

Turn left and keep walking straight along the path through the field **(10)** for about 0.4 miles (600m) until the edge of the field. Continue straight along the trail into the woods until a T-junction with another trail. Turn right onto it and keep walking along it for about 0.2 miles (300m) until a trails crossroad with a 3-stem tree in the centre **(11)**. Keep left and continue past it and after 20 yards (20m) keep left again. Follow the trail for about 0.15 miles (200m) until a stile on the right **(12)**. Turn right, climb over the stile and keep walking straight along the trail until a road.

Join the road and continue straight for about 0.3 miles (500m) until a 'Public footpath' signpost on the right. Turn right and continue straight past a metal barrier onto the footpath. Keep walking straight along it for about 0.25 miles (400m), past a brickwork building until a road. Turn right onto the road and follow it until a crossroad with Horseshoes lane. Turn left onto it (in the direction of Maidstone and Village Hall) and keep walking along the lane for about 0.4 miles (600m) until a T-junction. Turn right onto the pavement following the road (in the direction of Maidstone). Follow the pavement for about 0.3 miles (500m) until The Potting Shed on the left hand side.

Leeds Castle historical summary

From 857 the site was owned by a Saxon chief called Led or Leed, who built a wooden structure on two islands in the middle of the River Len. In 1119 Robert de Crevecoeur rebuilt it in stone as a Norman stronghold. Which form this Norman stronghold took is uncertain because it was rebuilt and transformed in the following centuries.

In 1278, the castle was bought by King Edward I's Queen, Eleanor of Castile. As a favoured residence of Edward's, it saw considerable investment. The king enhanced its defences, and it was probably Edward who created the lake that surrounds the castle.

Robert Fairfax owned the castle for 46 years until 1793. Sale of the family estates in Virginia released a large sum of money that allowed extensive repair and the remodeling of the castle in a Tudor style, completed in 1823, that resulted in the appearance today.

Lady Baillie bought the castle in 1926 for £ 180,000. She redecorated the interior, first working with the French architect and designer Armand-Albert Rateau, who oversaw exterior alterations and added interior features such as a 16th-century-style carved-oak staircase. During the early part of World War II the castle was used as a hospital where Lady Baillie and her daughters hosted burned Commonwealth airmen as part of their recovery. Upon her death in 1974, Lady Baillie left the castle to the Leeds Castle Foundation, a private charitable trust whose aim is to preserve the castle and grounds for the benefit of the public. The castle was opened to the public in 1976.

The castle also hosted the Northern Ireland peace talks held in September 2004 led by Tony Blair.

Source: www.wikipedia.org

The Leeds Castle Challenge

Walk overview:

Distance:	8 miles (13 km)
Time:	4 – 5 hours
Description:	Reaching the castle from the west, a longer walk, and different route through the grounds of Leeds Castle. The ultimate walk of the Potting Shed!



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Leave The Potting Shed, turn left and cross the main road A274. Turn left and keep walking along the pavement for about 0.1 miles (150m) until a 'Public footpath' stone on the right **(1)**.

You can continue a little further until the church entrance gate if you want to see the grounds of St. Mary's church, and then return to the 'Public footpath' stone.

Turn right and follow the road through the metal gate. After 20 yards (20m) turn left and after another 30 yards (30m) turn right (follow the edge of the field). Carry on along the edge for about 0.3 miles (500m) to the corner of the field and climb over a stile. Keep walking along the footpath through the bushes, and after a little while keep right and walk across the concrete bridge. Continue along the footpath through the bushes into the field. Turn left and keep walking along the edge (bushes are on the left hand side and the field is on the right) until a track leading through the bushes. Walk through the opening and keep walking along the track in the same direction (bushes are now on the right hand side and the fence is on the left). Follow the track until the metal barn and keep walking along it straight until the main road A274.

Cross the main road, turn right onto a pavement and after 50 yards (50m) turn left onto New Road. Keep walking along it until a T-junction. Turn right onto Avery Lane (in the direction of Leeds) and follow it for about 0.3 miles (500m) until a crossroad with Hollyfarm Road. Turn left onto the road and continue straight along it, and later along a track until an orchard. Keep walking straight along the edge until a corner. Turn right and continue past a 'Public Bridleway' stone until the furthest corner. Turn left onto a track and follow it for about 0.15 miles (200m) until a small road. Turn right and keep walking until a bigger road.

Turn left onto the road and continue along it for 0.15 miles (200m) until a 'Public footpath' signpost on the right. Turn right onto the footpath and keep following it over a small wooden footbridge and through a metal gate. Keep left and cross another two footbridges and then go through another metal gate leading into the estate of Fulling Mill Farm. Keep walking straight uphill until a turning metal gate **(2)**. Go through it and follow the edge of the field. At the corner of the forest on the right, turn right and continue straight through the field until a metal gate at the edge **(3)**.

Go through the gate and turn left onto a footpath. Keep walking straight along it for about 0.3 miles (500m) until a wooden gate **(4)**. Go through the gate, join a small road and continue straight along it through the property until a bigger road. Turn right onto it and continue until a 'Public footpath' signpost on the left. Turn left onto a footpath and keep walking along it for about 0.4 miles (600m) through the bushes, later through the field and along its edge until a stile on the right. Do not cross it but keep left and follow the path through the field until another stile **(5)**. Climb over it and continue along the footpath until the next stile. Climb over it, keep left and follow the path until a wooden gate.

Go through the gate, turn right onto a concrete road and keep walking along it until a stile with a yellow arrow on the left. Turn left, climb over it and continue straight uphill until a metal gate. Go through it and carry on until a road. Cross the road and continue straight through the wooden gate into the grounds of St. Nicholas Church **(6)**. Keep right and go around the church through the grounds until a wooden gate **(7)**. Go through it and keep walking straight until the next wooden gate. Go through it, cross the road and continue straight through 3 wooden gates into the Leeds Castle grounds **(8)**.

After the 3rd gate keep right and keep walking downhill along the footpath until a road. Turn left onto the road and before you reach The Great Water of Leeds Castle turn right and keep walking along the edge of the Water.

Before you turn right you can continue straight and explore the grounds and Leeds Castle itself.

Go through a wooden gate **(9)** and keep left walking along the edge until another wooden gate. Go through it and follow the trail over a wooden footbridge until a road. Turn right onto the road and keep walking along it for about 0.2 miles (300m), past St. Margaret's Church on your left until a 'Public footpath' signpost on the left. Turn right (follow the yellow arrow on the gate) and go up between the house and the garage, and then keep walking along a trail for about 50 yards (50m) until a crossroad with another trail. Turn left onto the trail and continue along it through the small woods and later diagonally through the field until a metal barn. Keep right and walk around the barn to the road. Turn right onto the road and follow it until a 'Public footpath' signpost on the left.