrison duty at the castle in 1845.[[108]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-108)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edinburgh_Castle_by_Thomas_Keith.jpg)

[Edinburgh Castle, waxed-paper negative by Thomas Keith, c. 1855](https://library.nga.gov/permalink/01NGA_INST/1p5jkvq/alma994204278304896). Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art Library, Washington DC

In 1905, responsibility for the castle was transferred from the [War Office](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_Office) to the [Office of Works](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_Works),[[109]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-109) although the garrison remained until 1923, when the troops moved to [Redford Barracks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redford_Barracks) in south-west Edinburgh. The castle was again used as a prison during the First World War, when "[Red Clydesider](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Clydeside)" [David Kirkwood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Kirkwood) was confined in the military prison block, and during the Second World War, when downed German *Luftwaffe* pilots were captured.[[110]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-110) The position of [Governor of Edinburgh Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Governors_of_Edinburgh_Castle), vacant since 1876, was revived in 1935 as an honorary title for the [General Officer Commanding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Officer_Commanding) in Scotland, the first holder being Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Cameron of Lochiel.[[111]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-111) The castle passed into the care of [Historic Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historic_Scotland) when it was established in 1991, and was designated a [Scheduled Ancient Monument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheduled_Ancient_Monument) in 1993.[[112]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-112) The buildings and structures of the castle are further protected by 24 separate [listings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listed_building), including 13 at [category A](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category_A_listed), the highest level of protection for a historic building in Scotland.[[113]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-113) The [Old](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Town,_Edinburgh) and [New Towns of Edinburgh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Town,_Edinburgh), a [World Heritage Site](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Sites_in_the_United_Kingdom) inscribed by [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) in 1995, is described as "dominated by a medieval fortress".[[114]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-114)

**FACTS:**

The castle sits atop a volcano

But no need to fear – the volcanic explosion that formed Castle Rock last exploded [nearly 340 million years ago](http://www.edinburghcastle.co.uk/history/). Archaeological evidence suggests humans have been living on Castle Rock since 850 BC. But when it came time for the [Edinburgh Castle](https://www.getyourguide.co.uk/edinburgh-castle-l2592/?partner_id=NXU0022) we know and love to be built on the mound in the 12th century, they constructed it right atop the plug of the volcano’s vent. So the architects must have been pretty confident that the long-dormant volcano won’t blow its lid again… right?

It’s the most besieged place in Great Britain

[Edinburgh Castle](https://www.getyourguide.co.uk/edinburgh-castle-l2592/?partner_id=NXU0022) has faced down hostile forces [an incredible *23 times*](http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/6-times-edinburgh-castle-was-under-siege-1-4411281), making it the most embattled fortress in Europe. Notable instances include the Longshanks Siege of 1296, when Edward I plundered the castle and shipped all its treasures to London. There’s also the Lang Siege, which resisted government forces from 1571-73, after the garrison occupying the castle declared their support for Mary, Queen of Scots. The last siege was during the 1745 Jacobite Rising, when Bonny Prince Charlie tried – and failed – to take the fortress. Other than its daily deluge of tourists, the castle has enjoyed a quiet life since.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Edinburgh Castle** | |
| Castlehill, [Edinburgh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh) in [Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland) | |
| Edinburgh Castle viewed from the front courtyard | |
|  | |
| [Wikimedia](https://foundation.wikimedia.org/wiki/Maps_Terms_of_Use) | © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright)  Location in Edinburgh | |
| **Coordinates** | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[55°56′55″N 3°12′3″W](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Edinburgh_Castle&params=55_56_55_N_3_12_3_W_)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[55°56′55″N 3°12′3″W](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Edinburgh_Castle&params=55_56_55_N_3_12_3_W_) |
| **Type** | Visitor attraction and [British Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army) regimental headquarters |
| **Site information** | |
| **Owner** | [Scottish Ministers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Government) and [Ministry of Defence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Defence_(United_Kingdom)) |
| **Operator** | [Historic Environment Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historic_Environment_Scotland) and [British Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army) |
| **Open to the public** | Yes |
| **Visitor numbers** | 2,201,354 (2019)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-1) |
| **Website** | [www.edinburghcastle.scot](https://www.edinburghcastle.scot/) |
| **Site history** | |
| **Built** | 11th century through to the 21st century |
| **Battles/wars** | * [Wars of Scottish Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wars_of_Scottish_Independence) (1296–1357) * Siege to free [James III of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_III_of_Scotland) (1482) * [Lang Siege](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#16th_century_and_the_Lang_Siege) (1571–1573) |
| **Events** | [Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Edinburgh_Military_Tattoo) (annual) |
| **Garrison information** | |
| **Current commander** | [Major General](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major-general_(United_Kingdom)) [Alastair Bruce of Crionaich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alastair_Bruce_of_Crionaich) |
| **Past commanders** | [List of Governors of Edinburgh Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Governors_of_Edinburgh_Castle) |
|  | |
| [**Scheduled monument**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheduled_monument) | |
| **Designated** | 17 May 1993 |
| **Reference no.** | SM90130[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Castle#cite_note-2) |