



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



MikeBehnken

Romantic San Francisco

San Francisco, 3 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: We know it's rather trite—droll, even—to start waxing poetic on how visitors will leave their hearts in San Francisco, et cetera, et cetera. However, we have to admit that the song is right. Once you've visited the City by the Bay, you realize there is a certain magic here that sets the heart aflutter, whether you're basking in beautiful sunset vistas, enjoying stolen moments in serene spots, or savoring the sensual flavors of local cuisine.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - San Francisco

DAY NOTE: Assemble a picnic from the San Francisco Farmer's Market (or, if the market isn't open, from the gourmet shops at the SF Ferry Building Marketplace) and then head west to Golden Gate Park. Want to feel like you're the only two people on the planet? Well, we can't guarantee total privacy, but semi-secluded nature walks can be had in the park's many nooks and crannies. The Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Garden is a particularly tranquil place for that picnic. Come dusk, take in the sunset with a lovely Wine Country varietal at Ocean Beach. For an evening treat, satisfy your sweet tooth with a trip to SF dessert legend Citizen Cake.



Ferry Building Marketplace & Farmer's Market

Waterfront Allure, foodie delight, transportation hub.



Golden Gate Park

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



Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens

Nature wonderland



Ocean Beach

San Francisco's largest



Citizen Cake

Stunningly good desserts

Day 3

DAY NOTE: Most tourists head to Marin County to explore outdoor wonders, but the East Bay is just as sunny and due to its more off-the-beaten-path nature, more private. Take a lovely hike through the Oakland Redwoods Regional Park. Then revel in unparalleled views of San Francisco from the Berkeley Marina, where you can grab a sunset cocktail at Skates on the Bay. Dine at Chez Panisse, the cozily romantic birthplace of California cuisine; if you eat upstairs, you might be lucky enough to score a table by the window, which affords you magical views of the bay.

Day 2 - San Francisco

DAY NOTE: Although this day will take you all over the city, it's ripe with opportunities for grand romantic gestures. Stroll around the grounds of the Palace of Fine Arts and soak up the dreamy architecture and natural scenery. Then take to the waters on a scenic Bay Cruise. Drive up to the top of Twin Peaks for an amazing sunset panoramic view, followed by a sophisticated fine dining experience at Gary Danko.



Palace of Fine Arts

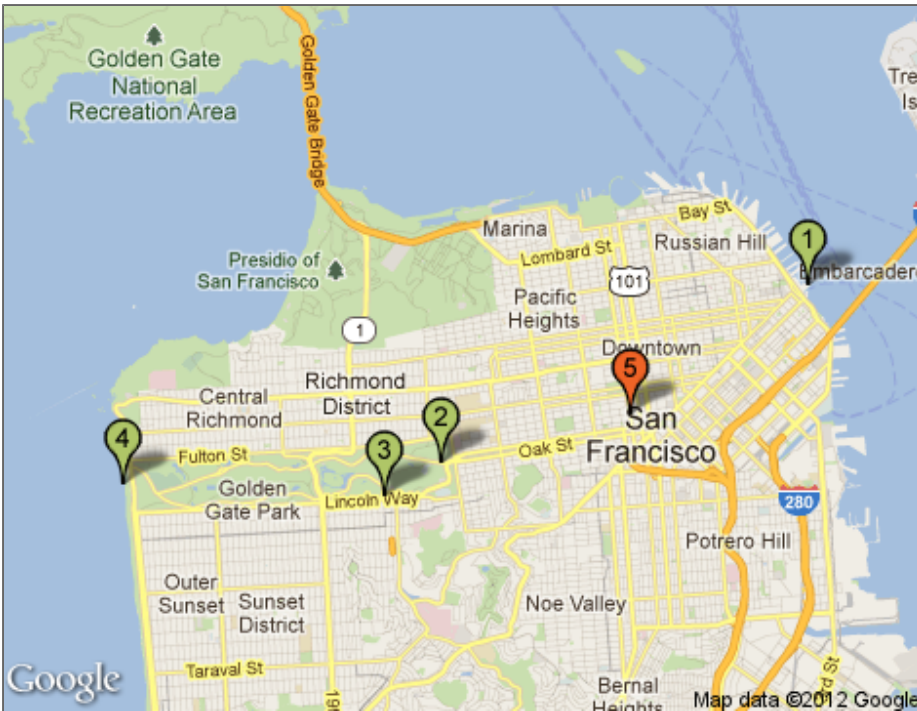
Beautiful architecture, great views of the Golden Gate



Golden Gate Bay Cruise

Sightseeing Cruise

Day 1 - San Francisco



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Assemble a picnic from the San Francisco Farmer's Market (or, if the market isn't open, from the gourmet shops at the SF Ferry Building Marketplace) and then head west to Golden Gate Park. Want to feel like you're the only two people on the planet? Well, we can't guarantee total privacy, but semi-secluded nature walks can be had in the park's many nooks and crannies. The Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Garden is a particularly tranquil place for that picnic. Come dusk, take in the sunset with a lovely Wine Country varietal at Ocean Beach. For an evening treat, satisfy your sweet tooth with a trip to SF dessert legend Citizen Cake.

contact:
tel: (415) 693-0996
<http://www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com>

location:
Ferry Building Marketplace
San Francisco CA 94111

1 Ferry Building Marketplace & Farmer's Market

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Ferry Building is situated at the nexus of several bus and train lines, making it a most convenient attraction to visit.

DESCRIPTION: While ferries still run from this historic building, it's also been transformed into a veritable shrine to food. The San Francisco Ferry Building Marketplace is chockablock with eateries, specialty culinary stores, and gift shops. Dining highlights include the mouth-watering burgers at Taylor's Refresher, the decadent sandwiches at Lulu Petite (the egg salad with truffle-artichoke pesto on brioche is truly the nectar of the gods), and the Vietnamese-inspired deliciousness of SF's legendary Slanted Door. Shopping for some special culinary treats? Stock up on loads of rare mushrooms and truffle salt at Far West Fungi, the finest fromage at local fave Cowgirl Creamery's Artisan Cheese Shop, and creative chocolate flavor combinations Rechiutti Confections. Want to sample local



wcities

farmers' bounty? The San Francisco Farmer's Market convenes behind the Ferry Building every Tuesday and Saturday, and features stalls upon stalls of produce, meat, eggs, cheese, baked goods, and prepared foods (we love the tamales and crepes, but everything is tasty). Vendors are friendly and always willing to allow shoppers a sample taste or a detailed explanation of farming practices. After all that munching, take a brisk walk on the Embarcadero past piers and views of the Bay Bridge. © NileGuide

contact:

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

location:

Stryan & Fulton Sts
San Francisco CA 94118

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



http2007

contact:

tel: (415) 661-1316
fax: +1 415 661 7427
<http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/>

location:

9th Avenue at Lincoln Way
San Francisco CA 94122

hours:

3 Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens

DESCRIPTION: This is a living museum in Golden Gate Park that is home to a wide array of rare and exotic plant life from around the world. Visit the 70-acre garden and explore seemingly endless trails with duck ponds, an arbor, herbs, flowers, blooming trees and redwoods, and smaller, specialized gardens with names like the Garden of Fragrance. Also on hand is an education center that provides different gardening,



8a-4:30p M-F, 10a-5p Sa, Su

horticulture, botany, and environmental classes for adults and children, plus a horticulture library and bookstore. The public is allowed to stroll through the garden anytime, although they are asked to keep on the paths. © wcities.com

contact:

<http://www.parksconservancy.org/visit/park-sites/ocean-beach.html>

location:

Great Highway
San Francisco CA 94121

4 Ocean Beach

DESCRIPTION: The massive beach stretches the length of the city's Pacific Ocean frontage from Seal Rocks all the way down to Daly City. Popular with surfers, kite flyers and families, it's San Francisco's main city beach. Although it can often be foggy and/or windy, on sunny warm days it's a joy. Swimming isn't advisable, as currents and waves can be extremely rough. A trip to Ocean Beach at sunset, followed by dinner at Beach Chalet (make sure you have a pint of the beer they brew on site) is just about a perfect evening. Or, enjoy a bonfire on the beach after dark, per NPS regulations.

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contact:

tel: (415) 861-2228
fax: (415) 861-0565
<http://www.citizencake.com>

location:

2125 Fillmore St
San Francisco CA 94115

hours:

Monday - Sunday, 10:00am - 10:00pm
Lunch - 11:30am - 3:00pm
Dinner - 5:00pm - 10:00pm

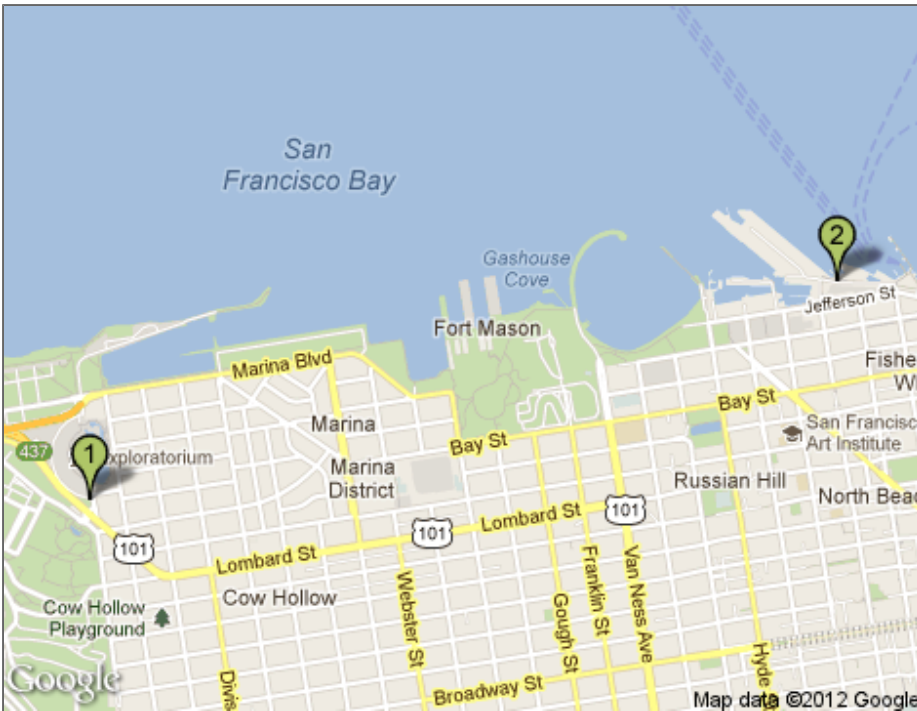
5 Citizen Cake

DESCRIPTION: This wildly popular bakery-cafe is sleek and contemporary with its pale wood and light-filled space. The baked goods, the true reason to come here, take the art of the pastry beyond the ordinary. Cookies, tarts, and the award-winning cakes are to die for. Have a soft spot for cupcakes? Flavors rotate daily, including chocolate-hazelnut, key lime, and Persian delight, a very special combination of rosewater-infused buttercream, pistachios, saffron cream, and candied violets. Yes, that's right! The dining menu is a tad overpriced, but offers light California fare--perfect for having enough room left for the true star here, dessert. The service is friendly and quick. © wcities.com



citysearch

Day 2 - San Francisco



QUICK NOTE

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contact:

tel: (415) 563-6504
fax: (415) 567-4062
<http://www.palaceoffinearts.org/>

location:

3301 Lyon Street
San Francisco CA 94123

1 Palace of Fine Arts

DESCRIPTION: Constructed as a temporary attraction for the 1915 Pan-Pacific International Exhibition, this Grecian temple of a monument continues to enchant and enhance the city. The original plaster, which made up the bulk of the monuments exterior, has been gradually replaced with funds raised by bond measures and the donations from the Marin's well-heeled residents who were loath to lose such a graceful part of their landscape. Swans in the adjoining lagoon glide by the soaring ochre-tinted colonnades and the imposing dome ringed with panels of centaurs and warriors engaged in battle over nubile maidens. Those column-top statues of sorrowing maidens turned away from prying eyes are using their tears to water the long-gone oaks that originally stood in the planters that they surround. Stroll inside the dome, clap your hands and marvel at the uncanny acoustics, then enjoy a picnic lunch on one of the park benches scattered to provide an unparalleled view of this gem. © wcities.com



contact:

<http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/San-Francisco/Golden-Gate-Bay-Cruise/d651-2630SFOCRS>

location:

San Francisco CA 94133

2 Golden Gate Bay Cruise

DESCRIPTION: Want to experience San Francisco's must-do attraction? Take the 60-minute Golden Gate Bay Cruise and you'll see why it's the perfect introduction to San Francisco. The narrated one-hour cruise does a loop of San Francisco Bay, sailing next to Alcatraz and under the Golden Gate Bridge! Departing from Pier 43½ in the heart of Fisherman's Wharf, you'll sail past the San Francisco skyline and view the lively neighborhood of North Beach and San Francisco Maritime National Park.

As you head west toward the Golden Gate Bridge, cruise along Fort Mason and the Marina District which was devastated in the 1989 earthquake. Don't miss incredible photo opportunities when sailing directly under the massive 4,200-foot (1,260-meter) span of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Steaming back into the bay, you'll travel past the wildlife reserves of the Marin Headlands and the legendary town of Sausalito, home to the 1960s flower generation. With Angel Island State Park to your left, you'll slowly cruise around the infamous island of Alcatraz.

On your way back to Fisherman's Wharf, look out for the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and Coit Tower. After a full hour of exciting sights, the barking sea lions at Pier 39 will welcome you back to Pier 43½.

All cruise vessels offer indoor and outdoor seating, restrooms, and seasonal snack bar service. The award-winning audio narration is available in English, German, Spanish, French, Japanese, Mandarin, Korean and Portuguese. Vessels operate on biodiesel – a renewable energy source.

Don't worry about the unpredictable San Francisco weather! This is an open ticket which is valid for use on any day within 90 days of your booking date. © Viator



viator

Day 3

DAY NOTE: Most tourists head to Marin County to explore outdoor wonders, but the East Bay is just as sunny and due to its more off-the-beaten-path nature, more private. Take a lovely hike through the Oakland Redwoods Regional Park. Then revel in unparalleled views of San Francisco from the Berkeley Marina, where you can grab a sunset cocktail at Skates on the Bay. Dine at Chez Panisse, the cozily romantic birthplace of California cuisine; if you eat upstairs, you might be lucky enough to score a table by the window, which affords you magical views of the 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.

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