

metairie cemetery self guided tour

metairie cemetery self guided tour offers a unique opportunity to explore one of New Orleans' most historic and architecturally rich burial grounds at your own pace. This article provides a comprehensive guide to navigating Metairie Cemetery, highlighting its striking monuments, notable interments, and the cultural significance embedded within its grounds. Whether you are a history enthusiast, an architecture admirer, or simply curious about local heritage, a self guided tour allows you to immerse yourself without the constraints of a formal group. The cemetery's elaborate tombs and statues reflect the diverse backgrounds and stories of the city's inhabitants, making it a fascinating open-air museum. This guide will cover preparation tips, key points of interest, and practical advice to ensure a rewarding visit. Below is a detailed table of contents to help you navigate the information presented.

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Overview of Metairie Cemetery

Metairie Cemetery is a historic burial ground located in Metairie, Louisiana, just outside of New Orleans. Established in the late 19th century, it serves as a final resting place for many prominent local figures and families. Unlike traditional cemeteries, Metairie is known for its grand mausoleums, elaborate sculptures, and intricately designed monuments that showcase a wide range of architectural styles, including Gothic, Egyptian Revival, and Classical influences. The cemetery occupies a significant place in New Orleans' cultural and historical landscape, reflecting the city's diverse heritage and traditions surrounding death and remembrance.

Historical Background

The cemetery was developed on what was once a horse racing track, giving it a unique layout and extensive grounds. Over the decades, it became one of the most prestigious burial sites in the region, attracting wealthy families and notable individuals. Its design and monuments reflect the artistic trends and funerary customs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, making it an important site for those interested in history, art, and culture.

Significance in Local Culture

Metairie Cemetery plays an important role in the community's identity and traditions. It is not only a place of mourning but also a site where the artistry of remembrance is celebrated. The cemetery's elaborate tombs and statues provide insight into the social status, religious beliefs, and personal stories of the individuals interred there. This cultural significance makes it a popular destination for those interested in exploring New Orleans' rich heritage.

Preparing for Your Self Guided Tour

Planning is essential for a successful metairie cemetery self guided tour. Visitors should equip themselves with maps, comfortable footwear, and knowledge about the site's layout to maximize their experience. Since the cemetery grounds are extensive, preparation ensures that all key areas and monuments can be visited efficiently and meaningfully.

Obtaining Maps and Guides

While there are no official guided tours provided on-site, several resources offer detailed maps and information, which can be obtained online or at local visitor centers. A good map will help you navigate the cemetery's winding paths and locate points of interest without confusion. Some third-party websites and publications also provide suggested walking routes and descriptions of significant monuments.

Timing and Weather Considerations

Visitors should consider the weather and time of day when planning their tour. Early mornings and late afternoons tend to be cooler and less crowded, providing a more comfortable and reflective atmosphere. The cemetery is generally open during daylight hours, and adequate daylight is necessary to appreciate the intricate details of the monuments and sculptures.

Key Monuments and Tombs to See

Metairie Cemetery is renowned for its impressive collection of mausoleums and sculptures, many of which are considered artistic masterpieces. A self guided tour should include visits to these notable monuments to fully appreciate the cemetery's aesthetic and historical value.

Angel of Resurrection

One of the most iconic statues in Metairie Cemetery is the Angel of Resurrection, a striking figure symbolizing hope and eternal life. This statue is often photographed due to its intricate details and emotional impact. It stands as a focal point within the cemetery

and serves as a symbol of the spiritual beliefs held by many of those interred.

Family Mausoleums

The cemetery contains numerous family mausoleums, many of which feature elaborate carvings, stained glass, and architectural elements that reflect the wealth and status of the families. Notable examples include the Heeb Family Mausoleum, which is decorated with classical motifs, and the Stern Family Mausoleum, known for its Egyptian Revival style. These structures provide insight into the funerary art trends popular during the cemetery's peak development period.

War Memorials and Veterans' Graves

Metairie Cemetery also honors military veterans with dedicated monuments and gravesites. Several memorials commemorate local soldiers who served in major conflicts, reflecting the community's respect for its veterans. Visitors interested in military history will find these sites particularly meaningful.

Notable Figures Buried at Metairie Cemetery

The cemetery is the final resting place of many prominent individuals who contributed to the cultural, political, and social life of New Orleans and Louisiana. A self-guided tour offers the opportunity to learn about these figures and their legacies.

Prominent Local Politicians

Several influential politicians from Louisiana's history are interred at Metairie Cemetery. Their mausoleums often feature inscriptions and symbols that reflect their public service and achievements. Exploring these graves provides context to the city's political history and development.

Artists and Musicians

New Orleans' rich artistic heritage is represented in the cemetery through the graves of notable musicians, painters, and writers. These individuals played key roles in shaping the cultural landscape of the region, and their resting places are often visited by admirers and historians alike.

Business and Civic Leaders

Many of the city's early business leaders and philanthropists are buried at Metairie Cemetery. Their contributions to the economic growth and civic welfare of New Orleans are commemorated through elaborate tombs and dedications. Visiting these sites offers

insight into the city's development and the people behind it.

Understanding the Cemetery's Architecture and Symbolism

The artistic and architectural elements of Metairie Cemetery provide a rich narrative about death, remembrance, and cultural identity. Exploring these features during a self guided tour enhances appreciation for the craftsmanship and symbolism embedded in the cemetery's design.

Funerary Art Styles

The cemetery showcases a variety of funerary art styles, including Gothic Revival, Egyptian Revival, Classical, and Art Deco. Each style reflects different cultural influences and periods, providing a visual history of funerary architecture. Notable features include pointed arches, obelisks, angelic statues, and intricate ironwork.

Symbolism in Monuments

Many tombs and statues incorporate symbolic motifs that convey messages about life, death, and the afterlife. Common symbols include angels symbolizing protection, urns representing the soul, and broken columns indicating a life cut short. Understanding these symbols adds depth to the experience of the self guided tour.

Materials and Craftsmanship

The use of materials such as marble, granite, limestone, and cast iron demonstrates the high level of craftsmanship involved in the cemetery's construction. The durability and beauty of these materials contribute to the lasting legacy of the monuments and enhance their visual impact.

Practical Tips for Visitors

To fully benefit from a metairie cemetery self guided tour, visitors should consider several practical aspects that ensure a safe, respectful, and enjoyable experience.

Respect and Etiquette

As an active cemetery, visitors must observe proper etiquette, including maintaining silence, refraining from touching monuments, and respecting the privacy of mourners. Photography is usually permitted, but it is important to be discreet and considerate.

Accessibility and Facilities

The cemetery's terrain includes paved paths and some uneven areas, so comfortable walking shoes are recommended. While there are limited facilities on-site, nearby amenities in Metairie provide options for dining and rest. Visitors with mobility challenges should plan accordingly.

Safety and Security

Staying within designated paths and visiting during daylight hours enhances safety. It is advisable to tour with a companion or inform someone about your visit plans. The cemetery is generally safe, but awareness of surroundings is always prudent.

- Bring water and sunscreen, especially during warmer months
- Use a printed or downloaded map for navigation
- Allow several hours to explore the main areas thoroughly
- Take notes or photographs to document points of interest

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour?

The Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour allows visitors to explore the historic cemetery at their own pace using maps and informational materials to learn about its notable monuments, architecture, and famous interments.

How can I obtain a map for the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour?

Maps for the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour are often available at the cemetery entrance, local visitor centers, or online through the official Metairie Cemetery or New Orleans tourism websites.

What are some highlights to see on the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour?

Highlights include the elaborate mausoleums, the sculpted angels, the Tomb of the Unknown Confederate Soldiers, and the graves of notable New Orleans figures such as politicians, artists, and historical personalities.

Is the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour accessible year-round?

Yes, Metairie Cemetery is generally open year-round, but it's best to check current visiting hours and any special event closures before planning your self-guided tour.

Are there any fees associated with the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour?

Typically, there is no fee to enter Metairie Cemetery and take a self-guided tour, but donations are often appreciated to help with maintenance and preservation efforts.

Can I use a mobile app for the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour?

While there isn't an official Metairie Cemetery app, some third-party apps and audio guides may offer information to enhance your self-guided experience.

How long does a self-guided tour of Metairie Cemetery usually take?

A self-guided tour can take anywhere from 1 to 2 hours depending on how many sites you visit and how much time you spend reading the historical markers and exploring the grounds.

Are there any rules or guidelines to follow during the Metairie Cemetery self-guided tour?

Visitors should respect the solemn nature of the cemetery by not disturbing graves, staying on designated paths, avoiding loud noises, and following any posted rules to preserve the site's dignity and safety.

Additional Resources

1. *Whispers Among the Tombstones: A Self-Guided Tour of Metairie Cemetery*

This book offers a detailed, step-by-step self-guided tour of Metairie Cemetery, highlighting its most notable monuments and sculptures. It explores the history behind the elaborate tombs and the stories of the prominent individuals interred there. Richly illustrated, it provides visitors with a deeper appreciation of the cemetery's artistic and cultural significance.

2. *Metairie Cemetery: Art, History, and Mystery*

Delving into the unique funerary art and architecture found in Metairie Cemetery, this book combines historical context with intriguing anecdotes. Readers will learn about the symbolism used in the monuments and the stories of New Orleans' most influential families. It's an essential guide for those interested in both art history and local heritage.

3. Silent Stories: Exploring Metairie Cemetery's Historic Graves

This engaging guide uncovers the personal histories of notable figures buried in Metairie Cemetery. It provides a self-guided walking tour that focuses on the lives and legacies of these individuals, from politicians to artists. The book encourages readers to reflect on the cultural fabric of New Orleans through its resting places.

4. Metairie Cemetery Self-Guided Tour and Historical Companion

Designed for independent explorers, this book pairs a practical map-based tour with detailed historical commentary. It offers insights into the cemetery's design, the evolution of burial practices, and the significance of various monuments. Ideal for visitors wanting a comprehensive yet accessible introduction to Metairie Cemetery.

5. Gardens of Stone: The Sculptural Beauty of Metairie Cemetery

Focusing on the artistic elements within Metairie Cemetery, this book showcases its stunning sculptures and mausoleums. It discusses the artists and craftsmen behind these works and examines the cemetery as an open-air museum. Readers gain an understanding of how art and memory intertwine in this unique setting.

6. Echoes of the Past: A Walking Tour of Metairie Cemetery

This book offers a chronological walking tour that reveals the cemetery's development alongside New Orleans' history. It highlights key gravesites and architectural styles while sharing little-known stories that bring the past to life. Perfect for history buffs and casual visitors alike.

7. Legends and Lore of Metairie Cemetery

Exploring the myths, ghost stories, and folklore surrounding Metairie Cemetery, this book adds a mysterious dimension to the self-guided tour experience. It blends historical facts with local legends to create an engaging narrative. Readers will find a captivating mix of history and the supernatural.

8. The Metairie Cemetery Guide: Architecture, History, and Notables

This comprehensive guidebook offers detailed descriptions of the cemetery's most significant monuments and the notable individuals buried there. It includes architectural analysis, biographical sketches, and historical context, making it a valuable resource for scholars and tourists.

9. Metairie Cemetery: A Cultural Landscape of New Orleans

Examining the cemetery as a cultural landmark, this book discusses its role in New Orleans' social and cultural history. It explores themes of memory, identity, and heritage through the lens of burial practices and monument design. The self-guided tour included helps readers navigate and appreciate the cemetery's unique atmosphere.

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