

About Us

With the snowy winters, the difficulty of getting a cab, and cockroaches running amok in apartments, New Yorkers have enough problems to contend with. But having a ghost haunting your home or business can make life in New York even harder.

That's why we've formed New York Ghost Chapter, a site to help you recognize the telltale signs of an unwanted spirit and find a trained paranormal professional to get rid of it for you. We also provide resources to learn about some of the most infamous ghosts in New York City's history and tour their old haunts.

You don't have to hold a seance to communicate with us. Just [contact](#) us here.

Clues to Finding a Ghost in The House

If any of several spooky occurrences are happening in your home or at your workplace, you may have a ghost on your hands.

According to [Unsolved Mysteries](#), there are several categories of evil spirit that may be haunting a particular area. One is the geomagnetic entity, such as the djinn or banshee, that is endemic to a culture or region and often manifests itself in folklore. The next category is the daemon, or agent of an evil sorcerer. There is also the poltergeist, which is the manifestation of wild or hormonal impulses in a person, and can be exorcised. The last category is what most people think of as a ghost: a manifestation of a traumatic death or event that haunts the area where it expired. This is why so many buildings tend to be haunted for a long period of time, spooking many different tenants, until the ghosts therein are correctly gotten rid of.

One possible manifestation of a ghost, according to [About.com](#), is that lights or electrical devices, such as TVs, are found switched on when the owner of the house knows they had been switched off, or vice versa. A particularly bold ghost may even switch devices on and off while people are in the room.

Objects also might disappear for weeks at a time, and reappear somewhere in the house that you had already searched. This is called the [DOPler](#) Effect, where DOP means "Disappearing Object Phenomenon."

There are also the unexplained noises (screeching, weeping, thumping) and drawers opening and closing. Like the lights and disappearing objects, these phenomena are rarely witnessed firsthand. However, many homeowners have had [far more harrowing](#) run-ins with spirits: levitating objects, physical assaults, and of course, seeing an actual human-shaped apparition glide through a room.

In order to interest a paranormal expert in your case, it may be advisable to take a photo of your ghost. Perhaps your ghost will look similar to some of the spirits at "[Ghost Pictures with Craig &](#)

[Jane Hamilton-Parker](#)." It shows a ghost photographed on the [street](#), and one captured on a [television set](#). According to Craig, this last one may be a manifestation of Electronic Voice Phenomena, where the signals picked up by electronic devices could net a ghost.

You may also want to keep a ghost diary, recording dates and times of suspected supernatural occurrences in your house, and let an expert sort out what's imagination and what's genuinely haunting.

Finding a Paranormal Investigator

Once you have determined that the odd occurrences around your house or office are supernatural in origin, the next step should be to hire a reliable ghost investigator.

The preeminent American ghost investigation agency is the Paranormal Research Society of North America, or [PRNSA](#). Their primary goal is accumulating scientific evidence of paranormal activity, and for the opportunity to use your house as a test case, they would be happy to work for free. They use electronic equipment, not seances or Ouija boards, to detect the presence of spirits. Although they operate out of Pennsylvania, they will travel all over the country in pursuit of your ghosts.

In the Midwest, there are the [Paranormal Activity Investigators](#), who are based in Kansas City. Like the Paranormal Research Society, they do not charge for their services, and their interest is primarily scientific. They have solved ghostly cases in locales as varied as the J. Huston Tavern in Arrow Rock, MO, the Historic Pottawattamie County Squirrel Cage Jail in Council Bluffs, IA, and the Jack-FM 105.1 Studios in Mission, KS.

In Michigan, there is [Grimstone, Inc.](#), which uses sophisticated video equipment to take the pursuit of the paranormal to the next level. Their digital multiplexers can record up to 16 simultaneous locations, catching any poltergeist who tries to flee through a wall into another part of the house. They also have audio equipment to detect the voices of ghosts that may not be audible to human ears, until recorded. With their Geiger counters and multimeters, they might find out that not only do you have a ghost but the wiring in your house is faulty, which might be helpful to know as well.

Since the folks at Grimstone are paranormal professionals, not hobbyists, they do charge for their services, as well as operating a gift shop and seminars to educate the community at large (including the Michigan Horror Writers Association and the Kiwanis Club of Whitmore Lake) about the world of the supernatural.

If the ghost hunters have taken apart your house from top to bottom and not found anything, but you are still being kept awake at night by strange apparitions, you may have another resort. According to [eHow](#), if you are a Catholic, you may be able to get a priest to bless your house, hopefully driving out any demons or ghosts. Though this is a task that most priests rarely perform, it's part of the job description, and you should take advantage.

Essential Supplies for a Ghost Hunt

Just as you wouldn't embark on a mountain trek without a backpack and carabineer, and you wouldn't go on a picnic without a blanket and sandwich, you don't want to go on a ghost hunt without packing these key supplies.

Camera

You need a camera to record your ghost, not just to identify what type of ghost you have (differentiating, say, an incubus from a poltergeist) but to further the mission that most paranormal agencies have: obtaining empirical evidence of ghostly activity. [Suite 101](#) has some tips for choosing a good ghost camera. You want a model with an adjustable shutter speed setting, so that you will be able to capture both floating orbs and moving phantom trails. A high ISO number, meaning that the camera is sensitive to light, will serve you well in dim surroundings like basements and graveyards. As with any other purpose for your camera, ghost photos will benefit from a camera model with the highest resolution (in megapixels) that you can afford. The blog [Ghost Hunting Secrets](#) advises that you take along several cameras, so that you will have a range of capabilities for different purposes.

Sound Recorder

Ghost noises will often show up in recordings, even if they aren't audible by people at the time and place in which they occur. A tape recorder will work for this purpose, as well as a digital sound recorder, which you may already have on your cell phone. An eHow article called "[How to Audio Record a Ghost](#)" recommends taking notes about any background noises you hear while recording, so that when you play the tape or sound file back later on, you will be able to distinguish the odd cries of a loon from the plaintive wail of a ghost.

Dowsing Rod

This has been recommended by the [American Ghost Society](#) as the world's oldest ghost detection device. Bring two L-shaped metal rods, one in each hand. When you find the area where the ghost is hiding, the two rods will cross each other. The official explanation from the American Society of Dowsers is: "the reasons the procedures work are entirely unknown."

Your Pet

Cats and dogs have sharper senses than human beings in some respects, and this goes for detecting the spirit world as well. If your cat's hair stands up when you bring her into a certain room, or your dog refuses to enter at all, you may have an invisible ghost on your hands.

Giving Up The Ghost

Follow these ghostbusting tips, and that banshee in your Brooklyn brownstone will have to find another borough to say "Boo" in.

Burn sage.

According to [wikiHow](#), the Native Americans knew that burning sage grasses can help cleanse a space of negative energies. Burn sage in the rooms where you have had ghostly happenings and ask the spirits to leave.

Call a priest.

Praying for the ghosts to leave may help counter a malevolent spiritual force with a positive one. If you want to go all out, you can invite a priest, shaman or other religious leader into your home to battle the ghosts, or place sacred objects around the rooms.

Call a ghost expert.

Most of the reputable paranormal investigation services are free, because they want to use your ghost to help prove the existence of a spirit world. You may be invited to play a role in dispelling the ghost from your own home. Ghost hunting services that charge a lot of money could potentially be scams, so you should check their references carefully before signing on.

Clean.

Cleaning the place up can't hurt. Wash your carpets, your curtains and your clothes. Even if your supernatural intruders remain, some unpleasant odors may vanish.

Ask them to leave.

Telling your ghost to "seek the light" and leave this plane of existence may work. The ghost may just be hanging around because it's afraid of whatever lies ahead, and some firm encouragement may be the push it needs.

Compromise.

When it comes to laying claim on their territory, ghosts are the original grandfathered tenants. Your ghost may have been in your apartment decades before you, and asking it to leave entirely might be a little unfair. Instead, talk to it in a reasonable tone of voice and ask it to stop doing the things that irritate you, such as pulling the silverware out of your drawers or flicking your bedroom light on and off in the middle of the night. It is possible that, like Bruce Willis in [The Sixth Sense](#), your ghost doesn't even realize it's dead, and thinks it's just going about its normal business. Explaining to it that it will have to behave, if it wants to spend its afterlife in your apartment, may put an end to the troubles you've been having.

Ghost tips are courtesy of these sites: [How to Get Rid of Things](#), [Angels & Ghosts](#) and [wikiHow](#).

How to Become a Ghost Investigator

If none of the paranormal experts you've met have been able to deal with your ghost, it may be time to take matters into your own hands and become a ghost investigator yourself.

According to [eHow](#), the first place to start should be with research. Read all you can about ghosts, extra-sensory perception, and related topics. This will enable you to differentiate, say, between ghosts and poltergeists when you encounter them in the field. Even [Van Helsing](#) had to start by being an expert on his subject.

Next, get some equipment. At the very least, get yourself a pen and notebook to record suspicious supernatural activity. Cameras and audio recording equipment should be next. If you want to get really high-tech, an EMF (electromagnetic field) detector, which is sensitive to disturbances in the electrical currents around you, should also be on your shopping list.

You may also want to seek some formal training in the field. Accredited academic institutions in the U.S. do not offer the opportunity to major in paranormal studies, but related disciplines can teach you information that you can later use in dealing with the supernatural. As an example, the [Center for Consciousness Studies](#) at the University of Arizona discusses issues related to extrasensory perception, and the [Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research](#) program at Princeton University has a mission to "enable better understanding of the role of consciousness in the establishment of physical reality." For a longer list of programs at well-regarded schools around the world that can give you a background relating to paranormal studies, try the [Parapsychology Degrees](#) article at Hollow Hill.

If you already have a degree in another area and want to make a smaller investment of time and money, try taking a seminar offered by a paranormal investigation group. [Grimstone, Inc.](#), operating out of Michigan, often holds seminars to educate the community at large (including the Michigan Horror Writers Association and the Kiwanis Club of Whitmore Lake) about the world of the supernatural. You may be able to find a similar seminar in the New York region.

However, if you think hunting ghosts is likely to be a profitable career, think again. Most paranormal investigators are in it as hobbyists and because of their curiosity about the spirit world, and do not charge clients for their services. If you want to turn your paranormal expertise into a business, it will take a lot of luck and marketing. It may be better to do something else to pay the bills, and look into strange happenings on the weekends.

Famous Ghosts in New York History

In a town of nearly eight and a half [million](#) people, there are bound to be a few ghosts. Here are some of the most notorious ones.

The Headless Horseman

Sure, this guy's from upstate. But this famous phantom, who hails from [Sleepy Hollow, New York](#), has been terrorizing readers ever since he galloped across the pages of Washington Irving's short story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Was he just a prank by the sneaky suitor Brom Bones to eliminate his competition, the nervous schoolteacher Ichabod Crane, or does he haunt the woods still, with his head tucked under his arm? You'll have to re-read the story and find out.

The Sullivan Brothers

When war broke out with Japan in 1941, the five [Sullivan brothers](#) volunteered to serve in the Navy, and requested to be aboard the same ship. This proved to be an unlucky decision, as the ship went down to a Japanese torpedo in the Pacific, killing all five of them. President Roosevelt wrote a personal letter to their grieving mother, and the Navy commissioned a ship in their honor, the *USS Sullivans*. That ship is now docked at the [Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park](#) in Buffalo, New York. Witnesses have reported having their ankles grabbed as they walked around the ship, and lights have flickered on and off when no electrical current has been going into the ship. It has been speculated that the Sullivans cannot rest until the much-criticized admiral of the battle of Guadalcanal, Daniel J. Callahan, has had his honor restored.

Gertrude Treadwell

This spinster passed away in an East Village row house in [1933](#). Legend has it that her overprotective father (Seabury Treadwell, a wonderful name) forbade her to marry the man she loved as a younger woman, and she was never able to love again. Her house is now the Merchants' House Museum, where staff have felt Gertrude's eerie presence. In 1999, a pair of ghost investigators tried to make contact with Gertrude, but as they were being followed by a [New York Times](#) reporter, the ghost kept quiet.

Theodosia Burr

This daughter of former vice president Aaron Burr disappeared while sailing from North Carolina to New York City's harbor. The ship is thought to have been lost to pirates. She now may be haunting the Village restaurant One if by Land, Two if by Sea, playing mischievously with [womens' earrings](#) as they dine.

Haunted New York Buildings

The old hotels, apartment buildings and theatres in New York have enough accumulated history to be full of ghosts. Here are some buildings that might spook you.

The White Horse Tavern

This is the bar that the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas liked to frequent when in New York City, where he would sit at his corner table and pound down shots of whiskey. He expired after a

particularly wild night at the White Horse, and legend has it that his ghost still visits, [rotating the table](#) to announce his return.

Brittany Hall

This is the former Brittany Hotel, [now a dorm](#) for NYU students. Occupants have reported disembodied voices and ghostly shadows moving up and down the hallways. The ghost investigation agency Paranormal NYC has responded to calls, but found nothing conclusive.

The 47th Street Theater

This [former firehouse](#) is now home to a Puerto Rican theater troupe. Construction crews have heard the distant sounds of pounding hooves around the building, perhaps the ghosts of horses carrying men to a blaze.

The Algonquin Hotel

This Midtown hotel was the daily lunch spot of the "[Vicious Circle](#)," a group of playwrights, poets, actors and editors in 1920s New York. Dorothy Parker, Harpo Marx and Robert Benchley were charter members. Though they've passed on, their work endures in print and celluloid, and their phantoms may still be around as well in the hotel's dining room.

The Dakota Building

The beautiful [Dakota Apartment Building](#) was the site of John Lennon's tragic murder at the hands of Mark David Chapman. It was also the location where Roman Polanski's terrifying film *Rosemary's Baby* was shot. With this kind of sinister pedigree, there's bound to be some evil energies floating around.

The Chelsea Hotel

The [Chelsea Hotel](#) has long been a magnet for hard-partying artists, writers and musicians. Like the White Horse Tavern, it was a favorite spot of Dylan Thomas and has logged appearances of his ghost. More troublingly, Sex Pistols bassist Sid Vicious stabbed his girlfriend, Nancy Spungen, to death at the Chelsea in 1978. After his own death from a heroin overdose, he is rumored to have returned to the Chelsea and sometimes rides the elevator late at night, regretting his past misdeeds.

Churchyard of St. Paul's Chapel

In this [churchyard](#), actor George Frederick Cooke was buried, headless, in 1812. His skull was reportedly used in productions of Hamlet, and he now indignantly wanders the grounds, wanting his head back.

Ghost Tours and Spooky Neighborhoods in New York

Whether you are a New Yorker or just visiting, don't miss the many ghost tours and haunted neighborhoods throughout the city.

The Ghosts of New York Walking Tour

This tour promises "[the haunted New York experience](#)." The tours are 90 minutes long and the total walking distance is less than a mile. Tours are conducted by Phil Schoenburg, a professor of history at Queens College, and his assistants. There are separate tours with different themes, such as the "Peter Stuyvesant and his Ghostly Friends of the East Village" tour, which will take you through the old haunts of such men as Edgar Allan Poe and Harry Houdini. There is also the "Ghosts of Times Square" tour, which takes you through the eerie history of the theatre district.

Crypt Keeper Tours New York

This [tour company](#), which does not have a website but only a phone number (and a P.O. box maintained by a "Mistress Craven") will [reportedly](#) shuttle you around the city in a hearse, while playing a CD that describes the "demise of New York's infamously deceased."

Greenwich Village

This has the highest ghost population of any of New York's neighborhoods. A [psychic medium](#) says that the unconventional arrangements of streets are a haven for spirit activity. It claims many famous ghosts, including Dylan Thomas and the troubled daughter of Aaron Burr. Some Greenwich Village haunted spots to check out are the restaurant One if by Land, Two if by Sea, which is sometimes visited by Burr's daughter, and the historic Merchant's House Museum, which is home to a reclusive spinster who died nearly a century ago.

Washington Square Park

Now adjacent to NYU, this park was once an [execution ground](#) for criminals sentenced to death by the noose. After the grisly sentences had been carried out, many of the dead were buried beneath the gallows trees. Some of them are rumored to still be hanging around the place. Before this, the park was an Indian burial ground. If ghosts are anywhere in New York, they're here.

Tompkins Square Park

Once a haven for drug users and now a dog walkers' park, Tompkins Square is host to an annual [Halloween parade for dogs](#). The only ghosts you're likely to see here will be on leashes and in costume, but you might meet a fellow dog owner who likes the macabre as much as you do.