

Kalø Castle Ruins

Middle Ages

Ruin

Ruin



Kalø-ruinens tårn og ringmur set fra sydøst.

The royal castle at Kalø at the bottom of Aarhus Bay and Kalø Vig is one of our best-preserved medieval castles.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfY1WjaLiy0>

Luftfoto af Kalø-borgen set fra syd.

Aerial photo of Kalø Castle seen from the south.

It is well worth a visit, both for the castle itself and the surrounding countryside.

Plantegning af Kalø-borgen.

Floor plan of Kalø Castle.

The castle was built in 1313 by King Erik Menved as one of a total of four Jutland "compulsory castles." In 1313, Erik Menved had defeated the Jutland peasant uprising against the king's many wars and the

resulting heavy taxes. From the castles, the royal power could control and tax the local area and prevent new rebellions. The three other contemporary castles are "Borgvold" near Viborg, "Bygholm" near Horsens, and "Ulstrup" near Struer.

Kalø-ruinens tårn og ringmur set fra sydøst.

The tower and curtain wall of the Kalø ruins seen from the southeast.

The castle at Kalø is built in an isolated and strategic location on top of a natural island, offering a fantastic view of Kalø Vig, Aarhus Bay, and the surrounding countryside.

The only access route by land is the almost 500 m long, artificially constructed causeway from the mainland northeast of Kalø. Originally, the road was separated from the castle by a drawbridge near the castle. Today, the causeway is the best preserved and longest medieval road in Denmark.

Den stenbrolagte og 500 m. lange vejdæmning til Kalø.borgen set fra nord.

The stone-paved, 500-meter-long causeway to Kalø Castle, seen from the north.

In the beach meadow west of the causeway on the mainland side, you can see the tree-covered "Grevens Skanse" (the Count's Fortification), whose exact function, background, and history are unfortunately unknown.

Udsigt over vejdæmningen mod nordøst set fra borgen.

View of the causeway to the northeast from the castle.

The sea protects the castle on all other sides. Egens Vig, within the large stone reef "Rønsten" that stretches southeast of the castle, forms a fantastically well-protected natural harbor, which was also used at that time. Sailing around the castle has always required extensive local knowledge, as there are only two narrow passages through the reef, the closest of which to Kalø is up to 11 m deep.

Grevens Skanse i strandengen ved Hestehaveskoven.

The Count's Skanse in the beach meadow by Hestehaveskoven.

The current ruins at Kalø are the result of several centuries of construction. Only remnants of the first castle remain beneath the current ruins.

Rønstenen-stenrev udenfor Kalø Slotsruin.

Rønstenen reef outside Kalø Castle ruins.

Among other things, traces of a round corner tower have been found in the northern corner of the current ring wall, and perhaps part of the large tower that still marks the ruins is also from this period.

Ruiner indenfor den nordøstlige ringmur og Kalø-borgens tårn set fra nordvest.

Ruins inside the northeast ring wall and Kalø Castle tower seen from the northwest.

The building ruins seen today mainly date from the castle's expansion under King Valdemar Atterdag. He redeemed the castle, which until 1343 had been mortgaged to the Counts of Holstein. At the end of his reign, however, it was mortgaged again, this time to the bishop of Aarhus. The bishop of Aarhus owned the castle and the associated taxes and duties until 1407, when the mortgage was redeemed again by Valdemar Atterdag's daughter Margrethe I.

Ruiner langs den sydøstlige ringmur og portåbningen indtil tårnet set fra sydvest.

Ruins along the southeastern ring wall and gate opening up to the tower, seen from the southwest.

At the end of the Middle Ages, in the first half of the 16th century, Kalø lost its military significance. After that, it functioned mainly as an administrative center and seat of the bailiff for the four districts of Djursland. The castle was used to collect the king's taxes and duties, and it also served as a prison. The most famous prisoner was Gustav Vasa, who later, in 1521, became king of Sweden. He was taken prisoner by King Christian II until 1519, when he managed to escape disguised as a cattle driver. The priest Søren Quist, known from St. St. Blicher's short story "The Priest in Vejlbj," is another well-known prisoner at Kalø, where he was imprisoned until his execution in 1626. In the 1600s, Kalø also took an active part in the witch trials.

With the introduction of absolute monarchy in 1660, the division of counties was abolished in favor of counties. In 1672, King Christian V gave Kalø to his son Ulrik Frederik Gyldenløve, who subsequently had the buildings demolished. The building materials were reused in the construction of Charlottenborg at Kongens Nytorv in Copenhagen.

Sydvestsiden af Kalø-borgens store tårn.

The southwest side of Kalø Castle's large tower.

There are several legends associated with Kalø. A wandering legend, also known from other places in Denmark, tells that a large treasure equivalent to seven years' tax revenue is buried at Kalø. The treasure is guarded by a large dragon at the castle, whose tail can sometimes be seen. The legend should, of course, be seen in the light of the repeated mortgaging and turbulent ownership that Kalø has

experienced over time.

Another story tells that during a long siege, only one cow and one pig remained at Kalø. The cow was then pulled to the castle's well countless times during the day, covered with one of the many hides from the already slaughtered cows, and the pig was stabbed so that it squealed all day long. This led the enemy to believe that there was still enough food in the castle, and they therefore abandoned their venture.

Vindebro og voldgrav i borgbankens sydhjørne set fra sydøst.

Drawbridge and moat in the south corner of the castle seen from the southeast.

12: Kalø-borgens voldgrav med stensat brønd og vindebro set fra nordøst.

12: The moat of Kalø Castle with a stone-lined well and drawbridge seen from the northeast.

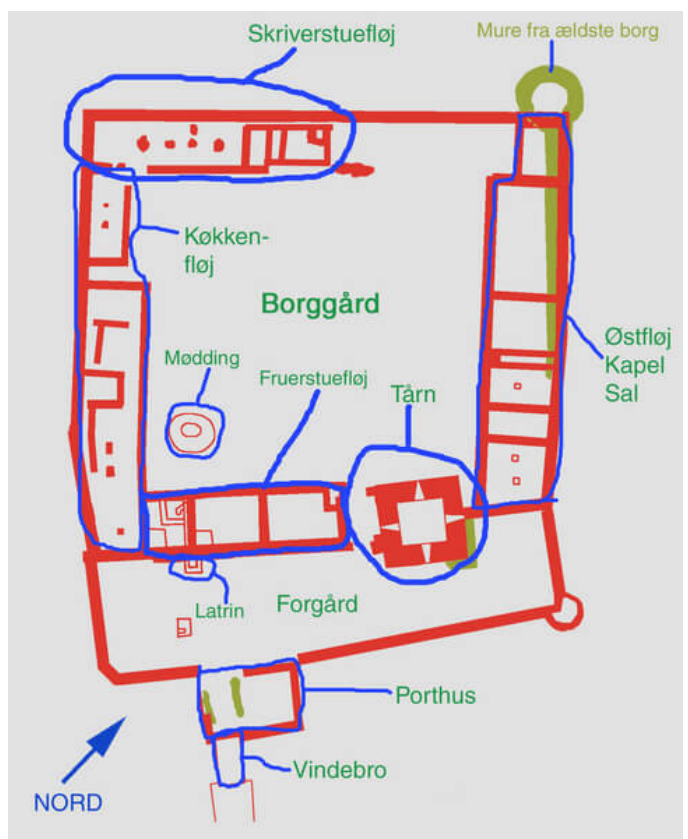
[LINK: See more about Kalø Castle Ruins on the National Museum's website.](#)

[LINK: Watch a video from a flight over the ruins of Kalø Castle.](#)

[LINK: See reconstruction of Kalø Castle.](#)



Luftfoto af Kalø-borgen set fra syd.



Plantegning af Kalø-borgen.



Den stenbrolagte og 500 m. lange vejdæmning til Kaløborgen set fra nord.



Udsigt over vejdæmningen mod nordøst set fra borgen.

Access

- In Rønne town, turn onto Kaløvej towards Ebeltoft.
- Follow the road for approx. 2 km to the large parking lot at the foot of the dam leading to the castle ruins.

Facilities

- Public toilet, restaurant, kiosk, and parking lot
- Free information leaflets in the leaflet box.
- Detailed guidebook sold at the kiosk.
- Information signs at the parking lot and the ruins.
- Distance to historical site: approx. 1.5 km.

Special conditions

- In good weather, Kalø Castle Ruins is an ideal place for a picnic.
- Remember to wear sensible footwear and clothing for the walk to the ruins.
- Dogs must be kept on a leash.
- Please be mindful of grazing cattle in the area.

VIDEO

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfY1WjaLiy0> (Dronetur over Kalø Slotsruin)

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNizCc5tAKU> (Flyvetur over Kalø Slotsruin)

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BfGZZKES3M> (Rekonstruktion af Kalø Slotsruin)

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Mols Bjerge

Kalø Slotsruin - Billeder

Kalø Slot

Practical Information

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