

ARE PRISONS AND JAILS THE SAME?

No, even Webster's Dictionary will show a difference. Jail is a place of confinement while one waits for a trial or is convicted of a minor offense. They are run by local governments (normally counties, or perhaps a city). A prison on the other hand is for those convicted of serious crimes (felonies), and are administered by states or the federal government. However, the comparison does not stop there. People held in jails are rarely held more than a year, and so the local administrators try to make the stay rather unpleasant to emphasize to the inmate that he/she does not want to come to jail. Prisons on the other hand have people that are serving long sentences. Some may have several life sentences without a chance of parole. Prison is their life. Prisons therefore provide chances for recreation and education. In most cases, ex-felons who re-enter the system are very glad to leave the poor food of jails and the strict confinement for the relative freedom and perks of prison life. Of course, this is the general experience. There are always exceptions. A few rural counties run jails where the inmates receive food such as pizza from name brand pizza restaurants. There are some prisons, or parts of prisons, which rival the prisons in third world countries. The American Federal Bureau of Prison system has tried to standardize their procedure, and this has helped to make the federal system more uniform.

