

# Alcatraz Night-time Tours: Big Attraction



Alcatraz, Spanish for 'pelican', is perhaps the biggest landmark in San Francisco Bay. First used as a military fort in the 19th century, it was opened in 1934 as a federal prison and held some of the world's most feared criminals of the time. Amongst these was the Chicago mobster Al Capone, as well as various other dangerous individuals who were separated from society by Alcatraz's walls and the freezing, shark-infested waters. Nowadays, San Francisco tour operators aim to offer an insight into Alcatraz's chilling past by

offering night-time tours around the huge and daunting prison.

'Hellcatraz', as it used to be referred to by the inmates, is visited by around 1 million people every year. Tours, which are offered by the National Park Service, are mostly conducted at night as this offers a more realistic atmosphere of the former prison's brutal regime and the suffering it caused for the old inmates. The night tours are slightly more expensive than day tours but are a little longer. Visitors are given a first-hand view of the dark cells of horror and are provided with detailed accounts of failed escape attempts and tales of the barbarous imprisonment methods once used within Alcatraz's walls.

Feedback from the tours so far has been positive. Visitors have described their experiences as eerie and unforgettable. Night-time trips to Alcatraz are almost certain, given effective marketing, to become more and more popular in years to come. Many potential visitors know about Alcatraz thanks to films such as the Clint Eastwood movie about the (presumed) unsuccessful escape attempt. These films have done absolutely no harm to the marketing of Alcatraz tours.

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