

# HEVER CASTLE



## Castle Guide

Take some time to discover more about Hever Castle  
before you visit.

AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER

# The Castle

You are about to head into the castle. Inside there will be other people also looking at the rooms and artefacts (old things) that we have in there. If it's busy, you might have to wait a little bit from time to time, but there's lots to look at, and you can even take a multimedia guide around with you. These guides are free and tell you all about each room. There are even some pictures and interactive parts, so they're a good way to learn more about the castle's history.



To get into the castle you have to first cross the drawbridge. This is a wooden bridge across the moat (the water around the castle). The bridge is made of wooden slats. There are little gaps between the slats, but these are very small and the bridge is very strong, so you don't need to worry about crossing it. Once over the bridge, you will be underneath the archway of the castle gatehouse. The gatehouse is made up of big blocks of stone, so the walls here are cold and hard. There is more stone beneath your feet too. Head under the archway, down the 3 steps and into the castle's courtyard.

Portcullis



# The Courtyard

The castle courtyard will be a bit darker than outside, because the walls of the castle keep it shaded. There is more stone under your feet here, and it will feel a little bumpy. Ahead, the building turns from stone to white painted wood with big black beams. There are lots of windows here too. Keep to the left hand side of the building and follow the black plastic chains around to the front door.

A member of staff will greet you at the door, they will be wearing a name badge and be wearing black, red and white so you know that they work here. When you have shown your tickets you will be allowed inside, so step over the step and go into the entrance hall.

It will be darker in here so your eyes might need to adjust a little bit. Once inside, head to the right and collect an audio guide from the steward (if you would like one). We also have some fidget spinners and headphones, so you are welcome to borrow some of those while you're in the castle. The floor here is soft red carpet.



# The Inner Hall

The first room is the Inner Hall. This is a big room with a high ceiling, wooden columns and lots of wooden paneling on the walls. Most of the wood in here has been carved into shapes, so you will see lots of little flowers, swirls and patterns. The floor here looks like wood but is a special mat, so it will feel soft and a little springy to walk on. There are also lots of old chairs (not to sit on, but to look at) and big paintings of people from history, like King Henry VIII and some of the former owners of Hever.



There are two other rooms to see in this area before you move on.

# The Moat Room

The first is through the far door next to the painting of King Henry VIII. The room is called the Moat Room and has an exhibition dedicated to war time memories of Hever Castle and the people that lived here during those years (1914 – 1918 and 1939 – 1945). The floor goes back to carpet in here and there is the sound of someone talking in the background and a tv screen playing a short video. You don't have to listen to or watch these if you don't want to though.



The other room is directly opposite this one across from the Inner Hall.

# The Drawing Room

This is the Drawing Room and is a long room filled with comfortable looking sofas. There is a rope in this room to stop you from going any further. You will see a few of these around the castle. They are to stop visitors from going too far into the rooms, which helps us to protect the artefacts. You can look at the room from the ropes though. There is more pretty wooden paneling here and the room is light and bright. There is also a patterned ceiling. Like the Moat Room there is low music playing in the background. It's cheerful orchestra music from the early 1900s when this room would have been used by people to relax before and after dinner.



Now you've had a good look in this area you need to go back into the entrance hall (which is where you first came in), but rather than going back through the front door, you're going to turn right into a narrow corridor. To begin with, this corridor will have people coming towards you on the left (although they will go off in another direction), but you'll need to keep over to the right for a bit before the space opens up. Don't worry though, it isn't very far at all. There is a rope ahead of you to stop you from going straight on.

# The Great Hall

When you get up to it, turn left through a door and into the Great Hall, which looks like this. The floor in here is made of wood, although part of that is covered by a large patterned rug. You'll need to stand back behind the ropes again, but it's a big room so you'll be able to see everything from there. This room has two long tables. Sometimes they are both set up for dinner with plates and chairs pulled up, but sometimes only one is. You might also see some fake plates of dessert on the table. This is to show you what people ate 100 years ago. The dessert is called peach melba, so it may smell like peach as you come into the room or as you go closer to the table.

There is a big fireplace to the right hand side. In the winter we light the fire to keep the room warm. There is a big tapestry on the left and lots of old plates, cups and jugs. The wall behind you also has more carved wooden patterns.

This is the last room downstairs where there is some low music playing in the background.



Next, you'll need to head back into the entrance hall. So leave the Great Hall by the other door, which is next to the tapestry. This will take you back into the narrow corridor, but you'll quickly turn right into the final part of the entrance hall. As you walk along, you'll find the floor here is another one of the special mats that looks like wood but is actually just a picture, so it will feel spongy under your feet.

Entrance Hall



# The Library

Once you have walked past the big table and bench (and the large horse riding boots) you'll find yourself in the library. The floor in here is real wood. You'll also need to keep behind the rope here, like in the Great Hall and the Drawing Room. This room can sometimes get a little bit busy, so you're welcome to keep moving and come back in later if that happens.

This room has lots of bookcases (including ones behind you), more comfortable looking sofas, tables, desks and a big fireplace with another painting above it. There are lots of carved wood decorations here too, and a white ceiling with a pretty pattern around the edge. In here we have another recording of a person talking, but it's not very loud so you don't have to listen.



When you're ready to move on, go through the door behind you (between the two bookcases) and go into the Parlour.

# The Parlour

The floor here is a bit different. It's called rush matting and is how the floor would have been 500 years ago when Anne Boleyn lived here at Hever. We have put it into the next few rooms so people can experience how it would have been to live in the past. It feels firmer than a carpet and is coarse, so isn't as soft, but it is also a little springy too. You might find it feels a little bit bumpy as you walk over it and think it has a slightly earthy smell, like dried grass.

The walls in here are also hung with lots of colourful fabrics as this is how the Tudors kept their rooms warm and bright.

This room has information boards which explain more about the Boleyns (the family that lived here in Tudor times). There is also a bench where you can sit down for a bit if you're feeling tired.



When you've finished reading the boards, you're going to head up the stone spiral staircase in the corner. There is a hand rail to hold onto and 13 steps up, so you can count them as you go. You'll have to go up one at a time as it's a bit too narrow to go up side by side.

Staircase



# The Nursery

The next room you will come to is the nursery. Like the Parlour, this room also has rush matting and fabrics hung on the wall in the Tudor style. The fabrics in here are green and red and are quite bright.

There is a wooden four poster bed in this room (which is what you call a bed with a canopy/roof over the top). There is also a wooden cradle and some toys that children in the Tudor times would have played with. The furniture in here is very old, so although there aren't any ropes we would ask you not to sit on them or touch them. That will help us to keep them safe.



To get into the next room you need to step up and in through the door.

# The Great Chamber

This room is the Great Chamber. Again, it has fabric hangings and rush matting, but this room is bigger than the last two you've been in. The ceiling in here is painted in blue and gold, so there are lots of colours to see in this room.

There's lots of furniture in here as well, and items that make it look like the Boleyn family have just left (even though they actually left 500 years ago!) As with the last room, there are no ropes in here, but please try not to touch things so we can keep them safe. Just have a really good look.

As you go around the rooms on this floor, you might see more of our castle staff members in their red, white and black clothes, and with their name badges. If you have any history questions, or audio guide questions, or need someone to point you in the right direction, please feel free to ask them. They are very friendly and they are here to help.

You are welcome to sit on the benches under the window here if you need to rest your feet for a bit.



# The Best Bedchamber

The next room is called the Best Bedchamber. To get there you need to go out of the door at the far end of the room (past the table and chairs). Then turn right and down two steps.

This is the last of the rooms that we have given a Tudor makeover, so there is more rush matting and more fabric on the walls. Although, these ones are more like the tapestry downstairs in the Great Hall because these have scenes of people, and animals and flowers.

There is another four poster bed in here, like the one you saw in the nursery, and the ceiling has wooden beams running from end to end.

The fireplace has a fake fire glowing in it. It's not real but might look like it at first glance, it also has a bit of fake smoke rising from it and we have sounds of a crackling fire playing to make it seem even more real. There are two windows in this room, but it can still be a bit darker in here sometimes, so do take care on the two steps up when you leave through the same door you used to come in.



# The Staircase Gallery

Once you have left the Best Bed Chamber you will find yourself in a bright corridor. There is no rush matting here and the floors are made of wood again, but there is more fabric. It's green and covers the wall to your left as you walk along the corridor.

Keep walking forward along the green fabric until the corridor opens up, then turn right and step down into the Staircase Gallery.

The Staircase Gallery is a long, wide corridor with lots of big windows to the right that overlook the courtyard you were in earlier. There are also more paintings hung on the walls and cabinets filled with smaller items for you to look at.

You may also see a few single chairs with pink seats. These are for visitors to sit on if they need to. There are two in here, so you're able to take a break if you want.



At the end of the corridor there are some steps going up, (you will all be heading up those in a minute), but first you need to turn right and down two steps. There will be two doors to choose from; one in front of you and one to your left. Let's go into the one straight ahead of you first. This door will take you into the Henry VIII Room.

# King Henry VIII's Bedchamber

The Henry Bedchamber is a bit darker than some of the other rooms you've been in and it has lots of dark furniture in it too. There is a large rug in the middle of the room, but mostly you will be walking on wood.



Don't be too surprised, but there is also a life size mannequin of Henry VIII in here as well. This is to show you the way they dressed back in Tudor times. He doesn't move though (he's not real) so you don't need to be worried about him. You'll also be on the other side of the ropes, so you won't get too close to him.

Sometimes Henry has a model of Anne Boleyn with him too. She looks similar but has a dress and headdress on instead. Just like the Henry statue however, she isn't real either.

This is how they look...

Mannequins



# The Book of Hours Room

When you have seen everything in the Henry Bedchamber, you'll need to turn around, head back out and then turn right into the room next door.



The walls in this room have wooden panelling and the floor is wooden too. This room is fairly empty except for two glass cabinets, which is where we keep something very special. In these cabinets are two prayer books that were owned by Anne Boleyn herself. This makes them 500 years old. This is why we have to keep them in glass cabinets, because they are very old and don't like being too hot, or too cold, or touched. If you can't see them very well, there is a small step you can use to stand a bit higher.

In the corner of this room, past the books is a small viewing window. You can't get past the windows, but through them you can see a small space that has been turned into a small church. The wooden walls and ceiling have lots of carvings and there is a painting and some items on a small altar.

# The Long Gallery

When you have finished in this room, head out the same way you came in, go back up the two steps, then turn right again and head up the stairs.

These stairs are wooden and very solid and they start to curve around the closer you get to the top. This means you'll need to keep over to the right-hand side and hold onto the handrail. The wall here is covered in red fabric. It looks a bit like carpet but is much softer!

When you get to the top, you'll be in a small landing area. There will be small cabinets filled with plates and spoons and more in front of you, but you will come to those later. First, you'll need to walk through the door into the Long Gallery.



The Long Gallery is the biggest room in the castle. It's very long (which is why it's called the Long Gallery) and has a high white ceiling with a lot of carved decoration on it. The floor is wooden and there is wooden paneling on the walls as well.

You will also see lots of paintings of past kings, queens and other important people. Each painting has a little set of curtains next to them, a bit like a tiny window.

The windows in here are tall and the tops have stained glass patterns, which means that the glass is stained into different colours and shapes.

The Long Gallery is 100ft long and you'll need to walk along the whole thing to leave.

When you reach the far end of the Long Gallery, turn left through a little doorway, down one small step and then up a small staircase into the corridor.



# Small Bedrooms

This corridor is quite narrow and a little bit dark, but as you walk along it you will see three small bedrooms on the right-hand side. They have pretty floral decorations that were chosen by the 3 girls whose bedrooms they were.



At the end of the corridor you will go down a couple of steps back into the other side of the landing you came to earlier. Here you will be able to see some of the cabinets a bit better, including the cabinet that is filled with ornaments of dogs (although hidden within the dogs are a kangaroo, a lion, a badger, a mountain goat if you want to challenge yourself to find them!)

# Exhibition Rooms

From the dogs cabinet, turn around and head through the door next to the sports trophies. These next three rooms are our exhibition spaces where we display different subjects and paintings each year.

These rooms are small but bright, with carpeted floors and plain white ceilings. The first room has more wooden paneling, but the second and third don't. The third room gets a bit smaller, but that is because you're about to go into the oldest part of the castle.



# The Council Chamber

Watch your step as you head into the gatehouse (this is the part you came in under. Remember when you crossed the drawbridge and stepped beneath a stone arch? Well, this is that part of the castle.

There is a mixture of normal steps and spiral steps here, so take it nice and slowly. There are 2 normal steps up from the last exhibition room, then 4 spiral steps down, and then a final one down into the Council Chamber. All of these steps are solid stone. The walls in the staircase and the Council Chamber are made of stone, but the floor in the Council Chamber is wooden.

The first thing you will see in here is a big suit of armour which is standing in front of a large central cabinet. You can walk around the cabinet and have a look at the items in here. This room is where we keep swords and instruments used to hurt people, so you might decide you don't want to see these things.



Next to the door in the far corner is an old medieval toilet called a garderobe, and we also have big counterweights which hold up the old medieval wooden portcullis gates.

You are welcome to spend as much time looking at things in here as you would like, but when you're done, please carry on going down the spiral steps . It gets a little darker towards the bottom, and the steps change height, so hold onto the rail and go nice and steadily. There are 26 steps in total, in case you want to count them going down.

However, if you don't feel comfortable with these stairs, you don't have to do them. We have another route you can use. It's longer, but more open. Just ask the room guide if you can use the alternative route. You'll have to double back on yourselves a bit, but just follow the guide. You will be passed to one or two other guides, so just keep following them and you will come to a big wooden galleried staircase. It looks down over the Inner Hall, which was the very first big room you walked into. From there, you will be able to go back out through the entrance doors and into the courtyard.

At the bottom of the steps, you will come back out into the courtyard you started in. If you took a guide at the entrance, you can return it here. There is a large, black wooden box on a table for you to post your multimedia guide into. Then you can cross back over the drawbridge and explore the gardens.

I hope this guide has helped to prepare you for your castle visit, but if you have any other questions you would like to ask, you're welcome to email [learning@hevercastle.co.uk](mailto:learning@hevercastle.co.uk) for more information.





# HEVER CASTLE & GARDENS

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