



Trim Castle: Where the Magic Began

Description

“The ultimate symbol of Norman glory”
Heritage Ireland

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Trim Castle Ireland

We call ourselves Castle Hunters. How did we get that title? Where did our passion for Castles begin? It all started in Ireland at the magnificent Trim Castle. Constructed in the 12th century, it is the largest Anglo-Norman fortification in Ireland. It won us over from the first look and started a path we never imagined taking.

It was our first trip to Ireland, to this lush green country known as the Emerald Isle. For Ryan, it was his first vacation outside of the U.S.

This is where Ryan discovered his love and passion for castles. Joelle had seen many castles over the years, but it was her first in Ireland. Ryan's excitement was of a child given the greatest and most unexpected gift they could ever imagine. It was pure joy and ear-to-ear smiles for him. That enthusiasm was highly contagious and has us hunting castles on every trip.

Getting to Trim Castle



The morning we started with some nervousness. We picked up our rental car in Dublin and began our five-day journey through Ireland. It was our first time driving on the “right” side of the road. That was exciting enough, but little did we know what we were in for once we arrived at Trim.

The 40-minute drive from Dublin was a quick and scenic route that introduced us to the beautiful landscapes we were in awe of during our whole vacation in Ireland. The drive was sketchy at times, with a few close calls. We made it, luckily, without any damage to the car. No doubt local drivers were a bit irritated with our slow speed. The words most uttered during those forty minutes were, “To the left, to the left, no, not that left!!!” There was a lot of laughter from the navigator and many scowls from the driver.

Visiting Trim Castle



Along the river Boyne in the quiet, quaint village of Trim sits the mighty Trim Castle. As you enter the town, you will pass the immense walls of Trim Castle's outer perimeter. The Castle sits on the south bank of the river. Enter the parking area and begin to walk up the ramp to the main gatehouse. For the cost of two Euros, you can enter the grounds. You gain access to the Keep for five euros with a guided tour (the only way to see the Keep). The tour is worth the time to look inside this massive structure.

We did not plan on spending the time for this, but it was worth it for the history, perspective of the Castle, and the amusing tour guide that made the experience even more memorable. It was around 45 minutes, so you will not kill your whole day. You start the tour after going up the stairs to the elevated Keep entrance.

The Tour

Once inside, your guide will go through the Castle's fascinating and storied history. You will learn fun facts and information about the town and the surrounding area that will intrigue anyone interested in history. Walk on modern metal and wood staircases that interweave from room to room and floor to floor while your guide paints a picture of castle living and what this structure once looked like years ago. These staircases provide the opportunity to truly absorb these nine-foot walls' sheer size and thickness. At one point in the tour, you will make it to the top of the structure to get a 360 picture-perfect view of the town, river, and valley in the distance. As you take in the view, this wow moment is the icing on a pretty awesome cake.

Trim Castle Grounds



Trim Castle Ireland

Before or after the tour, take advantage of wandering the beautifully maintained site. The interior is about three acres. A path circles the grounds inside; lap around the well-kept grounds and explore the remaining southern wall. There are multiple towers within the curtain wall to enter. It provides a visual in which one can imagine how this Castle defense occurred against its enemies. Part of the great hall and cellars remain at the entrance wall to complete the picture of castle living. Imagine the grand events, lavish feasts, and great fires here. Trim Castle was home as well as a fortress for centuries. Many families were raised here; if you listen, their stories are still within these walls.

Trim's History

Built between 1176 and 1220, it is Ireland's largest, best-preserved, and most impressive Anglo-Norman fortification. This over 800-year-old Castle has a fascinating history.

Trim Castle has stood as an imposing stone sentinel and a Norman symbol of strength. The construction began shortly after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland. It sat close to the edge of Pale's area near the well-known hostile world of the Gaelic Irish.



Hugh de Lacy

Trim Castle's construction commenced in 1176 by Hugh de Lacy and his son Walter. The building took over 30 years. King Henry II, in 1172 granted his baron Hugh de Lacy the Liberty of Meath to deter the expansion of the feared Strongbow, the 2nd Earl of Pembroke. Strongbow played a significant role in the invasion of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans. The King feared that Strongbow might set up his Kingdom in Ireland and wanted to reduce Strongbow's power by giving Hugh de Lacy Meath and Dublin.

Hugh de Lacy was not a man of impeccable reputation and was known to be quite a womanizer. Years later, the King became very concerned that Hugh sought to become a king. Hugh took care of the scoundrel for the King when an Irish nobleman took his head off with an ax.

The Construction



The site was strategically chosen due to its high ground and position overlooking the River Boyne's fording point. This navigable river sits 25 miles from the Irish sea.

The first structure built at the current site was a wood castle, which was destroyed during an attack. Hugh de Lacy and his son built the present massive 20-sided cruciform stone Keep, also called the Great Tower, with nine-foot thick walls. The cruciform was a unique design for Norman Keeps.

Learn more about castle structures on our [Castle Hunters](#) page [here](#).

When de Lacy died in 1186, his son Walter became Lord of Meath. He continued construction, adding a ditch, moat, and curtain walls. The curtain wall, which had several towers incorporated with two entry gates, spanned a fortified area of roughly 3 acres. Though predominantly built as a fortress, it was home to many families for centuries. To the outside world, the impressive and impenetrable Trim Castle let the world know that the Anglo-Normans weren't going anywhere.

Hollywood comes to Trim

Trim Castle may seem familiar to some guests. The 1980 film *The Big Red One* starring Mark Hamill, was partially filmed at Trim Castle. Its proper link to fame was as the walled town of York in *Braveheart*, directed by Mel Gibson. Scenes from London in *Braveheart* also were filmed at Trim.

The Town of Trim



Trim

Trim is quintessential Ireland and sits in the county of Meath. The town has a population of around 10,000 people. The city is full of colorful buildings, and you immediately get an intimate feel. The town has many excellent pubs and shops. There are many places to grab a meal or take a picnic with you to have along the River Boyne.



When you finish your visit to Trim Castle, take the time to discover the rest of Trim. Exit the main grounds and walk on the trail to the north. The walk alone is peaceful and lovely. This trail will take you to a bridge that spans the river and will lead you to St. Mary's Abbey's ruins, built in the 14th century. The Yellow Tower stands 130 feet high and is hard to miss.

Now, if you have the time, we recommend taking the casual 20-minute walk along the river trail past the stone sheep gate to the ruins of the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul. This quiet spot is relaxing and gives good views of the previous locations.

Just a few minutes walk on the other side of the river, and you will find the Priory of St John the Baptist. Another beautiful and peaceful spot to take in the magic of the area.

Winding up your visit



St. Patrick's Cathedral, Trim, Ireland

Before leaving town, check out the many churches and the beautiful St Patrick's Cathedral. The Cathedral was rebuilt many times since the first church in 433. The tower on the west side dates back to mid 14th century, and the rest of the building was built in 1803. In 1955 it was designated as a Cathedral. It has a beautiful interior with dramatic stained glass in the west window.

If you are looking for a quick pit stop in Marcie Regan's Pub on your walk back (see pic in our gallery below), a perfectly warm, authentic, and inviting establishment. Drink a beer and absorb the views while winding down your time here. Strike up a conversation with a local, or maybe you will be lucky

enough to hear the local break out in song.

Trim shops are great places to pick up fun Irish wear and snacks for the road.

We have an infobox (click [here](#) to go to the box) below that details all you can do while here.

Where to stay when visiting the Trim area

We were passing through Trim on the way to Galway. The area looked so quaint it would have been lovely to stay in the area for a night or two. There are various accommodations in the area that you can find in the links below.

It is important to price out properties on various sites. [Expedia](#) is a US-based company, whereas [Booking.com](#) is Europe-based. Not all properties appear on both, so check both. Our personal first choice is Booking.com. If the establishment has a website, check the price there as well.

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Final Thoughts



This location offers so much beauty that it will open your eyes to the world of Ireland. There will be many festivals throughout the year in the town of Trim to experience. It is no wonder why there were movie scenes in Braveheart and The Big Red One filmed here with such a fantastic setting.

Trim is a perfect location to introduce yourself to Ireland's wonders, and since it is in the county of Meath, you will be well on your way to discovering so much more. Ancient ruins like the Hill of Tara, the dozens of castles, and other historical sites surrounding this area will continue to intrigue and inspire you to experience all that magical Ireland offers.

Check opening times at Trim Castle's Official Website [HERE](#).



Top to-do's in Trim, Ireland

The town of Trim has a population of about 10,000 people. It is lovely in its simplicity but has a lot of personality within. Trim is Irish to the core. It has a beautiful collection of medieval buildings, including, of course, Trim Castle. Whether passing through for a quick visit or staying for a day or two, it will be well worth the stop. Make the time to visit many excellent pubs and grab a pint.

1. Trim Castle Is the main attraction in Trim, also known as St John's Castle. It is the largest Anglo-Norman Castle in Ireland. The Castle sits at the highest central point of the town and borders the river. There are extensive fortress grounds with many sites beyond the main Castle. The central fortification is an impressive three-story keep. It is a 20-sided tower, which is shaped in a cruciform, that was impenetrable by enemies. You can easily give Trim Castle two solid hours, especially if you take the 45-minute tour. The top of the Castle Keep offers spectacular views of the village of Trim and the local landscape. A picture-perfect spot.

2. St. Patrick's Cathedral Is found on a historic site with a 15th-century stone tower. The present church was built in 1803 with a striking steeple and a beautiful interior. Trim's town commissioned it to honor the first Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, born in Trim. If you can take in a mass at this gorgeous Cathedral to do so, no matter your faith. The Irish are deeply religious people who are passionate about their Catholic roots. It is a privilege to share and see that firsthand and a powerful experience.

3. River Boyle Walk Is a beautiful river walk around some of the best heritage sites available near the Village of Trim. Highlights along this path include Trim Castle, the river landscape, Sheep Gate, St Mark Abbey's ruins, Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul, Newton Cemetery and Abbey, Priory of St John the Baptist, St Peters Bridge, and the Victorine Friary. The path will stroll past many sheep grazing,

making it the ideal Irish setting.

4. The Sheep Gate Is a stone gate north of the river Boyne. It is the only remaining gate of five that once gave access to the village of Trim. It is named sheep gate as a toll was charged for sheep to pass through to market.

5. St Mary's Augustine Abbey ruin Is located on the North bank of the River Boyne. The Abbey is a former house of Augustinian canons dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The 130-foot yellow steeple is the most famous ruin in the Abbey. Built-in 1368, the tower served as Abbey's bell tower.

6. Priory of St John The Baptist Is an ancient ruin sitting about 1 mile east of Trim village on the River Boyne's south bank. It dates back to 1281. Among the remains is a church with a nave, chancel, and a sizeable three-light window in the east wall. A part of a two-story building and a 15th–16th-century wall with a corner turret remain.

7. The Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul and Newton Cemetery Is a medieval cathedral with a fascinating cemetery. The tomb of the Jealous Man and Woman, Effigies of Sir Lucas Dillon and Lady Jane Bathe, is in Newtown Cemetery. Only part of the original nave and chancel of this largest Gothic Church in Ireland remain. Sir Lucas Dillon's tomb is known locally as the tomb of the 'Jealous Man and Woman' since its two stone figures do not touch each other at all. Also, the sword of state separates the two graves.

8. Bective Abbey Is a Cistercian abbey on the River Boyle and was founded in 1147. The well-preserved remaining structure dates to the 15th century. The site includes the church, chapter house, and cloister. There are impressive cloister ruins with gothic arches typical of Cistercian architecture. The ruins have a maze of pathways with deadends and cut-off staircases. Several movies, such as The Last Duel and Braveheart, have been filmed there. There is a nearby parking lot as this site is registered with the National Monuments of Ireland.



Trim

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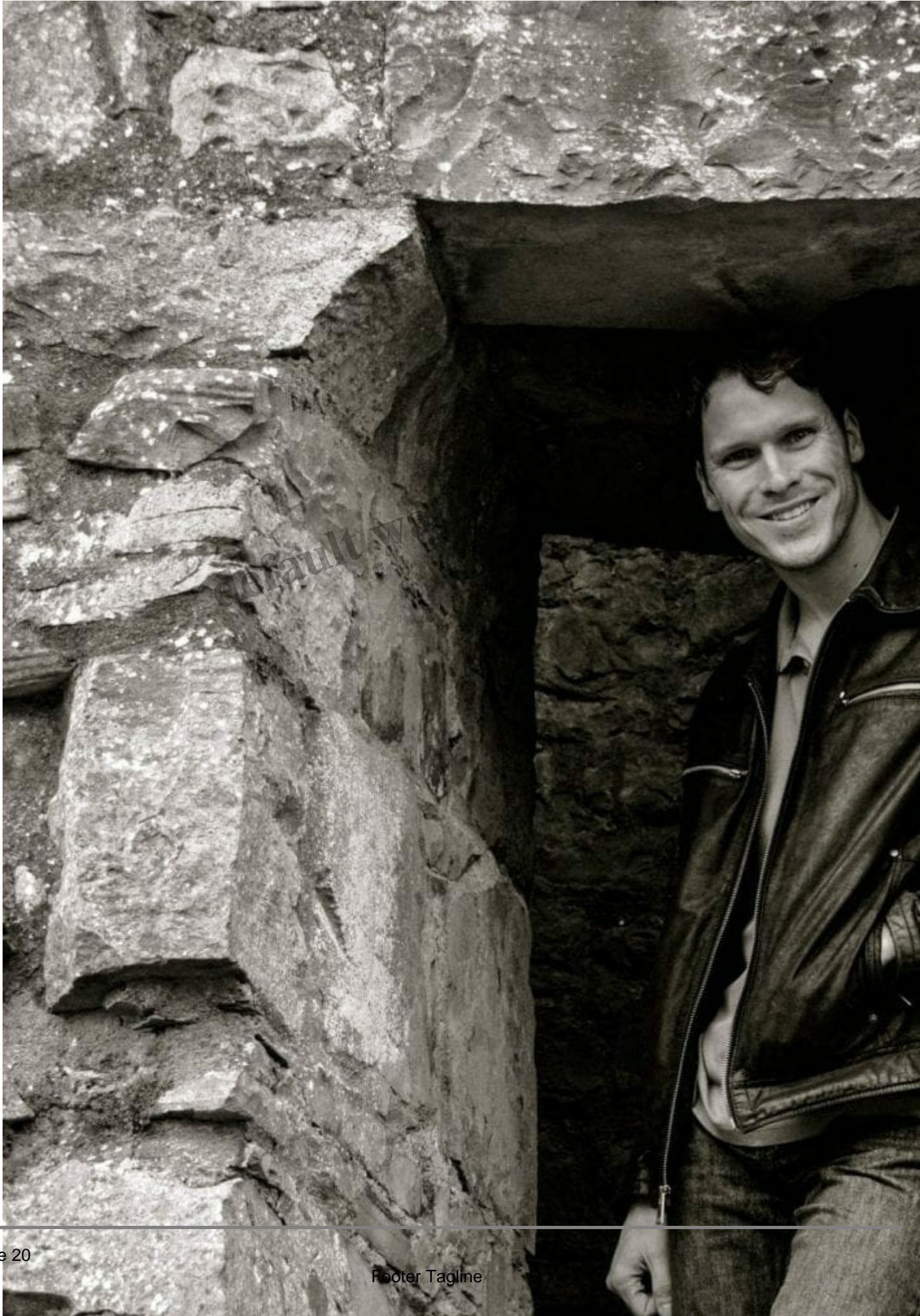
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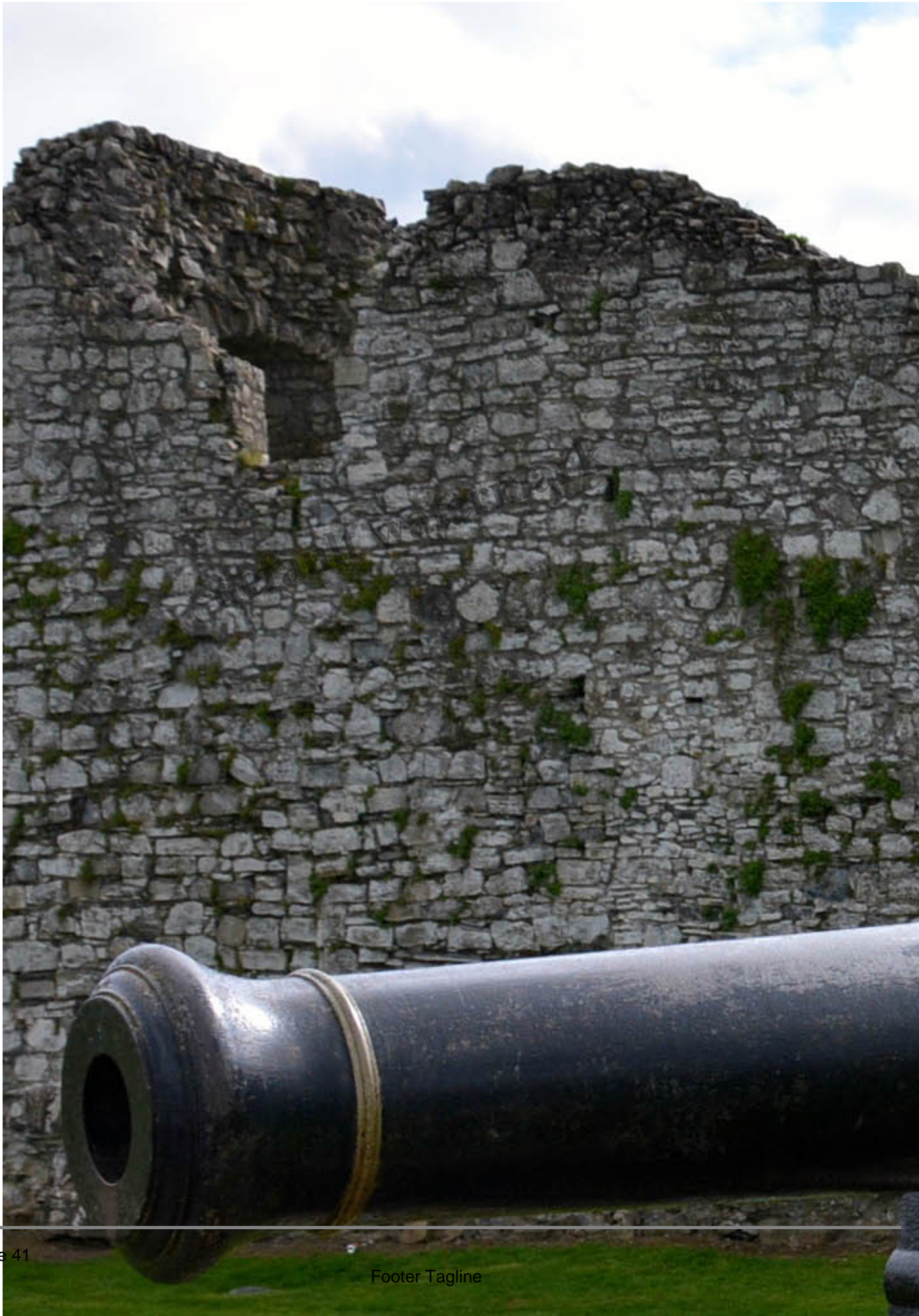
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[VRBO](#) is now under the Expedia group's ownership, which many were worried about, but it hasn't panned out to be a concern. It is a massive network with access to all lodging forms should issues arise. Joelle has used VRBO for many years with her family and has had no problems with it.

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