

San Francisco

The orange bridge, Alcatraz, the cable cars and fog at the Golden Gate

San Francisco is seven miles wide with a bay, a bridge and more fog than any American city. Walk the Embarcadero, take the ferry to Alcatraz, ride a cable car up Powell, eat a Mission burrito and stand at the Golden Gate as the fog rolls in. It is expensive, cold in summer, and worth every minute.

At a glance

AIRPORT	SFO, 25 min by BART to downtown
BEST SEASON	Sep-Nov (warmest); avoid summer fog
GETTING AROUND	BART, Muni and walking · no car needed

When to go

September to November is the warmest and clearest time. Summer (June–August) is foggy and cold at 14°C. Winter is wet; spring is green and bright.

Getting around

BART connects SFO to downtown in 30 minutes. Muni buses, the cable car and walking cover the city — it is seven miles square. A car is more trouble than it's worth: hills, parking and break-ins make it stressful.

What to see

Golden Gate Bridge	Walk or cycle the eastern walkway; Battery Spencer on the Marin side.
Alcatraz	Ferry from Pier 33; book two weeks ahead for night tours.
Fisherman's Wharf	Pier 39, sea lions, Boudin sourdough and the ferry to Sausalito.
Chinatown & North Beach	Grant Avenue, dim sum, City Lights Books and espresso in North Beach.
The Mission	Murals, Dolores Park and the burrito at El Farolito.
Golden Gate Park	de Young, the Japanese Tea Garden and the Conservatory of Flowers.
Haight-Ashbury	Victorians, vintage and the Summer of Love legacy.
Lombard Street	The crookedest street; walk it, don't drive it.

Tours worth booking

Muir Woods redwoods day trip from San Francisco	4 h · Nature · 4.8/5 (5340 reviews)
Napa Valley wine tour from San Francisco	9 h · Food & wine · 4.7/5 (4760 reviews)
Universal Studios Hollywood day ticket	Full day · Adventure · 4.7/5 (4120 reviews)
Alcatraz Island day tour with ferry	2.5 h · Culture · 4.8/5 (8920 reviews)
Warner Bros Studio Tour Hollywood	3 h · Culture · 4.8/5 (3640 reviews)
San Diego Zoo 1-day admission	Full day · Nature · 4.7/5 (6210 reviews)

Where to stay

Fairmont San Francisco	Nob Hill · Historic · From \$480
The Westin San Francisco Airport	SFO · airport · Business · From \$190
Protea Hotel San Francisco Downtown	SoMa · near Moscone · Business · From \$180
Hotel Griffon	San Francisco · Embarcadero · Boutique · From \$280
The Beverly Hills Hotel	Beverly Hills · Sunset Boulevard · Historic · From \$850
Chateau Marmont	West Hollywood · Sunset Boulevard · Historic · From \$720

Day-by-day itineraries

San Francisco in 1 day	suitesandsunsets.com/itineraries/san-francisco/1-day-itinerary
San Francisco in 2 days	suitesandsunsets.com/itineraries/san-francisco/2-day-itinerary
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