

# How to Make Your Own **HAUNTED** House

FROM: WIKIHOW-

[HTTPS://WWW.WIKIHOW.COM/MAKE-A-  
HAUNTED-HOUSE](https://www.wikihow.com/make-a-haunted-house)

AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HAUNTER'S  
GROUP PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



BATES  
MOTEL

VACANCY



# 1. PICK A SINGLE THEME & A COHESIVE STORY

- **A collection of props without a theme is just a collection, not a haunted house.**
- **Decide upon a single theme – e.g. ghosts, pirates, mad scientist.**
- **Determine your audience – are you going to have a super scary haunt for adults or a more family friendly tone?**
- **Decide on a simple story to fit your theme – a twisted biotech making monsters for the military, ghost pirates fighting pigmies, etc.**
- **This will help determine what “scenes” you create for the haunted house.**

## 2. DETERMINE SPACE

## AVAILABLE FOR THE HAUNT

- **How much space at your house is available for the haunted house & which areas are off limits - will you focus on the inside or outside of the house?**
- **Consider creating “rooms” or a maze with plastic or cloth if you want to keep people outside.**
- **Make sure the area is safe for the public- no trip hazards!**
- **Is there access for electricity or places to hide “behind the scenes” materials like air compressors or speakers?**

# 3. CREATE A PLAN FOR YOUR HAUNT

- **Once you know your theme and story, as well as your space, plan the details for your haunted house.**
- **Set a date for the haunted house and let people know you are creating it.**
- **Plan how much money & time you have & factor in.**
- **Drawing a visual map to determine what's in each "room" and the path through the haunted house is very useful.**
- **Map out the scares – while jump scares are great, too many get repetitive.**
- **Jump scares can be either people &/or animated props**
- **Remember, one major focus per room is best.**
- **Finally, draw up a list of "to-dos" and how much time each will take so everything gets done in time.**

# 4. CREATE AN EERIE ATMOSPHERE WITH LIGHT & SOUND

- **When planning your haunt, remember that the setting can go a long way to making your haunt great.**
- **Use darkness & lighting effects carefully – while complete darkness makes people wary and more likely to jump, eerie lighting (fire & ice effects or strobes) can convey a specific mood or impression of movement.**
- **Having a background soundtrack is good, but make sure they fit your space, e.g. lab beeps & boops for the mad scientist lab or wind, wolf howls and owls for a haunted forest or graveyard.**
- **Combine light & sound for best effect – thunder & lightning.**
- **Make sure to have background decorations (tombstones, spider webs, lab specimens, etc.) to match the scene.**

# 5. ASK FRIENDS TO HELP OUT

- **While you can do a haunted house without human actors, things are more fun with them.**
- **People make very effective “jump scares” or can help explain & set up a scene:**
  - **A spooky ghost can jump out and scare your guests.**
  - **A monster can hide in the dark and just move enough for the guests to realize they are there – & then can follow the group at a distance and hide when people see it.**
  - **A dead autopsy victim can lie on the table and “come to life” when people come near.**
  - **A mad scientist can explain their experiment and walk people through the lab.**
- **Your friends will have a ball scaring people!**



# 6. CREATE OR BUY PROPS

- **Planning your haunt early will help you decide on what props, background decorations or lighting you will need.**
- **Some things can't be bought or are too expensive, & you will need to make them.**
  - **Google can be your friend as there are many on-line instructions available (e.g. Instructables) to help build props.**
- **Also, interest groups can help - groups like the Northern California Haunters group & other on-line groups like the Halloween forum will share expertise.**
- **You can reduce expense of animated props by hacking an inexpensive store-bought animated prop – see our display on the table for “Human Hybrids Freak Show” room.**

# 7. DECORATE YOUR SPACE

- **This goes without saying...**
- **However, make sure to do it ahead of time, as you may want to tweak the layout after laying props and decorations out in physical space.**
- **Don't do it too early, however, or your family may rebel at having to live with the haunt.**
- **If you are doing this outside, be prepared for wind or rain – protect delicate props, animatronics, and electrical equipment/lights with waterproof coverings if needed.**
- **Be careful of using decorations that can stain household items - that creepy, slimy hand on the wall may live forevermore as a hand shaped stain.**

# 8. TEST PROPS, LIGHTING, & HAVE A “DRESS REHEARSAL” AHEAD OF TIME

- **Remember, “tweak time” should be built into the schedule.**
- **If at all possible, finish props & set up a few days early to allow testing, as last-minute electronic failures can put a damper on the fun.**
- **Also, try out lighting and sound at night ahead of time, as it can be very hard to determine the best lighting/sound during the day.**
- **If you have “actors”, go over what you want them to do ahead of time – general guidelines are helpful.**

# 9. DOCUMENT YOUR HAUNT- PLAN FOR PICTURES & VIDEO

- **After all of the fun is done, you may find you were too busy to take any pictures or video!**
- **While optional, this is short run theater and will disappear the next day. Taking photos and some video is essential to share with friends later.**
- **Ask a friend who is good with their camera & who is not part of the haunt to take some pictures and video, as you will probably be too busy to do so.**
- **Then later, you can have a “recap” of the night – this is great fun & helps you improve the haunt the following year.**

# 10. INVITE YOUR FRIENDS (OR THE NEIGHBORS) & HAVE FUN!

- **Whether this is a small event for a block party or to entertain the neighborhood families, or something larger like the Maker Faire, creating your own haunted house is great fun!**
- **Get more help at the other display tables here or join us at some Northern California Haunters “Make and Take” meetings - we are here to help.**