

Things to Do in San Francisco: The Ultimate Local's Guide

Alright, so you're heading to San Francisco (or thinking about it), and you're wondering—what the heck should I actually do there? Not just the stuff every tourist blog regurgitates, but the real-deal, can't-miss, lowkey legendary stuff. I've been there, done that, and yep—I've eaten way too much sourdough bread in the name of research. So let's talk about the best **things to do in San Francisco** without making you feel like you're stuck on a school field trip.

Explore Fisherman's Wharf (But Don't Linger Too Long)

Okay, so yes—**Fisherman's Wharf** is basically Tourist Central, and normally I'd tell you to run. But there *are* a few gems worth checking out before you roll your eyes and move on.

What's Worth Your Time:

- **Boudin Bakery** – Their fresh sourdough bread bowls? Absolutely worth the carbs.
- **Sea lions at Pier 39** – Loud, smelly, and 100% entertaining. Kinda like your cousin's toddler.
- **Musee Mecanique** – A vintage arcade museum filled with creepy old coin-op games that are weirdly addictive.

Just don't spend your *whole* day here, or you'll start pricing "I Love SF" hoodies unironically.

Just Have Fun by Riding a Cable Car

I know. Riding a cable car sounds cheesy. But trust me, hanging onto the side while climbing a hill like you're in a '50s movie? **Peak San Francisco vibes.**

Quick Tips:

- Take the **Powell-Hyde line** for the best views.
- Try riding early in the morning to avoid the mile-long tourist lines.
- Pro tip: Sit on the *right* side for photo-worthy views of the bay.

And FYI—no, it's not just a "trolley." Locals will roll their eyes at that.

Golden Gate Park: Way More Than a Pretty Walk

Golden Gate Park is enormous—like, bigger than Central Park enormous. And it's got *way* more going on than just grass and trees.

Don't Miss:

- **de Young Museum** – Modern art with a killer observation tower.

- **Japanese Tea Garden** – Cute bridges, koi ponds, and overpriced tea (but the vibes are immaculate).
- **Botanical Gardens** – Yes, I got lost in here for an hour, and no, I'm not ashamed.

You could legit spend the whole day here and not even notice your phone's battery is at 3%.

Visit Alcatraz (And Get the Audio Tour, Seriously)

This one? Totally lives up to the hype. Alcatraz Island is creepy, fascinating, and a little haunting. IMO, the best part is the self-guided audio tour narrated by former guards and prisoners. It's so detailed you'll probably feel like you're the one doing time.

Quick Pointers:

- Book your tickets *in advance*—they sell out fast.
- Bring a jacket. It's windy. Like, slap-your-face windy.
- The night tour is next-level spooky (in the best way).

Take in the Views from Twin Peaks

Ever dreamed of catching epic views without having to climb a mountain like Everest? **Twin Peaks totally delivers.**

- Drive up, or hike if you're feeling spicy.
- Best views? Right before sunset. Get that golden hour glow, baby.
- Watch your hat—it gets *wild* windy up there.

It's basically nature's version of a drone shot, minus the risk of crashing into a seagull.

Wander the Mission District (Come Hungry)

The Mission isn't just a neighborhood—it's a vibe. Graffiti-covered alleys, vintage shops, and some of the best Mexican food north of the border.

Top Picks:

- **La Taqueria** – Possibly the best burrito of your life. No joke.
- **Clarion Alley** – Street art that'll make you stop, snap pics, and maybe question capitalism.
- **Mission Dolores Park** – Grab a snack, find a sunny spot, and people-watch like a pro.

FYI: This is also where you'll meet the most stylish dogs in SF. Not even kidding.

Check Out Chinatown (It's Way More Than Just Dim Sum)

San Francisco's Chinatown is the oldest in North America, and honestly? It's a sensory overload in the best possible way.

Must-Dos:

- **Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory** – You get to see how they're made *and* taste the broken ones. Win-win.
- **Browse the herbal shops** – Warning: some of the stuff smells like old gym socks. But hey, it might cure your hangover?

Let Your Inner Hipster Shine in Haight-Ashbury

This is the birthplace of the '60s counterculture, and let's be real—it's still got some *major* flower power energy. Peace signs everywhere. Patchouli in the air. You get the idea.

Highlights:

- **Vintage clothing shops** – Find that ironic tee or '90s jacket you've always “accidentally” wanted.
- **Amoeba Music** – Giant record store = music lover's paradise.
- **Cool cafes** where you can overpay for a latte but feel superior doing it.

Honestly? It's weird and wonderful, and you'll definitely leave with a story.

Lombard Street: The Zig-Zaggiest of Them All

Lombard Street is one of those things you *have* to see just to say you did. Is it a little silly? Absolutely. But watching cars make tight turns like they're playing Mario Kart? Never gets old.

Best View:

Walk up the steps from the bottom for the best photo ops—and a mild calf workout.

Pro tip: Don't drive down it unless you enjoy brake anxiety.

Craving Nature? Head to Lands End

Want gorgeous coastal views without driving out to Big Sur? Lands End has your back.

What Makes It Awesome:

- **The trail is super walkable**, but wear comfy shoes.
- **Sutro Baths ruins** – Hauntingly cool and kinda romantic (in a post-apocalyptic way).
- Views of the Golden Gate Bridge that'll make your IG feed jealous.

It's a local fave for a reason—and no, you don't need hiking boots the size of a Prius to enjoy it.

Final Thoughts: San Francisco Isn't Just a City—It's a Whole Personality

If you're still asking yourself, “*What should I do in San Francisco?*”—honestly, just start walking. This city oozes character from every crooked street corner, misty hilltop, and overpriced café. One minute you're sipping a turmeric latte in a tech bro cafe, the next you're staring at Alcatraz wondering what your Wi-Fi password is.

So whether you're into nature, food, history, or just love a good Instagram backdrop, San Francisco's got something weird and wonderful for you. Just make sure you bring layers, comfy shoes, and maybe—*just maybe*—skip the Segway tour.