

TIGERS IN THE BAY AREA

Alumni Visitor Guide • September 2026

Welcome to the Bay, Tiger Fans!

Late September is one of the most beautiful times to visit the Bay Area, warm sunny days, low crowds, and spectacular scenery. Whether you're making a weekend of it or flying in just for the game, this guide covers everything you need for an unforgettable Tiger trip to NorCal.

GETTING TO THE BAY AREA

Airports

The Bay Area is served by three major airports, giving you flexibility depending on where you're staying. We recommend SFO or OAK based on the game location.

San Francisco International Airport (SFO) | South San Francisco

★ Best for San Francisco stays

The largest Bay Area airport with the most direct routes. Easy BART access (\$10–12) connects directly to downtown SF, Berkeley, and Oakland. ~30 min drive to SF, ~45 min to Berkeley without traffic.

Oakland International Airport (OAK) | Oakland

★ Best for Berkeley/East Bay stays

Often cheaper flights, especially on Southwest. BART connects directly from the terminal (OAK Connector shuttle to Coliseum station). Only ~20 min drive to Haas Pavilion in Berkeley: ideal if you're staying East Bay.

Ground Transportation

- **BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit):** The easiest way to get around without a car. SFO and OAK both connect directly. Downtown Berkeley station is a short walk from Haas Pavilion on game day. All BART is now tap-to-pay through mobile wallets (Apple Pay, Google Pay) with no special pass required. Both Apple and Google Maps integrate with the live local transit services and can provide schedules, recommended routes, prices, and directions.
- **Rideshare (Uber/Lyft/Waymo):** Widely available throughout the Bay Area. Waymo (autonomous vehicles) are common in SF and definitely worth try (make sure to download the app in advance).

- **Cable Cars:** Be sure to hop on when you're around the city! These **do not support tap-to-pay**, you'll need exact change in Cash or purchase tickets at a kiosk in advance.
- **Ferries:** Multiple available from the SF Ferry Building and Pier 39 to common destinations like Sausalito and Alcatraz. Tickets can be purchased at the Ferry Terminal or in advance online.
- **Rental Cars:** Useful if you plan to do day trips to areas like Napa, Sonoma, Muir Woods, or Half Moon Bay. Parking in the city can be very expensive, so consider picking up your rental only for the days you need it to avoid parking hassles.

 **Tiger Tip:** Late September weather in the Bay Area is great: typically 65-75°F and sunny, with cool evenings that can get chilly. Pack layers for after the game, but rest assured that "June Gloom" is long gone by September!



WHERE TO STAY

We recommend staying in either Berkeley/East Bay (closer to Haas Pavilion and more affordable), or San Francisco (great for exploring the city). Both are easily connected by BART. There are no official hotel blocks - only the recommendation from those who purchase tickets through IPTAY. Hotels can be pricier in the Bay Area, so below is a recommendation on areas to stay so you can select what you prefer for your budget.

Berkeley & East Bay Hotels

Staying on the East Bay side puts you closest to Haas Pavilion: a short BART or Uber from any of these. Rates are typically more affordable than SF, and you'll be right in the heart of the action.

DoubleTree Berkeley Marina | 200 Marina Blvd, Berkeley

★ **IPTAY Recommended / Priority**

Waterfront accommodations - may fill up as this is the recommended hotel for IPTAY ticket holders. 15 min Uber/drive or 30 min bus to Haas Pavilion.

Hotel Shattuck Plaza | 2086 Allston Way, Berkeley

★ **Downtown Berkeley best location for walkability**

Beautifully appointed historic hotel in the heart of downtown Berkeley, right across from BART. Walking distance to Chez Panisse, Telegraph Ave, and the campus. Friendly staff and great value for Berkeley.

Claremont Resort | 41 Tunnel Rd, Berkeley, CA 94705

★ **5 Star Hotel and Restaurant experience**

If you're looking for a 5-star luxury experience, the Claremont is your best choice. Known for sweeping views from the Berkeley hills, high end restaurants, and resort-like amenities.

 **Tiger Tip:** Check out the Claremont, North Berkeley, Elmwood, and Northside areas/neighborhoods of Berkeley, and avoid Southside and Westside areas.

San Francisco Hotels

Staying in SF gives you the full city experience: world-class dining, iconic neighborhoods, and easy access to day trips. Plan for ~30–45 min by BART to Haas on game day.

Hotel Kabuki | 1625 Post St, San Francisco

★ SF Clemson Club Local Recommendation

In the heart of Japantown and central to walk, bus, or ride around the city. Nice hotel with a great bar and Onsen spa. This is NOT in the midst of touristy areas, but more of a local's experience

High End Stays | Nob Hill

★ Top hotel experiences, but know the prices will reflect that

Fairmont San Francisco (make sure to check out Tonga Room), Ritz-Carlton San Francisco, Mark Hopkins (InterContinental). 3 iconic high end hotels in San Francisco's Nob Hill neighborhood, which boasts great dining, easy access to the cable cars, and sweeping hill top views.

Wharf Stays | Fisherman's Wharf

★ Close to Aquatic Park, Pier 39, and with views of the Bay/Bridge/Alcatraz

Hotel Zephyr, Hotel Zoe, and the Marriott Vacation Club are good options in this area. Great for families who want to be walking distance to sweeping Bay Views, Pier 39 / catching the Sea Lions, Ghirardelli Square, and activities like bike rentals.

 *Tiger Tip: Check out the Wharf, Marina, Nob Hill, Pacific Heights neighborhoods for the best experience. Avoid the Tenderloin, SOMA, and Financial District due to lower activity for the weekends. Union Square is an ok alternative - recommend staying north of Post Street and East of Mason Street in that area.*

WHERE TO DINE / DRINK

San Francisco

San Francisco has one of the most celebrated food scenes in the country. Late September is peak season: reservations at top spots are strongly recommended, especially for weekend evenings.

Sandwiches | Locations Vary

★ SF Clemson Club Local's Favorite: The Hornet (inside London Market)

Lucinda's, Deli Board, Golden Gate Deli and Liquor

Seafood | Locations Vary

★ **SF Clemson Club Local's Favorite: Hook Fish Co.**

Hog Island Oyster Co., Scoma's, Bar Crudo

American | Locations Vary

★ **Columbia, SC Native Owned: Early to Rise (brunch)**

Buena Vista Cafe (have to get the Irish Coffee), Brazen Head, Bix, Izzy's, Hose of Prime Rib, Park Tavern, Brenda's Meat & Three

Pizza | Locations Vary

★ **SF Clemson Club Local's Favorite: Pinsa Rosa**

Tony's, Jules, Rose Pizzeria, Little Star, Flour + Water

Italian | Locations Vary

★ **SF Clemson Club Local's Favorite: Cotogna**

Italian Homemade, Original Joe's / Little Original Joe's, Sevin Hills, aMano

Asian | Locations Vary

★ **SF Clemson Club Local's Favorite: China Live (dim sum)**

R&G Lounge (Cantonese), Daeho (Korean), PPQ Dungeness Island (Vietnamese), Kibatsu (Sushi), Amphawa (Thai), Lers Ros (Thai)

Bars | Locations Vary

★ **SF Clemson Club Local's Favorite: The Showdown (North Beach - official Clemson bar)**

North Star Cafe (Clemson-family owned), Shanghai Kelly's (Clemson-grad owned), Danny Coyle's (best Guinness in town!), Mini Bar (art and craft cocktails)

 **Tiger Tip:** The Ferry Building hosts a Saturday weekend farmers market with great artisan food stalls. Tunnel Tops park boasts sweeping bridge-to-bridge views in the Presidio with daily food trucks.

Berkeley

Berkeley is the birthplace of California cuisine and the farm-to-table movement. The dining scene punches well above its weight: especially on Shattuck Ave (the "Gourmet Ghetto").

General Recommendations | Locations May Vary

★ **The restaurant that launched California cuisine: a bucket-list dinner**

Chez Panisse (high end), Farmhouse Kitchen (Thai), Gather (brunch), Cheese Board (pizza), Ippuku (Japanese), Cholita Linda (mexican), Gusto (Mediterranean)



Late September is arguably the best time of year for Bay Area day trips: summer crowds have thinned, the weather is warm and clear, and the region is stunning. All of these destinations are within 1–2 hours of both SF and Berkeley.

Napa Valley | ~1 hour from Berkeley, ~1.5 hours from SF

September is harvest season in Napa: the most exciting time of year to visit wine country. Vineyards are buzzing, the air smells of fermenting grapes, and the scenery is spectacular. Napa is the higher end of the counties, so check other areas if you want a more laid back, local vibe.

- Stroll Downtown Napa: The city of Napa itself has become a dining destination. Oxbow Public Market is a must for artisan food, local wine, and people-watching.
- Drive the Silverado Trail: The scenic back road through vineyards with smaller, appointment-only wineries and stunning mountain views.
- Alpha Omega: High end Cabernets and exclusive tastings.
- Iron Horse:

Sonoma County | ~1 hour from SF, ~1.5 hours from Berkeley

Sonoma is Napa's more relaxed, laid-back neighbor: less flashy, more charming, and often better value. The historic Sonoma Plaza is a perfect base for exploring.

- Sonoma Plaza: The historic town square is lined with tasting rooms, restaurants, and shops. A perfect Saturday morning stop before heading to afternoon wineries.
- Anaba: Beautiful outdoor seating, bocce and pickleball courts, and on-site wood pizza oven and snacks. Known for Pinots and White blends.
- Three Fat Guys: Owned by 3 former Packer's lineman, and one of the only wineries you'll find football on TV. Great Cabs and Rose.
- Kivelstadt: Rustic outdoor seating and great food with pairing menus.
- Angelo's Deli: Stop in for great custom made sandwiches to take along with you! Check ahead of time if your winery permits outside food, or plan to take it to Sonoma Square for a picnic!
- Gundlach Bundschu: Wine caves and sprawling outdoor tables with sweeping views.

 *Tiger Tip: September is crush season, so you may get to see the actual harvest happening at some wineries. Book a designated driver service or tour so everyone can enjoy the tastings without worry. Surrounding areas like Healdsburg are also worth a visit!*

Muir Woods | ~45 min from SF, ~1 hour from Berkeley

One of the most awe-inspiring natural experiences in the Bay Area: ancient coastal redwood trees, some over 900 years old, in a misty canyon just north of San Francisco.

- Muir Woods National Monument: Walk among cathedral-like groves of towering coast redwoods. The main Creek Trail boardwalk (1.8 miles round trip) is accessible and stunning. The 2-mile loop adds elevation and more solitude.

- **IMPORTANT:** Parking reservations are required (\$10 and must book in advance) or take the shuttle from Sausalito. Arrive early for fewer crowds. Open 8am–5pm.
- Combine Muir Woods with a stop in Sausalito: a charming waterfront town with galleries, restaurants, and incredible views of the Golden Gate Bridge. The ferry back to SF from Sausalito is a classic Bay Area experience. When in Sausalito, check out the Joinery, Bar Bocce, and Le Garage for great waterfront eats.

Half Moon Bay | ~45 min from SF, ~1 hour from Berkeley

A charming coastal town on the Pacific side of the Peninsula: famous for its pumpkin farms (perfectly timed for late September!), stunning beaches, and the world-famous big wave surf spot Mavericks.

- Gray Whale Cove State Beach: A beautiful, somewhat hidden beach with dramatic cliff views. Dog-friendly and less crowded than other beaches. Short steep staircase to reach the sand.
- California Coastal Trail near the Ritz-Carlton: An easy, scenic cliffside walk with sweeping Pacific Ocean views. The adjacent Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay is a lovely splurge for lunch or drinks.
- Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Farms: Late September is the start of pumpkin season! Dozens of farm stands appear along Route 92 and Highway 1 with pumpkins, apple cider, and fall produce.
- Main Street Half Moon Bay: A charming small-town strip with independent shops, cafés, and restaurants. Great for a relaxed afternoon stroll.
- Maverick's Beach: The legendary big wave surf spot is nearby (not safe for swimming, but dramatic to observe from the bluffs).

San Francisco Itself: Don't Miss List

If this is your first trip to SF, here are the essential experiences for a late September visit:

- Golden Gate Bridge: Walk or bike across. September weather makes it actually visible. Best views from Tunnel Tops park in the Presidio, or rent a bike near the Wharf (if you bike across the bridge to Sausalito, you can bring the bike back on the Ferry).
- Ferry Building Marketplace: Artisan food, local oysters, Blue Bottle Coffee, and Saturday farmers market.
- Alcatraz: Book tickets in advance; the audio tour is genuinely excellent
- Fisherman's Wharf & Pier 39: Classic touristy fun; watch the sea lions, get clam chowder in a sourdough bowl. Walk to nearby Ghirardelli Square for ice cream, shopping, indoor mini golf and arcades, great views and a less-touristy vibe.
- Chinatown & North Beach: Walk from Union Square through Chinatown to Columbus Ave for espresso at Caffè Trieste.
- Golden Gate Park: Enormous, beautiful park with museums, botanical gardens, and bison. Academy of Sciences is fun for adults and kids. JFK Promenade is closed to cars and great for exploring the park, art installs, and roller skating!
- Alamo Square: Walkable to Lower / Upper Haight, hilltop views around the city and the iconic Painted Ladies.
- Lands End: Upper West corner of San Francisco - easy walk from the Bay to Ocean Beach with unique views of the Golden Gate bridge (looking east instead of the common west-facing views).

Longer Day Trips

If you are staying a while or open for a bit longer trek (and renting a car), there is a **ton** to see within up to 3-4 hours driving of the Bay Area (some of these are closer, check and plan ahead).

- Monterey Bay: Peak season for whale watching and a world-renowned aquarium.
- Lake Tahoe: East of the Bay Area. This isn't like the lakes you're used to - pristine blue waters amongst some of the best skiing / hiking / mountain biking in the country.
- Bodega Bay: Oyster farms, massive beaches / waves, and fresh seafood.
- Santa Cruz & Capitola: Classic beach boardwalk rides and colorful, European-style seaside villages.
- Yosemite: National Park with iconic sites like Half Dome, El Capitan, and Yosemite Falls.

 *Tiger Tip: The NorCal Clemson Club runs watch parties for football games throughout the fall at The Showdown (SF), The Sports Page (Mountain View), and Primo's (Danville). Follow @NorCalClemsonClub or email norcalclemsonclub@gmail.com to stay connected all season! We'd love to see you again in the Bay Area!*

CONNECT WITH THE NORCAL CLEMSON CLUB

norcalclemsonclub@gmail.com

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for events, watch parties, and more throughout the season!

GO TIGERS!