

The most paranormally active city in America

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Halloween in New Orleans is serious business that goes beyond trick-or-treating and carving pumpkins. Tourists stream into town to celebrate All Hallows' Eve along with locals, both living and dead.



In New Orleans the dead outnumber the living, tenfold, adding to the reputation of the city as the most haunted in the U.S. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

"This is the most paranormally active city in America," says Andrew Ward, Tulane alum and current student in international development and Haunted History Tours guide. "Anyone who has spent any time overnight in the Quarter has probably felt that there was something else there, perhaps not immediately visible."

Ward points to the infamous LeLaurie Mansion, where Madame Delphine LeLaurie, a local socialite, was known to have tortured and murdered slaves, as the most haunted building in the city. He says during his time as a Haunted History guide, 39 people have fainted on his tours ? 38 of them in front of that particular home.

"It's a generator for negative energy," Ward says of the Royal Street home. "So many horrible things were done to people on those premises that it has this lingering negativity, and that has an effect on people around it."

Ward says he started out as more of a skeptic than a believer in the supernatural, but his time leading the tours and hanging out in the French Quarter has changed his mind.

“I've been shown strange photos of things at the Andrew Jackson Hotel, I've seen what happens around the LeLaurie Mansion, I've heard the screams of the people who were executed at Jackson Square,” Ward says. “Putting all of these things together, it would be an insult to my own intelligence not to believe.”

To those with lingering doubts about whether ghosts in New Orleans are real, Ward offers a warning.

“If someone is going to come here and doubt it, don't do it loudly. For safety sake, look into getting a gris-gris bag of your own and pour an extra shot for the spirits. Even if you don't believe in it, how can it hurt?”