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San Francisco a City Guide

By Mary Scott

Introduction

The City and County of San Francisco is the fourth-largest city in the state of California, in the United States. A consolidated city-county, mainland San Francisco is located on the tip of the San Francisco Peninsula. Insular San Francisco includes several islands in the San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate Strait, notably Alcatraz, Treasure Island, and the Farallon Islands 27 miles offshore in the Pacific Ocean and also most of the privately owned Red Rock Island near the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

History

San Francisco has a long history of events marking its growth from a small town to a big city

- In 1776, the Spanish were the first Europeans to settle in San Francisco
- In 1848, with the advent of the California gold rush the city entered a period of rapid growth
- In 1822, serious development by non-Spanish speakers began, when William Richardson, an English whaler redeveloped a section of Yerba Buena in what is now Portsmouth Square in Chinatown.
- In 1846, the Mexican-American War broke out.
- On January 30, 1847, a naval force under Commodore John D. Sloat claimed it in the name of the United States and renamed it "San Francisco"
- On April 18, 1906, a devastating earthquake resulted from the rupture of over 270 miles of the San Andreas Fault, from San Juan Bautista to Eureka, centered immediately offshore of San Francisco.
- The city was quickly rebuilt after the earthquake.
- The phoenix on the city's flag represents San Francisco's "rebirth" from the ashes of the fire that resulted from the quake.
- In the 1950s San Francisco hired Harvard graduate Justin Herman to head the redevelopment agency for the city and county.
- Justin Herman began an aggressive campaign to renew blighted areas of the city.
- His planning led to the creation of Embarcadero Center, the Embarcadero Freeway, Japan town, the Geary Street super blocks, and Yerba Buena Gardens.

Place of Interest

San Francisco's parks, museums, tours, and landmarks are favorites for travelers the world over and offer an array of activities to suit every visitor. But no particular activity or place makes the city one of the most popular destinations in the world. It's San Francisco itself — its charm, its atmosphere, its perfect blend of big metropolis with small-town hospitality. Some of its main attractions are:

- Alcatraz Island
- Cable Cars
- California Academy of Sciences
- Coit Tower
- Ferry Building Marketplace (and Farmers' Market)
- Fisherman's Wharf
- Ghiradelli Square

- Golden Gate Bridge
- Lombard Street
- Pier 39
- The Cannery
- Yerba Buena Center for the Arts / Yerba Buena Gardens

Museums & Art Galleries

Notable San Francisco Museums include

- The Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA),
- The Palace of the Legion of Honor,
- The M. H. de Young Memorial Museum,
- The Asian Art Museum.

Other museums include

- The International Museum of Women,
- The Museum of the African Diaspora,
- The Contemporary Jewish Museum,
- The Museum of Craft & Folk Art,
- The Mexican Museum.

In terms of performing arts, San Francisco boasts

- The San Francisco Symphony,
- The San Francisco Opera
- The San Francisco Ballet.

San Francisco's Ballet and Opera are some of the oldest continuing performing arts companies in the United States.

Shopping

Like its population, San Francisco's shopping is both worldly and intimate. Every persuasion, style, era, and fetish is represented, not in big, tacky shopping malls, but in hundreds of quaint, dramatically

different boutiques scattered throughout the city. San Francisco has many shopping areas, but the following places are where one will find most of the actions:

- Union Square & Environs
- Chinatown
- Union Street
- Chestnut Street
- Fillmore Street
- Haight Street
- SoMa
- Hayes Valley

Food & Drink

San Francisco's restaurants are so renowned that many people visit the city just to eat — and with good reason. The city's brilliant chefs, combined with California's abundance of organic produce, seafood, free-range meats, and Northern California wine, guarantee some of the world's finest dining. San Francisco also has varied nightlife ranging from bars to lounges to clubs. Major areas of nightlife in San Francisco are North Beach, the Mission District, the Marina, the Castro, and South of Market. San

Francisco also boasts of legendary pop music venues such as The Fillmore and The Warfield.

Universities

San Francisco Unified School District and the Archdiocese of San Francisco's dozens of Catholic elementary and high schools serve the city. Despite its limited geographical space, San Francisco is home to a multitude of Universities and Colleges. Public universities include:

- University of California, San Francisco, primarily a graduate level health-sciences school, located north of Forest Hill
- San Francisco State University located in the southwest corner of the city near Lake Merced
- University of California, Hastings College of the Law located downtown at its Civic Center
- City College of San Francisco, one of the largest community colleges in the country is located in the Ingleside, with several extension campuses.

· Private universities:

- The Jesuit-run University of San Francisco, one of the first universities established west of the Mississippi, located in the center of the city
- Golden Gate University, a business and law school located downtown
- California Culinary Academy Le Cordon Bleu program located in the Tenderloin
- Academy of Art University
- San Francisco School of Digital Filmmaking
- Alliant International University.

Sports

San Francisco is the home of many major league teams like

- The San Francisco 49ers National Football League team, who play at Monster Park
- The San Francisco Giants Major League Baseball team, who play at SBC Park
- MLB 's Oakland Athletics
- NFL's Oakland Raiders
- The National Basketball Association's Golden State Warriors play across the bay in Oakland
- The regional National Hockey League team, the San Jose Sharks play in San Jose

The Warriors and Sharks were once based just south of San Francisco, at the Cow Palace, located several yards south of San Francisco, in Daly City. The city is also home to some famous golf courses, including the Harding Park Golf Course and the courses of the Olympic Club.

Hotels & Accommodation

Luxury Hotels

San Francisco has elegant and grand hotels in its possession. Westin St. Francis, Westin Saint Francis, Palace Hotel, Argent Hotel, Mark Hopkins Intercontinental, Hilton, Fairmont, W San Francisco, Pan Pacific, Park Hyatt, Hyatt Regency, Renaissance Parc 55, Ritz Carlton – are some of these big names.

All famous luxury hotels like Hilton, Hyatt, Palace Hotel, etc. have their branch in Fisherman Wharf.

Budget Hotels

If the visit to San Francisco is in a particularly busy season and booking in prominent hotels are over, here's a list of moderate to very inexpensive alternatives – Alisa Hotel, Edward II Inn & Suites, Hotel Beresford Arms, King George Hotel, The Marina Inn, The San Remo Hotel.

Tours and Sightseeing

San Francisco has different type of organized tours they differ in the contents as well as the transport system. Tours are available by Bus, Boat, BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) or on foot. The San Francisco Visitor Information Center, at Powell and Market streets, distributes free route maps. Blue & Gold Fleet and Red & White Fleet are two boat tours available. And Gray Line Bus tour is the San Francisco's largest bus tour operator. The self-guided Private SUV tour, 49-mile drive is one easy way to grasp the beauty of San Francisco and its extraordinary location. Beginning in the city, it follows a rough circle around the bay and passes virtually all the best-known sights, from Chinatown to the Golden Gate Bridge, Ocean Beach, Seal Rocks, Golden Gate Park, and Twin Peaks.

Transport

San Francisco has the most extensive public transit system on the West Coast and one of the most diverse in the country. Muni is the city-owned public transit system, which operates the Muni Metro

light rail system. BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) is the regional transit system, which connects San Francisco with the East Bay, through an underwater tunnel, and Northern San Mateo County, California communities and San Francisco International Airport on the San Francisco Peninsula. In addition, a frequent commuter rail service, Caltrain, operates between San Francisco, San Jose, California and Gilroy, California.

San Francisco International Airport (SFO) is located 12.9 km (8 miles) south of the city in San Mateo County on a landfill extension into the San Francisco Bay. It is the only major international hub airport in California other than LAX in Los Angeles.

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San Francisco Bay Area Information

By John Nazareno

Nestled along San Francisco Bay, the Bay Area boasts of one of the finest natural harbor in the world, which has a total area of around 450 square miles. Home to almost 8 million people, the San Francisco Bay Area provides the only real break in the coastal mountains of California making it one of the most ideal spot for living within the state. It is divided into 6 sub–regions (North Bay, San Francisco, East Bay, Peninsula, South Bay, and Santa Cruz) and composed of 10 counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma).

North Bay is a sub–region north of the Golden Gate Bridge, is separated by water from the rest of the Bay Area. It has numerous affluent communities and is probably the least urbanized among the 6 sub–regions. North Bay has many undeveloped parks, farmlands, and plantations. One popular location is Napa Valley, which is well–known for the world class red wines produced from its vineyards.

The City and County of San Francisco was once the largest city, in terms of population in the whole Bay Area. Although it no longer holds that distinction, it remains as the traditional, cultural, financial, and urban center of the region. The most famous landmark in this area is the Golden Gate Bridge, which spans the Golden Gate Strait, a water passage connecting San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The bridge connects the city/county of San Francisco with Marin County in the North Bay.

The East Bay area is split into 2 regions, the Inner East Bay and the Outer East Bay. Inner East Bay,

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located along the bay's coastline, is more urban, densely populated, and has a more ethnically diverse population. Old buildings in the area suggest that it is one of the oldest developed regions. Outer East Bay, on the other hand, is composed of inland valleys separated from the Inner East Bay by hills and mountains. Its development dates back to less than 60 years ago and is mostly suburban to rural.

San Francisco Peninsula (or simply Peninsula) is the area between East Bay and San Francisco. It is composed of a series of towns, small cities, and suburban communities along San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

South Bay is the sub-region where the past blends well with the present and the future. The past is typically characterized by the city of San Jose, the oldest city in California, while the present and the future could be gleaned from the products churned by Silicon Valley. In 1990, San Jose became the most populated city in the area.

Santa Cruz, although regarded by most as part of Monterey Bay Area, some agencies and records show it as a part of San Francisco Bay Area. It is sprawled along San Francisco Peninsula, Santa Cruz Mountains, and Monterey Bay.

With tourism being the region's leading industry, the Bay Area is teeming with tourist destinations and historic landmarks. It is one of the wealthiest regions in the United States. Of the 280 metropolitan areas nationwide, the Bay Area has the highest median household income with \$62,024. Six of the top ten places in California with the highest per capita income could also be found in the Bay Area. These figures are a testament of the boundless opportunities available for the citizens residing in the region.

With its idyllic setting and mild climate, living in the Bay Area is an investment that you can never be wrong about.

Visit the beautiful State of California

<http://www.stateof-california.com/popular-city/popular-city.html>

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California information and places to visit with the entire family or business. Come enjoy the many California theme parks

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that are available to visit

year round.



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