

TOP 5 HISTORIC PRISONS TO VISIT



From St. Petersburg to San Francisco, there are penitentiaries that marked history and that today are an obligatory stop on the map of any curious traveler. Find out where they are and who their most famous prisoners were. Tourism Review prepared a list of the historic prisons with the most iconic stories behind their walls.

Alcatraz – San Francisco, United States

Those visiting the city of San Francisco can take a ferry (at Pier 33, located near the Fisherman's Wharf) and tour the Alcatraz Island. The prison is one of the main tourist attractions in the region and one of the best-known historic prisons. The Alcatraz Island encompasses a total of 22 acres in the center of San Francisco Bay. Every year, it attracts more than 1.4 million visitors anxious to explore the terrifying cells of the most famous prison in the world.

It was used for only 29 years, but in its short history, Alcatraz hosted famous inmates such as Al Capone, one of the most famous mobsters of the twentieth century, or Machine Gun Kelly, the most wanted criminal in California.

Despite there were many escape attempts (14, to be exact), only one of these was successful: the escape of Frank Morris, John Anglin and Clarence Anglin: an event which was years later turned into a film, starring Clint Eastwood.

Château d'If – Marseille, France

Château d'If is, without a doubt, one of the most extraordinary prisons in the world welcoming 100,000 visitors a year. And the reality is that its appearance does not resemble any typical prison since, in fact, it is a castle (fortress) turned later into a prison. It was built between 1527 and 1529, becoming the first royal fortress of Marseille. Between 1580 and 1871, those who opposed the regime were imprisoned in this island of Marseille. No escape was possible due to the high ramparts with the artillery platforms that surmount the cliffs.

Among the main prisoners were Protestants and Republicans. The most famous prisoner was José Custodio Faria, better known as Abbé Faria, who would be portrayed and immortalized in the pages of Alexander Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* as the dearest friend of Edmundo Dantés.

Kresty – St. Petersburg, Russia

"Kresty" (Crosses), the legendary Russian prison in the city of St. Petersburg, was founded in 1892. The prison was originally constructed for 1,150 people and there were 960 cells. It is a complex of several

rectangular buildings that form two huge crosses. The "cross" form of the buildings symbolizes the Christian repentance of the prisoners.

The prison is the largest not only in Russia, but also in Europe and America and is a famous historic prison and landmark. The large-scale complex of red bricks stands out strongly against the background of nearby modern buildings in St. Petersburg.

Many world-famous people were prisoned here. At various times, the prisoners of the "Kresty" were Trotsky, Nabokov, Brodsky, Tupolev and many others.

Pentridge Prison – Victoria, Australia

In Australia, visitors can find one of the prisons with the most prolific number of stories behind its huge walls, rusted cells, and endless corridors. After 146 years, the prison officially closed in 1997. Today, it is part of the most popular horror tours and is considered a unique attraction.

All kinds of criminals and inmates stayed in its cells: from Chopper Read, a criminal who later became a writer and participated in 19 homicides, and Peter Dupas, one of the most wanted serial killers of the time; to Julian Knight, author of one of the best known massacres in the world's history, and Ronald Ryan, the last prisoner to be legally executed in Australia.

Security Prison 21 (S-21), Cambodia

Known as the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, it was used as an interrogation, torture and extermination camp. Although formerly a high school, today the site functions as a museum destined to remember the tragic and horrible history that the country experienced during the Khmer Rouge regime. Today, the history of the victims is restored through photographs as well as torture devices used during this time, so that history can never be repeated again.

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