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MikeBehnken

San Francisco: Best Food

San Francisco, 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Gourmands have always lauded San Francisco as a food paradise. However, San Fran's foodie frontiers extend beyond its many award-winning restaurants, such as Gary Danko, and the trailblazing California cuisine served up at Chez Panisse. Seafood lovers can enjoy the fresh daily catch at Scoma's' and other Fisherman's Wharf's eateries. Ethnic fare fans can feast on top-notch Latin American, Asian, and more world cuisines. We're partial to burritos at Pancho Villa, dim sum at Yank Sing, Vietnamese California-style at Slanted Door, and sushi at Ozumo. Health-conscious epicures can savor gorgeous produce and more culinary treats at the San Francisco Ferry Building Marketplace & Farmer's Market. And we haven't even gotten to dessert yet...head to Citizen Cake for a daily dose of sweetness.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - San Francisco



Ferry Building Marketplace & Farmer's Market

Waterfront Allure, foodie delight, transportation hub.



Gary Danko

Award-winning new American excellence



Yank Sing

Terrific Dim Sum and Shanghai-style food



Slanted Door

Modern Vietnamese delights on the edge of the Bay



Citizen Cake

Stunningly good desserts



Pancho Villa Taqueria

Legendary giant burritos



Scoma's

Wharf Favorite



Ozumo

Haute Japanese

Day 1 - San Francisco

QUICK NOTE

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 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



wcities

contact:

tel: (415) 749-2060

fax: (415) 775-1805

<http://www.garydanko.com>

location:

800 North Point Street
San Francisco CA 94133

hours:

5:30p-9:30p Su-W, 5:30p-10p
Th-Sa, Bar: 5p-midnight M-Su

2 Gary Danko

DESCRIPTION: The recipient of the coveted James Beard cooking award, chef Gary Danko practices his genius at his eponymous, 65-seat restaurant. Luxurious appetizers, flavorful entrees, and decadent desserts are the true crowd pleasers. Try the Lobster Salad with Fennel, Citrus, Avocado and Mustard Tarragon Dressing or an entree of Seared Maine Scallops with Black Truffle, Leek and Potato Puree. Indulge in the special Flambeed Pineapple with Macadamia Nuts and Cocounut Sherbert, prepared tableside and with gusto. An outstanding wine list featuring hundreds of California and French bottles is available (prices vary). © wcities.com



contact:
tel: (415) 957-9300
<http://www.yanksing.com/home.php>

location:
101 Spear St (at Rincon Center)
San Francisco CA 94107

hours:
11a-3p M-F, 11a-4p Sa-Su

3 Yank Sing

DESCRIPTION: This huge Shanghai-style restaurant features clean linens, good service and an outstanding array of dishes. The menu runs several pages and there are always a good number of daily specials available, in addition to fabulous Dim Sum ordered from rolling carts. You could probably eat here every day for a month and always have something new. The Deep-fried Fishcakes are done to crispy perfection on the outside and seasoned with just the right mix of garlic, peppers and seaweed. The Chicken Soup is also noteworthy both as a light lunch in itself or a starter for one of the wonderful noodle entrees that come with a variety of toppings. For something a little more fancy, the Wine-Marinated Squab, served cold, makes for a piquant dining experience. © NileGuide



editor

contact:
tel: (415) 861-8032
fax: (415) 861-8329
<http://slanteddoor.com/>

location:
1 Ferry Building #3
San Francisco CA 94111

hours:
Mo to Su from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM

4 Slanted Door

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
No reservation? Call the hostess at 5:30 to get on the waiting list, or dine at the bar.

DESCRIPTION: Many say the best restaurant in San Francisco is the Slanted Door. While the food is famous in its own right, the prime location – inside the historic Ferry Building and overlooking San Francisco Bay, perfect for a sunset cocktail and evening meal - contributes to the overwhelming popularity. The menu includes sure-fire palate-pleasers that utilize sustainably-farmed meat and seafood, as well as farm-fresh, seasonal produce. Reservations are booked for a month in advance, so plan ahead. If you can't get a reservation, sit at the bar where both the California Vietnamese fusion cuisine and the service are just as good. © NileGuide



mastermaq

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

contact:
tel: +1 415 864 8840
fax: (415) 864-3484
<http://www.pancho-villa.com>

location:
3071 16th Street
San Francisco CA 94103

hours:
10a-midnight M-Su

6 Pancho Villa Taqueria

DESCRIPTION: The food here can be summed up in six words: really big, really good, really cheap. That is why Pancho Villa is so popular. The place is huge, offering plenty of room to sit and savor your meal. Enjoy the local artwork displays as you eat your taco, quesedilla, burrito, nachos, or special platter. Chicken, beef, beans, tofu, pork, chile verde, chili colorado, tongue, seafood, cheese, vegetables are your options. Take your pick of fillings for your entrees. Toppings include sour cream, guacamole, lettuce, and a variety of home made salsas. The service is friendly and quick. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:
tel: 800/644-5852
fax: +1 415 775 2601
www.scomas.com

location:
Al Scoma Way
San Francisco CA 94133

hours:
Sun-Thurs 11:30am-10pm;
Fri-Sat 11:30am-10:30pm; bar
opens 30 min. prior to lunch
daily

7 Scoma's

DESCRIPTION: A throwback to the dining of yesteryear, Scoma's eschews trendier trout preparations and fancy digs for good old-fashioned seafood served in huge portions amid a very casual windowed waterfront setting. Gourmands should skip this one. But if your idea of heaven is straightforward seafood classics -- fried calamari, raw oysters, pesto pasta with rock shrimp, crab cioppino, lobster thermidor -- served with a generous portion of old-time hospitality, then Scoma's is as good as it gets. Unfortunately, a taste of tradition will cost you big time. Prices are as steep as those at some of the finest restaurants in town. Personally, I'd rather splurge at Gary Danko, but many of my out-of-town guests insist we meet at Scoma's, which is fine by me since it's a change of pace from today's chic spots, and the parking's free. © Frommer's



wcities

contact:
tel: (415) 882-1333
fax: (415) 882-1794
www.ozumo.com

location:
161 Steuart Street
San Francisco CA 94105

hours:
Mo to Th from 11:30 AM to
02:00 PM, Mo to Th from
05:30 PM to 10:30 PM, Fr
from 11:30 AM to 02:00
PM, Fr from 05:30 PM to 11:00
PM, Sa from 05:30 PM to
11:00 PM, Su from 05:30 PM
to 10:00 PM

8 Ozumo

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Tables in the rear look out into SF Bay

DESCRIPTION: A hip Japanese place nestled in the heart of San Francisco's Embarcadero District, it is famous for its succulent fish and the special Omakase Menu. Something scrumptious is always cooking up at the Charcoal Robata Grill such as fresh fish, lobster, chicken, lamb, duck and Kobe beef. The Sake lounge features a large variety of Sake and Japanese Beer. If you are bored of Sushi and Grilled Meats, go for the Omakase Special Menu that is made to order at least one day in advance. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Ozumo

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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