



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



MikeBehnken

# Reservations Needed

## **San Francisco, Oakland, Sausalito, 3 Days**

### Table of contents:

Guide Description	2
Itinerary Overview	3
Daily Itineraries	5
San Francisco Snapshot	15
Oakland Snapshot	17
Sausalito Snapshot	18

# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** This past weekend, the San Diego local expert visited the Bay Area for some fun in the unlikely sun.







# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - San Francisco, Oakland

**DAY NOTE:** Start your afternoon with a lunch time treat in North Beach at the famous Tony's Pizza followed by a walk up and down Coit Tower. After enjoying the brisk hike, cross the Bay Bridge to Oakland/Berkeley area, where the food is just as plentiful as all of the city's characters. Berkeley's College Ave has some great stops like the Far Leaves Tea Room and La Farine bakery (where you can pick up breakfast for the next morning - the morning buns are heaven!).

Enjoy dinner at the famous Bay Wolf, but save room for dessert at the even popular east bay staple (and 110 year old venue) Fenton's, where the ice cream sundaes are HUGE. Head back to North Beach/ Fisherman's Wharf for a drink at Cellar 360 or a pick me up at Buena Vista Cafe, within walking distance of the hotel and city favorites to close the evening.







	<b>Tony's Pizza Napoletana</b> Award winning Pizza in North Beach
	<b>Coit Tower</b> Towering view on top of Telegraph Hill
	<b>Fentons Creamery</b>
	<b>Cellar 360</b> Taste wines from 30+ wineries in Ghirardelli Square
	<b>Buena Vista Cafe</b> Wharfside Legend
	<b>Courtyard by Marriott Fisherman's Wharf</b> Prime Fisherman's Wharf location

## Day 2 - San Francisco

**DAY NOTE:** Enjoy a relaxing morning before heading out to the city's Chinatown district for lunch, where you'll walk around and see some of the area's great architecture. Later, enjoy some shark fin soup and crab at Anthony Bourdain's "No Reservations" favorite R&G Lounge right in the district, and walk yourself over to Union Square's Lefty O'Douls to catch the game.

Following a few beers, drive yourself back to the hotel for an upscale change of pace at the Italian District's Bix. Off in a small alley just two blocks down from Chinatown, this restaurant is famous for its strong drinks and great appetizer list. Make


reservations early! Finish your evening at Union Street's Bar None, a popular place for locals in the more classy downtown bar scene, or cross the street for a more sport themed bar at Bus Stop.

	<b>Chinatown</b> North America's oldest.
	<b>R &amp; G Lounge</b> Where Seafood is the Specialty
	<b>Lefty O'Douls</b> SF sports memories never die here
	<b>Bix</b> A classic Martini Bar
	<b>Bar None</b> Cow Hollow pub with games
	<b>Courtyard by Marriott Fisherman's Wharf</b> Prime Fisherman's Wharf location

## Day 3 - San Francisco, Sausalito

**DAY NOTE:** You might be tired, but it's worth it to start your morning early with a cup of Joe from Caffe Trieste, in walking distance from the hotel if you get up before the sun does. After a quick pastry, enjoy the drive through the city (passing Lombard Street) to Haight-Ashbury, where you'll find a bunch of hoodelums around some of the best vintage stores and cafes.

Finally, drive across the Golden Gate - with the windows down if the weather allows - to the sweet town of Sausalito. Enjoy lunch literally right on the water, an ice cream cone from Lappert's and drive back home from here.

	<b>Courtyard by Marriott Fisherman's Wharf</b> Prime Fisherman's Wharf location
	<b>Caffe Trieste</b> Live opera and espresso
	<b>Lombard Street</b> World's crookedest street!

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife



## Haight-Ashbury

Counter culture shopping, center of the 60's



## Golden Gate Bridge

An architectural icon capping off the San Francisco Bay



## Golden Gate Park

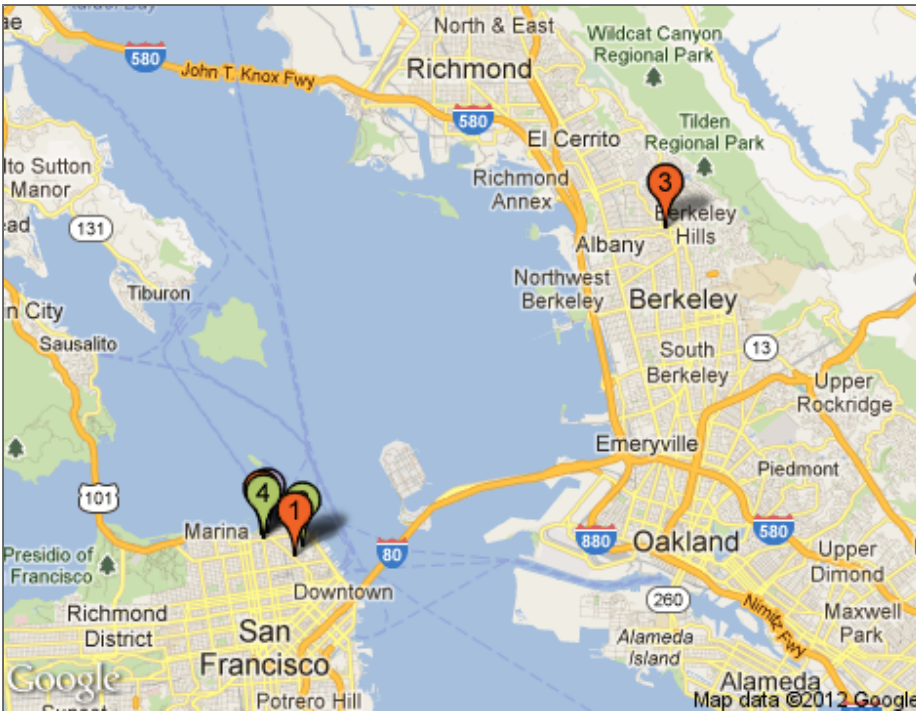
1,000+ acres of green retreat in the heart of the city



## Sausalito

Artsy Marin charm on the water's edge

# Day 1 - San Francisco, Oakland



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** Start your afternoon with a lunch time treat in North Beach at the famous Tony's Pizza followed by a walk up and down Coit Tower. After enjoying the brisk hike, cross the Bay Bridge to Oakland/Berkeley area, where the food is just as plentiful as all of the city's characters. Berkeley's College Ave has some great stops like the Far Leaves Tea Room and La Farine bakery (where you can pick up breakfast for the next morning - the morning buns are heaven!).

Enjoy dinner at the famous Bay Wolf, but save room for dessert at the even popular east bay staple (and 110 year old venue) Fenton's, where the ice cream sundaes are HUGE. Head back to North Beach/ Fisherman's Wharf for a drink at Cellar 360 or a pick me up at Buena Vista Cafe, within walking distance of the hotel and city favorites to close the evening.

### contact:

tel: (415) 835-9888

<http://www.tonyspizzanapoletana.com/>

### location:

1570 Stockton St  
San Francisco CA 94133

### hours:

Wed-Sun 12pm-11pm

## 1 Tony's Pizza Napoletana

**DESCRIPTION:** The buzz preceding the opening of Tony's Pizza Napoletana in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood was deafening but nothing if not accurate. Located off of Washington Square park and cooking everything from the 2007 World Pizza Cup (Naples, Italy) Margherita - only 73 made a day - to Sicilian Colombo to an authentic Jersey Tomato Pie, Tony's has a pizza for each and every taste. All of the staff are knowledgeable and attentive, the wine list is extensive, and the restaurant is a great place to see and be seen.

© NileGuide



citysearch

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 362-0808  
<http://www.coittower.org/>

**location:**  
1 Telegraph Hill Boulevard  
San Francisco CA 94133

**hours:**  
Daily 10am-5pm

## 2 Coit Tower

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The trek is entirely worth it; take the Filbert Steps (at the corner of Filbert and Kearny streets), which are steep but are the most direct path up to the tower

**DESCRIPTION:** The landmark Coit Tower was built in the 1930's as a tribute to the city's firefighters, at the behest of eccentric local celebrity Lillie Hitchcock Coit, an honorary firefighter herself. Today, Coit Tower stands proudly on the northeastern edge of the city in the scenic Telegraph Hill district. Although Coit Tower is accessed by an entirely uphill climb, visitors who brave it are treated to unparalleled views of the Bay and its bridges, Marin County, the East Bay, and the undulating San Francisco cityscape. Plus there's an incredible Art Deco mural that covers the entire circumference of the tower's interior ground-floor walls. Painted by 26 artists, this masterpiece depicts many aspects of '30's California industry and labor. Remember, the walk back is all downhill; head southwest into the nearby Italian-American enclave of North Beach for a cappuccino and gelato and some fabulous shopping on Grant Avenue. © NileGuide



**contact:**  
tel: 5106587000  
[www.fentonscreamery.com](http://www.fentonscreamery.com)

**location:**  
4226 Piedmont Avenue  
Oakland CA 94611

## 3 Fentons Creamery

**DESCRIPTION:** Known for generous portions, this Bay Area treasure is a retro soda fountain that showcases daily ice cream production and fountain sundae making. Founded in 1894, Fentons Creamery is a landmark institution that has served generations its famous handcrafted ice creams and sauces. The fresh Crab Salad sandwich is the house specialty, best when accompanied by a thick shake! Our ice cream sundaes are world famous – the Black & Tan Sundae is our signature item, made with one of the many ice cream flavors invented by Melvin Fenton – Toasted Almond. Fentons Creamery offers a wonderful, hearty breakfast on Friday, Saturday & Sunday! Serving thick Belgian waffles (best topped with ice cream), Pancakes, French toast, Crab Omelets and Crab Cake Eggs Benedict, savory turkey sausage...and so much more! Featured on the History Channel, the Food Network, USA Today and Zagat, Fentons offers ice cream production tours by appointment. © OpenTable



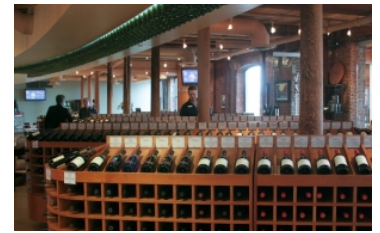
citysearch

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 440-0772  
<http://www.cellar360.com/cellar360/page/sanfrancisco.jsp>

**location:**  
900 North Point St  
San Francisco CA 94109

#### 4 Cellar 360

**DESCRIPTION:** A tasting room in San Francisco, Cellar 360 brings together the work of 30+ wineries around the world into one stylish tasting room in the heart of Ghirardelli Square. Tasting flights change every month, and various wines are also available by the glass. Classes on Wednesdays and Sundays are open to the public, pairing exciting selections with tasty treats from Cellar 360's in-house Chef. Bottle selection is extensive, and there is a patio for those who would like to consume their purchases there. They ship around the world, and have partner tasting rooms in Napa and Sonoma.  
© NileGuide



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 474 5044  
<http://www.thebuenavista.com>

**location:**  
2765 Hyde Street  
San Francisco CA 94109

**hours:**  
Mo to Fr from 09:00 AM to 02:00 AM, Sa to Su from 08:00 AM to 02:00 AM

#### 5 Buena Vista Cafe

**DESCRIPTION:** In 1953, Buena Vista Cafe served San Francisco the first Irish Coffee it had ever tasted. There is a rumor that it was the first one ANYONE had tasted. Almost fifty years later, it makes an estimated 2,000 Irish Coffees each day, packing the old mahogany bar (and its consistent queue) primarily with Fisherman's Wharf tourists. The view, which encompasses Ghirardelli Square, The Cannery, the Wharf, and much of the Bay, is amazing. © wcities.com



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 775-3800  
fax: (415) 441-7307  
<http://marriott.com/property/openpage/SFOCF>

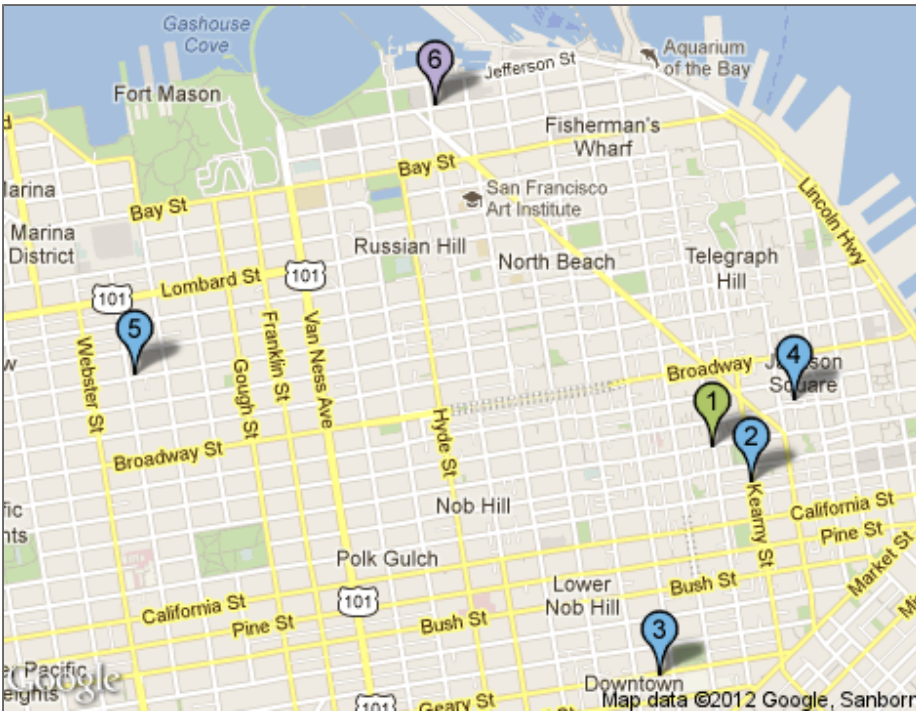
**location:**  
580 Beach Street  
San Francisco CA 94133

#### 6 Courtyard by Marriott Fisherman's Wharf

**DESCRIPTION:** Located in one of San Francisco's most famous districts, this hotel is only 1 block from Fisherman's Wharf, 3 blocks from Pier 39, 1 block to the famous Hyde/Powell Cable Car line, and adjacent to the Cannery. Chinatown and North Beach are less than 1/2 mile away - walk, bus, or cab! Walk a 1/2 block to the "F" line antique street cars and take a ride along the Embarcadero, up Market street through Downtown, Civic Center, and out to The Castro District.



# Day 2 - San Francisco



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** Enjoy a relaxing morning before heading out to the city's Chinatown district for lunch, where you'll walk around and see some of the area's great architecture. Later, enjoy some shark fin soup and crab at Anthony Bourdain's "No Reservations" favorite R&G Lounge right in the district, and walk yourself over to Union Square's Lefty O'Douls to catch the game.

Following a few beers, drive yourself back to the hotel for an upscale change of pace at the Italian District's Bix. Off in a small alley just two blocks down from Chinatown, this restaurant is famous for its strong drinks and great appetizer list. Make reservations early! Finish your evening at Union Street's Bar None, a popular place for locals in the more classy downtown bar scene, or cross the street for a more sport themed bar at Bus Stop.

### contact:

tel: +1 415 391 2000  
<http://www.sanfranciscochina.com/>

### location:

Bush St. and Kearny St.  
San Francisco CA 94108

## 1 Chinatown

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Good dim sum is surprisingly hard to find, as many restaurants seem to favor grease as a main ingredient. Chinatown's best dim sum can be found at the Golden Door Restaurant and Yank Sing. For an absolutely delectable yet no-frills Chinese dining experience, head to local favorite House of Nanking.

**DESCRIPTION:** Red lanterns waving in the breeze. Incense wafting out of small temples. Esoteric medicinal herbs dangling in shop windows. Some aspects of San Francisco's Chinatown, the oldest in America, hardly seem worlds apart from the motherland and haven't changed much from when



[www.bluewaikiki.com](http://www.bluewaikiki.com)

the neighborhood was first built in the mid-19th century. Enter at the dragon-flanked gate on Bush Street at Grant Avenue and get lost in a wonderland of bustling produce markets, touches of ancient Chinese architecture, quirky gift and houseware shops, art galleries, clothing stores, dim sum eateries, and serene tea houses, the densest concentration of which are on Grant Avenue and Stockton Street. Some hot spots are Portsmouth Square, where you can admire the graceful movements of Tai Chi practitioners and the strategy of elderly chess players, and the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco, where Sinophiles can take in art exhibits, be led on an informative, guided Heritage Walking Tour (excellent for those wishing to pick up on the area's rich history), or take a brush painting or traditional Chinese music workshop. © NileGuide

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 982-7877  
fax: (415) 982-1496  
<http://www.rnglounge.com/>

**location:**  
631 Kearny Street  
San Francisco CA 94108

**hours:**  
Daily 11a-9:30p

## 2 R & G Lounge

**DESCRIPTION:** Though the cuisine is Cantonese, you will feel like you have traveled to Japan when you climb the stairs to the dining room of the R & G Lounge. The room is covered with silk-screened Japanese prints and Japanese flute music plays overhead. The house specialty is seafood. In the late autumn and early winter months, experience a San Francisco tradition by sampling the roasted Dungeness crab. The salt and pepper quail and fresh oysters are other sea-faring favorites. © wcities.com



citysearch

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 982 8900  
<http://www.leftyodouls.biz/>

**location:**  
333 Geary St.  
San Francisco CA 94102

**hours:**  
Mo to Su from 07:00 AM to  
02:00 AM

## 3 Lefty O'Douls

**DESCRIPTION:** Lefty's is the perfect place to sit down and unwind after a long day of shopping, sight-seeing or working. They are more than a restaurant and lounge—offering one-of-a-kind baseball memorabilia, rare celebrity photos and "the best deal on the square." Lefty's has 12 TVs scattered throughout their restaurant. Don't forget the kids!



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 433 6300  
fax: +1 415 433 4574  
<http://www.bixrestaurant.com/>

**location:**  
56 Gold Street  
San Francisco CA 94133

**hours:**  
Mon-Tue 4:30pm-10pm  
Wed 4:30pm-10:30pm,  
Thu 4:30pm-11pm Fri

## 4 Bix

**DESCRIPTION:** Power hitters of the local and the international variety gather here to drink, eat, and conduct business in a comfortable setting. While the most requested drink may be the classic dry martini, other drink features include a Mojito 'Isidro' and Bix Punch. Entrees include Seared Rare Yellowfin Tuna and Grilled Rib-Eye Stctiorange © wcities.com



photo courtesy of thursdayclub

11:30am-12am, Sat  
5:30pm-12am Sun  
5:30pm-10pm

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 409 4469  
<http://www.barnonesf.com/>

**location:**  
1980 Union St.  
San Francisco CA 94123

## 5 Bar None

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

On a Union Street Pub Crawl, make this one of your later stops.

**DESCRIPTION:** This frat-party-cum-neighborhood-bar is the place to go if you're eager to take on a few wasted recent grads in beer pong or put the moves on that cute girl who used to live down the hall from you freshman year (or someone who looks just like her). Downstairs and behind more respectable establishments on this posh stretch of Union Street in the Marina, Bar None would be aptly named if the bouncers didn't occasionally turn away the unfit from the line on the street Friday and Saturday nights. Once inside, it does appear that anything goes. Bluto and the brothers of Delta Tau Chi would be proud.



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 775-3800  
fax: (415) 441-7307  
<http://marriott.com/property/openpage/SFOCF>

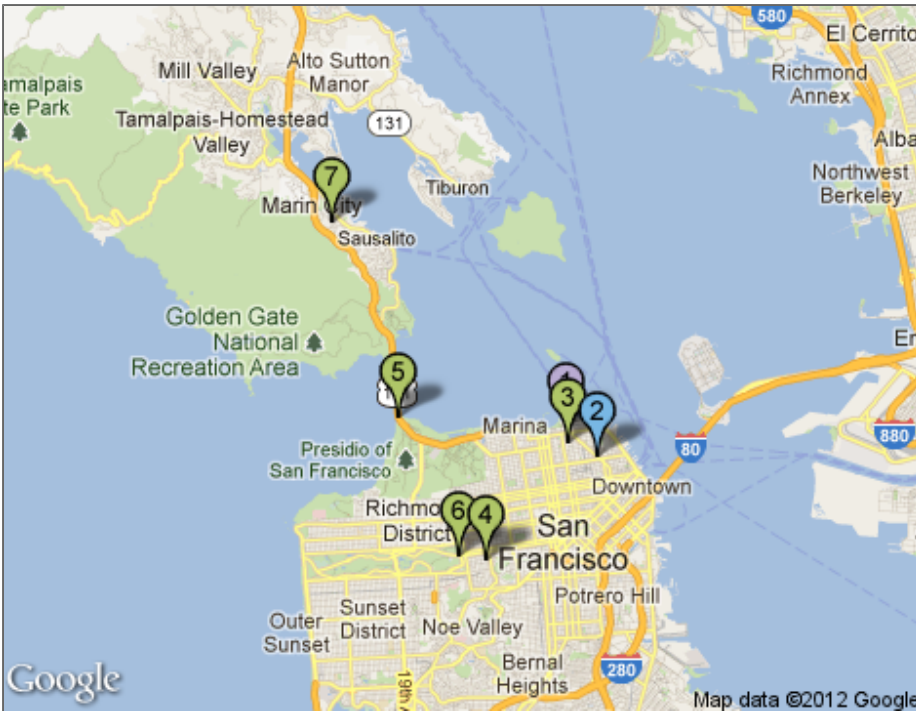
**location:**  
580 Beach Street  
San Francisco CA 94133

## 6 Courtyard by Marriott Fisherman's Wharf

**DESCRIPTION:** Located in one of San Francisco's most famous districts, this hotel is only 1 block from Fisherman's Wharf, 3 blocks from Pier 39, 1 block to the famous Hyde/Powell Cable Car line, and adjacent to the Cannery. Chinatown and North Beach are less than 1/2 mile away - walk, bus, or cab! Walk a 1/2 block to the "F" line antique street cars and take a ride along the Embarcadero, up Market street through Downtown, Civic Center, and out to The Castro District.



# Day 3 - San Francisco, Sausalito



## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** You might be tired, but it's worth it to start your morning early with a cup of Joe from Caffe Trieste, in walking distance from the hotel if you get up before the sun does. After a quick pastry, enjoy the drive through the city (passing Lombard Street) to Haight-Ashbury, where you'll find a bunch of hoodelums around some of the best vintage stores and cafes.

Finally, drive across the Golden Gate - with the windows down if the weather allows - to the sweet town of Sausalito. Enjoy lunch literally right on the water, an ice cream cone from Lappert's and drive back home from here.

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 775-3800  
fax: (415) 441-7307  
<http://marriott.com/property/propertypage/SFOCF>

**location:**  
580 Beach Street  
San Francisco CA 94133

## 1 Courtyard by Marriott Fisherman's Wharf

**DESCRIPTION:** Located in one of San Francisco's most famous districts, this hotel is only 1 block from Fisherman's Wharf, 3 blocks from Pier 39, 1 block to the famous Hyde/Powell Cable Car line, and adjacent to the Cannery. Chinatown and North Beach are less than 1/2 mile away - walk, bus, or cab! Walk a 1/2 block to the "F" line antique street cars and take a ride along the Embarcadero, up Market street through Downtown, Civic Center, and out to The Castro District.



**contact:**  
tel: (415) 392 6739  
<http://www.caffetrieste.com>

**location:**  
609 Vallejo Street  
San Francisco CA 94133

**hours:**  
Fr to Sa from 06:30 PM to  
12:00 AM, Su to Th from 06:30  
AM to 11:00 PM

## 2 Caffè Trieste

**DESCRIPTION:** The Giotta family opened this charming cafe more than 40 years ago and it was the first espresso bar on the West Coast. Now, it is a North Beach tradition with its polished wood surfaces and celebrity photograph-lined walls. You will get the feeling that if Chris Isaac and Tony Bennett are loyal customers, you should be too. Along with excellent coffee and homemade cuisine, you get live music, as several family members are professional singers. Saturday evenings, your coffee comes accompanied by traditional Italian songs, ballads, or even opera. Note: Cash only. © wcities.com



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 391-2000

**location:**  
Between Hyde &  
Leavenworth streets  
San Francisco CA 94133

## 3 Lombard Street

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**  
Take the Powell-Hyde Cable Car line there, as it conveniently stops at the very top of the street.

**DESCRIPTION:** Famed as the "crookedest street in the world," the swath of Lombard Street between Hyde and Leavenworth streets in San Francisco's Russian Hill district is indeed full of twists and turns. Lombard Street was designed as a series of switchbacks in order to make its steep grade navigable by automobile. Today, you'll almost definitely see Lombard Street congested with cars making the celebrated drive down. Therefore, we recommend hoofing it—you'll be able to admire all the more slowly the lovely, brightly-colored houses flanked with bougainvillea and all manner of flowers, as well as the gorgeous view of North Beach, Telegraph Hill, and the bay. After winding down Lombard Street, head east to nearby North Beach for serious Italian eats, or north to the maritime delights of Fisherman's Wharf and Ghiradelli Square. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Lombard Street

**contact:**  
tel: +1 415 391 2000 (Tourist  
Information)

**location:**  
Haight and Ashbury Streets  
San Francisco CA 94117

## 4 Haight-Ashbury

**DESCRIPTION:** This center of '60s psychedelic activity to this day retains counterculture credentials with a proliferation of piercing salons, bookstores brimming with hippie nostalgia, and off-beat shops set amid Victorian architecture. © NileGuide



**contact:**  
tel: (415) 921-5858  
<http://www.goldengate.org/>

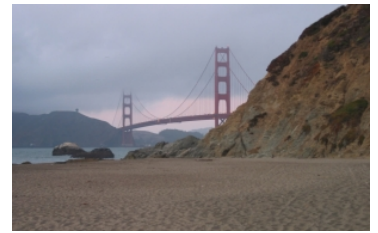
**location:**  
Lincoln Blvd & Hwy 1  
San Francisco CA 94129

## 5 Golden Gate Bridge

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Dress in layers, as the bridge is in the city's fog and wind belt; even on a picture-perfect day, the temperature can fluctuate.

**DESCRIPTION:** Perhaps the most iconic bridge in the country, if not in the world, the rusted-orange expanse of the Golden Gate Bridge is a not-to-miss sight while in San Francisco. Connecting the city and neighboring Marin County to the north, the Golden Gate Bridge also serves as a gateway between the San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Although you'll be treated to glimpses of the bridge throughout the city, the best way to experience it is to walk or bike across, starting in the Presidio. You can then spend a serene afternoon strolling around the quaint Marin seaside city of Sausalito. If you prefer a gentler route, you can take a ferry from the San Francisco Ferry Building or from Fisherman's Wharf to Sausalito or Tiburon (another beautiful Marin town full of great restaurants and nearby walking paths), gazing at the majestic Golden Gate Bridge, plus sailboats, kite-surfers, and the gorgeous Bay views along the way. © NileGuide



wcities

**contact:**  
tel: (415) 831-2700  
fax: +1 415 581 2540  
<http://www.sfgov.org/>

**location:**  
Stanyan & Fulton Sts  
San Francisco CA 94118

## 6 Golden Gate Park

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

You can pedal a boat around Stow Lake, but a better bet is to rent a bike at the boathouse there and pedal around the park. On your way, check out the historic herd of bison (That's right, big shaggy buffalo) in their paddock near the lake.

**DESCRIPTION:** Spanning three miles from the edge of Haight-Ashbury all the way to the Pacific Ocean, Golden Gate Park contains so many mini-universes and attractions you'll want to (literally) stop and smell the roses on several occasions. Die-hard nature lovers can check out the Rose Garden, the Conservatory of Flowers, or the famous Japanese Tea Garden, featuring a classic pagoda, cherry blossoms, and landscaping straight out of the Land of the Rising Sun. Golden Gate Park's natural highlight, however, is the San Francisco Botanical Garden, which features a horticultural trip around the world (don't miss the redwood grove and succulents section). Don't miss Golden Gate Park's two world-class museums, the California Academy of Sciences and the De Young Museum. Both were completely rebuilt in their original locations in the past decade, and are worth a visit for their architecture alone. The park is also the perfect place to get active. There are tons of walking paths, several public tennis courts, an affordable pitch and put nine-hole golf course, sport fields, and picnic grounds. You can even rent a boat and head out for a delightful row on Stow Lake. Spring, summer, and fall bring a number of



http2007

events to Golden Gate Park, including bluegrass, rock, and hip-hop concerts and Shakespeare in the Park performances. © NileGuide

**contact:**  
<http://www.sausalito.org/>

**location:**  
Sausalito  
Sausalito CA 94956

## 7 Sausalito

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Some nearby attractions of interest include the Bay Area Discovery Museum (just under the Golden Gate Bridge tower), which delights the whole family with science, art, and media exhibits; the Marine Mammal Center; hikes and ocean vistas galore in the Marin Headlands; and Angel Island State Park, a former West Coast immigration center and currently a marvelous place to enjoy picnics and walks (ferries depart from the Sausalito pier).

**DESCRIPTION:** Sausalito is a quaint, Mediterranean-style waterfront town that serves as the ideal gateway to outdoors adventures galore in Marin County—or as the perfect après-activity haven. From window-shopping at eclectic boutiques to grabbing some scoops at Lappert's Ice Cream and savoring them by a Spanish-style fountain in the sun-splashed plaza, Sausalito certainly has its charms, not to mention its fair share of top-notch dining. And then there are Sausalito's views of San Francisco twinkling across the bay and the surrounding Marin hills dotted with gorgeous homes. Sausalito is also home to a vibrant community of artists, who open their galleries and studios on the second Wednesday of every month during an Artwalk in the Caledonia Street neighborhood. In addition, the renowned Sausalito Art Festival takes place in the center of town every Labor Day weekend. © NileGuide



courtesy of inetours

# San Francisco Snapshot

## Local Info

Sun and fog, grandeur and blight, hipsters and suits, relaxed and industrious... San Francisco's juxtapositions are infinite. Arguably the most beautiful city in the United States, the city by the bay is also the most un-American city, in attitude as well as looks. Old Victorian homes blend with modern, shiny skyscrapers, and the skyline is neither wholly gray concrete nor red brick like its East Coast sister cities.

The second most densely populated city in the U.S., San Francisco is more akin to Europe than to America. The city has 63 miles of bike lanes within its seven-by-seven square miles, with some 40,000 residents cycling to work every day. On Sundays in the spring and summer, some streets are closed to car traffic and open to the public for biking, rollerblading, and just hanging out. Plazas attract farmer's markets, protests, and coffee-sipping denizens. San Francisco has always been iconoclastic, from the early Gold Rush Days, to the 1967 Summer of Love, to the legalization (and subsequent prohibition) of same-sex marriage, a movement which pushed five other states to do the same. Flanked on the east and west side by its beloved bridges, the metropolis could be easily perched next to the Mediterranean Sea. It's no wonder it attracts the third-highest number of foreign visitors in the U.S. each year.

San Francisco isn't so much a city as a collection of neighborhoods, each with its own character and micro-climate, which is why the city can have sun, fog and drizzle at the same time on the same day. In all, there are 27 distinct neighborhoods with dozens of sub-neighborhoods that mesh together like puzzle pieces.

Often only a block or two separates one from the other, one world from the next. The Tenderloin, San Francisco's skid row, borders sparkling and tourist-ridden Union Square; the modish Mission lies side by side with stroller-central Noe Valley; gritty Polk Gulch rubs rich Russian Hill; overlooked Western Addition nuzzles posh Pac Heights; blue-collar Chinatown kisses the corporate Financial District.

The characters who inhabit these communities are a paradox as well – Jimmy Choos pound the pavement

alongside friendly bums, and white-collar workers take the same bus as fuzzy boot-clad street performers. To label San Francisco's citizens as eclectic is an understatement. It's also an understatement to call them "unique." Don't be surprised if you find yourself amongst an impromptu pillow fight along the Embarcadero, a naked bike parade up Market Street, or a flash dance party on public transit.

Despite the stereotype, California does not a hot, sunny destination make. Most visitors underestimate the fog's chill, which is felt most strongly between 4-8pm, after which the wind tends to calm down. San Franciscans are a practical bunch; you'll rarely see a local without a spare scarf, hat, or long sleeves. They also shy away from wintry black and gray wardrobes; color plays a huge part in street fashion, and nobody looks twice if somebody dons a purple velvet suit while walking their dog or if a bride wears red instead of white to her wedding. San Franciscans also know that when it's hot, you take advantage of it, whether it's in November, March, or May. Beach days and mild nights do happen, but they are few and far between, and they are rarely enjoyed in the summer.

San Francisco boasts festivals nearly every weekend, from the largest Chinese New Year's Parade outside of China, to Pride, the oldest of the world's gay pride parades. Much of the population turns out for the annual Bay to Breakers run as well as the three-day Outside Lands concert in Golden Gate Park, both of which make San Francisco a party destination on par with New Orleans, Berlin, Austin, and Miami. Chances are high that you'll be in town for some event like the Stern Grove free concerts, Cinco de Mayo, Treasure Island Music festival, Carnaval, Fillmore Street Jazz festival, or the dozens of film festivals which descend upon the most cultured of cities yearly. Don't forget the Haight Street, Folsom Street, Union Street, North Beach, and Japantown neighborhood street fairs. And the list goes on...

Yet, even with endless fun at their fingertips, San Franciscans are a diligent bunch. It's no coincidence that the city is home to online powerhouses Twitter, Craigslist, Zynga, and Yelp, and only a few miles away you'll find Paypal, Google, and Facebook. San Francisco seems to be

experiencing a second boom to the dot-com era with hundreds of tech start-ups invading SOMA, Potrero Hill, and the blighted 5th street and Market corridor (Twitter recently got a tax break for moving here versus retreating to blander Silicon Valley).

Since the first dotcom boom in 2000, newfound wealth has made an obvious impression on the city. Old SOMA warehouses have turned into condos; decrepit Dogpatch industrial spaces have been transformed into airy live/work lofts; and just wait until 2017, when the "Grand Central Station of the West" opens. The new Transbay Transit Center project will add three 1,200 foot skyscrapers and 10 additional towers to the San Francisco skyline. Lest we forget, the highly anticipated eastern span of the Bay Bridge, with its single self-supporting suspension tower, is slated to finally open in 2013.

To some, all of this development has meant San Francisco has lost its counter culture character. Ridiculously high rents have driven many of the "hippies" out. Those that remain are finding it less hospitable. The Haight-Ashbury neighborhood has been populated with vagabonds ever since the Summer of Love and business owners are finally taking a stand against their loitering. The controversial Sit/Lie Law, which bans sitting or lying on sidewalks between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., was just passed by voters.

Next to its cable cars and hills (you'll never forget your first ride over the crest of Nob Hill) San Francisco is known as epicurean heaven. Boasting around 3,600 restaurants, San Francisco has fantastic ethnic cuisine—sushi, Vietnamese, Thai, and Chinese, to name just a few. The large Hispanic population contributes dozens of popular taquerias; most are concentrated in the Mission district. The birth of California cuisine, pioneered by Alice Waters of the world famous Chez Panisse, turned the entire country on to fresh, local ingredients, a movement which is reflected across the board in San Francisco eateries like Zuni Café, Range, Michael Mina, and newcomer Prospect.

San Francisco's stunning beauty and easy access to nature make it a paradise for outdoor-lovers. There are over 50 city, state, and federal parks within the city itself, including the crown jewel: Golden Gate Park. Gorgeous golden beaches are mere

## San Francisco Snapshot continued

minutes from downtown, mountain biking was born in the Marin hills just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area covers close to 75,000 acres, including 59 miles of bay and ocean shoreline.

You won't find that kind of space in any other major American city. More

community-focused than Los Angeles, milder than Boston, more relaxed than New York, more focused than Miami, San Francisco is a destination of dreamers and achievers- people don't just talk the talk, they put their plans into action and aren't afraid to fail. Just look at the San Francisco Giants- even a baseball team

deemed "a bunch of rag tag misfits" can pull off a World Series championship...just sayin'. It's obvious San Franciscans love their city, and when you visit, you probably will too.

© NileGuide

# Oakland Snapshot

## Local Info

Everyone knows the Gertrude Stein quote about her hometown of Oakland: "There is no there there." Whatever it means (most likely she was talking about her return to find that her childhood house was gone) the negative connotation has attached itself to the city. Well, we have a motto for modern-day Oakland: "So there!" The city today still has its gritty (read: crime-ridden) areas but it also has a lively historic downtown area, a diverse population, the charming restaurant-and-shopping district of Rockridge and some of the priciest homes in northern California. It has popular Lake Merritt in the city center. It has far more pleasant weather than San Francisco. In all, visitors will find a great many attractions to enjoy here. (Or there.)

## Sights

Jack London is another famous Oakland resident and the eponymous Jack London Square is now a thriving shopping, entertainment and residential district-- and

one of the most popular destinations for tourists in the know. It has London's old Yukon cabin, brought in and reassembled and, next door, the very cool old Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon. It also has FDR's yacht, the USS Potomac, which is open for tours. City museums worth checking out include the Oakland Museum of California and the African American Museum and Library downtown. Take the kids to the Chabot Space and Science Center, where they can view the universe through refractor and reflector telescopes, and to Children's Fairyland, where kids' literature comes to life in shows and in scenes recreated from famous children's books. The Oakland Zoo and the historic district of Preservation Park should be on your itinerary as well.

## Dining

San Francisco has the reputation for world-class restaurants and, while Oakland has fewer, it has a handful that match any you'll find across the bay. For cheap, good Asian food, head to Chinatown, where

you'll discover delicious Japanese and Vietnamese fare too. Piedmont Avenue is home to a number of rising culinary delights, International Boulevard has famous taco trucks that foodies and locals flock to. Rockridge has many crowded cafes and high-end restaurants as well. Stop in at Rockridge Market Hall for some of the finest grocery and deli selections anywhere in the U.S.

## Shopping

Craft jewelry, gourmet sweets, clothing boutiques and other trendy gems can be found in the family-friendly atmosphere along College Avenue. Rockridge is the upscale shopping area and Jack London Square also has numerous shops and boutiques to slake the shopaholic in you. For a fancy a hat, head to the Hat Guys on Broadway-- which boasts of having the largest hat collection on the West Coast. Downtown Oakland has shops and other miscellaneous stores that offer great buys.

© NileGuide

# Sausalito Snapshot

## Local Info

Best known for its unrivaled waterfront views, the tiny fishing village of Sausalito (originally spelled Saucelito)

has had a colorful and storied history that's included Native American tribes, Spanish conquistadores and land grants, Prohibition-era rum runners, and a WWII

shipyard to rival the biggest and most technologically advanced in the country.  
© NileGuide