



CĒSIS CASTLE



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HISTORY OF THE CASTLE

In its 800-year history, the significance of the Cēsis Castle has changed as considerably as its external appearance. It has lived through the limelight of fame, but felt devastation and obscurity. And it is this shifting and momentous history that makes it one of the most eminent cultural monuments in Latvia and Europe.

Constructed around 1214, the castle originally served as the residence of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, but it was during the reign of its next residents – the Teutonic Order – that it achieved fame as the mightiest fortress in Livonia. As the residence of the Teutonic Order's Masters of Livonia, the castle hosted the annual meetings of the Order's most senior commanders. The Order's archive, library and chancellery were in Cēsis, as was the Master's Mint. The castle was severely damaged in 1577 during a siege led by Tsar Ivan the Terrible, when 300 people, seeking refuge in the castle, committed mass suicide by blowing up the gunpowder store. The rapid development of artillery saw the ancient fortress lose its military significance but the castle continued to be used as a residence until the end of the 17th century. 300 years ago the castle was completely abandoned to its fate – rain and frost gradually wore away the remaining roofless buildings while townspeople utilised the thick walls as a quarry. It was the Romantic movement of the 19th century that finally aroused broader public interest in the castle as a monument of antiquity, thus initiating the castle's conservation and research phase. Today, the castle is one of Latvia's most exceptional cultural tourism destinations, its unique appeal attracting travellers from all over the world.



CONSERVATION

Conservation works on the centuries-old walls of Cēsis Castle have already been going for several decades. Restorers are carefully renewing masonry joints, reinforcing precarious stones and conserving layers of rendering and paint that have survived to this day. The utopian reconstructing plans post nurtured in the 20th century have now been replaced by a minimum-intervention approach seeking to preserve the authenticity and romantic character of the castle ruins for future generations.

The most significant achievement in recent years has been the restoration of the castle's Western Tower, implemented in 2015 with the support of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism.





The castle is being conserved for posterity by painstaking and meticulous restoration



COME AND VISIT

Step into ancient times, candle-lit by your own lantern – visit the Western Tower and illuminate the dark winding stairs once climbed by knights of the Teutonic Order. Head for the Master's Chamber – one of the most impressive medieval-castle interiors in the Baltics. Explore the dungeon in Tall Herman's Tower where the Order's fiercest opponents were incarcerated 500 years ago. Take a castle tour with a genial guide in authentic medieval attire and be regaled with tales of everyday life in a Teutonic Order castle. Make an appointment with Master of Livonia Walter von Plettenberg, savour a genuine medieval feast and take an unforgettable journey into the past.

More ► www.cesiscastle.lv





**Cēsis Castle –
Latvia's
best-preserved
medieval
castle ruins**

**Discover
and sense
the Middle
Ages at
Cēsis Castle**







LIVING HISTORY

Living history events at Cēsis Castle are opportunities to learn about daily life in the Middle Ages, bring the past closer and make it more tangible. Castle folk will attire you in medieval armour, introduce ancient trades and skills and reveal the edible and medicinal plants the people of Livonia grew 500 years ago.





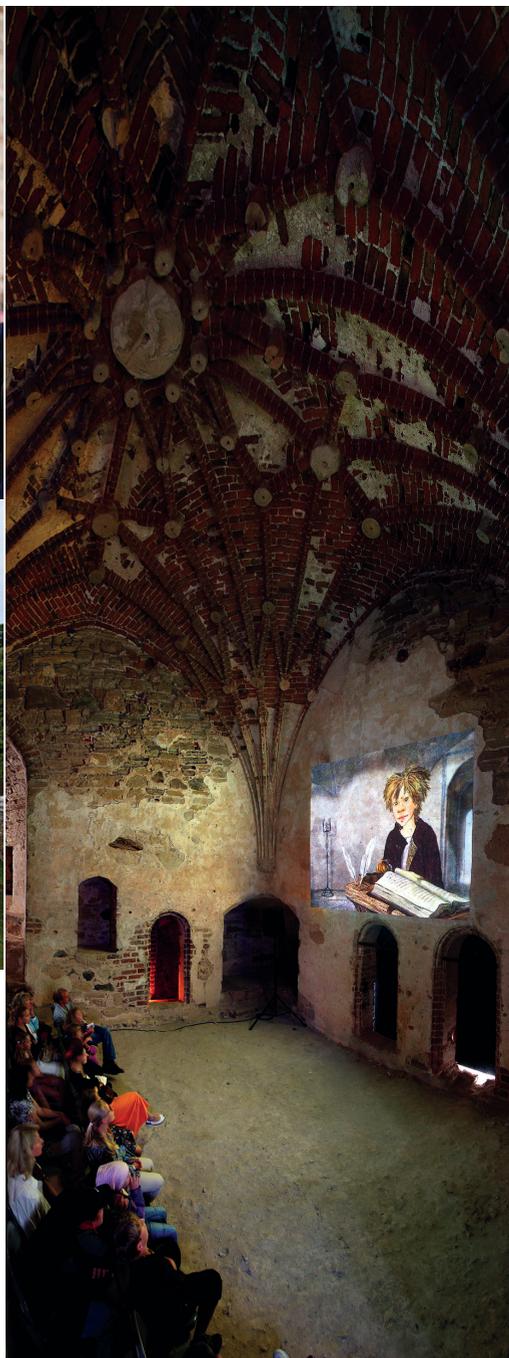


MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

Cēsis Castle is home to Latvia's most extensive and tradition-rich medieval celebration. Every year in late summer, the festival attracts several thousand visitors looking to delight in medieval music and dance, follow the fortunes of rival knights and archers, and explore medieval history through active participation in a variety of events.

More ► www.medievaldays.cesis.lv





HISTORIC FILM FESTIVAL AT THE CASTLE

August each year sees the Cēsis Castle walls brought to life by moving pictures during the Historical Film Festival. A nocturnal screening in the Western Tower or the castle courtyard is a special occasion for any cinema lover. ▶

More ▶ www.filmuskate.cesis.lv



FOR CHILDREN

The children's playground set up in the castle garden enables young visitors to try out activities popular in the Middle Ages – including walking on stilts, balancing on a horizontal beam and hoop rolling – all featured in Children's Games, a work by world-famous Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel.





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Visit Cēsis Castle today!



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The Conservation of Cēsis Castle for the Socio-economic Development of the Region project was executed between August 2014 and December 2015 in partnership with the Østfold county in Norway and utilised a € 249 607 grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism.

The project's outcome ensured the authentic preservation of a Cēsis Castle Western tower, access to it for visitors and their safety, so improving existing cultural services and enabling the introduction of a new cultural-tourism package.

