

## A Self-Guided Tour for the Young at Heart



Welcome to Washington National Cathedral. We have 112 friendly and spooky characters for you to find and meet!

What are gargoyles really meant to do? They are part of a building's guttering system; they are water spouts meant to keep water from running down the walls of buildings. They are often, but not always, carved in the form of fantastic or imaginary animals or humans. A number of our Cathedral carvings memorialize real people, often in a funny way. However, the sculptors were always careful not to be mean while poking fun.

Some of our critters are not really gargoyles but are called "grotesques," which are also part of the Cathedral's rain control system. Gargoyles carry away excess water via pipes running through their mouths; grotesques deflect rainwater by bouncing it off the top of their heads, noses or other projecting parts and away from the stone walls.

To find these gargoyles, face the west façade (main entrance) of the Cathedral—this is the end with the two towers. The first gargoyle is on the left-hand side of this face of the building. The tour moves left-to-right.



**1** This first gargoyle is located on the castle-like portion of the front of the Cathedral. It depicts a three-eyed "human" with a mill stone around his neck. Pictured on the stone is the front of one of the buildings of the National Cathedral School for Girls, located to your left.

**2** The gargoyle to the right of #1, still on the castle-like part of the building, is a baldish man with large ears, short legs and huge shoes. He holds a gavel in one hand and a stack of papers in the other.

**3** Above and on the left of the left-hand portal (arched opening with double doors below) is a curly-haired faun, the Greek god Pan, holding pipes. This gargoyle was given in thanksgiving for the many musical programs offered to the public by the Cathedral.

**4** A rotund gentleman holding a fork and spoon can be found to the right of the smiling Pan. This funny figure represents gluttony, one of the "seven deadly sins."

There are no gargoyles over the central portal, unless you look very high on the building.

**5** Above the right-hand portal, on the left, find a bear peering through the famous St. Louis Arch, the "gateway to the west." Given by the Missouri Chapter of the National Cathedral Association, the bear represents Missouri's state motto, "We stand on our own."

**6** To the right of the bear is a carving depicting a seated birdwatcher. Do you see the binoculars on his hip?

**7** On the castle-like part of the Cathedral, on the right-hand (south) side of the Cathedral, is a delightful elephant holding a book in his trunk. The person honored by this gargoyle is a former manager of the Cathedral's bookstore.

**8** The final gargoyle on this tour is a frightening devil, located to the right of #7. Can you see his pitchfork, horn, and pointed tail? He's wearing quite an evil expression on his face. Make up a story to tell why he's holding a basket of fruit.

Take some time to look at the large statues of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Cathedral's namesakes, and Adam. Note the swirling sculptures above each portal depicting the creation of day, humankind and night. What else can you see? Have you tried our other self-guided gargoyle tours, "Eight Great Gargoyles" and "Silly Southern Gargoyles"?