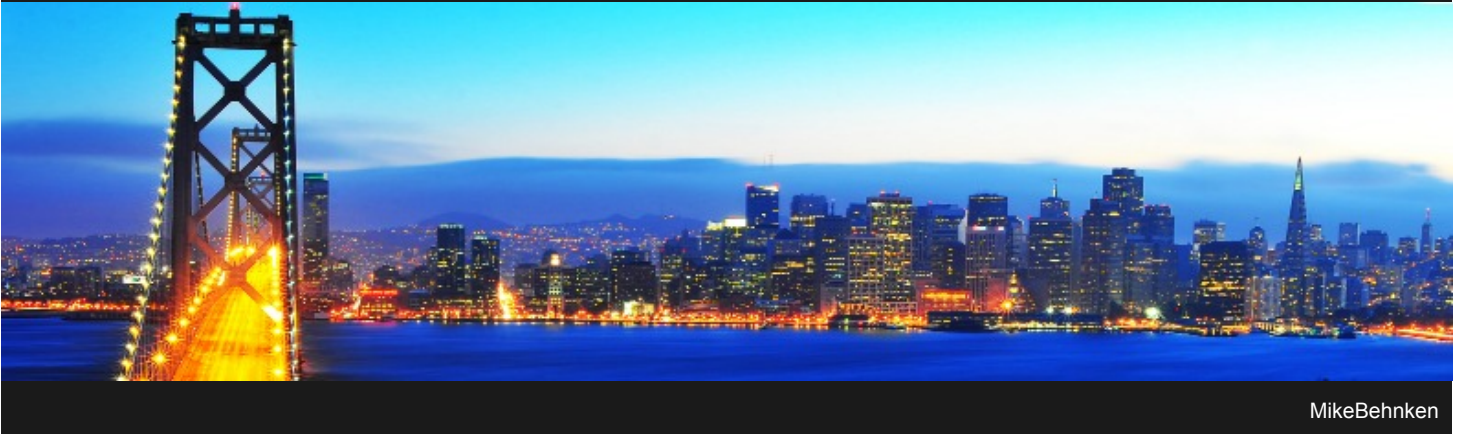




nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



MikeBehnken

Road Trippin' California

San Francisco, Mountain View, Los Gatos, Sunnyvale, Los Angeles, 5 Days

Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

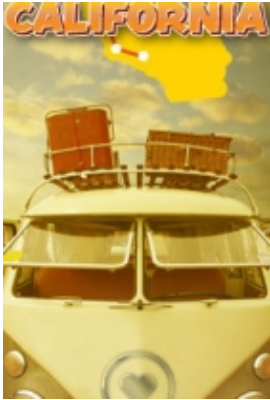
Itinerary Overview 3

Daily Itineraries 4

San Francisco Snapshot 14

Los Angeles Snapshot 16

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Road trips are all about the experience and the thrill of discovery. So we're helping you discover even more this summer with our special package deals.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Los Angeles



Hotel Angeleno Los Angeles

At the crossroads of Brentwood and Bel-Air

Day 3 - Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Gatos

DAY NOTE: Silicon Valley, a high-tech industry Mecca, extends south from San Francisco, on the western side of the San Francisco Bay and comprises 15 suburban communities centering around San Jose and collectively known as "the Silicon Valley".



Hotel Avante, a Joie de Vivre Hotel

Stylish, business-friendly Silicon Valley accommodations



Wild Palms Hotel, a Joie de Vivre Hotel

Mediterranean-style lodgings in Silicon Valley



Hotel Los Gatos & Spa, a Joie de Vivre Hotel

Quiet charm of historic downtown Los Gatos

Day 4 - San Francisco

DAY NOTE: San Francisco hotels: a distinctive collection of boutique hotels in San Francisco.



Best Western Americana Hotel, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Affordable resort



Galleria Park, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Union Square style



Hotel Adagio, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Historical Landmark



Hotel Carlton, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Eclectic Simplicity



Hotel Del Sol, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Affordable family lodging where kids are VIPs.



Hotel Kabuki, a Joie de Vivre hotel

East meets West



Petite Auberge

Elegant charm



White Swan Inn

An Old English Inn



Laurel Inn, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Style and Elegance



Hotel Drisco, a Joie de Vivre hotel

A Room With A View



Hotel Vitale, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Waterfront Luxuries



Hotel Rex, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Novel Worthy



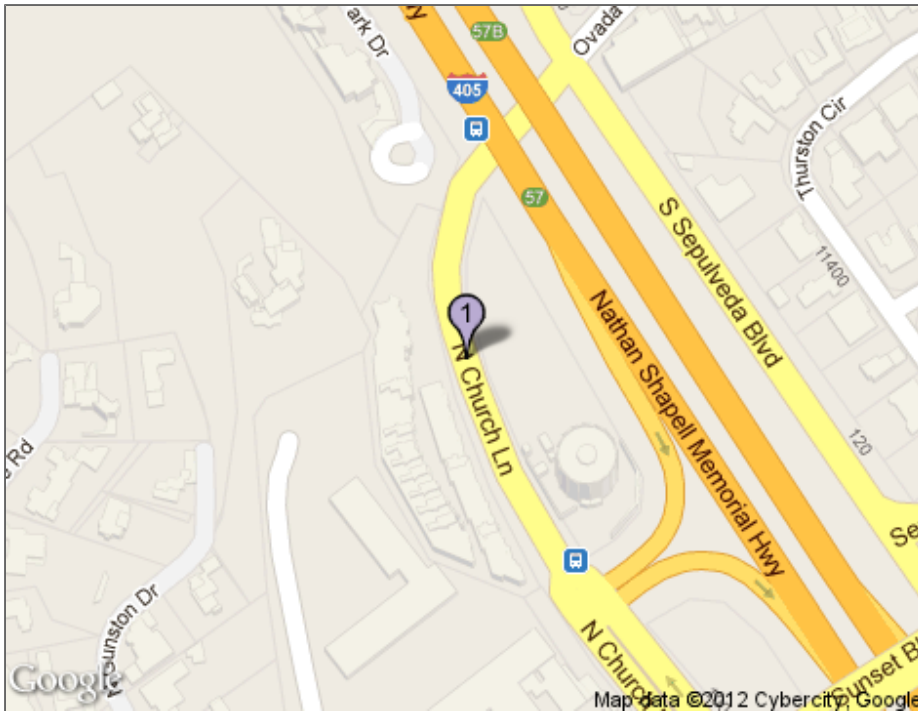
Best Western Hotel Tomo, a Joie de Vivre hotel

Japantown convenience

Day 5

DAY NOTE: Stay at one of our East Bay boutique hotels near San Francisco and explore the other side of the San Francisco bay.

Day 1 - Los Angeles



QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +1 310 476-6411

fax: +1 310 472 1157

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

location:

170 N Church Ln
Los Angeles CA 90049

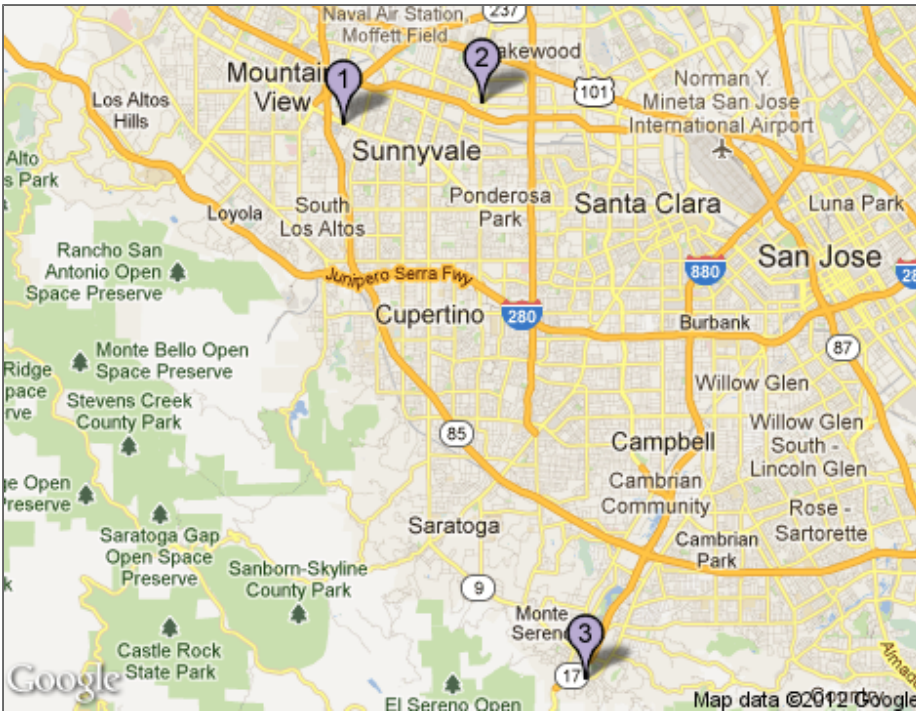
1 Hotel Angeleno Los Angeles

DESCRIPTION: Hotel Angeleno, a Joie de Vivre Boutique Hotel is set at the crossroads of Brentwood and Bel-Air, 1 mile from UCLA and 7 miles from Hollywood. Guestrooms have complimentary wireless Internet access, work station with ergonomic chair, and laptop-size safes. Other amenities include an outdoor heated pool surrounded by a patio with fireplace, fitness center, restaurant, and lounge.



Hotels.com

Day 3 - Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Gatos



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Silicon Valley, a high-tech industry Mecca, extends south from San Francisco, on the western side of the San Francisco Bay and comprises 15 suburban communities centering around San Jose and collectively known as "the Silicon Valley".

contact:

tel: +1 650 940-1000
<http://www.jdvhotels.com/>

location:

860 E El Camino Real
Mountain View CA 94040

1 Hotel Avante, a Joie de Vivre Hotel

DESCRIPTION: **Stylish, business-friendly Silicon Valley accommodations** Located near three major freeways, this 91-room boutique hotel is within 7 miles of Shoreline Amphitheatre and Great America. The rooms have complimentary high-speed Internet access, stylish furniture and a variety of low-tech toys. Guests can unwind before or after meetings by listening to music in the Hi-Fi Lounge or by soaking in the hot tub.



Hotels.com

contact:

tel: +1 408 738-0500
<http://www.jdvhotels.com/>

location:

910 E Fremont Ave
Sunnyvale CA 94087

2 Wild Palms Hotel, a Joie de Vivre Hotel

DESCRIPTION: The Wild Palms Hotel in Sunnyvale, California features a vibrant Mediterranean ambience, with two spectacular courtyards and guestrooms decorated in colorful bungalow stylings. The hotel's island atmosphere is highlighted by lush tropical landscaping, exquisite mosaics, dramatic murals, and handcrafted furnishings. Surrounding the pool and hot tub, office cabanas and Soleil Lounge create the ideal environment for work and play. Wild Palms Hotel is a non-smoking hotel.



Hotels.com

contact:

tel: +1 408 335-1700
<http://www.jdvhotels.com/>

location:

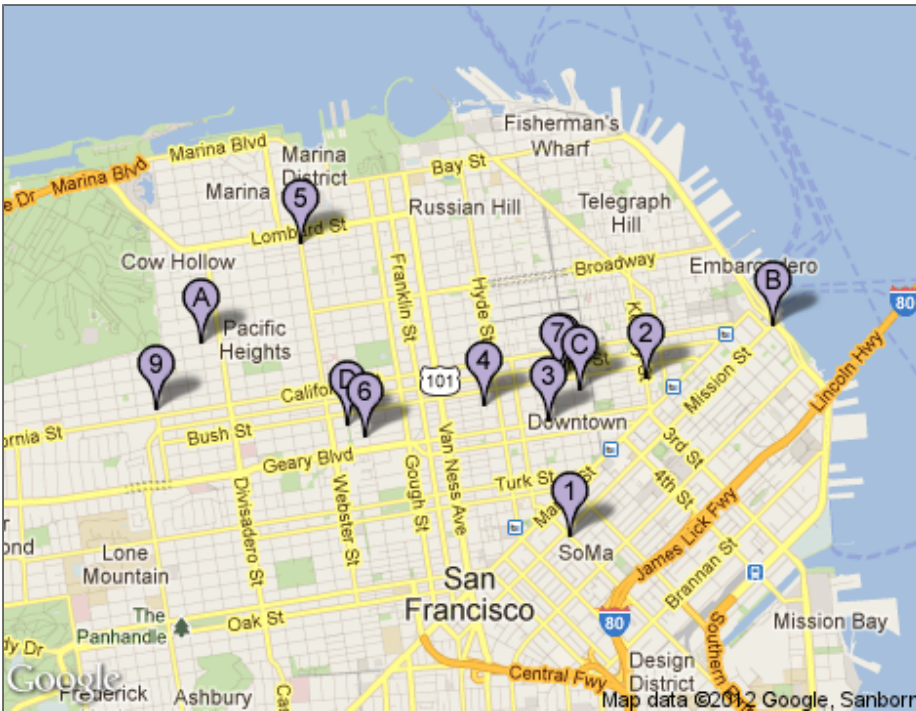
210 E Main St
Los Gatos CA 95030

3 Hotel Los Gatos & Spa, a Joie de Vivre Hotel

DESCRIPTION: This boutique hotel offers the feel of a private villa amid the quiet charm of historic downtown Los Gatos. Oversized rooms feature premium bedding; large, tiled bathrooms; and windows that open to courtyard and mountain views. Sophisticated service is provided via signature amenities including a Preston Wynne day spa.



Day 4 - San Francisco



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: San Francisco hotels: a distinctive collection of boutique hotels in San Francisco.

contact:

tel: (415) 626-0200 / (800) 444-5816

fax: (415) 863-2529

<http://www.bestwesterncalifornia.com/hotels/best-western-america/>, <http://www.americaniahotelsf.com/>

location:

121 7th St
San Francisco CA 94103

1 Best Western Americana Hotel, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: This SoMa neighborhood hotel is ideal in summer and early fall months with its courtyard, sun deck, and a heated outdoor pool, that rises above the busy city streets and radiates a resort feeling. The architecture is a contemporary Mediterranean style that looks as if belongs in Southern California. Affordable, comfortable, and filled with amenities, it is recommended for its central location that provides easy access to the downtown business district and the city's tourist attractions. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: (415) 781-3060 / (866) 756-3036

fax: (415) 433-4409

<http://www.galleriapark.com>

location:

191 Sutter St
San Francisco CA 94108

2 Galleria Park, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: Enjoy the maximum in convenience and comfort at this exquisitely renovated 1911 hotel that boasts a stunning black marble facade. Two blocks from Financial District, Union Square and Chinatown, this restored gem is the perfect place to relax after a busy day. The rooms are elegantly appointed with Old World charm and modern conveniences. Business travelers will appreciate the attentive support staff and office amenities. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

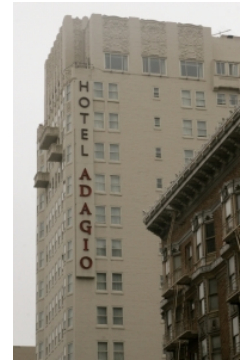
tel: 800/228-8830
fax: 415/775-9388
<http://www.thehoteladagio.com>

location:

550 Geary St
San Francisco CA 94102

3 Hotel Adagio, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: Our local hip-hotel company, Joie de Vivre, revamped every one of this 1929 Spanish Revival hotel's 171 large, bright guest rooms in gorgeous modern style. They're real lookers, each with a walnut brown and mocha color palette and dark wood furnishings. Other plusses include firm mattresses, double-paned windows that open, quiet surroundings, voice mail, and plenty of elbowroom. Executive floors (7-16) also come with robes, upscale amenities, makeup mirrors, and stereos with iPod ports. Bathrooms are old but spotless, and have resurfaced tubs. Feel like splurging? Go for one of the two penthouse-level suites; one has lovely terraces with a New York vibe. Another good reason to stay here is the restaurant/bar **Cortez**, which draws a lively crowd of locals who meet here after work to nosh on small plates in the groovy lounge. **Tip:** Rooms above the eighth floor have good, but not great, views of the city. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:

tel: 800/922-7586
fax: 415/673-4904
<http://www.jdvhospitality.com>

location:

1075 Sutter St
San Francisco CA 94109

4 Hotel Carlton, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: If you're looking for wonderfully cheap, attractive, and clean accommodations and don't mind being in the gritty center of the city, book a room here. The Joie de Vivre hotel group is behind this 163-room hotel that was built in 1927 and revamped in May 2004 in "global vintage" decor. The interior design is globally eclectic, with travel photographs from the American Himalayan Foundation, tribal figurines, Oriental rugs, a vibrant sari-like color scheme, imported hand-painted Moroccan tables, and cool Lucite-beaded table lamps in the guest rooms. Outside, the neighborhood is drab, but it's only a 7-block walk to Union Square, and with doubles starting at a mere \$93, you can splurge for a taxi with the money saved. Or stick nearby and try **Saha**, their Arabian-fusion restaurant (think hummus, pizza, Yemenese meatballs, and seared scallops), which serves breakfast and dinner. Heck, they even throw in a complimentary evening wine hour in the lobby. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:

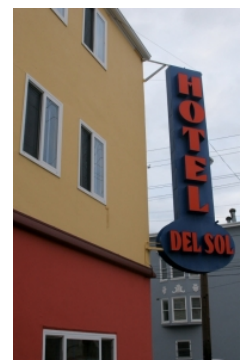
tel: 877/433-5765
fax: 415/931-4137
<http://www.thehoteldelsol.com>

location:

3100 Webster St
San Francisco CA 94123

5 Hotel Del Sol, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: The cheeriest motel in town is located just 2 blocks off the Marina District's bustling section of Lombard. Three-level Hotel del Sol is all about festive flair and luxury touches. The sunshine theme extends from the Miami Beach-style use of vibrant color, as in the yellow, red, orange, and blue exterior, to the heated courtyard pool, which beckons the youngish clientele as they head for their cars parked (for free!) in cabana-like spaces. This is also one of the most family-friendly places to stay, with a "Kids are VIPs" program, including a family suite (three adjoining rooms with bunks and toys); a lending library of kids' books, toys, and videos; childproofing kits; three rooms that have been professionally baby-proofed; bonded babysitting services; evening cookies and milk; and pool toys; and sunglasses and visors for the young ones. Fair-weather fun doesn't stop at the front door of the hotel, which boasts 57 spacious rooms (updated with all new bedding, paint, carpets, drapes, and sofas in 2006) with equally perky interior decor (read: loud and colorful) as well as unexpected extras like CD players, Aveda products, and tips on the town's



wcities

happenings and shopping meccas. Suites also include minifridges and DVD players. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: (415) 922-3200
fax: (415) 921-0417
<http://www.jdvhotels.com/hotels/kabuki/>

location:

1625 Post St
San Francisco CA 94115

6 Hotel Kabuki, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: All the best features of California and Japan are melded together at this serenely elegant Japantown high rise. The Hotel Kabuki offers fabulous amenities and services, all in a very Asian setting which aims to relax the weary traveler. Choose from Western- or Japanese-style rooms, the latter featuring futons and traditional Japanese bathrooms including a soaking tub. Shopping and sightseeing are minutes away. Let Kabuki's personable staff help you plan your day full of shopping, sightseeing, and exploring throughout San Francisco. © NileGuide



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 415 928 6000
fax: +1 415 673 7214
<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/california-san-francisco-petite-auberge.html>

location:

863 Bush Street
San Francisco CA
94108-3312

7 Petite Auberge

DESCRIPTION: Petite Auberge, a "small inn," welcomes guests to a world of French provincial enchantment. The inn's 26 intimate guest rooms boast inviting beds, carved armoires and many with fireplaces. Petite Auberge is located just up the hill from Union Square and Chinatown and less than two blocks from our famous cable cars – within walking distance to the best restaurants and theaters. Honeymooners might want to select the "Petite Suite" with its private deck, hand painted king bed, spa tub, champagne and chocolates.



wcities

contact:

tel: 800/999-9570
fax: 415/775-5717
<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/california-san-francisco-white-swaninn.html>

location:

845 Bush Street
San Francisco CA
94108-3300

8 White Swan Inn

DESCRIPTION: The White Swan Inn is a splendid tribute to the luxury hotels of England. Rich floral carpets, comfortable furniture covered with elegant fabrics and enchanting English art and collectibles set the tone. With 26 guestrooms and 30 fireplaces the inn exudes warmth and serenity in the midst of a busy city. The inn is located just up the hill from Union Square and Chinatown and less than two blocks from our famous cable cars – within walking distance to the best restaurants and theaters.



wcities

contact:

tel: 800/552-8735

fax: 415/928-1866

www.thelaurelinn.com

location:

444 Presidio Ave

San Francisco CA 94115



Laurel Inn, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: If you don't mind being out of the downtown area, this hip hotel is one of the most tranquil and affordably high-style places to rest your head. Tucked just beyond the southernmost tip of the Presidio and Pacific Heights, the outside is nothing impressive -- just another motor inn. And that's what it was until the Joie de Vivre hotel company breathed new life into the place. Now decor is très chic and modern, with Zen-like influences (think W Hotel at half the price). The rooms, some of which have excellent city views, are smartly designed and decorated in the style of a contemporary studio apartment. The continental breakfast is fine, but why bother when you're across the street from **Ella's**, which serves San Francisco's best breakfast? Other thoughtful touches: 24-hour coffee and tea service, pet-friendly rooms, a CD and video lending library, and indoor parking. There's also great shopping a block away at Sacramento Street; and the new and hip **G Bar**, which serves libations and a surprisingly active slice of glamorous young Pacific Heights-style revelry. © Frommer's



Hotels.com

contact:

tel: 800/634-7277

fax: 415/567-5537

www.hoteldrisco.com

location:

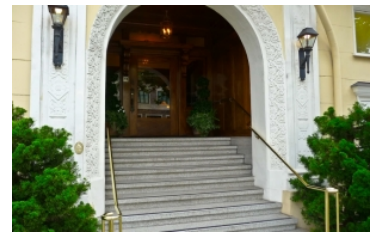
2901 Pacific Ave

San Francisco CA 94115



Hotel Drisco, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: Located on one of the most sought-after blocks of residential property in all of San Francisco, the Drisco, built in 1903, is one of the city's best small hotels. Refinements by interior designer Glenn Texeira (who also did the Ritz-Carlton in Manila) are evident from the very small lobby and sitting areas to the calming atmosphere of the cream, yellow, and green guest rooms. As in the neighboring mansions, traditional antique furnishings and thick, luxurious fabrics abound here. The hotel's comfy beds will make you want to loll late into the morning before primping in the large marble bathrooms, complete with robes and slippers. Each suite has a couch that unfolds into a bed (although you would never guess from the looks of it), an additional phone and TV, and superior views. A 24-hour coffee and tea service is available on the ground floor, in the same comfy rooms where breakfast is served. If you're arriving by car, however, you may not want to stay here as there is no hotel parking. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:

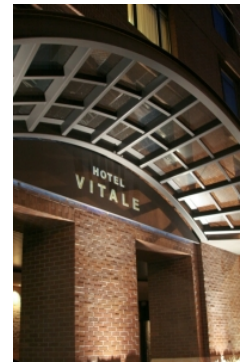
tel: 888/890-8868
fax: 415/278-3750
www.hotelvitale.com

location:

8 Mission St
San Francisco CA 94105

B Hotel Vitale, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: Perched at the foot of the Embarcadero with outstanding waterfront and Bay Bridge views from east-facing rooms, this 199-unit hotel opened in early 2005 to instant popularity. In addition to its prime location across from the Ferry Building Marketplace, Hotel Vitale looks pretty darned chic, from the clean-lined lobby, lounge, and decent but not destination-worthy **Americano** restaurant (with a hopping after-work bar scene), to the modern and masculine rooms awash in earth tones and armed with contemporary perks like flatscreen TVs, CD players with groovy compilations, gourmet minibars and for-sale bath products, huge bathrooms with walk-in showers, and nature-themed pop art. Despite excellent service from the well-trained staff, there are a few subtleties that separate Vitale from true luxury hotel status: For example, my fancy flatscreen TV didn't face the bed or the couch and wasn't on hinges that allowed it to be adjusted -- very annoying -- and the fitness room is flat-out lame with three cardio machines and a few weights. However, they're now offering complimentary access to the nearby YMCA health club, which has all the workout essentials. So, if you can live with a few quirks, it's a very attractive place to stay -- my NYC friend loves this hotel -- especially if you book one of the suites with 270-degree San Francisco views. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:

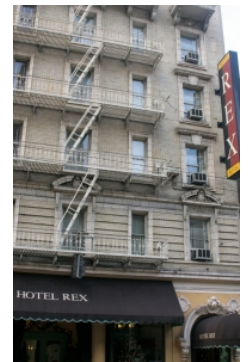
tel: 800/433-4434
fax: 415/433-3695
http://www.thehotelrex.com

location:

562 Sutter St
San Francisco CA 94102

C Hotel Rex, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: Joie de Vivre, the most creative hotel group in the city, is the brains behind this cleverly restored historic building, a restoration that was inspired by the San Francisco art and literary salons of the 1920s and '30s. JDV kept some of the imported furnishings and the European boutique hotel ambience, but gave the lobby and rooms a major face-lift, adding the decorative flair that makes its hotels among the most popular in town. The clublike lobby lounge is modeled after a 1920s literary salon and is, like all the group's properties, cleverly stylish. (They even host jazz artists Fri 6-8pm.) The guest rooms are above average in size, decorated with custom wall coverings, hand-painted lampshades, and works by local artists. If you have one of the rooms in the back, you'll look out over a shady, peaceful courtyard. It's also in a great location, situated near several fine galleries, theaters, and restaurants. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:

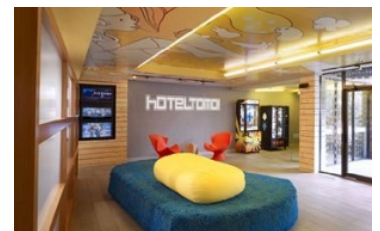
tel: (415) 921-4000
fax: (415) 923-1064
http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/productInfo.do

location:

1800 Sutter St
San Francisco CA 94115

D Best Western Hotel Tomo, a Joie de Vivre hotel

DESCRIPTION: Make your next trip to San Francisco a trip to Japan...stay at the Best Western Hotel Tomo, one of the city's nicest and reasonably priced small hotels. When you step out the door, you will step into a colorful Japanese village with gift shops, bookstores, kimono shops, trendy fashion boutiques, Japanese baths, sushi bars, markets and 30 restaurants (Japanese, Chinese, Korean and American) making the neighborhood one of the city's most exciting places. And that's not all. The Best Western Hotel Tomo is ideally situated in the heart of San Francisco. The renowned Union Square shopping district is just 1 mile east of us, to the north is the Golden Gate Bridge, to the west is the Golden Gate Park and the ocean, and



Hotels.com

to the south is the Davies Symphony Hall, the War Memorial Opera House and the City Hall. Fillmore Street with its popular boutiques, cafés, and clubs is just a few blocks away, and Chinatown, the famed cable cars, and St. Mary's Cathedral also are nearby. The Best Western Hotel Tomo is easy to reach by car, airport shuttle or public transportation. Three municipal bus lines stop within ½ block of the Best Western Miyako Inn and provide excellent service throughout the city.

Day 5

DAY NOTE: Stay at one of our East Bay boutique hotels near San Francisco and explore the other side of the San Francisco bay.

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

Los Angeles Snapshot

Local Info

People either love it, or they hate it--but no matter what, Los Angeles makes no excuses and changes itself for no one. And you've got to admire that. Made up of dozens of communities, there is no one single experience that can sum up the life and the heartbeat of this city. But what can be noticed about Los Angeles by both tourists and locals alike is the hustle-and-bustle lifestyle, the vibrant and unique neighborhoods, and the extreme diversity that sets it apart from any other city. From the eternal sunshine and Hollywood glitz to all the small communities with their own distinct cultural personalities, this City of Angels will forever be many things to many people.

Downtown

While not exactly in the center of town geographically due to the sprawling nature of the city, Downtown Los Angeles is still teeming with activity. There are cultural hotbeds like Olvera Street and Chinatown that are just minutes away from Los Angeles landmarks such as the Bank of America Building and the Walt Disney Concert Hall. And if you have a hankering for more art and culture while Downtown, the Museum of Contemporary Art(MOCA) is a definite must-see.

Hollywood

The big sign just about says it all--Hollywood is glitz, glamour, and unavoidable. While many people are critical of Hollywood, they still can't help but satiate their curiosity by visiting this busy area. The center of things is, without a doubt, Hollywood Boulevard, location of world-famous tourist spots including Mann's Chinese Theater, the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and the Kodak Theatre where the Oscars are now held annually.

The Miracle Mile/Hancock Park area is another of L.A.'s historical neighborhoods. Here you will find Wilshire Boulevard's Museum Row. The museums are contained within Hancock Park, a small but peaceful oasis in the center of hectic urban activity. To venture into the far distant past, stop by the Brea Tar Pits, La, and to immerse yourself in a famous museum, the LACMA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art is a popular attraction on Miracle Mile.

Ritz West Hollywood is home to one of the city's most famous(or infamous) attractions: the Sunset Strip. Here you'll find most of the city's hippest clubs frequented by up-and-coming actors and socialites, as well as some of the city's finest hotels and shopping, including the upscale Melrose Avenue Shopping District. West Hollywood is also the center of the city's gay and lesbian community, and it puts on one of the flashiest and most exhilarating annual Halloween parades in the state.

Beverly Hills and the Westside

This world-famous city with its world-famous zip code is synonymous with wealth, status, and celebrity. The understated elegance and grace of the residential neighborhoods are balanced out by Rodeo Drive, which offers some of the finest(and most expensive) shopping in the world.

Santa Monica and Beach Cities

Back in the heyday of Route 66, Santa Monica was the end of the line. Today, this beachfront community offers the best in entertainment for all ages on its famous Santa Monica Pier. You can enjoy some carnival-style food and games or take a ride on the ferris wheel for a breathtaking view of the city and shoreline. When you're ready for some shopping, the active Third Street Promenade has a diverse directory of stores and eateries.

The motto of the coastal community of Malibu is "27 miles of scenic beauty," and that about describes it best. The main attraction here is the drive along the Pacific Coast Highway, which takes you past beach after beach on one side of the road and million-dollar hilltop estates on the other. Make sure you have plenty of film and sunscreen. Even at night, the stars just seem brighter.

Venice, just south of Santa Monica, is the city's home to all things eclectic and many things downright bizarre. This small, artsy beach town offers one of the greatest collections of cafes, bars, galleries, antiques and one-of-a-kind shops around. Weekend afternoons on the boardwalk are definitely a memorable experience for any visitor to the city.

San Fernando Valley

On the other side of the Hollywood Hills sits "The Valley," as known by locals. It features a seemingly endless sea of suburban cul-de-sacs, strip malls, funky shops and restaurants. Hollywood makes its presence known in the cities of Burbank and Universal City, which are home to Warner Bros. Studio and Universal Studios. There are two things you can always count on in the Valley: the earthquakes always feel stronger, and the temperature is always 10 degrees hotter.

South Central and Compton

Although the South Central neighborhood of Crenshaw gained worldwide publicity as the center of the infamous 1992 riots, this area is rich in history and culture. South Central also is home to famous Los Angeles landmarks such as the Watts Towers, the historic Shrine Auditorium, and Exposition Park. Within the famed Exposition Park is the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the California Science Center, and the IMAX California Science Center. It has also long been a place of culture and diversity, as evidenced by the African American Cultural Center.

Long Beach and the South Bay

Long Beach is a fairly large city in its own right and is a neighbor to the well known district of Orange County. Aside from a plethora of shopping and dining options, this beach community is perhaps best known for the Queen Mary, a Titanic-esque ocean liner now permanently docked here and open for tours. They also have many outdoor activities for tourists to take advantage of, as well as museums and beaches that all can enjoy.

The South Bay is made up of smaller beach towns and quiet neighborhoods such as Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach and Palos Verdes Estates.

Pasadena and Points East

Pasadena is one of the most prominent communities in the entire state of California. Old Town Pasadena provides one of the greatest clusters of bars, shops, cafes and restaurants in the entire L.A. area. The city is also known for the Norton Simon Museum, which is the largest collection

Los Angeles Snapshot continued

of art owned by one man, and the Rose Bowl. And every New Years' Day, this not-so-sleepy town becomes the focus of the entire world for the annual Tournament of Roses Parade.

East L.A., as evidenced by its name, forms the eastern edge of the city and is a great example of a neighborhood rich in cultural expression.

LAX and Inglewood

LAX is one of the largest airports in the United States, when it comes to the sheer number of people passing through its hallways. The airport is the main feature of the otherwise-sleepy, suburban neighborhood of Westchester. This pocket of quiet, tree-lined streets and neighborhood schools and churches is a refreshing oasis in an often-frenetic city.

Inglewood features a wide variety of restaurants, music and sports venues. Here you will find Hollywood Park Racetrack and the The Forum arena, an entertainment hotspot. Inglewood also hosts the annual Hollywood Black Film Festival, which pays homage to African-American filmmakers of past, present and future.

©