

Duart Castle

Disability Access Statement



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Introduction

This guide is intended as an introduction for people who are considering a visit to Duart Castle and who have a disability or mobility issue or who support someone who has.

It is our intention to be open and honest about access to the castle facilities.

You may find this guide useful if you, or someone you support has:

- A physical disability.
- A sensory disability.
- A learning disability. (Intellectual disability).
- Uses an aid for mobility such as crutches, a wheelchair or stick.
- Has a registered assistance dog.
- Has autism
- Has a mobility issue of any nature

This list is not exhaustive.

The site and all facilities are usually busiest in June, July and August, and daily between 11:00 and 15:00.

For visitors who require a 'quiet' visit, please contact the castle in advance. We can usually open early or late to accommodate you, so long as we have advance notice and provided that the castle is due to open that day.

During your visit to the castle a guide is usually on hand to help.

We can provide a large print copy of this guide on request.

Duart Castle does not accept abuse or aggression towards staff or guests. Please inform a member of the Duart team if another visitor challenges you or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way. This includes if you are approached for not wearing a face covering when you are exempt.

In this document we have listed each separate part of the castle buildings and public spaces together with information to help you make an informed decision about visit us.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the castle team on **07468 262943** or by email to manager@duartcastle.com

Duart Castle - Summary

The castle you see today was built in the 14th century as a fortress. It was intended as a defensive structure and therefore was not designed for easy access.

It was restored early in the 20th Century as a country house, and most of the original features were retained or updated.

The castle has spiral stairs to most floors, narrow corridors and there is only one route from the first floor to the top and back down.

The tearoom and shop are situated in an old farm building, separate from the castle.

Toilets are in the same building as the tearoom and giftshop, accessed by their own outside door, which is level, or via the restaurant, which has steps.

The car park and most of the walkways around the site, including access to the castle, shop and tearoom, is loose slate or shingle and may be uneven in places.

Covid arrangements

In 2020 we opened the castle with a revised route and special arrangements to accommodate safety measures such as safe distancing.

We require all visitors to wear a suitable face covering, unless exempt, in line with the Scottish Government directions.

Please tell us if you are exempt from wearing a face covering. We will not require medical evidence.

Please inform a member of the Duart team if another visitor challenges you or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way if you are approached for not wearing a face covering when you are exempt.

Staff wear face coverings but have clear visors available if you are hard of hearing or lip read. Please let us know if you would like us to wear a visor instead of a mask.

We have prepared a detailed risk assessment for access to the site during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is available on request from us.

Car Park

The car park has a loose slate gravel surface.

There are two wide disabled parking spaces adjacent to the pedestrian access to the castle and other buildings.

Customers who cannot manage the walk to the castle or shop and tearoom may drive up to them.

We prefer this to be by arrangement so that we can manage limited spaces. Please contact the castle in advance of your visit or approach the ticket hut or shop staff on the day.

Millennium Wood

The Millennium Wood is accessed by a short gravel path from the castle drive.

The gate swings out.

An information board is sited outside the wood and further information boards are positioned around the path. These are positioned close to the ground, facing up.

A path loops around the wood. It is mostly flat with a small wooden bridge.

Due to the nature of the woods, the path may be wet and muddy with the potential to be slippery.

There are likely to be overhanging branches.

Paths and approach

The approach to the castle, tearoom and shop is initially on a smooth track. This becomes a loose gravel and shingle path that is uneven in places.

The path divides with a gentle slope up to the castle and down to tearoom and gift shop.

Castle

The castle is accessed by a walk up a gentle incline to the ticket hut from the car park or shop and tearoom. The surface is loose shingle.

Ticket Hut

The customer window is **not** protected from the elements.

The ticket hut has a window for selling admission tickets 90cms from the ground.

The credit/debit card machine can be passed to customers. Cash is accepted.

The guide in the ticket hut can come around to the front of the hut to serve customers if required.

The guide in the ticket hut can summon assistance from the castle guide if necessary.

Concession tickets are available for customers with a disability. Registered carers may be admitted free if they are accompanying a visitor with a disability.

Registered assistance dogs may accompany their owner. No other animals are admitted to the castle.

There are no public toilets or changing facilities in the castle building.

The courtyard and battlements are open to the elements. The three exhibition floors in the castle are inside.

The castle is not heated.

We have used the British convention of labelling the first level of the castle as the ground floor, the first floor is the next level and so on in this guide.

Entrance

12 Steps up to courtyard with a handrail on left and right after the first step. These steps are wide so visitors can only hold one side

A low threshold step leads to a step down into the courtyard.

Courtyard

A level, paved path leads around the courtyard.

There are three information boards at approximately 110cms, angled upwards.

2 Steps lead into the ground floor.

Ground floor

Kitchen, scullery, corridors, dungeons, exhibition room.

The ground floor is level throughout.

Lighting levels vary.

Information signs are sited throughout. Chairs and a bench seat are available in the kitchen.

The corridors have subdued lighting and sound effects – these may be switched off and the area made lighter by arrangement.

1 step up then 14 Spiral stairs, turning clockwise with pole in middle to hold on to on right. No handrail to left. 1 small step over threshold into corridor.

Alternative entrance to first floor.

There is an alternative entrance into the castle via the usual exit. This is accessed by retracing your steps from this point back to the usual exit.

This has 2 steps leading to a flight of 12 stairs with handrail on left as you go up.

First Floor

Pantry, corridor, sea room, banqueting hall.

Level access to all rooms.

One set of stairs with 5 steps to a window view in banqueting hall. Handrail on both sides. This is not part of the main route and can be avoided.

Information signs in various locations on walls and display stands.

A guide is generally available in the sea room and can assist with access and explanations and answer customer questions.

There is a television display on a loop with commentary showing areas above the first floor, in the banqueting hall. There are 2 chairs, and the guide can provide more on request.

NOTE – From this point the only means of return to the first floor is by the same route.

3 Steps up to spiral stairs.

Spiral stairs – 21 steps, initially anticlockwise then clockwise. Rope handrail to left and rope to right, leading to the second floor.

Second Floor

Old bathroom, dressing room, corridors, state bedroom, passageway exhibition.

Corridor off to left with low lighting leading to 2 steps up to the corridor.

Level access throughout except one small step to access passageway with display of Maclean family photos only. Exit by retracing steps to state bedroom.

Back to spiral stairs by same route.,

Spiral stairs – 16 steps, clockwise. Rope handrail to left and rope to right.

Note, these are the original castle stairs and therefore narrower than the previous set of spiral stairs. The individual steps are higher and may be uneven in places.

Leading to the third floor.

Third Floor

Exhibition room, access to battlements.

Small landing at top of stairs with safety barrier.

4 Steps up to exhibition room.

Large room with displays and photos. Display cases are mostly glass from the floor up.

Central exhibits in lit display cases, 80cms from ground.

Exit back to landing, down 4 steps.

Access to battlements from landing up 5 steps to battlements.

Battlements

Step over threshold from inside to out.

Wall around outside facing views is 140cms high.

Raised drain covers X 4 require stepping over.

2 X Displays showing landmarks, positioned at 110cms height.

Viewing areas at two corners – step up and over small water drain gap.

Return by same route to first floor Banqueting Hall.

Exit

Exit is via 12 steps down to courtyard with a handrail on right, to 2 steps with a turn to the right and down into courtyard. There is no handrail for these two steps.

One step up then 12 Steps down to drive with a handrail on left and right except for the last step, which has no handrail. These steps are wide so visitors can only hold one side.

Shop

The approach to the shop is down a gravel and shingle drive from the car park or from a gravel path with 5 steps from the castle drive. This path can be avoided.

There is 1 shallow step up into shop.

The door opens inwards.

The shop is level access throughout.

Displays vary in height and accessibility. The shop manager or assistant is always on hand to assist.

Access around displays is kept free but please note that at busy times customers for the tearoom may be queuing through the shop.

The shop is not very big and can get crowded.

The till and serving counter is 96cm high. Shop staff can serve customers who cannot reach the counter direct beside the till. All transactions, for example credit/debit card machines, can be brought to the customer.

The shop also has an online presence at www.duartcastle.com/giftshop

Tearoom

Access to the tearoom is through the same entrance as the shop.

There is one small step up.

Takeaway food

All food is ordered at the food service counter. This is 91cm high, with rails running around in front of the counter to take trays.

Food is on display or by notices on display behind the counter. Staff can tell customers about the products on sale on request.

Tearoom staff can serve customers who cannot reach the counter direct beside the till. All transactions, for example credit/debit card machines, can be brought to the customer.

Eating inside – restaurant area.

NOTE: We did not open the restaurant area of the tearoom during 2020. It is our intention to open it in 2021 at a date yet to be decided. This will be subject to any Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time.

The restaurant area is up 2 steps from the tearoom. There is a handrail on the right-hand side.

Seating is at tables that are 79cm high.

Chairs can be removed by staff for people who use wheelchairs.

Staff are happy to carry drinks and food to the table for people.

Eating outside

We have 5 picnic benches outside.

These are on grassed areas adjacent to the tearoom and shop.

Access is from the shop and tearoom door and up a small step onto the grass.

Food may be served to these tables by staff if required.

Toilets

The toilets are in the same building as the tearoom and shop.

They can be accessed direct from the path. This entrance is level.

Alternatively, they can be accessed via the restaurant. There are 3 steps down from the restaurant.

Lobby

The lobby has a pull-down baby changing area.

There are entrances from the lobby to the ladies and gents toilets.

Ladies

4 cubicles. Minimum width 90cm. Doors open inwards.

2 Sinks.

Gents

Right hand turn from door.

3 Urinals.

Passageway between urinals and sinks to access cubicle XX wide.

1 Cubicle. Minimum width 100cm. Door open inwards.

2 Sinks.

Feedback and how to contact us:

We are aware that this document may not answer all your questions.

Please contact the castle on **07468 262943** or by email to manager@duartcastle.com if you are uncertain about visiting us. We are happy to answer any queries that you may have and to discuss your requirements and how we may meet them.

If you have any feedback about this guide and suggestions for how we could improve it please contact Ray Canham at manager@duartcastle.com