



San Francisco, CA

Relocation Guide

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IOR makes every effort to ensure the information contained in this guide is as current as possible. If you notice errors, or information which is no longer accurate, please contact us immediately so we may correct the issue.

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Photo courtesy of [Lonely Planet](#)

San Francisco is the cultural, commercial and financial center of Northern California. It has a density of about 18,187 people per square mile, making it the most densely settled large city in the state of California, and the second-most densely populated major city in the United States after New York City. San Francisco is located on the San Francisco Peninsula, and is surrounded by both the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay. The hilly city is easily recognizable by its landmark bridges connecting San Francisco to the rest of the Bay Area, most notably the Golden Gate Bridge.

San Francisco was founded on June 29, 1776, when colonists from Spain established Presidio of San Francisco at the Golden Gate and Mission San Francisco de Asís, named for St. Francis of Assisi a few miles away. The California Gold Rush of 1849 brought rapid growth, making it the largest city on the West Coast at the time. In the 1950s, massive immigration, liberalizing attitudes, along with the rise of the "hippie" counterculture cemented San Francisco as a center of liberal activism in the United States. Politically, the city votes strongly along liberal Democratic Party lines.

Nicknamed "The City by the Bay" and "Fog City", San Francisco is known for its cool summers, fog, steep rolling hills, eclectic mix of architecture and landmarks including the cable cars, the former Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary and its Chinatown district. The city is also the headquarters of five major banking institutions and various other companies, and has a large presence in tech and start-up industries. San Francisco has the most restaurants and farmer's markets per capita in North America, and has an extensive amount of cultural museums and breathtaking parks. One of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, San Francisco provides a northern California haven for the curious traveler.

City of San Francisco Overview

- [Mayor of the City San Francisco](#)
- Population: 837,000
- Land Area: 46.87 square miles (121.4 km²)
- Parks: Over 220 Parks including Golden Gate Park
- [San Francisco Parks and Recreation Department](#)
- [San Francisco Public Library](#)
- [Weather Today in San Francisco](#)

History of San Francisco

- [Timeline of San Francisco history](#)
- [San Francisco Museum and Historical Society](#)

San Francisco Recommended Reading (available in print and on www.amazon.com):

- *Editor's choice: [A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius](#)* by Dave Eggers
- [Lonely Planet San Francisco 2016](#) by Alison Bing
- [This is San Francisco](#) [A Children's Classic] by Miroslav Sasek
- For readings about [home architecture](#)

What to See, Sightseeing Tours, Value Packages and Passes, Tourist Information – San Francisco

- [San Francisco Visitors Center](#)
- [Save money on attractions](#)
- [San Francisco for Free](#)
- [Tours](#)

Where to Find Arts & Entertainment in San Francisco

- [San Francisco Gate](#)
- [San Francisco Bay Guardian](#)
- [TimeOut Things to Do in San Francisco](#)
- [Theatre tickets and schedules](#)
- [Museums/Art Galleries](#)
- [Cinema listings and schedules](#)

Where to Eat – San Francisco

- [Yelp](#)
- [Zagat](#)
- [Thrillist: Eat in San Francisco](#)
- Food Blog Links: <http://sf.eater.com/>; <http://cyneats.com/category/san-francisco/>
- Make online restaurant reservations at [Open Table](#)

Select San Francisco Neighborhoods

[North Beach](#), rich in Italian heritage, compresses cabarets, jazz clubs, galleries, inns, family style restaurants and gelato parlors into less than a square mile. A perfect spot for cappuccino and espresso, North Beach is transformed into one of San Francisco's most electric playgrounds by night; live music and dancing keep the streets swinging.

[Pacific Heights](#), one of San Francisco's more exclusive neighborhoods, houses more than its share of mansions and gorgeous parks with sweeping views of the marina and Bay below. On Fillmore Street, Pacific Heights neighborhood visitors will find upmarket shops and boutiques, yuppies and families.

Rising over the west flank of North Beach, [Russian Hill](#) has an isolationist, artistic vibe reflective of its history. As late as the 1970s, this tony San Francisco neighborhood was considered rather bohemian (in fact, it served as the backdrop for Armistead Maupin's ribald "Tales of the City" novels). While it has moved decidedly upscale, Russian Hill's magnificent views, winding staircases and charming café's make it one of the favorite San Francisco neighborhoods.

Of the city's 40-plus neighborhoods, [Nob Hill](#) boasts perhaps the best view of San Francisco Bay, especially when observed from a California Street cable car. Once the home of the silver kings and railroad barons, the "nabobs," Nob Hill's noble tenants include Grace Cathedral, a replica of Notre Dame in Paris; Huntington Park, site of many art shows and graced by a replica of a 16th century Roman fountain; Nob Hill Masonic Center, an architectural dazzler hosting various musical events; the Cable Car Barn, where the cable cars are stored when not in service, and grand hotels.

Mexican and Latin American populations made [Mission District](#) their home, with their cuisine, traditions, and art creating a vibrant cultural area. More recently, the Mission District is home to San Francisco's hipsters and hippest restaurants, lured by the endless oh-so-hot restaurants and bars that stretch from 16th and Valencia streets to 25th and Mission streets.



Photo courtesy of San Francisco Travel

San Francisco's sprawling [South of Market district](#) (SOMA, in popular parlance) is home to web gurus, urban warriors, offbeat artists, and an unending supply of club kids. This San Francisco neighborhood's industrial, warehouse nature is perfect for the megaclubs and leathermen alike. "SOMA," is more than two square miles of sleek nightclubs, fashionable restaurants, art hubs and the nation's most beautiful ballpark.

Greater Bay Area Neighborhoods

[Palo Alto](#) - The City of Palo Alto is more than 100 years old, and is named after a majestic 1000 (not 250) year old coastal redwood tree along San Francisquito Creek, where early Spanish explorers settled. The blend of business and residential areas anchored by a vibrant downtown defines Palo Alto's unique character. A charming mixture of old and new, Palo Alto's tree-lined streets and historic buildings reflect its California heritage.

[Mountain View](#), named for its views of the Santa Cruz Mountain, prides itself on having attractive and well-built residential communities served by neighborhood parks and playgrounds, recreational facilities, quality education, and convenient shopping. Housing includes a wide range of styles and sizes to suit all preferences. In addition to having ownership opportunities, there are a number of rental properties to suite divergent needs.

[Cupertino](#), nestled between the Santa Cruz Mountains to the west and city of San Jose to the east, tiny Cupertino, lies at the edge of the state's famed Silicon Valley. Not surprisingly, a fifth of the city's workers are computer specialists. In addition, Cupertino is just east of the oldest wine-producing area in the state. Numerous hiking, biking and horseback trails are easily accessible in Cupertino.

[Sunnyvale](#), better known as the home to many high-tech companies, is a very ethnically diverse city. If you're outdoorsy, Sunnyvale is far more affordable than the surrounding cities with equivalent access to outdoor spaces.

[Santa Clara](#) blends a mix of modern and historic buildings. Nearby San Jose offers much of the urban feel you might be accustomed to in larger cities, with very good restaurants, bars and some decent nightclubs.

EMERGENCY

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
DIAL 911
FOR FIRE, POLICE & AMBULANCE**

Emergency personnel will ask for the following information so keep this page close to your phone:

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____

If you accidentally call 911, please do not hang up. The police will automatically be dispatched to your home to make sure there are no problems. Explain to the Operator the call was an accident.

[POISON CONTROL](#) (800) 222-1222
[ANIMAL POISON CONTROL](#) (888) 426-4435

Other Important Numbers: _____
PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN _____
WORK PHONE NUMBER _____

[DIAL 311](#) for Non-Emergency to reach any City of San Francisco agency, or to request a City Service (such as replacing a broken street-lamp or removing an abandoned vehicle).

Urgent Care Centers

An Urgent Care Center is different than a Hospital Emergency Room. An Emergency room would be in an absolute emergency. You may visit an Urgent Care Center if, for example, you have a terrible ear ache and need medicine immediately but your Primary Care Physician's office is closed. Many Urgent Care Centers have extended hours and are open early morning until late evening during the week and also some weekend hours. Be sure to refer back to your health insurance company to clarify which urgent care centers and primary care physicians you are allowed to visit using your health insurance. Your insurance card should have a toll-free 1-800 number on the back for you to call and ask questions and clarify which urgent care center would be closest for you. Please always carry your insurance card with you!

Safety and Security

While San Francisco is relatively safe, it is still a major city. Like every major metropolitan area in the USA, there is some crime.

Take basic precautions: lock your car, lock your doors and windows in your home, be aware of strangers and things that just don't seem right. It is always better to be cautious.

Check [here for a list of crime rates per neighborhood in San Francisco.](#)

Hospitals & Clinics

[General Directory of San Francisco Hospitals](#)

- [California Pacific Medical Center](#)
- [Saint Francis Memorial Hospital](#)
- [San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center](#)
- [UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital](#)
- [UCSF Medical Center](#)

Veterinary Clinics

- [Ocean Avenue Veterinary Hospital](#)
- [San Francisco Pet Hospital](#)
- [Seven Hills Veterinary Hospital](#)

Pharmacies

There are several major pharmacy chains in San Francisco, found on nearly every block on commercial streets. These pharmacies are also general stores and carry a large selection of cleaning, house care, pet care, and other supplies. Click on “Store Locator” and enter your zip (postal) code to find the pharmacy near you. Many pharmacies are open 24 hours. Check for hours of operation.

- [CVS](#)
- [Rite-Aid](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Pharmacies in San Francisco](#)

Rental Agents

In most situations, your IOR consultant will partner with a local realtor to have access to the most current and extensive property listings as well as the realtor's expertise in preparing and negotiating leases. This agent receives a commission for their assistance, and in most US locations this commission is paid by the Landlord, not the tenant. Your IOR DS Consultant will discuss this with you.

Renter's Rights

Tenants who lease or rent property are protected against discrimination by [The Fair Housing Act](#). If you think your rights have been violated, you may write a letter or telephone the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office nearest you. You have one year after the alleged violation to file a complaint with HUD, but you should file as soon as possible.

While you can generally expect the same service from landlords, it's important to know your state's laws. Each state and most major cities have their own tenant rights, laws and protections. [Here are California's](#).

You can also visit the [HUD website here for a full guide to renters' rights by states](#).

If your rental property ever suffers any defects that make your place uninhabitable, your landlord has a duty to fix it. While some apartments let you make online requests for repairs, as well as provide a phone number for "emergencies," always make sure you document your request in writing. The landlord will then have a certain amount of time to make those repairs.

Privacy

You have the right to privacy. While the landlord owns the property, they can't access it anytime they want. All states have laws stating renters have a right to privacy while renting. Pretty much the only time the landlord can come into your rental without permission or notice is when they're responding to an emergency that threatens injury or property damage.

Any other time the landlord wants to enter your apartment, they need to have your permission and in most cases give you 24-hours' notice before entering.

What to Expect from Your Landlord:

In most states, you are legally entitled to:

- Safe structural elements including floors, walls, roofs and secure doors and windows.
- Privacy as described above.
- All electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems function.
- Working hot and cold water.
- Exterminating infestations of rodents and other insects.
- Access to trash receptacles.

Additional expectations:

- Landlords cannot discriminate based on race, gender, sexual orientation or disabilities.
- Apartment buildings sometimes come with laundry and dryer machines in the basement.
- Water, electricity and gas bills are usually up to you to pay. **Your IOR DS consultant will assist you with this process.**

Utilities and Appliances

Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you or provide information on connecting your utilities. It is possible some will be included in your rent, but typically most are not.

****Note that you will need a social security number in order to register and pay for utilities****

Recycling

Everyone in San Francisco is required to keep their recyclables, compostables and trash separate. This may vary for rental properties, ask your IOR DS Consultant for more about specific neighborhoods.

General SF Government [Mandatory Recycling/Composting Information](#)

- Government of SF page on recycling requirements for residents [here](#)
- Guide to separating compost, trash, and recyclables [here](#)
- Type in a specific item to see if it is recyclable [here](#)



The Lease Process

Review your housing budget with your IOR DS Consultant

Your IOR DS Consultant can help you understand what kind of property you can afford. You also need to take into account that you may be responsible for some of the utility costs of your rental.

Know what you want

What are you looking for in a property? Do you want a studio or a single bedroom? Maybe you want to rent a single family home? Do you need the property to come with appliances, including washer and dryer? Do want it to be close to school or your work? Do you want it to be within walking distance of retail, like groceries or coffee shops? Are you looking for a child friendly area? Keep in mind that outside of the city center in major cities, there is not much public transportation and most locals drive everywhere.

Identify potential apartments

IOR offers home finding services to aid you with this process. Your consultant may work with a local broker who will help to organize appointments and visit properties. They will also assist in the rental application and the leasing process.

Common Abbreviations and Acronyms Used in Rental Housing Listings

Acronym	Meaning
24-hr mtn	24-hour emergency maintenance
AC or A/C	Air conditioning
Appls	Appliances
Apt	Apartment
BA	Bathroom
BR	Bedroom
Bsmt	Basement
CAC	Central air conditioning
DA	Dining area
Det	Detached
Dk	Deck
DR	Dining room
Dw (D/w)	Dishwasher
Eff	Efficiency
EiK	Eat-in kitchen
Fin bsmt	Finished basement
FDR	Formal dining room
FHA	Fair Housing Act
FMR	Fair market rent
FP	Floorplan
Gar	Garage
H/A	Handicapped accessible
H/W	Hardwood floors
Hi ceil	High ceilings
HVAC	Heating, ventilation and air conditioning

Acronym	Meaning
LA	Living area
LR	Living room
MBR	Master bedroom
MBTH	Master bathroom
Neg	Negotiable
Ofc	Office
OSP	Off-street parking
Pkg	Parking
PM	Property manager (management)
Pvt	Private
Pwdr rm	Powder room (1/2 bath)
RE	Real estate
Renov	Renovated
Rf	Roof
Rm	Room
SF	Single-family
SFA	Single-family attached
SFD	Single-family detached
Sp, Pl (S/p)	Swimming pool
Sq. ft	Square feet
Th (T/H)	Townhouse
Vw (vu)	View
W/A	Wheelchair accessible
W/W	Wall-to-wall carpeting

Visit

Make this process as efficient as possible by visiting as many potential properties as you can in one or two days. Try to go sometime during the week if possible. Your IOR DS consultant will work with you to set an appropriate schedule and to ensure that the properties you visit meet your needs as closely as possible.

What to do once you're there

As you look at the rental unit, be sure to ask a lot of questions. While you should keep small concerns to yourself about the unit while looking at it, feel free to ask the landlord or apartment manager any questions you might have that will help in your decision. Here are some possible questions you may consider asking:

- What's the monthly rent?
- Are any utilities included with the rent?
- How much is the security deposit?
- When is rent due? Do you have auto-pay?
- What's the make-up of the other tenants? Are they mainly younger students? Married couples with families? Older folks?
- What's the parking situation like? Do you pay for a parking spot?
- Do you take care of small maintenance issues or am I responsible for some of the repairs in the property?
- Am I able to re-paint the walls or make other modifications?

Again, be friendly and polite when you ask these questions.

The Application

The next step in the leasing process for an apartment is to submit a rental application for the location you want. The manager or landlord will be able to give you the application as well as anything else that they may need to have filled out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist with this process. For a single family home there will likely be a rental application.

You will need your Social Security number, Driver's License and/or passport, and proof of employment. Some landlords may charge you an application fee which could be between \$20 to \$400 dollars, depending on the landlord. This could be a combination of an application fee and move-in fee.

Once you've done this, it can take up to a few days to hear back from the property manager. Once your application has been approved the lease approval process will begin with IOR and likely your employer.

Signing the lease

DO NOT SIGN THE LEASE until your IOR DS Consultant has reviewed it in full and given their approval.

The lease is a binding contract, so it is very important to pay attention as a leasing agent goes over it with you. It is perfectly normal for you to take your time and read all the fine print for yourself. If you

are working with an IOR DS consultant, make sure to talk with them and receive approval before signing. You will also be given a copy of the lease to take with you and keep for your records, but it is very important to know everything included in your lease from the start.

Some things to look for in a lease:

- Term of the lease and any important dates such as when the rent is due.
- Extra fees for parking spaces or storage, garbage collection and pets.
- Information regarding utility providers and whether you or the landlord is responsible for those bills.
- Notification requirements in case of renewal.
- Requirements/responsibilities of the tenants to do routine repairs such as lawn maintenance, cleaning or notification of repairs.
- Clauses that allow the landlord to change the terms of the lease after it is signed.
- Restrictions that would prevent you from living normally or comfortably in the home.

Sometimes landlords will ask for a security deposit before you sign the lease. This is normal, but you shouldn't pay in cash. Make sure all payments are made out as a check or money order just in case.

What to expect from the lease

Most leases include the following or a variation thereof:

- Your employer requires that all leases include a Break Clause in case you are transferred for work or personal needs.
- Contracts will often be for periods of a year or more.
- Minimum stay. Typically three fourths of your lease contract time. If you choose to move out before this date, you will lose your security deposit. If you move out afterwards, you are still required to give a specified number of days notice.
- Security Deposit. Landlords will expect you to leave them with a deposit (usually about one to two month's rent) that they will hold for the duration of your lease. You will receive your security deposit back at the end of the lease provided you don't break any specific clauses in your lease, such as moving out without proper notice, not paying rent, causing damages to the property, etc.
- Landlords should not be given unchecked access to your apartment. If there isn't anything in your lease about landlord's rights to enter the leased premises, suggest the following clause:

Entry by the Landlord. Landlord or his agent will not enter Tenant's home except to deal with an emergency; to make necessary or agreed repairs; to supply necessary or agreed services; or to show the unit to potential purchasers, tenants, or repair persons. Unless there is an emergency, Landlord will give Tenant at least 24 hours' written notice of the date, time, and purpose of the intended entry and will schedule entries during normal business hours, Monday–Friday.

Most landlords will be hard-pressed to say no to such a reasonable clause. If the landlord refuses, it's a sure sign that he won't be reasonable in other respects, too. Continue on in your housing search.

Moving In

On your selected move-in date, after the lease has been signed, and deposits have been paid...you should be given your keys and more than likely a move-in form to fill out. Your IOR DS Consultant will assist you with an initial walk through of your apartment. Look for dings in the walls, cracked windows or other irregularities and report them on this form. This will indicate that these things were there before you moved in and you will not be held responsible for them at the end of the lease term.

Get Renter's Insurance

Renter's insurance covers any loss to your personal property due to robbery or accidents. It also covers any damage you might cause to other tenant's property. For example, let's say your washing machine springs a leak and water seeps through the floor and ruins your neighbor's antique dresser. Renter's insurance would cover that.

Renter's insurance will cost approximately about \$15-125 a month, less if you tack it onto another policy (like auto) you have with an insurance company. A few popular options are [Allstate](#) and [State Farm](#).

Obtaining a Driver's License

If you are a visitor in California over 18 and have a valid driver license from your home state or country, you may drive in this state without getting a California driver license as long as your home state license remains valid.

If you become a California resident, you must get a California driver license within 10 days. Residency is established by voting in a California election, paying resident tuition, filing for a homeowner's property tax exemption, or any other privilege or benefit not ordinarily extended to nonresidents.

To apply for an original driver license if you are over 18, you will need to do the following:

- Make an appointment before visiting a DMV office (walk-ins are only accepted at our [Driver License Processing Centers](#)).
- Complete application form DL 44 (An original DL 44 form must be submitted. Copies will not be accepted.)
- Give a thumb print
- Have your picture taken
- Provide your social security number. It will be verified with the Social Security Administration while you are in the office.
- Verify your [birth date and legal presence](#)
- [Provide your true full name](#)
- [Pay the application fee](#)
- Pass a vision exam
- Pass a traffic laws and sign test. [Sample Test](#))

Note: To allow you sufficient time for testing DMV will not be administering written or audio exams after 4:30 p.m.

- Steps for applying for a California driver's license [here](#)
- For general information and to find an office near you, see general California [DMV website](#)

For general information and instructions on how to obtain an official state ID card or driver's license, [visit the website of the California DMV](#).

Your Destination Services Consultant will also assist you with the proper procedure.

SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA

Generally, to register your child for school you will need to have a passport and/or birth certificate, proof of immunizations, any applicable past school records and proof of residency. Most public schools have boundary areas, and you must show proof (i.e. copy of lease or home purchase agreement) to be allowed to register in that particular school. Please always confirm requirements with the school you are interested in before assuming that your child will be able to attend that school.

Contact your IOR Destination Services Consultant for more assistance with schooling questions.

Public Schools in San Francisco

The public school system in San Francisco is managed by the [San Francisco Unified School District](#). As the only public school district in San Francisco County, SFUSD enrolls over 55,000 students in more than 160 schools. Public schools in San Francisco base enrollment on a choice system, meaning that any student can apply to any school within the district. Generally, for school registration you will need proof of age such as passport or birth certificate, immunization records and proof of residency, such as a signed lease or purchase contract and deed.

For more information on enrollment and public school applications, please visit the SFUSD [Enrollment Guide](#).

Private Schools in San Francisco

There are over 100 private schools in San Francisco, ranging from early childhood education to high school. An estimated 30% of school-aged children in San Francisco attend private schools. In general, many private schools in the U.S. require applications and entrance exams, and some may align with a specific religion when devising a curriculum. Listed below are some of the most acclaimed private schools in San Francisco:

- [The Bay School](#)
- [The Drew School](#)
- [Katherine Delmar Burke School](#)
- [Lick-Wilmerding High School](#)
- [Presidio Hill School](#)
- [San Francisco University High School](#)
- [Stratford School](#)

For a complete listing of private schools in San Francisco, click [here](#).

Colleges and Universities

- [City College of San Francisco](#)
- [San Francisco Art Institute](#)
- [Santa Clara University](#)
- [SFSU- San Francisco State University](#)
- [Stanford University](#)
- [UC Berkley](#)
- [UCSF-University of California, San Francisco](#)



Santa Clara University

Checking and Savings Accounts

To open a local checking or savings account you will need the following information:

- Two forms of picture identification including but not limited to your passport, driver's license or work ID.
- Social security number
- Local mailing address. You may use your office address as your mailing address, but be prepared to call your bank branch as soon as you have your permanent address.
- Letter of Employment
- Cash for the initial deposit can range from \$25-\$150 dollars.

Major U.S. Banks

Below is a list of links to some of the larger U.S. banks. Not every bank is represented in all U.S. locations; in some cases you may find that the local bank is a better option for you than some of the larger banks. Your IOR DS Consultant can help you in selecting a bank by sharing the various options available locally.

- [Bank of America](#)
- [Bank of the West](#)
- [Chase](#)
- [Citibank](#)
- [HSBC](#)
- [US Bank](#)
- [Wells Fargo](#)
- [List of banks in San Francisco](#)

Local San Francisco Banking Options

- [First Republic Bank](#)
- [JP Morgan Private Bank of Northern California](#)
- [Patelco Credit Union](#)

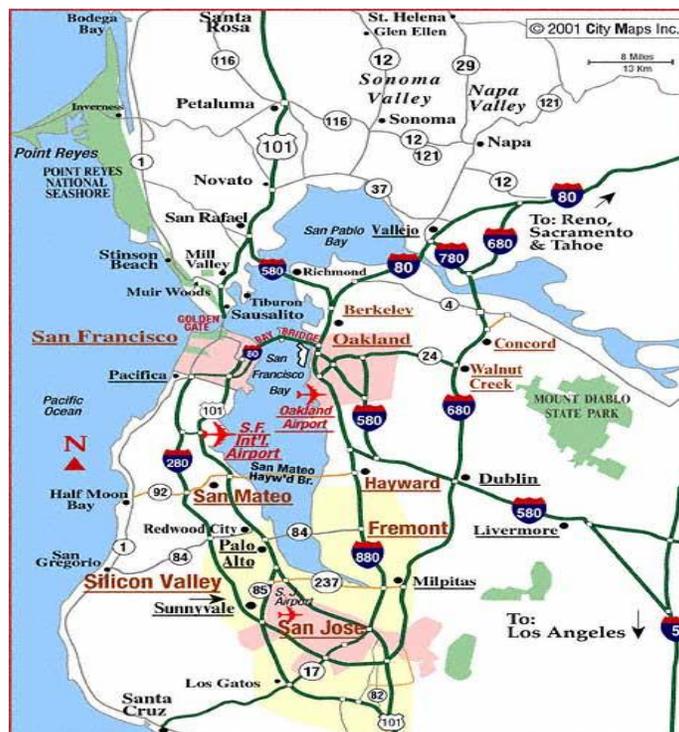
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/DRIVING

Driving

In San Francisco, driving can be a tedious matter. There are confusing array of one way and two way streets, trolley cars, steep hills and narrow lanes all conspiring to make driving an unpleasant experience at best. In addition, there is the fog that blurs the sight of the driver. Parking is in short supply and expensive. On the bright side, the roads are wide and the drivers are generally respectful making the experience adaptable through time.

Interstate 80 begins at the approach to the Bay Bridge and is the only direct automobile link to the East Bay. U.S. Route 101 connects to the western terminus of Interstate 80 and provides access to the south of the city along San Francisco Bay toward Silicon Valley. Northward, the routing for U.S. 101 uses connects to the Golden Gate Bridge, the only direct automobile link to Marin County and the North Bay. State Route 1 also enters San Francisco from the north via the Golden Gate Bridge, but turns south away from the routing of U.S. 101, joining with Interstate 280 at the city's southern border. Interstate 280 continues this southerly routing along the central portion of the Peninsula south to San Jose.

Free websites like ParkWhiz.com let you book off-street parking in advance after searching by location and price, which is often discounted. San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency provides useful information about where to park, how to park legally, meters and pricing, holiday parking, and more. SF Best Parking allows you to compare the pricing and location of many options and pick the one that best fits your needs.



Map courtesy of AAccessMaps.com

Public Transit

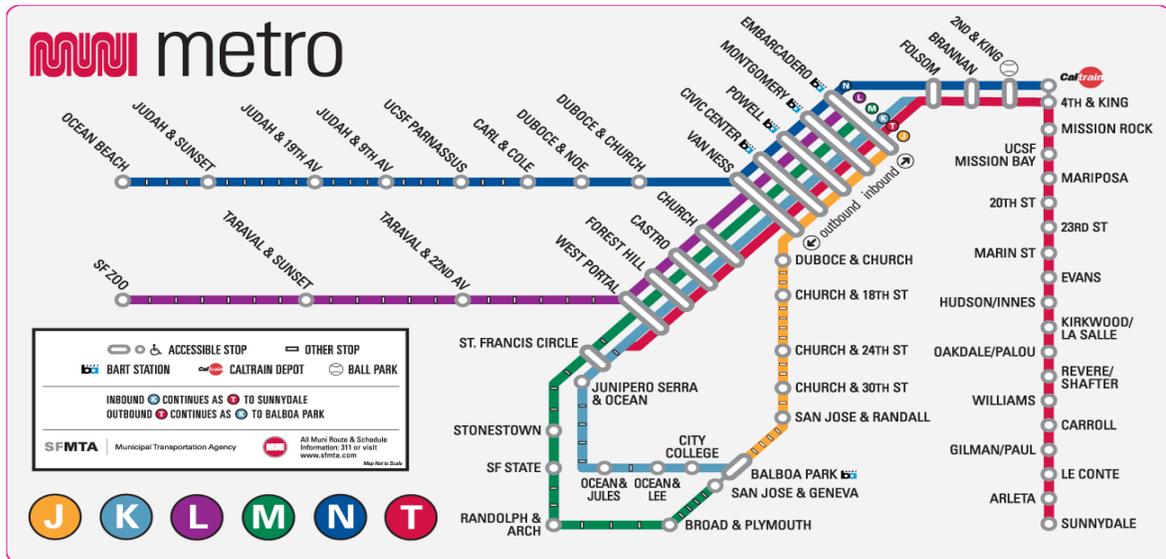
San Francisco has one of the most comprehensive public transportation systems in the United States. The major transit systems are: [Muni](#) — Metro subway, streetcars, buses, trolley buses and cable cars within San Francisco proper, [BART](#) — regional subway services in the San Francisco Bay Area, and [Caltrain](#) — commuter rail services to San José.

[Muni](#) runs a network of local transport that covers most areas of touristic interest well. An all-day Muni passport is good on all Muni services, including Cable Cars. The Clipper Card was fully introduced in 2010 and is a contact-less, multi-agency fare card. Clipper can either be set up with pay as you go or a monthly pass. MUNI operates on a proof of payment basis. The fine for being caught without proof of payment is \$250. You can plan your Muni travel online.

[Muni Metro](#) (Lines J, K, L, M, N, S and T) is a modern light rail and subway system. It connects many southern and western neighborhoods to downtown, where you can transfer to one of BART's four downtown stations and the [Caltrain](#) terminal at 4th and King. Tickets can be purchased from ticket vending machines before boarding; if the stop does not have such a machine and you do not have a ticket, you must board through the front door and buy one from the driver.

[The Historic Streetcar](#) F Line uses historic streetcars, in original colors from several cities in the US and Milan, Italy. The line runs from Fisherman's Wharf south along the waterfront Embarcadero to the ferry building at the foot of Market Street, then up Market Street on the surface to the Castro district. The world-famous Cable Cars run on three lines in the steep streets between Market Street and Fisherman's Wharf: the north-south Powell-Mason and Powell-Hyde lines and the east-west California Street line.

Both diesel and electric trolley buses serve the rest of city. Board through the front door and buy tickets or show your pass or transfer to the driver. Bus Service ranges from a consistent departure of every two minutes on many lines leaving popular destinations, to a more sporadic 20 minutes for buses to Treasure Island and between outlying neighborhoods. Bus delays, leading to waits of 20 to 30 minutes, are not uncommon. MUNI operates 24 hours a day / seven days a week in San Francisco, although late night owl service is limited in both lines and stops.



Courtesy of [SFMTA](http://www.sfmta.com)

[BART](#) , the regional metro, has eight stations in San Francisco, making it a nice way to get between well-trafficked parts of the city, especially downtown and the Mission. BART gets you across the Bay to Berkeley and Oakland, and to the airports of San Francisco and Oakland. BART operates seven days a week from 4AM to 12:30AM. Caltrain has three stops within San Francisco. Other than the 4th and King terminal in SoMa, these are the 22nd St. Station and the Bayshore Station (off Tunnel Ave).

Taxis

Taxis in San Francisco are, for a large city, surprisingly inefficient and expensive. Except for taxi stations at or near downtown business hotels, or cruising just a few major arteries, taxis can be hard to find and hail -- and calling for a cab can mean a 30-45 minute wait, if the cab shows up at all. It is significantly easier to catch a taxi on weekdays, not including Friday night. You will also want to schedule your cab ahead of time because if you are going beyond 15 miles, you will end up paying substantially more.

- [List of Taxi Providers in San Francisco](#)

Car Rentals

Car rental in San Francisco is expensive, registration fees are the highest of any U.S. state, and because collisions are common, rates for liability insurance (legally required) are high as well. However, if necessary, the following are some options:

- [Avis](#)
- [Budget Rent A Car](#)
- [Dollar Rent A Car](#)
- [Hertz](#)

Transportation “App” Options

Several web based phone applications to secure a driver are available throughout the area. The driver knows your approximate location based on your phone GPS. Payment is automatic through the app and fares may be cheaper than a taxi.

- [Uber](#)
- [Lyft](#)

Air

The [San Francisco Airport](#) (SFO) offers extensive service across the United States and beyond, including non-stop flights to 83 US cities and more than 49 international cities. The [Oakland Airport](#) (OAK) provides additional service to the Bay Area, offering non-stop service to a growing list of 55 international and domestic locations.

Train

[Amtrak](#) has local service to Sacramento, Bakersfield, San Luis Obispo, and Redding. The [Amtrak California Zephyr](#) provides service from Emeryville in San Francisco to Chicago, Illinois, with stops including Reno, Nevada and Denver, Colorado.

Bicycle

If you have strong legs and can tolerate traffic with intermittent bike lanes, bicycles can be a convenient form of transportation in San Francisco. Much of the terrain is hilly and difficult to pedal up. Using the Flat route finder or looking at the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition map to find flat routes is a way to get around this. A classic and relatively easy ride is from the tip of Golden Gate Park's panhandle in the Haight, along paths and JFK Drive through the park to Ocean Beach. JFK Drive is lightly trafficked, and closed to cars on Sundays. The Golden Gate Bridge has sectioned off pathways on each side for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- [Flat Route Finder](#)
- [San Francisco Bicycle Coalition](#)

Map Websites

- [Bing Maps](#)
- [MapQuest](#)

AAA Travel Protection

[AAA](#) is a membership organization that offers benefits such as roadside service and towing, discounts on car products and services, maps, reference materials, etc. Call 888-258-1370 for additional information and pricing.

PET RESOURCES

San Francisco is a fairly pet friendly city- especially towards dogs. However, there are many laws in place regarding dog leashing and licenses.

Dog Licenses

The SF city government requires all dogs are required to have a license, which must be updated yearly. This license can only be obtained with proof of a current rabies vaccination. New residents have 30 days to acquire a license or an unlicensed dog fee might apply.

- [Purchasing the required dog license](#)
- [Application](#)
- [List of all adoption and license fees by animal](#)

Dog Parks

- ["Best Dog Parks in San Francisco"](#)
- [SF Parks & Recreation Dog Parks](#)

Veterinary Clinics

- [Ocean Avenue Veterinary Hospital](#)
- [San Francisco Pet Hospital](#)
- [Seven Hills Veterinary Hospital](#)

Pet Supplies

- [Petco](#)
- [PetSmart](#)
- [Petagogy](#)

LIVING AND SHOPPING

TV, Cable, Telephone, and Internet

The main service providers for TV cable, landline telephone and internet all offer combination packages. They are in stiff competition with each other, so special offers change monthly, sometimes even weekly.

- [AT&T](#)
- [Comcast XFINITY](#)
- [DirectTV](#)
- [Dish](#)
- [Time Warner Cable](#)
- [Wave Broadband](#)

Food Shopping

Residents of San Francisco go to a wide range of open air farmers markets, large gourmet markets, small specialty shops and conventional supermarkets. The main conventional supermarkets are listed below.

They are located all over town and the surrounding areas:

- [Rainbow Grocery](#)
- [Safeway](#)
- [Trader Joe's](#)
- [Whole Foods](#)



Farmer's Markets

For those looking to get their goods directly from the producer, there are many farmer's market locations throughout San Francisco. From fresh produce to prepared foods, you can find an available market almost every day of the week:

- [California Farmer's Market Association](#)
- [Ferry Plaza Farmer's Market](#)
- [Heart of the City Famer's Market](#)



Courtesy of [Ferry Building Marketplace](#)

RECREATION

Sightseeing

As one of the most vibrant areas in the West Coast, San Francisco offers a wide selection of recreational opportunities, ranging from professional football, basketball and baseball, to permanent companies in opera, ballet, theater and symphony. San Francisco's retail offerings are world class, with several major shopping malls and urban entertainment centers. With mild annual temperatures, great beaches along the Pacific Ocean, the Twin Peaks and many parks best represented by the Golden Gate Park, the Bay Area also offers mesmerizing outdoor activities.

A principal point of interest is Fisherman's Wharf. Although many of the locals consider it a tourist trap, it is a great place to see street entertainers, watch sea lions, visit museums or take a cruise to the infamous Alcatraz Prison or the pleasant Angel Island. Working fishing boats still come into the small harbor, and the district is home to several excellent seafood restaurants.



Alcatraz Prison

The Golden Gate Bridge is another must see. It has been called one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World and is the first thing you see in San Francisco if driving in from the north, as it is one of the major road routes into and out of the city. Golden Gate Park is also a great way to see the bridge and to spend an afternoon enjoying various attractions in the park. There are Segway tours that help explore the over 1000-acre park that contains the historical Golden Gate Park Carousel, the famous de Young Fine Arts Museum, and The California Academy of Science Museum in Golden Gate Park.

- [Alcatraz Prison](#)
- [Aquarium of the Bay](#)
- [Civic Center](#)
- [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library](#)
- [Fisherman's Wharf](#)
- [Golden Gate Park](#)
- [Mission Dolores Park](#)
- [San Francisco Zoo](#)
- [The Haight Neighborhood](#)
- [Treasure Island San Francisco](#)
- [Winchester Mystery House](#)



Fisherman's Wharf

Art and Culture

San Francisco is one of the West Coast's hubs for art and culture. It is one of only a handful of cities in the country to feature permanent dance, theater, symphony and opera companies in various venues. The Herbst Theater is one of cornerstone theaters in the area and hosts more than 200 shows presented on its stage every year. The theater is distinguished as the historic site of the United Nations Charter signing in 1945, and is now the primary venue for many of the Bay Area's premier cultural organizations, including City Arts & Lectures, San Francisco Performances, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and San Francisco Jazz (SFJAZZ).

Musicals are shown at the Orpheum or the Golden Gate Theaters, and the Florence Gould Theater hosts the San Francisco Lyric Opera. The world class San Francisco Ballet can be seen at the War Memorial Opera House, and plays are performed at the Geary (by the American Conservatory Theater), Curran and the Marines Memorial theatres.

In addition to the performing arts, the Bay Area is also home to some of the world's finest museums. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) holds an internationally recognized collection of modern and contemporary art. It was the first museum on the West Coast devoted solely to 20th century art. The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Legion of Honor and de Young Museum also have impressive works of art. The Legion of Honor is considered San Francisco's most beautiful museum, and displays an impressive collection of 4,000 years of ancient and European art in an unforgettable setting overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge.

Close by the de Young museum is the California Academy of Science, which holds a huge array of science exhibits, including an aquarium and a natural history museum. For children, there is the Randall Museum that focuses on arts, crafts and natural sciences. There is also the Cartoon Art Museum that displays a range of editorial cartoons, comic books, graphic novels and newspaper comics.

- [American Conservatory Theater](#)
- [Cartoon Art Museum](#)
- [California Museum of Sciences](#)
- [de Young Museum](#)
- [Exploratorium](#)
- [Florence of Gould Theater](#)
- [Legion of Honor](#)
- [Orpheum Theater](#)
- [Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra](#)
- [Randall Museum](#)
- [San Francisco Ballet](#)
- [San Francisco of Museum of Modern Art](#)
- [The Herbst Theater](#)



Palace of Fine Arts

Festivals and Holidays

San Francisco hosts a variety of festivals throughout the year. Some of the famous music related festivals include the San Francisco Blues Festival, attracting the world's most renowned musicians, and the nation's largest public electronic music festival, LovEvolution. There are also famous festivals in the area such as the Cherry Blossom Festival held in April, the San Francisco International Film Festival and Bay to Breakers, one of the largest footraces in the nation where runners dress in costume, wearing anything from elaborate costumes to wearing almost nothing at all.

Ethnic celebrations are held throughout the year as well. During the Chinese New Year in China Town, there is a colorful, vibrant parade with decorative costumes, lions, deafening firecrackers, "lucky-money" envelopes, colorful banners, ornately themed floats, martial arts groups, stilt walkers, acrobats and a 200 foot Golden Dragon. The Tet Festival in the Civic Center-Tenderloin area celebrates the Vietnamese New Year. In addition, as an area with a large LGBTQ community, San Francisco is home to one of the largest gay pride parades in nation. It's a huge, happy, chaotic celebration of diversity, politics, sexuality, and San Francisco wackiness, on the last weekend in June. About a dozen stages and spaces offer everything from square dancing to hip-hop, from a family garden to Leather Alley.

Common American events in the Bay Area include the Columbus Day Parade, Easter Parade, Fourth of July and Cinco de Mayo. A fun event held during the Christmas holidays is the Tree Lighting Ceremony at Ghirardelli Square at the end of November. The Bay Area is full of exciting events throughout the year from multiethnic parades to good fireworks on Fourth of July.

- [Bay to Breakers \(foot race\)](#)
- [Cherry Blossom Festival](#)
- [Chinese New Year Festival and Parade](#)
- [Columbus Day Parade](#)
- [Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon](#)
- [Fleet Week](#)
- [Fringe Festival](#)
- [Haight Ashbury Street Fair](#)
- [LovEvolution](#)
- [San Francisco Film Society's International Film Festival](#)
- [San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Parade and Celebration](#)
- [Sunday Streets](#)
- [Union Street Art Festival](#)



Chinese New Year Celebration

Sports for the Spectator

San Francisco is home to two major league sports. The city's Major League Baseball team, [The San Francisco Giants](#), play their home games at AT&T Park. San Francisco's National Football League team, [The 49ers](#) play their games at Levi's stadium. Both teams command huge fan bases.



Levi's Stadium

Sports for the Participant

The Bay Area offers various outlets to exercise and be involved in the community. There are more than 220 parks in San Francisco, natural areas, harbors that are home to many boats from all around the world, and numerous beautiful and challenging golf courses.

For runners, there are various running events and clubs that will keep you motivated and also offer an opportunity to meet new people. There are multiple 5k, 10k runs, half marathons and full marathons held all year round in the parks and city centers of the Bay Area. The San Francisco Marathon provides an awesome way to see the famous land marks of San Francisco such as the Golden Gate Bridge, AT&T Park and so on. For those who aren't avid runners, there is the largest foot race in America, Bay to Breakers where you can have a great time walking and seeing the crazy costumes during the 12 kilometer walk.

In addition, there are a number of cycling, yoga, boating and other recreational opportunities in San Francisco. The San Francisco Gate's [Entertainment Section](#) provides information on many recreational opportunities throughout the city.

- [Bay Area sporting events](#)
- [Bay to Breakers](#)
- [Golf Courses](#)
- [Running Groups in San Francisco](#)
- [San Francisco Marathon](#)

Shopping

San Francisco offers various sites for shopping, from small boutiques to large shopping malls. [Union Square](#) is the heart of the shopping district where well-known retail stores are represented. [Maiden Lane](#) is a small, upscale shopping street located right off the center of Union Square. Another area to check out is [Fillmore Street](#). Unlike other commercial areas, Fillmore appeals to those with varied interests; it has three quaint bookstores, three flower shops and even three hardware outlets scattered among upscale clothiers. This strip was recently named one of America's best shopping streets by US News. [Westfield San Francisco Centre](#) is a centrally located large mall, complete with 166 stores.

Volunteer Opportunities

- [Volunteer Match](#)
- [United Way](#)
- [SF One Brick](#)- short term volunteering opportunities
- [SF Rocket Dog Rescue](#)
- [SF Family Dog Rescue](#)

Parent & Children Resources

- [Mom's Clubs](#) - social groups offering events and outings with mothers and their young children.

Smart Phone Apps for Travel:

- [Uber](#) : Similar to a taxi service but all web based. Payment also handled online, do not pay or tip driver directly. Uber driver knows your approximate location based on your phone GPS.
- [Lyft](#) : Wherever you're headed, count on Lyft for rides in minutes. The Lyft app matches you with local drivers at the tap of a button. Just request and go.
- [Apple Maps](#) : Map by direction
- [Map Quest](#) : Map by direction
- [Waze](#) : Community based traffic & navigation with alternate route suggestions
- [CityMaps2Go](#) : The #1 travel app lets you discover exciting new places. Beautiful photos and insider tips at the touch of a button. You will receive stories about places you like and can instantly save and find them on your maps and in your lists.

Smart Phone Apps for Communication:

- [WhatsApp](#) : Free local & international Real Time messaging
- [Line](#) : Exchange free instant messages with friends whenever and wherever with one-on-one and group chats. LINE is available on all smartphone devices (iPhone, Android, Windows Phone, Blackberry, Nokia) and even on your PC.
- [Viber](#) : Free text, calling, photo messages and location-sharing with Viber users. No registration, alias or invitations required. Instantly integrates with your own contact list. Best-quality mobile calls using 3G or Wi-Fi.
- [Skype](#) : Stay in touch with your family and friends for free on Skype. Download Skype today to chat and call on desktop and mobile.

Smart Phone Apps for Weather:

- [WTHR13](#) : Local weather and closings; includes radar and forecast
- [Weather Channel](#) : National and international time, temperature & weather
- [Tornado](#) : Set up tornado alerts & siren

Smart Phone Apps for Local Information/Reviews:

- [Angie's List](#) : Referrals for doctor, dentist, child care, maid, mechanic, painter, plumber, etc.
- [Yelp!](#) : Find local businesses, restaurants, bars, clubs, events, etc. with map, lists, and reviews
- [Next Door](#) : Neighbors share community events, items for sale, recommendations for babysitters, doctors and handymen, crime reports, ideas about how to improve their neighborhood and more.
- [Meet Ups](#) : Meetups are neighbors getting together to learn something, do something or share something. Cultural groups advertise gatherings here as well.

AREA MAP



[Neighborhood Map of San Francisco](#)

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

[Federal Holidays listed through 2020](#)

[California Legal Holidays](#)

The following are federal holidays in the United States and need to be treated as such by employers:

- New Year's Day January 1*
- Martin Luther King Day Third Monday in January
- Memorial Day Last Monday in May
- Independence Day July 4*
- Labor Day First Monday in September
- Columbus Day Second Monday in October
- Veterans' Day November 11*
- Thanksgiving Day Fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day December 25*

*If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the day following is observed as the legal holiday.



San Francisco Skyline. Courtesy of [SF Station](#)