

# Ghosts and Legends: Uncovering the Mysteries of Edinburgh's Underground

If you're easily spooked then you may need to have your wits about you when planning a trip to Edinburgh, the world's most haunted city.

The Scottish capital has a gruesome history to look back on, and its narrow, winding streets are packed with troublesome tales of plague, famine, and gore.

Today, the city stands as a beautiful metropolis, vibrantly bustling under the watchful eye of Edinburgh Castle, which is a 1,000-year-old castle built on a steep hill looming over the streets below.

With evidence of human habitation in Edinburgh dating back to 8,500 BC, the city is alive with a rich history, and relics of its past still permeate the capital to this very day.

Edinburgh's bloody and murky past is also still very evident for the world to see, and there are many areas of the city that have seen hundreds of ghost sightings and spooky goings-on throughout the years.

From the infamous Edinburgh Vaults to Greyfriars Kirkyard and everything in between, you can discover much of the city's ghostly legends on foot. [Walking tour Edinburgh](#) attractions can involve spooky visits to the capital's most ghostly attractions.

With ghosts and ghouls still said to be roaming the city's ancient streets, tourists claim to have encountered apparitions lurking in graveyards and some of Edinburgh's oldest landmarks. So let's take a deeper look at some of the

spookiest locations to visit in the world's most haunted cities:

## **Visiting the Infamous Vaults**

Completed in 1788, Edinburgh's South Bridge was a feat of 18th Century engineering at the time, and the 1,000 ft long structure went on to create plenty of vaults for taverns, cobblers, and smelters to set up shop underneath the city.

There were a few problems with the South Bridge, however. The plan was for Edinburgh's oldest resident, a well-known judge's wife, to cross the bridge first. However, after she passed away a matter of days before its completion, it was decided that her body would be the first to cross the South Bridge in its coffin.

Edinburgh locals believed that the act left the bridge cursed, and many initially refused to use it as a result. Despite this, it quickly became a popular place for businessmen to set up shops due to its prime location.



Photo by [Adam Wilson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Sadly, the bridge wasn't waterproofed, and the vaults underneath [quickly became squalid](#), damp, and dark subterranean spaces were left for only the city's poorest residents and their exploitative landlords.

The vaults were even home to bodysnatchers, who would illegally exhume the recently deceased to sell on a no-questions-asked basis to medical researchers.

The squalid conditions of the vaults meant they were abandoned within 30 years of the bridge opening, but the mazes of tunnels were excavated in 1985 and tours of the spooky passages are available throughout the day, or during the night, if you're particularly brave.

## Greyfriars Kirkyard

Visit Greyfriars Kirkyard on a quiet evening and have a listen. Legend has it that the term 'dead ringer' has its origins when locals were mistakenly buried alive while

presumed dead. To counter these errors, safety coffins were introduced with bells attached to be rung should someone find themselves trapped six feet under.

Greyfriars Kirkyard is filled with macabre reminders of Edinburgh's grim history and you can still see a number of 'Mortsafes' throughout the location, which [take the form of literal cages](#) designed to prevent bodysnatchers from exhuming recently buried corpses.

With more than [3,000 eye-witness accounts](#) of poltergeist activity reported in Greyfriars Kirkyard, it's become customary for visitors to take pictures using their cameras throughout the graveyard.

Plenty of tourists report spooky apparitions and anomalies appearing on images and the footage, and others claim that they've received scratches, burns, bite marks, and even been knocked out by the poltergeists that lurk in the eerie location.

## Visiting the Dungeon

To get a more hands-on experience of the city's gory past, you can take a walk to Edinburgh Dungeon and step back in time through the capital's dark history.

Edinburgh is a subterranean city, and the dungeon forms another underground tourist attraction in the heart of the Scottish capital on Market Street.

Live actors provide [interactive shows](#) and rides to highlight the warts-and-all history of the world's most haunted city and its troublesome past.

Inside the dungeon, you'll come face-to-face with the legend of Sawney Bean, the leader of a clan that in the 16th Century was said to have murdered and cannibalized more than 1,000 victims over 25 years.

Fortunately, Edinburgh's culinary prowess means that humans won't be on the menu when you dine out after your dungeon experience, and its central location makes a trip to the dungeon perfect when exploring the city on foot.

## **A Frightfully Unforgettable Visit**

Whether you have an appetite for spooky cities or prefer to hide behind the sofa when watching a scary movie, Edinburgh has plenty to offer across its ancient landmarks and rich past.

As the world's most haunted city, no trip would be complete without visiting the vaults or keeping on the lookout for ghostly goings on in Greyfriars Kirkyard. Just remember that you may not always be alone in a city that's full of surprises!