

Guides

Beware the restless spirits and evil forces that occupy these eerie places. Their stories alone are the stuff nightmares are made of. Experience the spookiness of each for yourself through the books and movies that they inspired.

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12 of the Most Haunted Places in America—and the Books That Define Them



KRISTINE SOLOMON, CONTRIBUTOR

Whether you're a horror fanatic or a hardened skeptic, it's hard to resist a good fright fest—and it

turns out you don't have to go very far to find one. The U.S. was built on a pretty macabre foundation and is home to hundreds of the most chilling places on Earth. We picked a dozen destinations that will give you goosebumps, from demonic dungeons and mansions of murder to haunted hotels and a forest believed to be inhabited by the devil himself. Many of these sites have been immortalized in books and movies (listed here, too), and their stories are bound to send shivers up your spine.

Haunted Mansion in Savannah Georgia

HAMILTON-TURNER INN IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Savannah has a reputation as one of the spookiest cities in the South. Among its most chilling landmarks is the Hamilton-Turner Inn, which was built in 1873 and still accepts guests. Originally a private residence, it was the site of several eerie deaths, including that of a little girl who fell down a staircase while playing near the pool table. Guests insist they've heard billiard balls rolling across the floor and sensed people sneaking up on

them. Parties at this storied mansion were depicted in the bestselling novel [“Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil”](#), and the hit [movie of the same name](#) starring John Cusack.

Haunted Tunnels in Portland Oregon

THE SHANGHAI TUNNELS IN PORTLAND, OREGON

Today's it's one of the hippest cities in the country, but Portland's sketchy past is immortalized underground in the [Shanghai Tunnels](#), a decrepit subterranean dungeon. The tunnels were used in the 19th century to imprison and torture thousands of kidnapped men and women, who were later led onto ships bound for Asia and forced into slave labor and prostitution. The sickening phenomenon was known as “Shanghaiing.” You can tour the Portland Underground—which is said to be haunted by the ghosts of its victims—or just read about it in [“Under the Shanghai Tunnels”](#), a fictional tale that delves into the seedy history of these dark portals.

Haunted Winchester Rifle House

WINCHESTER MYSTERY HOUSE IN SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Staircases that lead to the ceiling, a door to nowhere, and a cabinet that extends through 30 rooms are just some of the oddities you'll find in the 7-story, 160-room [Winchester Mystery House](#) in San Jose. It was commissioned in 1886 by grieving widow and rifle heiress [Sarah Winchester](#), who may have been haunted by the spirits of people killed by her company's firearms. Sightings of the friendly "wheelbarrow ghost" and other apparitions have been reported ever since. Helen Mirren played the eccentric heiress in the big-screen adaptation "[Winchester](#)", but if you really want to learn all about the estate's chilling lore, pick up a copy of "[Captive of the Labyrinth](#)".

Most Haunted Cemetery in New Orleans

ST. LOUIS CEMETERY NO. 1 IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Supernatural occurrences aren't hard to come by in the Big Easy, and a visit to the [St. Louis Cemetery No. 1](#) will bring you straight to the source. This is the burial ground of one of New

Orleans' most prominent 19th-century legends, Marie Laveau. Dubbed the “Voodoo Queen,” Laveau is just one of many spirits believed to roam the Gothic graveyard’s above-ground tombs at night. She was also the inspiration behind [“American Horror Story: Coven”](#), as well as several biographies and works of fiction. Read all about her witchy ways in [“Voodoo Queen: The Spirited Lives of Marie Laveau”](#), written by a University of New Orleans professor.

CREDIT: CAROL FAIRBANK @FAIRBANKSHIRE

Haunted forest clearing in North Carolina

DEVIL’S TRAMPING GROUND: CHATHAM COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

The center of the pine woods in Chatham County may not be a place you’d want to set up camp, but those who have claim they’ve heard footsteps and seen red, glowing eyes in the darkness. The perfectly round, completely barren clearing has baffled scientists and spooked humans and dogs alike. It’s said to be The Devil’s Tramping Ground, where the devil dances at night, plotting our demise and using his cloven hooves to kill anything that dares to grow there. Is the tale true

or just an ominous urban legend? Read the southern spook fest [“The Devil’s Tramping Ground and Other North Carolina Mystery Stories”](#), then judge for yourself.

Haunted jail in South Carolina

OLD CITY JAIL IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Visitors to this shuttered prison-turned-museum have reported spine-tingling paranormal activity, such as voices, slamming doors, and moving objects. From 1802 to 1937, the [Old City Jail](#) a.k.a. Old Charleston Jail—housed pirates, Civil War POWs, and the first female serial killer, Lavinia Fisher. Right before Fisher was hanged publicly in the prison gallows, she notoriously shouted, “If you have a message you want to send to Hell, give it to me; I’ll carry it!” The true story of Fisher and her husband (and partner in murderous crime) is captured in the acclaimed book [“Six Miles to Charleston.”](#)

House haunted by witch in Salem Massachusetts

HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES IN SALEM,

MASSACHUSETTS

Inside the former family home of author Nathaniel Hawthorne, in Salem, Massachusetts, legend has it that objects move on their own, the presence of a child can be felt in the attic, and Hawthorne's relative, Susan Ingersoll, can still be seen peering through the windows. In 1851, Hawthorne published a Gothic novel, "The House of the Seven Gables," inspired by the eerie residence (a film starring Vincent Price would follow). In it, he described a curse placed on his family by a victim of the Salem witch trials; the curse went on to wreak havoc for generations ... and possibly to this day.

CREDIT: @DRIVERA3

Haunted dungeon in Pennsylvania

FORT DELAWARE STATE PARK IN DELAWARE CITY, DELAWARE

Paranormal investigators have a field day at Fort Delaware State Park, the former site of a particularly horrific Civil War prison camp where Confederate soldiers were trapped in utter squalor. Inside the fort itself is a network of creepy dungeons, where ghost hunters have captured

apparitions through thermal imagery. Visitors to the fort have heard disembodied voices and witnessed moving shadows—and one person was even caught on video being pulled backwards by an invisible force. Too scared to book a tour of this historically haunted landmark? Read a collection of first-hand testimonies in [“Civil War Ghosts at Fort Delaware”](#).

Haunted insane asylum in America

TRANS-ALLEGHENY LUNATIC ASYLUM IN WESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

In 19th-century Weston, West Virginia it didn't take much to be admitted to the psychiatric ward.

“Conditions” like menopause, seduction, domestic trouble, and even indigestion or laziness could have landed you in the [Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum](#), where patients experienced severe abuse and unlivable conditions, sometimes for their entire lives. Visitors can still hear tortured screams and slamming doors as they explore the now-vacant rooms and isolation cells. [“The Haunted History of the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum”](#) recounts the murders, suicides, and barbaric

medical treatments, like ice-pick lobotomies, that occurred there before the hospital shut its doors for good in 1994.

Devil in the white city castle

MURDER CASTLE IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Hiding in plain sight during the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago was a residence so greusome, it came to be called Murder Castle. Unwitting fair-goers seeking cheap accommodations would quickly find themselves trapped in the residence of serial killer H. H. Holmes. It was a dizzying maze of hallways with soundproof walls, hidden rooms, and secret passages. Holmes would dispose of his victims via trap doors that led to the basement—and later dissolve their corpses in vats of acid or incinerate them on-site. The entire atrocity is recounted in the bestselling historical novel ["The Devil in the White City"](#). The house itself was razed in 1938, but the Englewood branch of the U.S. Post Office built in its place remains a popular stop on any Chicago ghost tour.

CREDIT: STEPHANIE WESTCOTT

Haunted chapel in Arlington Virginia

OLD POST CHAPEL IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The Virginia/D.C. area has its share of spooky sites, and one of the most notorious is the Old Post Chapel adjacent to the revered [Arlington National Cemetery](#). Apparitions have been spotted everywhere, including the bridal room (formerly the mourning room) and around the Robert E. Lee Memorial (legend suggests it's his wife standing guard). Soldiers have reported unexplained footsteps, organ playing, and opened cabinets. Then, there's the lady in red who paces the graves at night. ["Where Valor Rests"](#) provides a detailed, illustrated history of the cemetery, where 40,000 military veterans have been laid to rest, including JFK, the Tuskegee Airmen, and the Space Shuttle Challenger astronauts.

Most haunted ghost town in the wild west

THE GHOST TOWN OF BODIE, CALIFORNIA

[Bodie, California](#) was once a lawless gold-mining town rife with prostitution, gambling, and gunslinging. The debauchery continued until a toddler accidentally lit a match and burned the

town to the ground in 1932. Today, it's completely abandoned except for park rangers and their families, who have reported being scared out of their wits—and even strangled and suffocated—by the restless spirits who still inhabit the ghost town. If you visit this [Bodie National Historic Site](#), don't steal a single thing or you'll be vexed with the Bodie Curse until you return it. [“Bodie's Gold: Tall Tales and True History from a California Mining Town”](#) is chock full of historical information on this fascinating land that time forgot.

From haunted houses and hotels to ghoulish graveyards and ghost towns, some of the most paranormal places in the world are right here in the U.S.A.—and you can visit almost all of them or experience them right from your couch.

EXPLORE EVEN MORE AWESOME PLACES:

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[Wineries You Have to Experience to Believe](#)

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