

## America's Most Haunted Places

Question: Do you believe in ghosts?

[GHOST SFX]

Me too! And we're not alone: Nearly half of Americans believe in ghosts. Which may be why America is chock full of...not just haunted houses...but haunted...pretty much everything.

So for all you ghost-story lovers out there, here's a spooky little history of...

[DISTORTED VOICE]

America's most haunted places!

In the year of our lord 1909, F.O. and Flora Stanley opened a super-creepy hotel nestled way out in the mountainous wilderness of Colorado. They loved their weird hotel so much...they decided to never...ever...leave.

After the couple died, according to the totally freaked-out staff of The Stanley Hotel, Mrs. Stanley's ghost would play her piano late at night...and Mr. Stanley kept showing up in the background of people's photos. Guests complained about bags being unpacked, lights blinking on and off, and...children's laughter echoing through the hallways.

[SFX CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER]

Which begs the question: why would you *ever* book a room at The Stanley Hotel?

Well...if you're the world's most famous horror novelist, that's an easy question. When Stephen King stayed there with his wife and son for one night in 1974, they were the only guests. That night, King had a nightmare that his 3-year old son was being chased through the hallways by a firehose. He woke up drenched in sweat and frantically jotted down the idea for his best-selling novel turned horror film *The Shining*...which I gotta admit, pretty much scarred me for life.

Well if you want *permanent* psychological damage, you can not only *still* stay at the hotel...but also watch the movie. Over and over and over. That's because guest bedrooms have a channel where *The Shining* plays on a 24-hour loop.

Sounds like torture, right? But if you want actual *torture*, look no further than the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia. When this terrifying castle-like prison was built in 1829, it took solitary confinement to a whole new level.

Prisoners lived alone, ate alone, and exercised alone. When an inmate left his cell, they always covered his head with a hood so he couldn't see or be seen.

But the inmates' ghosts got their revenge, turning the prison into a haunted compound of horrors. Former guards and visitors have reported disembodied laughter, shadowy figures lurking around the cell blocks and...the pacing footsteps of ghostly guards.

[EERIE FOOTSTEPS SFX]

Airports can kind of feel like prisons...what with all the flight delays. But there's one airport that can be particularly traumatizing.

Honolulu International Airport has its own resident ghost, known as the "Lady in Waiting." She's a blonde spirit in a white dress who shows up in the off-limits areas of the airport.

The story goes that the Lady in Waiting fell in love with a man who promised to marry her. But he abandoned her at the gate. And she's been waiting for him ever since.

Beyond the sight of her floating through the back corridors, the Lady in Waiting also haunts the bathrooms. Travelers have reported paper rolls that unravel on their own, and toilets that flush by themselves.

[SFX...TOILET FLUSH...THEN EERIE LAUGHTER]

But American ghosts don't just sit around flushing toilets. In Chicago, they've taken over the zoo.

Lions and tigers and ghosts, oh my!

As it turns out, where Lincoln Park Zoo now stands...used to be the city's cemetery. But in the mid-1800s, most of the cemetery was moved. Notice I said...*most*. That's because historians have proven that, after the great Chicago Fire of 1871, thousands of bodies were still buried there.

And as we've learned from horror movies: messing with burial grounds is pretty much the easiest way to get haunted.

So now, along with the honks of seals, people have reported the moans of ghosts around the Lincoln Park Zoo.

[SFX TIGER ROAR FOLLOWED BY MOANING GHOST]

But why do we even believe in ghosts? Some experts say it's actually not some dark impulse. Psychologist Christopher French says many people see ghosts as proof that the soul can survive the body's death. And sociologist Margee Kerr says that feeling terror when we know we're safe...can give us a special kind of euphoria and even confidence.

So go ahead, walk boldly into your creepy basement! Go to that haunted house! It's Halloween, Ten'ers, so get out there and scare the bejesus out of yourself...until you scream so hard it makes you totally crack up!