



# San Francisco

## The Quintessential City

You've probably heard all the superlatives used to describe the City by the Bay: "beautiful," "picturesque" "romantic," "enchanted," "charming," "exciting," "alive," and "everybody's favorite city."

And you probably know why tourists come here—to see the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz Island, Chinatown, Ghirardelli Square and the seals at Fisherman's Wharf. They also come to ride a cable car, to experience the precipitous hills, to taste sourdough bread where it was created, and to learn why "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" is such a poignant song.

Now it's your turn to have a good time in San Francisco. Any time is a good time.

---

## *Pathfinder* Newsletter

Fall 2008

Guided Tours of Cities, Towns, and National Parks in the American West

by the Authors of *Seven Perfect Days in Northern California* and *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado*

Geographically, San Francisco is built on 43 hills and stretches approximately eight miles (12.9 km) east-to-west and seven miles (11.3 km) north-to-south, encompassing a total area of only 47 square miles (121 square kilometers). It's often said that if you get tired of climbing, you can always lean against one of the hills. Because the city is surrounded on three sides by water, and fog rolls in most summer evenings, average daytime temperatures range between 56 and 69 degrees Fahrenheit (13.3 and 20.5 Celsius). So, be sure to have a sweater or windbreaker handy at all times of the year.

### Alternative Attractions

We suggest that you order the free “San Francisco Basic Visitor Information Kit” by calling the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau, at least four weeks before you leave home, or order it online. (See “To Learn More” at the end of this issue.) From the kit and other information on the Visitors Bureau website, you'll learn of other attractions that are not included in this newsletter. The kit also contains useful maps.

## Day One

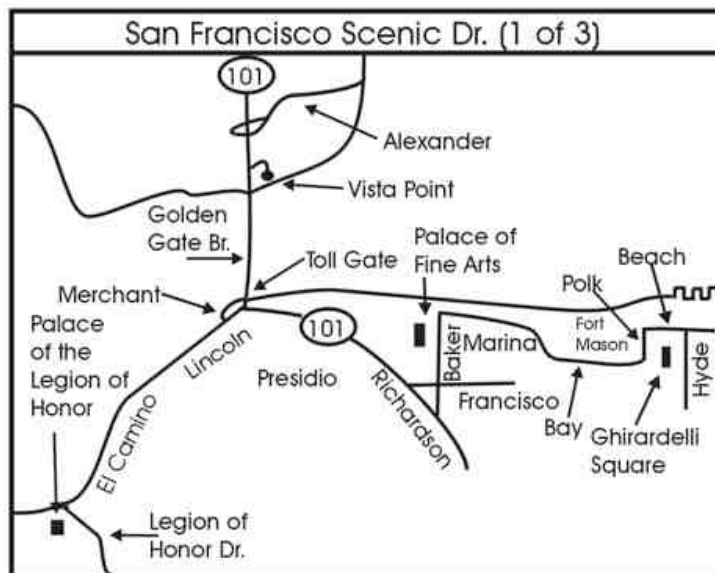
This morning, we'll give you a guided driving tour of the city, and after that, you'll enjoy a cable car ride. This afternoon and into the evening, you'll experience the best parts of San Francisco's number one attraction, Fisherman's Wharf.

### Scenic Driving Tour

*Before we start our drive, here are two words of caution: cable cars have the right of way; and, if you park on a hill—even when you set the emergency brake and put the transmission in “park”—be sure to turn your front wheels so they rest into the curb and the car won't roll.*

As you can see from our maps, you'll be driving across the city from east to west, then from west to east on a different route. On the cable car rides this afternoon, you will experience the city on one route from north to south and on another from south to north. That should give you a good overall perspective of the city.

Our starting point is in front of **Ghirardelli Square** on Beach St., between Larkin and Polk. This afternoon, we'll spend some time in this complex of charming shops and restaurants. (From Beach St., it's largely hidden by the building on its east side.)



Head west on Beach St., in the direction of the Golden Gate Bridge. After Ghirardelli Square, turn left onto Polk St. and then immediately right on Bay St. You'll soon see **Fort Mason Center** on your right. Formerly the western headquarters for the US Army and a WWII troop embarkation point, Fort Mason is now headquarters for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the home of several cultural organizations.

Next, you'll drive through the Marina area by turning right on Laguna, left on Beach and right onto Marina Blvd. The Marina area is known for its beautiful homes and exceptional views.

*Watch carefully for Baker St., which is the street after Broderick St. If you miss Baker, you'll end up on the Golden Gate Bridge, and we're not ready for that yet.* Turn left (south) onto Baker and you'll find the **Palace of Fine Arts** on your right. We think that the Palace of Fine Arts and the Golden Gate Bridge are the most visually exciting structures in San Francisco—in other words, feasts for the eye. (See the center photo on page 1.)

Here, you'll want to get out of the car, take some photographs and walk through this neo-classical pseudo-Roman ruin. Designed by San Francisco architect, Bernard Maybeck, it was built of wood and plaster as part of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition and rebuilt in concrete during the 1960's. This is the only structure remaining from the Exposition, which extended from here to Fort Mason.

Next, continue south on Baker St. to Francisco St., turn right, and then right again, onto Richardson Ave. Several blocks later, you'll find yourself traveling on U.S. Rte. 101 through the **Presidio's** 1,480 heavily wooded acres toward the Golden Gate Bridge. The Presidio has been of military importance ever since the Spanish established a garrison here in 1776, because of its strategic location at the mouth of San Francisco Bay. The US Army took it over in 1847 and then in 1995 turned it over to the National Park Service.

As you approach the **Golden Gate Bridge**, you may be interested to know that: construction of the bridge took four and one-half years, was completed in 1937, and cost \$35 million; the bridge is 1.6 miles (2.6 km) long, excluding approaches; the center suspension section is 4,200 feet (1,280 meters) long; the deck sits 220 feet (67 meters; approximately 22 stories) above the water at low tide; the towers rise another 526 feet (160 meters; 52 stories); its color is "international orange"; and 34 people work full time, year-round, applying 10,000 gallons of paint a year to the bridge.

There is no tollgate northbound on the bridge, because tolls are collected only on the southbound side.

*The following two instructions are very important if you want to enjoy a beautiful view of San Francisco and continue to follow our scenic drive without getting off track:*

*First, be prepared to turn right off U.S. 101 at the Vista Point Exit soon after you leave the bridge.* When you do that, you'll find yourself on Vista Point, where you'll want to park and enjoy the view. By the way, the other bridge you'll see from here is the circa-1936 San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. And, of course, that's Oakland at the other end, with Berkeley to the left.

*The second important instruction is: Reenter U.S. 101 and turn off at the Alexander Ave. Exit. Turn left under 101 and follow the signs to San Francisco to get back to the bridge. As you approach the tollbooth, it's very important that you use the far right-hand lane. Look to the right immediately after exiting the toll booth and turn into the street that you see there. (It looks more*

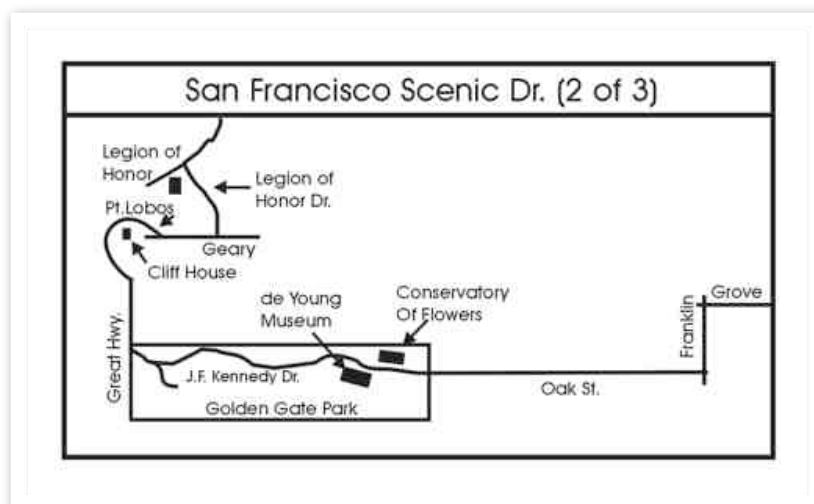
like a road leading to residences or maintenance facilities than an exit from a major highway). Continue on that street until it intersects Lincoln Blvd. Turn right on Lincoln.

(If you miss the street immediately after the tollbooth, you will need to follow the Highway 1 signs and exit at Golden Gate Park, picking up the tour from there.)

Then, follow Lincoln south a little over a mile (1.6+ km) until it turns into El Camino del Mar. Another mile past that, you'll come to the **California Palace of the Legion of Honor**.

Pass in front of the Legion of Honor building and take Legion of Honor Dr. south one-half mile to Geary, where you'll turn right and follow Geary to 40th Ave. Then bear right on Point Lobos Ave. Six-tenths of a mile farther, you'll come to **Cliff House**. You may want to get out of your car here and look 32 miles due west into the Pacific Ocean where you'll see the Farallon Islands. San Francisco's city limits actually extend to, and include, these islands. The Cliff House itself has been the location of a succession of restaurants since 1863, most of which have been leveled by fires. Are you wondering why you don't see very many people on the beach? The reason is that the water is too cold for swimming, year round, and it's unsafe for both swimming and surfboarding.

You're now on Great Highway heading south. One-half mile beyond Cliff House, turn left on John F. Kennedy Dr. (just after the traffic light at Fulton St.) and into Golden Gate Park. Follow JFK Drive, which bears left about one-quarter mile into the park, all the way through the park. (There are no street signs; you'll need to follow our map.)



**Golden Gate Park** is recognized as one of the most beautiful city parks in the world. It's three miles (4.8 km) long and a half-mile (.8 km) wide. Prior to being designed in 1871 by William Hammond Hall and developed by horticulturist John McLaren, its 1,017 acres (412 hectares) were windswept and treeless sand dunes.

JFK Dr. will take you by the new **M. H. de Young Museum**, on your right. Unseen nearby are the **Japanese Tea Garden**, the **California Academy of Sciences** (which houses the Steinhart Aquarium, the Morrison Planetarium, and the Natural History Museum) and the **Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens**. Soon after you pass the de Young Museum, you'll see the **Conservatory of Flowers** on your left. You'll have the opportunity to visit several of these attractions tomorrow when we return to Golden Gate Park.

As you exit the park, the road will feed you onto Oak St. Follow it 1.5 miles (2.4 km) to Franklin St., where you'll turn left. Four major streets later, you'll come to Grove St., where you'll turn right and pass between **Symphony Hall** on your right and the **Opera House** on your left. Turn left/north onto Van Ness and drive past **City Hall** on your right. Ten major streets past City Hall turn right/east onto Bush St. Another ten major streets and you'll arrive at the green-tiled Chinatown Gate on Grant Ave. Turn left on Grant and enter Chinatown.

**Chinatown** is an enclave of 18 square blocks that has the largest concentration of Chinese outside Asia (about 13,000 people). Many of the people you see here are recent immigrants, because Chinatown is a kind of revolving door. Newcomers continually take the place of those who have become acclimated to America and move on to other parts of the city or country. Look at the storefronts closely to see if you can determine what kinds of businesses serve the local residents and tourists.

Four streets north of Bush St., you'll come to Clay St. Turn right and travel one block to Kearney St., then turn left. On your left is Portsmouth Square.

**Portsmouth Square** has four distinctions: 1) before landfill changed the landscape, it was on the waterfront; 2) originally, it was the plaza of the Mexican settlement of Yerba Buena; 3) it's the site where the American flag was first raised on San Francisco in July, 1846; and, 4) today, it's an important gathering place for the Chinese community.

At the end of the block, turn left on Washington St., and then right on Grant St. Three streets north on Grant, you'll come to Broadway. Turn left. At the next street, turn right on Stockton and travel six streets to Lombard. Turn right on Lombard and drive two streets to Telegraph Hill Blvd. Then, drive up the hill to **Coit Tower**.

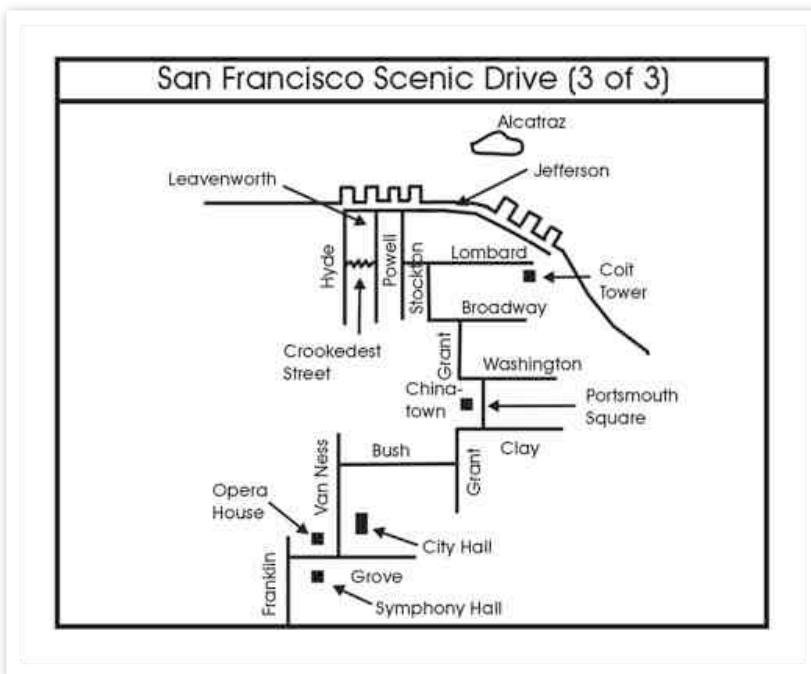
You'll then be on top of **Telegraph Hill** where a beautiful panorama of San Francisco and the bay awaits you—if you can find a parking space, if you have time to ride the elevator to the top of Coit

Tower, and if it's not foggy. To the north you'll see **Alcatraz Island** and **Fisherman's Wharf**. To the south is the **Ferry Building** and the **Transamerica Pyramid**, the city's tallest building at 853 feet. The 210-foot (64 meters) Coit Tower was built in 1933, from a bequest by Lillie Hitchcock Coit, to honor the city's firefighters. Works Progress Administration murals can be viewed on the first floor of the tower.

Now drive back down to Lombard St., then turn left and drive three streets to Powell where you'll turn right. Six streets down Powell you'll come to Jefferson, where you'll turn left and drive five streets to Hyde. Jefferson Street is the heart of **Fisherman's Wharf**.

From Jefferson, you'll get a closer view of Alcatraz Island out in the bay. You'll have the opportunity to visit Alcatraz Island tomorrow.

Just before you turn left onto Hyde St., look to the right and you'll see the historic ships that we'll board this afternoon.



After turning onto Hyde, you'll see the cable car turnaround-embarkation point on your right just before Beach St. That is where you'll catch the cable car after seeing the Crookedest Street in the World.

Continue past Beach, uphill five streets, to Lombard, and then turn left down the hill.

### **The Crookedest Street in the World**

This block of Lombard Street on Russian Hill is known as "The Crookedest Street in the World." The hill is so steep that eight curves were added in the 1920's so horse-drawn carriages could negotiate it. A resident by the name of Peter Bercut added the Hydrangeas in the 1950's. Today, it's great fun to drive or walk down, and beautiful to photograph from the bottom, especially in the morning when the sun is fully on it. So when you reach the end of the block, if you have your camera ready and the opportunity to street-park....

At the bottom of the Crookedest Street, turn left onto Leavenworth, then drive five streets back to Beach St. and turn left. (You'll need to jog right-then-left at Columbus Ave.)

On the left, in the middle of the next block (between Leavenworth and Hyde) you'll find a parking garage where we suggest you leave your car until this evening. (An alternative is the Ghirardelli Square underground parking garage that is two blocks farther west; enter on Larkin St.)

Now, walk one-half block west to the cable car turnaround-embarkation point.

### **Cable Car Ride**

It was Andrew Hallidie who, having witnessed the accident of an overloaded horse-drawn streetcar on Nob Hill, conceived the mechanism under the cable car that grips and releases the constantly moving steel cable. This enables the car to move forward, climb hills, and descend hills safely.

Beginning in 1873, cable cars became the primary means of public transportation in San Francisco. By 1906, the system had eight lines with 115 miles of track and 600 cable cars. Today only three lines, 10.5 miles of track and 30 cars survive, and the city's cable car system is a National Historic Landmark. The system carries some 13 million passengers a year, more than half of whom are local residents.

You should be able to get on a Powell-Hyde cable car going toward Union Square at this time of day. For the best views, we suggest that you sit on the left outside seats. We also suggest that you put away this newsletter and simply enjoy the sights and sounds of this wonderful, 9-1/2 mile-per-hour, 15- to 20-minute experience. If you're seated, be sure to have your camera ready for some great views, especially on your left at the Crookedest Street and on the top of Nob Hill at the intersection of California and Powell. (See the right photo on page 1.)

Things may get a little more difficult on the return trip, because there's likely to be a waiting line at the Hallidie Plaza turntable. You'll want to return via the Powell-Mason Line, so you can enjoy different scenery, and to position yourself for our next activity. You'll end up at the turntable at Taylor and Bay Streets. Walk three blocks toward the bay to Jefferson, turn right and walk three blocks to Pier 39.

*Instead of waiting in Hallidie Plaza, you may want to hail a cab on Market St. and ask the driver to take you to Pier 39 at Fisherman's Wharf.*



There are some wonderful attractions at Fisherman's Wharf, and we're going to visit them this afternoon. However, a large number of tacky establishments have sprung up to exploit the many tourists who flock here. You may have different tastes than we do, but we choose to put blinders on, quickly pass them by, and head toward the attractions that are truly worthwhile. So, we suggest that you walk on the water-side of Jefferson St.

### The Seals at Pier 39

Not one of our favorite attractions because we find it too commercialized and lacking in typical San Francisco charm, Pier 39 is nevertheless one of the city's most-visited sites. Good for kids, it features an aquarium, arcade rides, scenic bay cruises, restaurants, and more than 100 specialty shops. The end of the pier is a good vantage point for taking photographs of Alcatraz Island, especially if you have a telephoto lens. But Pier 39's biggest attraction is also its noisiest.

If you don't have children with you, we suggest you walk straight through the center of the pier, turn left, then left again to the sea lion overlook. Our first time here, we spent about 45 minutes watching, listening and truly enjoying this unusual sight. Altogether, we counted 40 rafts that each averaged about 25 sea lions and harbor seals. That's about 1,000 of the noisy and amusing creatures in one location. (See the left photo on page 1.)

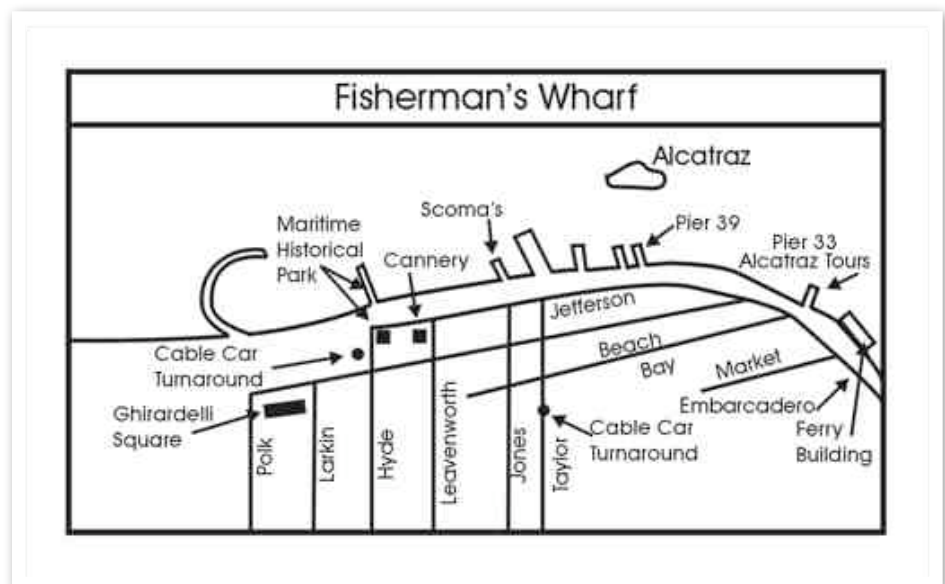
What's the difference between a sea lion and a harbor seal? Adult sea lions are dark brown or black, have ears, are often seven or eight feet in length, and can weigh up to 800 pounds (362 kilograms). Harbor seals are usually light gray or brown and are spotted, do not have ears, are five to six feet (1.5 to 1.8 meters) long, and weigh about 200 pounds (91 kilograms).

About 1990, boats occupied this entire area. Then the sea lions and seals began to winter here. The people in charge of tourism realized they had a bonanza, so the boats were moved out and the animals moved in. For a good picture of the overall scene, head for Pier 41 across the way.

### It's Lunch Time!

Now, walk west on Jefferson to its intersection with Taylor Street. Here you'll find some fine-smelling, picturesque, outdoor seafood stalls. Sauntering by them should whet your appetite. If you're on a tight budget, you may choose to stay right here and munch on a crab cocktail and sourdough bread.

Instead, we recommend Scoma's restaurant as a far better, and better tasting, experience. So, we suggest that you continue west one block to the junction of Jefferson and Jones Streets. Then



walk out onto the pier, which is the home of the fishing fleet that supplies the Wharf's seafood restaurants. When you see the orange and white Scoma's sign on your left, you'll know you're there. Don't be put off by the restaurant's unpretentious appearance; it's what's inside that counts.

Scoma's has been our favorite San Francisco lunch spot for many years, and it is a favorite of many San Franciscans, too. For us, the reason is the restaurant's large Crab Louis salad, which is scrumptious. Forget what it costs and dig into that huge mound of Dungeness crab that's covered with a very tasty Thousand Island dressing. (It makes our mouths water just to think about it!) With Scoma's sourdough bread, this is a truly sensational meal. If you can't abide crab or even seafood, the restaurant also has a wide selection of salads, pasta and meat dishes to choose from. (415-771-4383; [www.scomas.com](http://www.scomas.com)).

After lunch, continue walking west on Jefferson. You'll see **The Cannery** on your left. It's a three-story shopping center built inside the circa-1909 Del Monte peach-canning factory. We'll pass up The Cannery in preference to Ghirardelli Square, which we'll visit in a little while. But if The Cannery appeals to you more than our next activity does, go for it and enjoy! (2801 Leavenworth St., 415-771-3112, [www.thecannery.com](http://www.thecannery.com))

## Historic Ships

When you reach Hyde St., turn right and walk out onto the Hyde Street Pier. There you'll enter the **San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park**. Nowhere else in the United States is there a collection of five ships that have been designated as a National Historic Landmark. You can board and explore three of them!

*Here's a tip: If you have a Golden Age Passport, it will give you and your entourage free access to the park.*

The star of the show is the *Balclutha*, a 256-foot (78 meters) long, three-masted, square-rigged, steel-hulled sailing ship that was built in 1886 in Glasgow, Scotland. It has seen a lot of ocean, because it's primary task was to carry California wheat to Europe and to return with whiskey and coal. In doing so, it rounded the treacherous southern tip of South America (Cape Horn) 17 times.

Here's your opportunity for a unique experience. Try to imagine how challenging and difficult life was for the sailors who occupied a cramped bunk area while under sail for months at a time, or as they climbed high in the ship's rigging during good weather or bad. Stand at the helm and imagine guiding the ship around the Cape during a violent storm. Check out the captain's cabin and the below-deck maritime museum. Join an interpretive presentation by a Park ranger. In other words, this may be your once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get a genuine *feel* for what it was like to sail the ocean in the 1800's.

Next, board the *C.A. Thayer*, a 156-foot (47 meters) long, three-masted schooner built in 1895. One of two surviving schooners from a fleet of 900, she was the last commercial sailing vessel on the West Coast. *Thayer* carried lumber between Puget Sound and various California ports, as well as fishermen and small boats to Alaska, returning with salmon. She also served as a cod fishing boat in the Bering Sea.



Finally, climb aboard the *Eureka*, a 299-foot (91 meters) side-wheel ferry built in 1890 in Tiburon, just across the bay. Her original name, *Ukiah*, was changed to *Eureka* when refitted in 1922 to carry automobiles and passengers instead of trains. *Eureka* was the world's largest passenger ferry, capable of carrying 2,300 passengers and 120 automobiles per trip. Be sure to check out the lower deck where you'll find a display of classic autos and trucks.

The other two national historic landmark ships, which you'll have to observe from the pier, are the *Alma*, a 59-foot (18 meters), flat-bottomed scow schooner built in San Francisco in 1891, and the *Hercules*, a 139-foot (42 meters) steam-powered tugboat built in Camden, New Jersey in 1907. Not in the landmark category, but interesting nevertheless, is the *Eppleton Hall*, a 100-foot (30 meters) steam-powered steel tugboat that was built in South Shields, England in 1914.

The Historical Park's Visitor Center is also worth a visit. You'll find it as you leave the Hyde St. Pier at the corner of Jefferson and Hyde. Its displays tell interesting stories of voyage and discovery. 415-447-5000; [www.nps.gov/safr](http://www.nps.gov/safr): If you're really into ships, the **Maritime Museum** is two blocks west on Beach St., and there are two other ships worthy of your attention on Pier 45 at the foot of Taylor St.: the **USS Pampanito** submarine and the **S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien** liberty ship.

### **Ghirardelli Square**

Now, walk up Hyde St., past the cable car turnaround to Beach St., then a block west to Ghirardelli Square. As you do, you'll pass a favorite of both the locals and tourists, the Buena Vista Cafe, at 2765 Hyde (415-474-5044). There's a reason the Buena Vista Cafe is always crowded: it's the home (and principal dispenser in the world) of the original Irish coffee, a blend of Irish whiskey, black coffee, sugar, and heavy cream.

Turn left on Larkin and enter Ghirardelli Square just before North Point St.

Ghirardelli Square (415-775-5500; [www.ghirardellisq.com](http://www.ghirardellisq.com)) has the distinction of being the first manufacturing facility in the U.S. to be converted to a shopping and restaurant complex. The oldest of the red brick buildings, circa 1864 and originally a woolen mill, became the Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory. It operated as such from 1893 to 1962 when the company transferred its operations to a new factory across the bay in San Leandro. The square was transformed to its current use by 1964.

Containing more than 40 businesses, Ghirardelli Square has an appeal about it that other similar complexes can't quite match. From the fountain and view of the bay to the inviting plaza, free entertainment, restaurants, quality shops, international merchandise, and foods, this is a class operation.

Be sure to visit the Ghirardelli Chocolate Manufactory to observe chocolate being made by the original equipment, as well as to view the store's extensive selection of chocolates. You can also get free samples at the door of the less-crowded Ghirardelli Soda Fountain and Chocolate Shop.

For dinner options in the Fisherman's Wharf area, see "Where to Eat and Sleep" at the end of this issue.

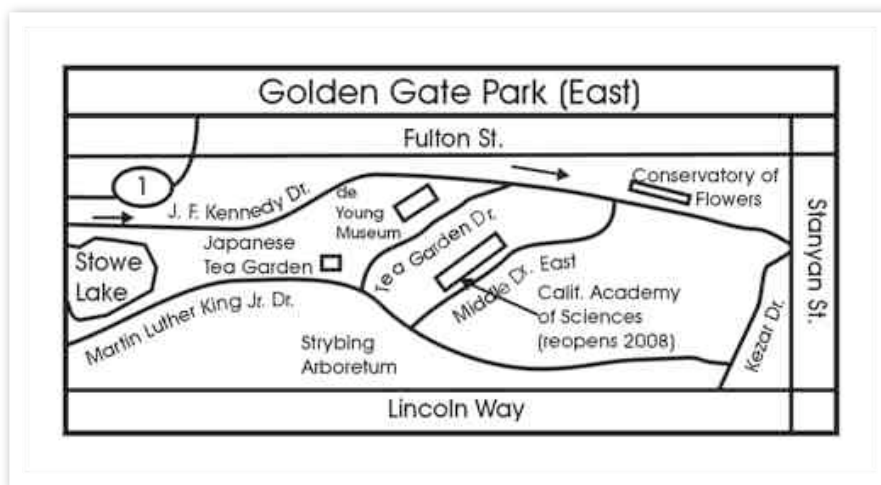
## Day Two

On your second full day in San Francisco, we believe you'll enjoy spending the morning in Golden Gate Park, and the afternoon at the Ferry Building Marketplace and on Alcatraz Island.

Other attractions to consider as alternatives are:

- Asian Art Museum, [www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org)
- Cable Car Museum, [www.cablecarmuseum.org](http://www.cablecarmuseum.org)
- California Palace of the Legion of Honor, [www.legionofhonor.org](http://www.legionofhonor.org)
- Exploratorium, [www.exploratorium.edu](http://www.exploratorium.edu)
- Fort Point National Historic Site, [www.nps.gov/fopo](http://www.nps.gov/fopo)
- Maritime Museum, [www.nps.gov/safr](http://www.nps.gov/safr)
- Mission Dolores, [www.missiondolores.org](http://www.missiondolores.org)
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org)
- S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien Liberty Ship, [www.ssjeremiahobrien.org](http://www.ssjeremiahobrien.org) (pier 45)
- USS Pampanito Submarine. [www.maritime.org](http://www.maritime.org) (pier 45; foot of Taylor St.)

Let's start with the attractions in Golden Gate Park. You'll be able to locate them by using our map. (There are no street signs.)



You'll probably have time to visit only a couple of the attractions in Golden Gate Park. Here are your choices:

**California Academy of Sciences** – This is three museums in one: The **Steinhart Aquarium** displays 16,000 marine specimens in 190 tanks and features a fish roundabout, a coral reef and a frozen great white shark. The **Natural History Museum**

features excellent animal dioramas. The **Morrison Planetarium** features a laser light show. Open every day of the year, 10am-5pm; 415-379-8000; [www.calacademy.org](http://www.calacademy.org).

**Conservatory of Flowers** - Housed in a replica of the conservatory in Kew Gardens, England, this large greenhouse contains palms, philodendrons, orchids, ferns, hibiscuses and other rare plants. Open Thursday-Sunday, 9am-4:30pm; 415-666-7001; [www.conservatoryofflowers.org](http://www.conservatoryofflowers.org).

**Japanese Tea Garden** – Five acres of Japanese landscaping, featuring a dwarf tree forest, a giant bronze Buddha cast in Japan in 1790, colorful pagodas, the moon bridge, pretty waterfalls, a temple, lanterns, cherry blossoms peaking about the first week of April, and a teahouse staffed by Japanese women. Open daily 8:30am-5:30pm; 415-752-4227; [www.inetours.com/Pages/SFNbrhds/Japanese\\_Tea\\_Garden.html](http://www.inetours.com/Pages/SFNbrhds/Japanese_Tea_Garden.html).

**M.H. de Young Memorial Museum** - A collection of 1,000 American paintings, American sculpture and decorative art, African art, Oceanic art, art of the Americas, textiles, and contemporary crafts. Open Tuesday-Sunday 9:30am-5pm, Friday until 8:45pm; 415-863-3330; [www.deyoungmuseum.org](http://www.deyoungmuseum.org).

**Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens** - Sixty acres of carefully labeled plant varieties and species from around the world, arranged according to geographical origin. Open 365 days from 8am-4:30pm weekdays and 10am-5pm on weekends and holidays; 415-661-1316; [www.sfbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org).

For lunch, we suggest that you drive to the Embarcadero, leave your car in the parking lot at Washington and the Embarcadero, walk to the Ferry Building, and eat outdoors (weather permitting, of course) at the very popular **Taylor's Refresher**. This is a great place to have a burger, fish and chips, soup, salad, or any of several specialty dishes. Afterward, spend some time exploring the Ferry Building Marketplace.

### **Ferry Building Marketplace**

For most new arrivals and commuters, ferries were the only way to enter San Francisco from the Gold Rush through the mid-1930s. (The Bay Bridge and Golden Gate Bridge were completed in 1936 and 1937, respectively.) At its peak, the Ferry Building saw some 50,000 commuters from the East Bay and Marin County pass through its portals each day. Following a period of decline and rehabilitation, the Ferry Building has now bounced back as a favorite attraction of city-dwellers and tourists alike. Ferries still carry 11,000 commuters per day to and from the East Bay and Marin County. The Bay Area Rapid Transit system's (BART's) Embarcadero station is two blocks away on Market St.

On Tuesdays and Saturdays until 2pm, the Ferry Building hosts a popular farmers market, usually outside, in front of the building. Inside the Marketplace, are 42 mostly specialty food-related establishments that are purveyors of meats, fish, cheeses, breads, mushrooms, olive oil, herbs, pastries, gelato and oysters; and there are several restaurants, cafes and small eateries. Our favorite shop is the Cowgirl Creamery, which offers samples of artisan cheeses from France, England, Italy, Spain, Greece, Canada and the United States.

All Ferry Building businesses are open Mon.-Fri. 10am-6pm, Sat. 9am-6pm, and Sun. 11am-5pm. Some are open longer hours. For more information, click on [www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com](http://www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com).

Next, go to the "F" line Muni stop in front of the Ferry Building and take a streetcar north on the Embarcadero, a little over a mile (1.6+ kilometers), to the stop at Bay and Embarcadero. There, you'll find Pier 33 and the ferry that will take you to Alcatraz Island. The streetcars come by about every eight minutes.

### **Alcatraz Island**

*Since this is a very popular tourist activity, we strongly suggest that you make reservations in advance at [www.alcatrazcruises.com/](http://www.alcatrazcruises.com/); 800-700-3151 or 415-981-7625. Tickets can be purchased from the ticket office at Pier 33, but you may not get your preferred tour time. Departure*

times are approximately every half-hour from 9:30am to 4:15pm (when the last ferry leaves). Total tour time is about 2-1/2 hours. Unlike prisoners of yore, you may wander the island at will, and you can leave any time a ferry departs. Additional information can be gotten from the National Park Service at [www.nps.gov/alcatraz](http://www.nps.gov/alcatraz), or 415-561-4900.

Once a fort and military prison, and operational as a federal penitentiary from 1934 to 1963, Alcatraz opened to visitors in 1973. The “Rock” is now one of San Francisco’s most popular tourist attractions. Following a twenty-minute ferry ride, your visit will start with a short presentation and movie, and will include a self-guided audio-taped tour of the cell house that features the voices of former guards and inmates. Famous former inmates include Al Capone, “Machine Gun” Kelley, Mickey Cohen and Robert “Birdman of Alcatraz” Stroud.

Although benign-looking from a distance, Alcatraz has often been called a “hell hole”—and you’ll get a sense of that, especially in Block D where you’ll see the cells of the most recalcitrant prisoners.

Again, for dinner options in the Fisherman’s Wharf area, see “Where to Eat and Sleep” at the end of this issue.

## *Day Three*

Many folks who travel to San Francisco take a jaunt across the Golden Gate Bridge to enjoy two natural wonders: Muir Woods and the Point Reyes National Seashore. (An alternative is to drive to either the Napa Valley or the Sonoma Valley for a day of wine tasting and sight seeing. See the Summer 2008 issue of *Pathfinder Newsletter* at [www.traveltheamericanwest.com](http://www.traveltheamericanwest.com).)

The **Muir Woods National Monument**, located 12 miles northwest of the Golden Gate Bridge, contains the Bay Area’s only large, intact stand of ancient coast redwood trees—the world’s tallest living things. To get there, drive north on U.S. 101, exit at the Mill Valley-Stinson Beach turnoff, and follow twisty-turny Highway 1 to Muir Woods Road and the national monument. Walking the one-mile round trip, hard-surface, self-guided trail along Redwood Creek, we felt like Lilliputians among the 200 foot-high (61 meters), 1,000 year-old giants. And there is an interesting variety of birds, ferns and plant life. It’s usually cool in these woods, so be sure to have a jacket or sweater handy.

Open every day, including holidays, 8am-8pm during the summer and 8am-5pm during the winter; Muir Woods, Mill Valley 94941; 415-388-2595; [www.nps.gov/muwo](http://www.nps.gov/muwo).

To get to **Point Reyes National Seashore** from Muir Woods, return to Highway 1 and drive about 22 miles (35 km) north to Point Reyes Station. Have lunch at the Station House Café, take a stroll around town, then backtrack on Highway 1 two miles to Olema and turn right into the National Seashore.

Point Reyes is the largest peninsula on the northern California coast and a good place to “get away from it all.” Explorer Sir Francis Drake is said to have landed here in 1579. Worth seeing are: the excellent exhibits in the Bear Valley Visitor Center; the Coast Miwok Indian Village; Woodpecker Trail, where we saw a single tree with thousands of holes bored by woodpeckers;

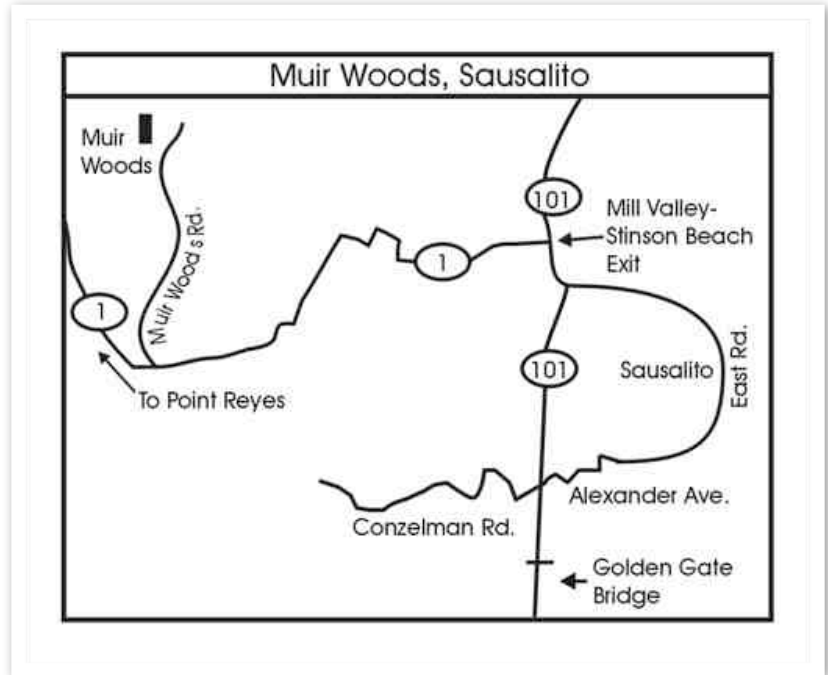
the Morgan Horse Farm; and Earthquake Trail, where you can clearly see how the earth has shifted along the San Andreas fault line. (Point Reyes is still moving northwest at two inches a year.) We've seen quite a few deer and many species of birds here. Migrating gray whales can be seen from Point Reyes between December and February, and between March and May.

The Bear Valley Visitor Center is open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and weekends and holidays 8am-5pm (closed December 25); 415-464-5100; [www.nps.gov/pore](http://www.nps.gov/pore).

### Wrapping up your day

If you would like to see and photograph a spectacular view of the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco—with the western sun enhancing the picture—drive up Conzelman Road and stop at any of the pullouts-with-a-view. (See the accompanying map.) The best pullout may be the first one; walk to the end of the short trail to see a close-up view of the bridge.

Then, drive down to Sausalito for a little window shopping and dinner-with-a-view at Scoma's Restaurant on the waterfront; 588 Bridgeway, [www.scomassausalito.com](http://www.scomassausalito.com), 415-332-9551. Why Scoma's again? As seafood restaurants go, we think it's in a class by itself. This is a beautiful and very tasty way to end your three days in San Francisco.



\*\*\*\*\*

### Where to Eat and Sleep:

For lodging information specific to the Fisherman's Wharf area, go to <http://www.fishermanswharf.org/Lodging.htm>. For restaurant information specific to the Fisherman's Wharf area go to [www.fishermanswharf.org/Restaurants.htm](http://www.fishermanswharf.org/Restaurants.htm). For general information about places to eat and sleep in San Francisco, go online to [www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com/where\\_to\\_eat/](http://www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com/where_to_eat/) or consult the "San Francisco Basic Visitor Information Kit" (see below).

**To Learn More:** To receive information about additional things to do in San Francisco, go online at [www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com](http://www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com) and request a free copy of the "San Francisco Basic Visitor Information Kit," or telephone the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau at 415-283-0177. That website is loaded with all kinds of useful information.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Bill and Celia Ginnodo** are residents of Arlington Heights, Illinois. They have lived, and traveled extensively, in Northern California, and have enjoyed San Francisco over many years. They are the authors of *Seven Perfect Days in Northern California: A Guided Driving Tour* and *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado: A Guided Driving Tour* which can be seen at [www.pridepublications.com](http://www.pridepublications.com) and at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Free back issues of *Pathfinder Newsletter* may be seen and printed at [www.traveltheamericanwest.com](http://www.traveltheamericanwest.com).

Text, maps and photographs copyright ©2008 Pride Publications, Inc.

**Why not combine this issue with the last one—“Northern California’s Wine Country”—and have a wonderful six-day vacation? You can print it at [www.traveltheamericanwest.com](http://www.traveltheamericanwest.com).**