

SAN FRANCISCO

FALL & WINTER GUIDE 2008/2009



The best places to eat, sleep and play
in San Francisco this fall and winter

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INTRODUCTION



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PACKING TIPS

1. **A backpack**—"Backpacks abound among locals. They are handy for carrying the layers of clothing that you will need, due to the changing temperatures of the day."
—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco
2. **A coat**—"Be prepared, S.F. can be very chilly! Always bring a coat."
—TripAdvisor Member, Pacifica, Calif.
3. **Comfortable shoes**—"Bring good walking shoes! Even if you do minimal walking, you'll be climbing BIG HILLS."
—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco
4. "A good solid guidebook for visiting San Francisco and Marin County is the **Golden Gate Trailblazer: Where to Hike, Walk, Bike in San Francisco and Marin**. It includes the ferry system, all the coastal trails and is written by San Francisco natives."
—TripAdvisor Member

Inside SAN FRANCISCO

Diversity is the name of the game in San Francisco.

Diverse citizens: one of the most liberal centers in the U.S. today, the city is the second most densely populated in the country and is home to significant Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Italian, Irish and Russian populations. Diverse architecture: almost destroyed in an earthquake in 1906, the city was rapidly rebuilt and remains one of the most architecturally interesting cities in the United States with building styles that range from British Victorians to modern skyscrapers. Diverse landscape: here you'll find calf-cramping hills, the mind-soothing Pacific and the funny-bone-tickling Lombard Street, the "most crooked" street in the world.

For the most part, there is little diversity in San Francisco's weather and temperatures seldom dip below 40 degrees or exceed 90. In winter, the surrounding waters tend to keep the city from getting as cold as other parts of the Bay Area.

In the summer, the opposite effect occurs. No one knows who said, "the coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco." But savvy travelers know it's true.

Top VIEWS



SAN FRANCISCO'S BEST VIEWS

"**Coit Tower** is a must. The views are remarkable! A small fee to ride the elevator to the top, but well worth it for the 360-degree panoramic view of San Francisco. You will see the Golden Gate Bridge, Pier 39, Lombard Street, the Bay Bridge and Alcatraz all from high up in the tower."—TripAdvisor Member, Durham, Calif.

Coit Tower, 1 Telegraph Hill Blvd., 415 362 0808

Cross the **Golden Gate Bridge** by foot, bicycle or vehicle to see San Francisco's skyline, the mountains, the ocean, Alcatraz and many of the area's other landmarks. "One of the most beautiful places in the world."—TripAdvisor Member, Gedera, Israel

Golden Gate Bridge, Lincoln Blvd., near Doyle Dr. and Fort Point, Golden Gate Bridge Plaza, 415 921 5858

The summit of **Twin Peaks** is a good place to witness a beautiful sunrise or sunset, and get an overview of the city. "Market Street is laid out before you, and the Bay Bridge stretches to the East Bay. You can see the University of California campanile and the Mormon Temple on a clear day and the tops of the Golden Gate Bridge towers."—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco

Twin Peaks, Twin Peaks Boulevard to Christmas Tree Point

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. Alcatraz, Pier 41, 415 561 4900
2. City Lights Booksellers, 261 Columbus Ave., 415 362 8193
3. Golden Gate Bridge, Lincoln Boulevard near Doyle Drive and Fort Point, Golden Gate Bridge Plaza, 415 921 5858
4. Pier 39, Beach Street and The Embarcadero, 415 705 5500
5. Mr. Toad's Tours, Departs from Fisherman's Wharf, 2698 Mason St., 650 401 7708
6. Fisherman's Wharf, Jefferson Street between Hyde and Powell streets, 888 WHARFS
7. City Segway Tours, 505 Beach St., 415 409 0672
8. USS Pampanito, Pier 45 at Fisherman's Wharf, 415 775 1943
9. Bay Quackers - San Francisco Duck Tours, The Anchorage Mall @ The Fisherman's Wharf, 415 431 3825
10. Ferry Building Marketplace, 1 Ferry Building, Embarcadero at Market Street, 415 693 0996



FAMILIES

Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory makes fortune cookies by hand and is a real treat. "It's a bit hard to find, but you can handwrite your own fortunes and the lady will put them in a fortune cookie right in front of you."—TripAdvisor Member, Little Elm, Texas

Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory, 56 Ross Alley, Between Washington and Jackson Streets, 415 781 3956

"Filled with nickelodeons, vintage pinball games and all mechanical amusements of days gone by," the **Musee Mecanique** "doesn't cost you a thing unless you want to feed the machines coins and watch their neat movements. Better than today's video games!"—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Musee Mecanique, Pier 45, Fisherman's Wharf, 415 346 2000

Fisherman's Wharf "was buzzing with families, friends and strangers. Loads of restaurants and shops and nice to sit and take in the vibe. Yes, it's a tourist area, but that made all the fun."—TripAdvisor Member, Brisbane, Australia

Fisherman's Wharf, Jefferson Street between Hyde and Powell streets, 888 WHARFS

ROMANCE

Step out of the cold and into the "eye-catching" **Conservatory of Flowers**. "The water lilies were gorgeous and large. I also really enjoyed seeing all the different orchids. The rooms are quite warm, and the misting adds to the feeling of being in a tropical location."—TripAdvisor Member, Modesto, Calif.

Conservatory of Flowers, John F. Kennedy Drive, Golden Gate Park, 415 666 7001

With "beautiful architecture, a lovely pond with water birds and terrapins," the **Palace of Fine Arts** is "the perfect place for a picnic. Must take a camera!"—TripAdvisor member, Israel

Palace of Fine Arts, 3301 Lyon St., 415 563 6504

Catch a classic movie alfresco with wine and dinner at **Foreign Cinema**. "Make sure you call ahead for a reservation and get a table outside. They show old movies on the wall after dark."—TripAdvisor Member, Dallas, Texas

Foreign Cinema, 2534 Mission St., 415 648 7600

Where to **PLAY**



BUDGET

"If you're cheap and just want to sit back and enjoy drinks, check out **Holy Cow**. It's free, and it's a bar with dancing."—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco

Holy Cow, 1535 Folsom St., 415 621 6087

San Francisco City Guides offer free walking tours "featuring legends, history and architecture and it's run by trained volunteers. It can be fun finding out stuff about places you might not normally go."—TripAdvisor Member, Australia

San Francisco City Guides, San Francisco Public Library, 100 Larkin St., 415 557 4266

At **Cris** on Polk Street you'll find "really high-end designer pieces and they're in amazing condition. It isn't really a 'thrift' store."—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco

Cris, 2056 Polk St., 415 474 1191



ADVENTURE

"Take a look at the **Kristi Yamaguchi Outdoor Ice Skating Rink**. Even if you don't ice-skate, grab a cup of coffee or hot chocolate, and just watch the people skate (or fall)—HAHAHA! It's actually a tradition of mine."—TripAdvisor Member, California

Kristi Yamaguchi Outdoor Ice Skating Rink at Embarcadero Center, Embarcadero at Battery, 415 772 0734

Ocean Beach "is a great place to hang out. It stretches forever, and there is always enough space to run around and have your own party. They allow bonfires (in authorized fire rings), which rocks because at night, even though it's cold, you can sit by a bonfire and have a blast."—TripAdvisor Member, Petaluma, Calif.

Ocean Beach, On the Great Highway, 415 561 4741

Rent a bicycle at **Adventure Bicycle Company** and freewheel across the city's most famous landmark. "Allow at least half a day as once you cross the Golden Gate Bridge. You can head down into Sausalito, which is lovely and has its own climate which is often warmer than SF."—TripAdvisor Member, Hampshire, England

Adventure Bicycle Company, 734 Lombard St., 415 771 8735



EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL

No trip to the city is complete without a visit to the notorious island prison, **Alcatraz**. Opt for the after-dark tour, which is "fascinating and creepy. The views at sunset on the way out and the nighttime cityscape on the way back are awesome."—TripAdvisor Member, Mesa, Ariz.

Alcatraz, tour departs from Pier 41, 415 561 4900 (Ranger Station) 415 981 7625 (Ferry Tickets/Reservations)

"**Mission Dolores** was my favorite San Francisco sight. The old church is the oldest building in San Francisco, and the ceiling, painted by Native Americans in traditional patterns, is a fascinating juxtaposition to the European altar and art in this little Catholic mission."—TripAdvisor Member, Victoria, British Columbia

Mission Dolores, 3321 16th St. at Dolores St., 415 621 8203

City Lights is "my idea of a true bookstore: wooden shelves, chairs and stools combined with intimate 'rooms' and the feeling you can really wander and take your time to choose your book. A fantastic range of local books and an amazing section on beat poetry."—TripAdvisor Member, Adelaide, Australia

City Lights Booksellers, 261 Columbus Ave., 415 362 8193

"Fascinating and creepy."



TripAdvisor members have posted more than 1,300,000 photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It's almost like being there!



RELAXATION

"If you want a day out of the city, **Angel Island** is a great getaway for something different. The hike to the peak and down again gives excellent views of Sausalito and Tiburon, as well as back to the city and the Golden Gate Bridge."—TripAdvisor Member, Reading, England

Angel Island State Park, Ferry departs from Pier 41, 415 435 1915

Check out the **Presidio-Golden Gate National Recreation Area**, a 75,398-acre park. It's a collection of parks from San Mateo County to southern Marin County. "They have trails and rangers lead interesting walks. We went on one where they pointed out all the plants that the native people ate before SF was settled. Walk along Crissy Field to Fort Point and up to the Golden Gate Bridge."—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco

Golden Gate National Recreation Area, The Pacific West Region Information Center, Building 201, Fort Mason, 415 561 4700

For a more compact experience go to **Golden Gate Park** and tour the "Japanese Garden and stop at the tea house or visit the recently restored glass arboretum. It's beautiful."—TripAdvisor Member

Japanese Garden at Golden Gate Park, Tea Garden Drive and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, 415 831 2700

What's the **TOUR**

How to Get Around



"San Francisco is a compact and walkable city offering a wide range of transportation options that preclude the need for a car. If you're looking for a workout, use nothing but **your own two feet** and you'll likely find yourself in better shape by the end of your voyage!"—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco

Cable Cars. "Public transportation in San Francisco is excellent. Especially the cable cars, which are fun and easy."—TripAdvisor Member, Santa Cruz, Calif.

Golden Gate Transit. The ferry trip to Sausalito is "a terrific way to see the Bay."—TripAdvisor Member

Golden Gate Transit, 415 455 2000

WHERE to eat

TOP 10 Restaurants

1. Restaurant Gary Danko, 800 N. Point St., 415 749 2060
2. Blue Bottle Cafe, 315 Linden St., 415 252 7535
3. Mitchell's Ice Cream, 688 San Jose Ave., 415 648 2300
4. Frascati, 1901 Hyde St., 415 928 1406
5. Dottie's True Blue Café, 522 Jones St., 415 885 2767
6. Bi-Rite Creamery & Bakeshop, 3692 18th St., 415 626 5600
7. Tartine Bakery, 600 Guerrero St., 415 487 2600
8. Kokkari Estiatorio, 200 Jackson St., 415 981 0983
9. Restaurant Michael Mina, 335 Powell St., 415 397 9222
10. Delfina, 3621 18th St., 415 552 4055

FAMILIES

Tommy's Joynt "is great for atmosphere. Kids like it because the decor is so crazy and you can find something for all palates. The sandwiches and hot plates are good and filling."—TripAdvisor Member, Berkeley, Calif.

Tommy's Joynt, 1101 Geary Blvd., 415 775 4216

For a family breakfast, visit **Dottie's True Blue Cafe**. "The staff were all fantastic: patient and friendly with our kids, attentive to the adults, even willing to share a word and joke. The food was great and the portions able to fill that brunch time hole."—TripAdvisor Member, Essex, England

Dottie's True Blue Cafe, 522 Jones St., 415 885 2767

"If you like the 1950s style American Diner, then **Mel's Drive-in Diner** is a good pick. It's not a drive-in but they have balloons and crayons for the kids."—TripAdvisor Member

Mel's Drive-In, 801 Mission St., 415 227 0793

"...the food was to die for."

ROMANCE

Dress to impress at **Restaurant Gary Danko**. "Great choice for a romantic dinner, prepared by professional chefs and served in an elegant dining room."

—TripAdvisor Member, Munich, Germany

Restaurant Gary Danko, 800 North Point at Hyde St., 415 749 2060

Enjoy an unhurried meal at **La Folie** where the service was "attentive and warm. The staff delivered a perfectly paced meal and the food was everything you'd want it to be from this kind of restaurant."

—TripAdvisor Member, Belmont, Calif.

La Folie, 2316 Polk St., 415 776 5577

Take pleasure in fine dining at **The Dining Room at the Ritz-Carlton** where service is "very friendly and the food was to die for. We had a whole spectrum of foods with Asian flare. Everything was very fresh and well balanced."—TripAdvisor Member, California

The Dining Room at the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco, 600 Stockton at California St., 415 296 7465

BUDGET

"For cheap eats, **Lefty O'Doul's** near Union Square serves up food, almost cafeteria style, with some excellent beers on tap to wash it down."—TripAdvisor Member

Lefty O'Doul's, 333 Geary St., 415 982 8900

"The **Siam Restaurant** is a small, neat little Thai restaurant that's nicer than a hole-in-the-wall, but priced close to that. Kids might cotton to the Thai-inflected dishes that use spaghetti noodles (but not spaghetti sauce) or the ever popular Pad Thai."—TripAdvisor Member

Siam Thai Restaurant, 55 Cyril Magnin St., 415 362 7456

"For some fantastic cheap eats, try **Asqew Grill**. They create interesting grilled 'kabobs,' grilled sides such as asparagus, and even have a 'grilled' banana split! It's delicious healthy food."—TripAdvisor Member, Yosemite National Park, Calif.

Asqew Grill, 1607 Haight St. at Clayton, 415 701 9301

WHERE to eat



HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

For vegetarian fine dining, don't miss **Millennium**, the "best vegetarian/vegan restaurant in San Francisco, possibly the whole U.S. Period."—TripAdvisor Member, Oudewater, Netherlands

Millennium, 580 Geary St., 415 345 3900

"You MUST go to **Golden Era** for amazing vegetarian Vietnamese/Asian food. Go here if nowhere else."—TripAdvisor Member, Milwaukee, Wis.

Golden Era, 572 O'Farrell St., 415 673 3136

"...impressive bay views and a great assortment of epicurean delights."

You'll find flavors from all over the world at **Greens Restaurant**. "One of the best meals I've ever had. Try the vegetable and tofu kabob and wonderful gingerbread pudding with blueberries. The service is really excellent as is the view of the Golden Gate."—TripAdvisor Member, Washington, D.C.

Greens Restaurant, Building A, Fort Mason Center, 415 771 6222

HIDDEN GEMS

At **Chaya Brasserie**, the "menu is short, which means good fresh products cooked with real taste. And no heavy sauce full of sugar and 'flavors' that some other restaurants claiming to be 'fusion' usually serve."—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

Chaya Brasserie, 132 The Embarcadero, 415 777 8688

"An extremely popular local favorite, **The Slanted Door** offers a good selection of Chinese, French and Vietnamese entrees. It's located in the recently renovated Ferry Building, which has impressive bay views and a great assortment of epicurean delights."—TripAdvisor Member, Munich, Germany

The Slanted Door, 1 Ferry Building #3, 415 861 8032

Burger Joint is "a great place for a burger and fries. The buns are whole wheat, chicken is free range and beef comes from Niman Ranch. You can't get much more SF than that!"—TripAdvisor Member

Burger Joint, 700 Haight St., 415 864 3833

SPECIAL EVENTS



Check out concerts by emerging artists and jazz greats including Mavis Staples, Arturo Sandoval and Sweet Honey in the Rock at the **San Francisco Jazz Festival**. Extra events include film presentations, exhibitions and family concerts. (October 3 – November 9)

San Francisco Jazz Festival, Various venues, 415 788 7353, <http://www.sfjazz.org>

Halloween in San Francisco has something for all ages: Adults can party with 10 DJs on six different stages at the **Halloween Ball** in the landmark Regency Center (October 24), or kids of all ages can sail the seas on the **Halloween Haunted Pirate Ship**. (October 25)

Halloween Haunted Pirate Ship, Red and White Fleet, Pier 43½, Fisherman's Wharf, 415 673 2900, http://www.redandwhite.com/special_cruise_halloween.asp

Halloween Ball, Regency Center, 1290 Sutter St., 415 673 6464, <http://www.alfandalf.com/nextevent/index.htm>

Environmentally friendly San Francisco is the perfect setting for the **Green Festival**, a celebration of the Earth incorporating presentations on sustainable living, inspiring speakers, tasty, ethical eats, a tea garden and fair trade pavilion. (November 14 – 16)

Green Festival, San Francisco Concourse Exhibition Center, 635 8th St., 800 58 GREEN, <http://www.greenfestivals.org>

Illuminated by hundreds of lights, the Hyatt Regency San Francisco **Snow Village** will enchant the whole family with music, food, displays and festivities throughout the season. (November 14 – December 30)
Snow Village, Hyatt Regency San Francisco, 5 Embarcadero Center, 415 788 1234, <http://sanfranciscoregency.hyatt.com>

Kick off the winter holiday season with **Pier 39's Holiday Tree Lighting**, featuring festive music, decadent ornaments and luminous lights to welcome the season of celebrations including Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa. (November 16)
Pier 39's Holiday Tree Lighting, Pier 39, <http://www.pier39.com>

Featuring over 100 restaurants with prix fixe menus on offer, **Dine About Town** is sure to tempt your taste buds. (January 1 – 31)
Dine About Town, Various venues, 415 391 2000, <http://www.sfdineabouttown.com>

The largest festival of its kind outside of China, San Francisco's Chinese New Year Festival lights up Chinatown with thousands of fireworks, elaborate decorations, a flower fair, a walk/run, pageants, street parties and the much anticipated **Chinese New Year Parade** on February 7. (January 24 – February 15)
Chinese New Year Festival and Parade, Chinatown, 415 986 1370, <http://www.chineseparade.com>

Where to STAY



FAMILIES

“On the Wharf and beside the cable car base, the **Argonaut Hotel** is right in the heart of what San Francisco is all about. Rooms are clean and spacious, with a cute chocolate surprise every evening at ‘turn-down’ time and the most comfortable beds we’ve ever slept in at any hotel!”—TripAdvisor Member, Dublin, Ireland

Argonaut Hotel, 495 Jefferson St. at Hyde, Fisherman’s Wharf, 415 563 0800

Nob Hill Motor Inn “is located in a nice neighborhood; Russian Hill and Nob Hill are in walking distance. The room on the second floor was small, but clean and affordable. A big plus: You can park your car for free. If you need any tips or advice, feel free to ask the friendly and helpful hosts.”—TripAdvisor Member, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Nob Hill Motor Inn, 1630 Pacific Ave., 415 775 8160

Columbus Motor Inn offers a “great location steps from the Wharf, Chinatown, Lombard Street and cable cars, in a safe neighborhood. Fantastic price for the location. Wow, wow, wow!”—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Columbus Motor Inn, 1075 Columbus Ave., 415 885 1492

Have questions about San Francisco? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions are answered within 24 hours.



ROMANCE

The White Swan Inn is “a wonderful place with great service and a pleasing, homey feel. The fireplace was romantic, the room huge and the bathroom was the cleanest we’ve ever seen.”—TripAdvisor Member, Lincoln, Neb.

White Swan Inn, 845 Bush St., 415 775 1755

Petite Auberge offers “good value in a great location. Each person at the desk proved to be very friendly, competent and knowledgeable. The room was small but clean, charmingly furnished and comfortable. It was quiet for a room in the center of the city.”—TripAdvisor Member, Baden, Switzerland

Petite Auberge, 863 Bush St., 415 928 6000

The Mandarin Oriental capitalizes on its surroundings. It’s a “wonderful five-star, central hotel in San Francisco.” It boasts “views that take your breath away, romantic sunsets across the Pacific Ocean and beautiful rooms that are manicured to perfection every day.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Mandarin Oriental, 222 Sansome St., 415 276 9888

BUDGET

24 Henry is a “peaceful haven in the Castro. Walter and his staff will make you feel very welcome at this relaxed and well-run guest house, situated on a very quiet, tree-lined street, but only minutes away from all the bustle of Market and Castro streets.”—TripAdvisor Member, United Kingdom

24 Henry, 24 Henry St., 415 864 5686

“We loved the **Ocean Park Motel**. The guy at reception was super friendly and provided us with lots of useful information. The art deco style is great; the courtyard, fantastic. The room was nicely decorated and very clean.”—TripAdvisor Member, Frankfurt, Germany

Ocean Park Motel, 2690 46th Ave., 415 566 7020

“We stayed at **Pacific Heights Inn** for our romantic escape to San Francisco. This motel is well situated on Union Street. In 30 minutes, one can walk to Pier 39, to Lombard Street, etc. We had a room with a big bed and kitchenette, which allowed us to take our meals at the hotel.”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

Pacific Heights Inn, 1555 Union St., 415 776 3310

“...charming jewel of a hotel!”

LUXURY

“The staff at the **Four Seasons San Francisco** was extremely kind and gave us a room on the highest floor possible at our request. The bed was one of those cloud types—very, very luxurious. The slippers are super-soft, and the bathroom amenities are L’Occitane, a new favorite of mine.”—TripAdvisor Member, Rome, Italy

Four Seasons San Francisco, 757 Market St., 415 633 3000

At the **Hotel Drisco**, “We loved the ambience, the view, the size of the room, the personal attention and the quietness of this charming jewel of a hotel in a beautiful residential setting. The service is friendly and attentive.”—TripAdvisor Member, Corpus Christi, Texas

Hotel Drisco, 2901 Pacific Ave., 415 346 2880

Omni San Francisco is “a great choice, whether you’re there for business or for romance. Elegant, quiet, perfectly located in a very good part of town. I think the Omni really has it all.”—TripAdvisor Member, Madrid, Spain

Omni San Francisco Hotel, 500 California St., 415 677 9494

Where to **STAY**



HIDDEN GEMS

“The **Rex** is a good hotel that makes you feel like you’ve traveled back in time. The rooms are very small, but they are decorated in an old-fashioned style that does make you feel at home. In the early evening, the hotel offers a free glass of wine to all their guests—a nice touch.”—TripAdvisor Member, Brussels, Belgium

Rex Hotel, 562 Sutter St., 415 433 4434

“...like you’ve traveled back in time.”

“**Castle Inn** makes a perfect base to visit the city. As first timers to San Francisco, three of us stayed at the Inn and were highly satisfied. The room with two double beds was roomy enough to fit all our luggage and still make us feel comfortable. All in all, we had a very pleasant stay, with amazing prices for such a nice location and for all the little extras we had.”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

Castle Inn, 1565 Broadway, 415 441 1155

The **Orchard Hotel**’s classic arched façade belies what’s inside. “New, modern, clean, contemporary, intimate all describe it. No, it doesn’t have a gorgeous view or fancy lobby, but it has friendly and helpful staff, affordable rates and well appointed rooms.”—TripAdvisor Member, Wisconsin

The Orchard Hotel, 665 Bush St., 415 362 8878

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