

# Experience San Francisco

by Nathan Shedroff

## Eclectic, Active, and Bright...

**“Everybody’s favorite city” is still one of the most unusual, interesting places you’ll ever visit.**

Its true melange of varied cultures lends an identity tricky to describe but easy to experience. Easily the most sexually ambiguous city in the world, everything, literally, goes. This doesn’t mean there aren’t conservative people with traditional values, just that tolerance is one of them.

**“Come for the sex, stay for the food”**

While San Francisco is a notorious attraction for freedoms of all kinds, the thing that keeps people here is the food. This is such a great restaurant city that you can probably duck into the first eatery you see and leave having had a fantastic meal. The competition is as fierce here as any city on the globe. With its proximity to the farms of the Central Valley, it’s great weather, and it’s reputation for indulgence, it’s no wonder that San Francisco is one of the world’s great eating Meccas.

It’s not a great art city (see the art listings) but what it (and the Bay Area) loses in art, it more than makes-up in technology. This is the home of multimedia and the Internet industry—whatever New Yorkers want to tell you. Nowhere else is the spirit so alive—even today—the ideas flow, and the industry so accepting. Even after the dot.bust there is probably a higher percentage of great, experienced designers, engineers, and developers here than anywhere else—certainly on a per capita basis. Of course, the industry here is a shell of its former self (as with everywhere else), but this is still the place to build an understanding of what it’s all about and what it all can be.

San Francisco is one of the safest cities in the country, but that doesn’t mean you can’t get yourself into trouble. There really aren’t any bad neighborhoods—at least not where you’re going to be—but there are some seedy ones. Actually, the seedy neighborhoods aren’t dangerous (so don’t worry) and the homeless people are somewhat friendly and are rarely aggressive. You’ll find more attitude from some of the Maitre d’s in town.

With one of the best public transportation systems in the country (we know, that’s not saying much) you can get around San Francisco fairly easily but if you want to leave the city to explore, we suggest a car. The only truly publicly accessible part of the Bay Area is the East Bay (BART is easy to take there). Marin and the South Bay, however, won’t work without a car (the trains and busses just aren’t good enough or cover enough of area unless you’re going a few blocks off El Camino Real or the Caltrain line).

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## Maps and Listings:

**Nearby** (from Ft. Mason to the Argonaut): On the edge of the major tourist district, you’re only steps from some of the best views San Francisco has to offer, the best walking and some wonderful experiences.

**Unique Experiences:** These are experiences you won’t find anywhere else.

**Epicurean Eats:** While there are a few bargains listed here, most are the very best meals the San Francisco Bay Area can offer—at any price. All are high-quality experiences, both in food and atmosphere. Of course, there are plenty of great restaurants throughout the Bay Area but these are the best worth leaving the city for.

**Casual Eats:** You can eat very well in SF for very little—if you know where to go. Money isn’t as much a factor as imagination.

### Café Culture +

**Café Culture:** Until New Orleans is rebuilt, San Francisco is probably the most European of cities in the USA. Sidewalk culture thrives, despite the often cool weather. Quality coffees and teas abound and there are dogs a plenty.

**People Watching:** San Francisco is one of the strangest (and we mean that in the best possible way) people-watching cities ever. Almost any street corner can work but we’ve highlighted some of the best areas here.

**Relax:** San Franciscans know all about the good life. It’s a full-time sport in this city. There must be more masseurs and masseuses per capita here than anywhere else on the planet. There’s also been a recent surge in day spas and other ways to pamper one’s self.

**Big Kids:** San Francisco is an especially easy city to discover the child you were—years ago or minutes ago.

**Cool Shopping:** You can find all of the same chain stores you find anywhere else in the world so we ignore them completely and only discuss the unique.

### Geek + Views

**Geek Pilgrimages:** Go if you must, stay if you will, can you please just not geek-out for one trip?

**Captivating Views:** What would you expect from a city surrounded by water with so many hills? Ditch the car and go for an urban hike.

### Art + Architecture

**Art:** San Francisco is not a great art city. The big museums are passable at best (SFMOMA actually owns Jeff Koons’ piece, Bubbles) but good shows come through nonetheless. While there is a lot of interesting avant-garde art being created in the city, most of the art sold in the galleries and shown in the museums is very safe and conservative (reflecting the tastes of the more traditional buyers) and usually vetted first by New York. You’ll probably have to go to New York or Los Angeles to see some of this city’s best art. The real exception to this is the newly opened De Young Museum in Golden Gate Park.

**Architecture:** Despite the TransAmerica building’s icon status around the world, San Francisco isn’t really known for its architecture. There are definitely some wonderful buildings—and some truly hideous ones as well—but, overall, it doesn’t rival Chicago, New York City, London, or even Los Angeles (now). The city’s historic buildings are some of the best examples. The invention of the glue-together “loft” has ruined much of SOMA where lenient taxation policies have allowed these cheaply-built, overpriced me-too buildings to populate nearly every alley and street.

### Night + Trouble

**Rock the Night Away:** Not as big a music town as New York or Los Angeles—or even Chicago—but you can find a wide variety of experiences if you know where to look.

**Looking for Trouble?:** And you thought we were going to leave out the seedier things San Francisco is known for...

# Nearby (from Ft. Mason to the Argonaut)

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## Activites

- 1 Golden Gate Bridge Free**  
Another tourist icon that avoids becoming a trap. The bridge itself is as spectacular as the views. If you have access to a bike (or have time to rent one), bike across to the Marin Headlands. Otherwise, park the car on either side and walk the length and back. Bring your camera!
- 2 Fort Point Free**  
Fort Point is at the end of the walk through Crissy Field along the coast west of Fort Mason. An actual, old military fort, it's now a museum. Whether or not you go inside, however, the views of the bridge towering overhead, the surfers rounding the point, and the sailboats in and out of the gate are relaxing and unique. [nps.gov/fopo](http://nps.gov/fopo)
- 3 Kite Surfing Free**  
If you don't know how to windsurf or kite surf, this is not a good place to start. However, there is nothing like catching air and slipping around the bay and under the bridge amid the sailboats and freighters.
- 4 Crissy Field Free**  
Recently revived (the park, the waterfront, and the wetlands, this is the site of San Francisco's first airport. Now part of the Presidio (an old army base turned diverse park), Crissy Field is the ideal place to walk, nap on the lawn, launch a kite-board or windsurfer, or just sit back and watch them.
- 5 Exploratorium \$13**  
Still the mold for what most science museums are trying to be. It's noisy, chaotic, and some of the exhibits may be broken but if you're well-versed in learning theory you'll immediately recognize the participatory and experiential style. A delight for all of the senses. See while it's still at the funky, beautiful Palace of Fine Arts—before they move. The exhibits can keep any curious soul—of any age—engaged for hours. [exploratorium.edu](http://exploratorium.edu)
- 6 Tactile Dome \$16 (inc. Exploratorium admission)**  
A little-known attraction inside the Exploratorium, but you need reservations! It's a maze in utter darkness and all you have is your sense of touch to guide you up, over, and across incredible surfaces. You don't even need to get stoned to lose yourself in the sensations. [exploratorium.edu/visit/tactile\\_dome](http://exploratorium.edu/visit/tactile_dome)
- 7 Wave Organ Free**  
A musical instrument that "plays" the bay tides through different cement tubes stuck into the water. It's a short walk along the breakwater past the yacht club and it works better some days than others. [exploratorium.edu/visit/wave\\_organ.html](http://exploratorium.edu/visit/wave_organ.html)
- 8 Marina Safeway Grocery Store**  
Looking for romance without the bar scene? Just do your shopping here. It's been known for decades to be a better hook-up place for the more traditional singles that Marina attracts.
- 9 Swimming in Aquatic Park Free**  
There's nothing like jumping in the water for a brisk workout and when the water temperature hovers around 50 degrees (year round) "brisk" is the operative word. Regular swimmers, many training for the Alcatraz to SF swim, have the right-of-way here among the anchored boats and there's always room for visitors. You should be an accomplished swimmer before you get in the water and you might want to bring a wetsuit. It's cold!

- 10 Riding a Cable Car \$5**  
As touristy and crowded as it sounds (and it is both), riding a Cable Car up California Street is still exhilarating. The tickets are getting pricey and the ride isn't even that long (unless you're going or coming to the Wharf) but its fun to hang-on to a bar (if there aren't any seats) and see the envy in drivers' eyes as you inch up an impossibly steep hill with a breathtaking view of the city. The most fun you'll have surrounded by tourists. Bring your camera. [scablecar.com](http://scablecar.com)
- 11 Lombard Street Free**  
Terribly touristy, but still a beautiful street. It's not actually the crookedest street in the World—Vermont Street to on Potrero Hill is much more crooked, more fun, and virtually empty—but it is picturesque. Come off-peak hours (weekday mornings) to avoid the crowds and drive as slowly as you can get away with. But, the best views of the street are actually from the bottom, not the top.
- 12 Sea Lions at Pier 39 Free**  
Though Pier 39 is a typical tourist trap/shopping mall, the reward for being trapped is a chance to see hundreds of seals languishing on their own floating decks on the West side of the pier. Be sure to go when they're resting up after hunting for food (usually around Noon).
- 13 Alcatraz \$16**  
Don't expect this to be another tourist trap. It's actually a fascinating tour book-ended with pleasant rides on the bay. The interactive, self-guided tour is particularly well-done thanks to a local experimental theater troupe. Advance reservations suggested. [blueandgoldfleet.com](http://blueandgoldfleet.com)
- 14 Blade, Walk, or Bike The Embarcadero Free**  
There's no better way to experience the bay, see the city, and watch people than simply walking along The Embarcadero. You can rent bikes or skates in Fisherman's Wharf or just hoof it to lunch or dinner—either direction
- 15 Coit Tower \$3 elevator ride (murals are free)**  
One of the most beautiful examples of Art Deco architecture, this 210 foot tower on the top of Telegraph Hill was a gift willed to the city from Lillie Hitchcock Coit on her death to honor the city's volunteer firemen. From the top, the view is spectacular but the real jewels are the WPA-era murals in the lobby. [coittower.org](http://coittower.org)
- 16 Filbert Steps Free**  
Most residents along these stairs can't drive to their homes. They must haul their belongings and groceries along the steep stairs but the quiet elegance and beautiful views are obviously worth the hassle. You can walk these steps at any time but they are at their most spectacular in morning. There's nothing mysterious or dramatic about the design of these paths, it's all about the views.
- Staircase Walks Free**  
The map might not show it but San Francisco's streets are down-right zany. Who would orient streets straight up the steepest hills instead of spiraling around them like everywhere else in the world? Streets, of course, aren't the only vertical climbers. Walking the stairs in several places in the City is both a hike and a reward.
- Filbert Steps
- 17 Greenwich Street**

## Restaurants

- 11 Greens Vegetarian \$20 ★★★★★**  
A spectacular menu to accompany the view of the Golden Gate Bridge. All of the ingredients are organic, impeccably fresh, and will make you forget that there's no meat. The wine list is also one of the best in the city. Also, for lunch, they've opened **Greens To Go** with a limited menu for takeout. This is perfect to grab something and eat outside on the piers (if the weather is nice). Bonus: it's right next to the conference venue in Fort Mason. Bldg. A, Fort Mason [greensrestaurant.com](http://greensrestaurant.com)
- 12 Asqew Grill Fusion \$9 ★★**  
Several locations around the city, an easy, tasty, moderately-priced restaurant with an energetic crowd. Don't be afraid to mix skewers or share a table. 3348 Steiner [asqewgrill.com](http://asqewgrill.com)
- 13 Barney's Burgers Burgers+ \$7 ★★**  
Known as the best burger in SF (if you can believe that any one place could hold the crown). You can get anything veggie, turkey, or beef, but the salads are the real jewels here—especially the Cobb. 3344 Steiner [barneysburgers.com](http://barneysburgers.com)
- 14 Pacific Catch Pacific Rim \$10 ★★**  
Quick, fresh, tasty Asian-inspired sea food. No-nonsense, small, and energetic (like much of the Marina neighborhood). 2027 Chestnut
- 15 Plumpjack California Cuisine \$14 ★★**  
A cosy, intimate restaurant with the usual spread of California Cuisine, fresh ingredients, and casual elegance. 3127 Fillmore [plumpjack.com](http://plumpjack.com)
- 16 Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory Desserts \$10 ★**  
OK food but you're in a chocolate factory! Best to order big, decadent desserts. Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point #52 [ghirardelli.com](http://ghirardelli.com)
- 17 Gaylord's Indian \$18 ★★**  
A little on the expensive side (if you're used to inexpensive, exquisite Indian in other cities) but the best Indian food in San Francisco. 900 North Point [gaylords.com](http://gaylords.com)
- 18 Boudin Bakery Center Bakery, Cafe \$15 ★★**  
A tourist trap, no doubt, but a well-done one. This bakery is the chain's flagship store with everything from meals (in the Bistro Boudin) to bread-tastings, to merchandise and, of course, you can look into the kitchen. 165 Jefferson Street [boudinbakery.com](http://boudinbakery.com)
- 19 Houston's American \$15 ★★**  
Beautiful and refined inside, the food is simple but well-done. Known for their ribs and burgers, anything from the grill—especially if Alfredo's working it—will fill you up. Big plates and lots of food. The place is busy in the evenings starting Thursday night. You may have to wait, but hang-out by the grill and watch the chefs do their thing. There may even be something in it for you. 1800 Montgomery [hillstone.com](http://hillstone.com)
- 20 Fog City Diner American \$18 ★★**  
Great food, decent prices, wonderful service. A local's haunt as well as tourists in the know. A range of food for everyone and a great bar. 1300 Battery [fogcitydiner.com](http://fogcitydiner.com)

- 21 Rose Pistola Ligurian \$15 ★★**  
This restaurant is often packed with tourists but it's a worthy place to eat nonetheless. The neighborhood is wonderful to walk around. 532 Columbus Ave
- 22 House of Nanking Chinese \$12 ★★**  
One of the most unusual restaurants you'll ever find. The lines get long but the service is unbelievably fast. Be prepared to order as you sit down and when you look up, your food will be arriving to your table. You'll be in and out in about 30 minutes but the food is extremely tasty. 919 Kearny
- Warning: The Stinking Rose Tourist Trap**  
The worst tourist trap in SF (other than Pier 39). This restaurant should be fantastic but turns-on the garlic so much that it ruins the food entirely. It's filled with tourists, anyway. Locals avoid it like the plague.

## Shops

- 23 City Lights Books**  
In case you didn't know, this SF institution was the powerhouse behind so many beat poets and writers, often publishing their work before they were "discovered" by other publishers. Lawrence Ferlinghetti created an eclectic (there's that word again) book store and alternate publishing house that is as famous for its perspective and location as it is for its selection. [citylights.com](http://citylights.com)

## Nightlife

- 24 Theatersports \$15**  
Quite possibly the most creative experience you can have, improv theater isn't demanding but is terribly rewarding. Theatersports is an international organization but the San Francisco chapter is especially adept at this tag-team, no holds-barred sport. Matches run most weekend nights and classes are taught most weeknights and weekend days. [improv.org](http://improv.org)
- 25 Teatro Zinzani Circus Theater \$110 ★★**  
Imagine the best circus (sans animals) inviting you to dinner in the middle of the stage and then letting loose like you know they do when the audience has gone home. Silly, dramatic, funny, lively, and risqué, these performers make you forget the meal altogether—though the food is good—and pull you into the performance, literally. You can't possibly have a bad experience here if you like people at all. Pier 29 [love.zinzanni.org](http://love.zinzanni.org)
- 26 Beach Blanket Babylon \$25-75**  
There's not much to describe of this show that would do it justice. Singing, dancing, and amazing costumes only tell part of the story. This San Francisco institution is an experience all its own, slyly written and performed, sending-up countless celebrities, politicians, and San Francisco itself with wit, much fun, a good dose of bawdiness, and a sweet reverence—much like San Francisco itself. 678 Green St [beachblanketbabylon.com](http://beachblanketbabylon.com)

## Captivating Views

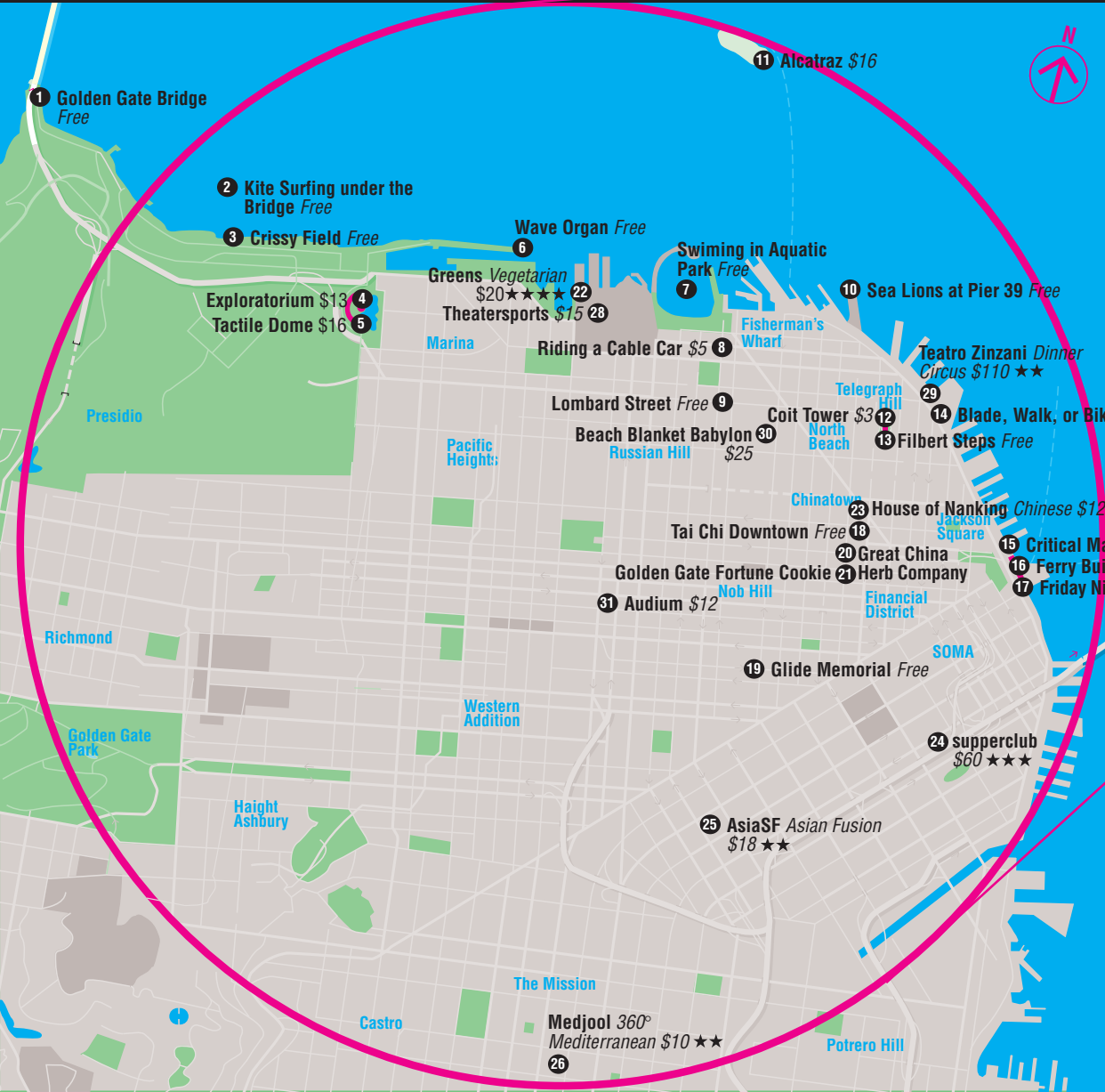
- 1 Golden Gate Bridge**
- 2 The Mouth of Aquatic Park**
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# Unique Experiences

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### 4 Exploratorium *\$13*

Still the mold for what most science museums are trying to be. It's noisy, chaotic, and some of the exhibits may be broken but if you're well-versed in learning theory you'll immediately recognize the participatory and experiential style. A delight for all of the senses. See while it's still at the funky, beautiful Palace of Fine Arts—before they move. The exhibits can keep any curious soul—of any age—engaged for hours. [exploratorium.edu](http://exploratorium.edu)

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### 15 Critical Mass *Free 5pm Last Friday of every month*

Part 13-year ongoing protest and part healthy, alternative transportation party, Critical Mass started as a revolt by harassed bike messengers. From 500 to 5000 bicyclists ride, en masse, down Market Street at the height of rush-hour and then off to other points in the city. There is nothing like this alternative tour of the city, at ground level, and under personal power. It's tiring and exhilarating at the same time. There is a sense of camaraderie and friendliness that is hard to find in other events—and it's great exercise. [CriticalMassHub.com](http://CriticalMassHub.com)

### 16 Ferry Building *Free*

Recently remodeled and now reinhabited by some of the poshest food in the City (some very upscale food stalls and the weekend farmers' market are here). The building itself is beautiful, sitting right at the end of Market Street. Buy something to eat or drink, sit out by the bay, and relax.

### 17 Friday Night Skate *Fridays 8pm*

This fun, energetic tour of SF starts every Friday night at 8pm in Justin Herman Plaza (across from the Ferry Building) and rolls via rollerskate, inline skate, and skate board. Everybody is welcome—especially beginners—and the skate is organized so that slow-pokes can easily catch-up at the several stops around the city. Unlike Critical Mass, it isn't a protest of any sort but the sheer size of the crowd (400-700 skaters) often obliterates car traffic in many spots. There are a few small hills on the 12 mile course but nothing too difficult. It is one of the best ways to see this beautiful city. [web.cora.org/friday.phtml](http://web.cora.org/friday.phtml)

### 18 Tai Chi in Chinatown *Free*

There's nothing like practicing Tai Chi with the experts. The scene is definitely not a scene. If you don't know Tai Chi, this is not the best place to learn. However, it is a friendly place if you know Tai Chi and a great place to practice. Portsmouth Square, Kearny @ Clay

### 19 Glide Memorial *Sundays 9am and 11am*

Services here attract an amazing variety of people from all cultures because of Reverend Cecil William's pluralistic outlook and spiritual values stressing love, grace, and tolerance above all else. Services are lively, inspiring and inclusive. Each word is signed in American Sign Language—even the music is signed, including the beat. Sunday services are so popular, there are two shifts and each fills the church to overflowing. Arrive early and get in line. The church itself does an amazing amount of good work for the homeless and poor in the Tenderloin where the church is located. No donation is necessary but we suggest you give a little something. 330 Ellis [www.glide.org](http://www.glide.org)

### 20 Marin Headlands *Free*

The best way to see the headlands is by mountain bike, but if you must drive, be sure to stop by the Headlands Center of the Arts. Be careful getting to the beaches if you choose. The paths are closed for a reason. [nps.gov/goga/mahe](http://nps.gov/goga/mahe)

### 21 Nike Missile Silo *Free*

On the first Sunday of every month, the Site SF-88 Nike Missile Silo in the headlands is open (the coast on both sides of the bridge are studded with the remnants of silos and bunkers). This silo is the only one in the world kept as a museum. You can even ride the missile lifts underground. [nikemissile.org/launch3.html](http://nikemissile.org/launch3.html)

### 22 Mountain Biking Mt. Tamalpais *Free*

There's nothing more quintessential to Northern California living that mountain biking in Marin. One of the best rides (and workouts) is up the fire roads to the top of Mt. Tam. It might be a little crowded on the weekends but all are good folk.

### 23 Surfing OB or Linda Mar *Free*

If you've never surfed before, this is no place to start. If you have, you know you really need to get in the water. OB can be mellow to treacherous, depending on the swell. Linda Mar is much more even but never as big.

### 24 Mavericks *Free*

This is the West Coast home of big wave surfing. Just west of Half Moon Bay (down the coast 30 minutes), when it's "going off" the views of surfers working the waves is truly awe-inspiring (it is the most dangerous sport in the world).

## Shopping

### 25 Great China Herb Company *Herbs/Alternative Medicine*

With a doctor on duty, whether you're feeling ill or just curious, don't be afraid to peak in and talk herbs and health. There are plenty of herb stores in Chinatown but this one is especially good. 857 Washington St.

### 26 Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory *Fortune Cookies \$3/bag*

This is the birthplace of the genre. 56 Ross Alley

## Restaurants

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A spectacular menu to accompany the view of the Golden Gate Bridge. All of the ingredients are organic, impeccably fresh, and will make you forget that there's no meat. The wine list is also one of the best in the city. Also, for lunch, they've opened **Greens To Go** with a limited menu for takeout. This is perfect to grab something and eat outside on the piers (if the weather is nice). Bonus: it's right next to the conference venue in Fort Mason. Bldg. A, Fort Mason [greensrestaurant.com](http://greensrestaurant.com)

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### 29 supperclub *Fusion + Performance \$60 ★★★*

The new owners of the legendary club in Amsterdam just opened an outlet here in SF! Meals are 3-hour feasts with music and performance, turning into a bar and club afterward. You never know what and who you might encounter here. 657 Harrison [supperclub.com](http://supperclub.com)

### 30 Asia SF *Asian Fusion \$18 ★★*

Really, if we didn't tell you that your waitress isn't a woman, you probably wouldn't know. They all provide entertainment on the bar as well as (dancing and lip-synching to music). They're pretty good, as is the food (though a bit expensive). [asiastf.com](http://asiastf.com)

### 31 Medjool *360° Mediterranean \$10 ★★*

It's a restaurant and hostel, and has the best roof deck in town! You can order food when you finally need something to chase the margaritas and beer. The bar and grill aren't anything unique (though, they're perfectly fine). It's all about the view here. 2522 Mission. [medjoolst.com](http://medjoolst.com)

### 32 Beach Chalet *American, Brewery \$15 ★★*

The food is great, a little pricey, and there's a microbrew on the premises. However, the real reason to come is the spectacular view of Ocean Beach—no matter what the weather is like. [beachchalet.com](http://beachchalet.com)

### 33 Moss Beach Distillery *American \$15 ★*

Skip the restaurant and walk downstairs to the outside porch. You can order light "pub" food and sit on the porch overlooking the coast wrapped in blankets provided by the establishment. It's great for lunch but perfect at sunset. Maybe you'll even see the ghost. 140 Beach Way, Moss Beach [mossbeachdistillery.com](http://mossbeachdistillery.com)

## Nightlife

### 34 Theatersports *\$15*

Quite possibly the most creative experience you watch. Theatersports is an international organization but the San Francisco chapter is especially adept at this tag-team, no holds-barred improv. Matches run most weekend nights and classes are taught most weeknights and weekend days. [improv.org](http://improv.org)

### 35 Teatro Zinzani *Dinner Circus \$110*

Imagine the best circus (sans animals) inviting you to dinner on the stage and letting lose like you know they do when the audience has gone home. Silly, dramatic, funny, lively, and risqué, these performers make you forget the meal altogether—though the food is decent—and pull you into the performance, literally. You can't possibly have a bad experience here if you like people at all. Pier 29 [love.zinzanni.org](http://love.zinzanni.org)

### 36 Beach Blanket Babylon *\$25-75*

There's not much we can say that would do it justice. Singing, dancing, and amazing costumes only tell part of the story. This SF institution is an experience all its own, stly written and performed, sending-up countless celebrities, politicians, and San Francisco itself with wit, much fun, a good dose of bawdiness, and a sweet reverence—much like San Francisco itself. 678 Green St [beachblanketbabylon.com](http://beachblanketbabylon.com)

### 37 Audium *\$12*

See review on the **Rock the Night Away** map.

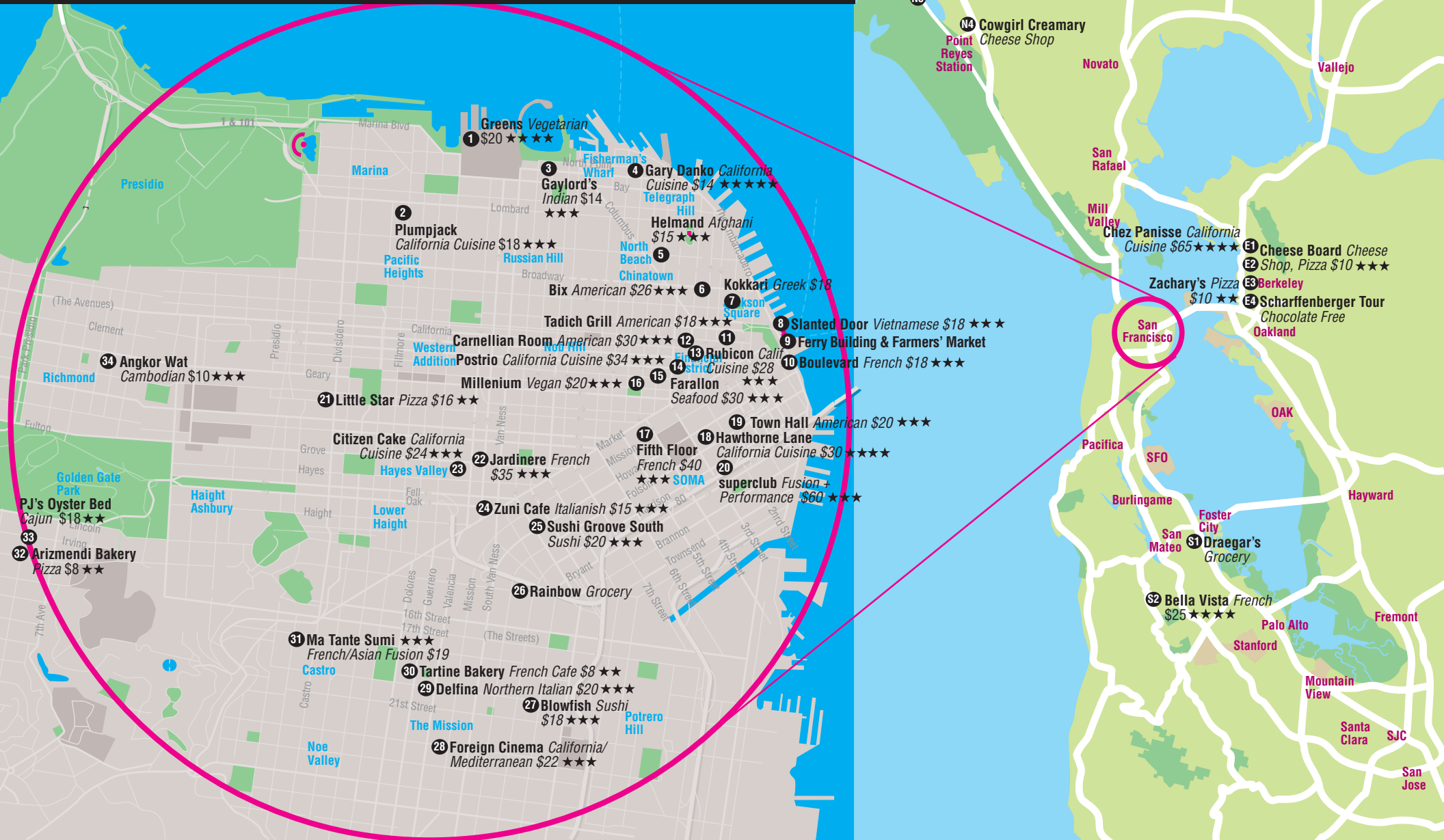
# Epicurean Eats

from *Experience San Francisco*, by Nathan Shedroff

While there are a few bargains listed here, most are the very best meals the San Francisco Bay Area can offer. All are high-quality experiences, both in food and atmosphere.

Prices are average for an **entrée** (wine, appetizers, dessert, etc. additional)

©2005 Nathan Shedroff





# Epicurean Eats

While there are a few bargains listed here, most are the very best meals the San Francisco Bay Area can offer—at any price. All are high-quality experiences, both in food and atmosphere. Of course, there are plenty of great restaurants throughout the Bay Area but these are the best worth leaving the city for.

## San Francisco

- 1 Greens Vegetarian \$20 ★★★★★**  
A spectacular menu to accompany the view of the Golden Gate Bridge. All of the ingredients are organic, impeccably fresh, and will make you forget that there's no meat. The wine list is also one of the best in the city. Also, for lunch, they've opened **Greens To Go** with a limited menu for takeout. This is perfect to grab something and eat outside on the piers (if the weather is nice). Bonus: it's right next to the conference venue in Fort Mason. Bldg. A, Fort Mason [greensrestaurant.com](#)
- 2 Plumpjack California Cuisine \$14 ★★★**  
A cosy, intimate restaurant with the usual spread of California Cuisine, fresh ingredients, and casual elegance. 3127 Fillmore [plumpjack.com](#)
- 3 Gaylord's Indian \$18 ★★★**  
A little on the expensive side (if you're used to inexpensive, exquisite Indian in other cities) but the best Indian food in San Francisco. 900 North Point [gaylord's.com](#)
- 4 Gary Danko California Cuisine \$70 ★★★★★**  
One of the only five star restaurants in San Francisco (which is saying something in this city). Named after its award-winning chef, the experience is more than merely the exquisite food. One of the finest wine lists in the city and probably the best cheese course. 800 N. Point St [garydanko.com](#)
- 5 Helmond Afghani \$15 ★★★**  
Traditional Afghan dishes reinterpreted. Incredible flavors and aromas. Great service and a wonderful interior. 430 Broadway [helmandsf.com](#)
- 6 Bix American \$26 ★★★**  
This rebirth of an authentic 30s-era speakeasy is an effective time machine that doesn't rest too much on the past. The food is fabulous but the real treat is the piano and crooning on weekend nights. Very crowded and noisy at times and reservations are mandatory. 56 Gold [bixrestaurant.com](#)
- 7 Kokkari Greek \$24 ★★★**  
A mix of traditional greek standards and innovative interpretations. Their known for their grilled fish and meats, but everything is fresh and wonderful. This contemporary, elegant restaurant serves greek food like you've never dreamed. Great service and fine dining. 200 Jackson [kokkari.com](#)
- 8 Slanted Door Vietnamese ★★★**  
This Bay Area institution has found a new home in the renovated **Ferry Building**. It's food is just as flavorful and original as ever and the new digs are elegant, inviting, fresh, and have a great view of the bay. The bar is fantastic and the service fun and impeccable. 1 Ferry Building #3 [slanteddoor.com](#)
- 9 Ferry Building Farmers' Market**  
Every Saturday and Sunday, local farmers (most organic) sell their wares in and around the Ferry Building, itself a daily food-mall of the highest order. Local favorites like, Scharffenberger and Cowgirl Creamery have stores inside open every day. Saturdays are usually bigger than Sundays.
- 10 Boulevard French ★★★**  
One of the finest restaurants in SF. Stroll along the Embarcadero before or after. 1 Mission [boulevardrestaurant.com](#)

- 11 Tadich Grill American \$18 ★★**  
Not stuffy, exactly, but full of tradition. One of the oldest restaurants in SF, you'll step back into the 40s the moment you walk in the door. The food is, well, traditional. The meats and fish are like your parents would have expected. 240 California
- 12 Carnelian Room American \$30 ★★★**  
A regal and slightly stuffy bar and restaurant at the top of the Bank of America building, the second-largest building in San Francisco is still the tallest restaurant and bar (and view) in the city. Reservations are mandatory for dinner and the meals are expensive, though reasonable for the quality. [carnelianroom.com](#)
- 13 Rubicon California Cuisine \$28 ★★★**  
Quiet, exquisite, delicious. Rubicon is one of the most understated and unsung fine restaurants in the city with a great wine list and wonderful cheese course. 558 Sacramento [sfrubicon.com](#)
- 14 Farallon Seafood \$30 ★★★**  
Mainly seafood and a theatrical interior. The lamps in the entry help give the illusion of being underwater. The dining room in the bath has the original tiled-ceiling from the swimming pool that used to be there. 450 Post [farallonrestaurant.com](#)
- 15 Postrio California Cuisine \$34 ★★★**  
545 Post [postrio.com](#)
- 16 Millenium Vegan \$20 ★★★**  
Possible the best vegan food on the planet served fancy and fresh on white linen. 580 Geary [milleniumrestaurant.com](#)
- 17 Fifth Floor French \$40 ★★★**  
Imaginative meals and high quality. Quiet, intimate setting. 12 4th St. [fifthfloor.citysearch.com](#)
- 18 Hawthorne Lane California Cuisine \$30 ★★★★★**  
One of the finest meals in the City with original ideas brought to the table. Part continental, part California Cuisine. Good enough for President Clinton when he was in town. 22 Hawthorne Lane [hawthornelane.com](#)
- 19 Town Hall American \$20 ★★★**  
342 Howard [townhallsf.com](#)
- 20 supperclub Fusion + Performance \$60 ★★★**  
The new owners of the legendary club in Amsterdam just opened an outlet here in SF! Meals are 3-hour feasts with music and performance, turning into a bar and club afterward. You never know what and who you might encounter here. 657 Harrison [supperclub.com](#)
- 21 Little Star Pizza \$16 ★★**  
If you're craving Zachary's deep-dish style pizza but not the drive to Berkeley, Little Star's is almost as good. 846 Divisadero [littlestarpizza.com](#)
- 22 Jardinaire French \$35 ★★★**  
Luscious and delicious, inventive and reliable, somewhere between California and France. Traci deJardin's place is consistently satisfying on all levels. 300 Grove [jardiniere.com](#)
- 23 Citizen Cake California Cuisine \$24 ★★★**  
Known for amazing desserts with subtle flavor combinations, this venue now serves lunch and dinner. A little pricey but everything is delicious. If you're just after their cupcakes or smaller treats, visit Citizen Cubcake on the top floor of the Virgin Megastore. 399 Grove [citizencake.com](#)

- 24 Zuni Cafe Italianish \$15 ★★★**  
A San Francisco legend for wannabees, already ares, has-beens, and rising stars. Despite the diversity, it's a fine, simple restaurant with a great menu and a lively atmosphere. Renowned for their oysters and burgers. 1658 Market
- 25 Sushi Groove South Sushi \$20 ★★★**  
The hippist sushi in town. Beautiful food, beautiful people, a great bar, DJ on location and even heated toilet seats! The sushi is fresh and inventive but pricey. 516 Folsom
- 26 Rainbow Food Store Grocery**  
A gourmet paradise crossed with the most PC of urban, organic, vegetarian coops. This store's politics sometimes get out of hand but their food is always the healthiest. They probably have the best cheese selections in the city. 1745 Folsom [rainbowgrocery.org](#)
- 27 Blowfish Sushi \$18 ★★★**  
Delicious sushi served with a bit of attitude. This is as much a place to be seen as one to be tasted. Lunch is much nicer and more relaxed. We recommend a bento box and a cucumber limeade. 2170 Bryant [blowfishsushi.com](#)
- 28 Foreign Cinema California/Mediterranean \$22 ★★★**  
Typically wonderful food with foreign films on the big screen. A popular haunt with the hip and beautiful. Always fun. 2534 Mission [foreigncinema.com](#)
- 29 Delfina Northern Italian \$20 ★★★**  
Small, loud, very busy, and exquisite. This original interpretation of Northern Italian cuisine is a local favorite and Anne and Craig (who own and run the restaurant) are heroes in the local food scene. Reservations required. 3621 18th St [delfinasf.com](#)
- 30 Tartine Bakery French Cafe \$8 ★★**  
Exactly what you miss about Parisian mornings. The best French pastries and light lunches possible. 600 Guerrero @ 18th [tartinebakery.com](#)
- 31 Ma Tante Sumi French/Asian Fusion \$19 ★★★**  
Quiet, small, and undiscovered, this wonderful neighborhood place mixes French and Asian ingredients and styles as if the two were on the same continent. 4243 18th St [matantesumisf.com](#)
- 32 Arizmendi Bakery Pizza \$8 ★★**  
Don't have time to make your way to Berkeley for a Cheeseboard pizza? The folks at Arizmendi are trained to create the same quality pizzas in the Cheeseboard style. See **Cheeseboard** in the East Bay. 1331 9th Ave. [arizmendibakery.org](#)
- 33 PJ's Oyster Bed Cajun \$18 ★★**  
A good cajun restaurant but the best clam chowder in the city. It's a bit of a trek from the normal visitor paths but if you're looking for clam chowder in this town, this is the place to go. 737 Irving Street @ 8th [pjosysterbed.com](#)
- 34 Angkor Wat Cambodian \$10 ★★★**  
Moderately priced and delicious food. Simple interior but good service. The Pope was served their amlaw machhou kh-tiss ma-nor soup when he was in town and he had two servings. If it's good enough for him... 4217 Geary Blvd

## North Bay

- 11 Copia California Cuisine \$40 (includes day pass) ★★★★★**  
This shrine to food in Napa includes an art gallery, restaurant (lunch only), museum, and a cooking school. You can take-in all three if you make reservations early and plan ahead. It's a long but beautiful drive from SF. 500 First, Napa [copia.org](#)
- 12 French Laundry California Cuisine \$175 ★★★★★**  
Way up in Yountville, this is one of the only 5 star (Michelen) restaurants on the West Coast. Very pricey and not local. Reservations needed months in advance. 6640 Washington Street, Yountville [frenchlaundry.com](#)
- 13 Manka's California Cuisine \$60 ★★★**  
Worth the trek to Inverness (on the way to Point Reyes) if you're looking for serious meat and fish and fresh, local ingredients. Really, it's something special. If you have a problem with hunting trophies, you best go somewhere else. [mankas.com](#)
- 14 Cowgirl Creamery Cheese shop**  
One of the best local cheesemakers—and innovative as well. They have an outlet in the Ferry Building but their real shop and kitchens are in Point Reyes Station—and worth the trip. If you can't make the trip, they now have a store in the **Ferry Building**.

## East Bay

- 31 Chez Panisse California Cuisine \$65 ★★★★★**  
Alice Water's now-legendary Berkeley restaurant launched the movement toward local, fresh ingredients. There's now a less-expensive café upstairs. Reservations needed well in advance. 1517 Shattuck, Berkeley [chezpanisse.com](#)
- 32 Cheeseboard Cheese Shop, Pizza \$10 ★★★★★**  
Possibly the best local cheese shop in the Bay Area—certainly one of the biggest selections. Perfect for when you miss France and Italy. Don't miss the lunchtime pizzas two doors down: only one kind per day and always an original, Heavenly invention. 1512 Shattuck, Berkeley [cheeseboardcollective.coop](#)
- 33 Zachary's Pizza \$10 ★★**  
Family-owned, deep-dish style pizza renowned throughout the Bay Area—especially the spinach and mushroom pie. 5801 College Ave. Oakland and 1853 Solano Ave. Berkeley, [zacharys.com](#)
- 34 Scharffenberger Tour Chocolate Free**  
Possibly the best chocolate in the USA, you can sample the varieties while you learn how it's made. Get here quickly before their new owners (Hershey's) makes changes.

## South Bay

- 31 Draeger's Food Store Grocery**  
A terk down the peninsula (to San Carlos) but this store is such a gourmet haven, it's opening was covered by *The New York Times*. Pricey, of course, but where can you pop-in for a \$2000 bottle of champagne? 22 E Fourth Ave, San Mateo [draegers.com](#)
- 32 Bella Vista French \$25 ★★★★★**  
In the mountains overlooking the peninsula, this classic French restaurant fakes you out with an entry that looks like a cabin in Tahoe (it's a local bar). Once you step into the dining room, however, you might as well be in Paris. The view is delicious as well. 13451 Skyline Blvd, Woodside [bvrestaurant.com](#)

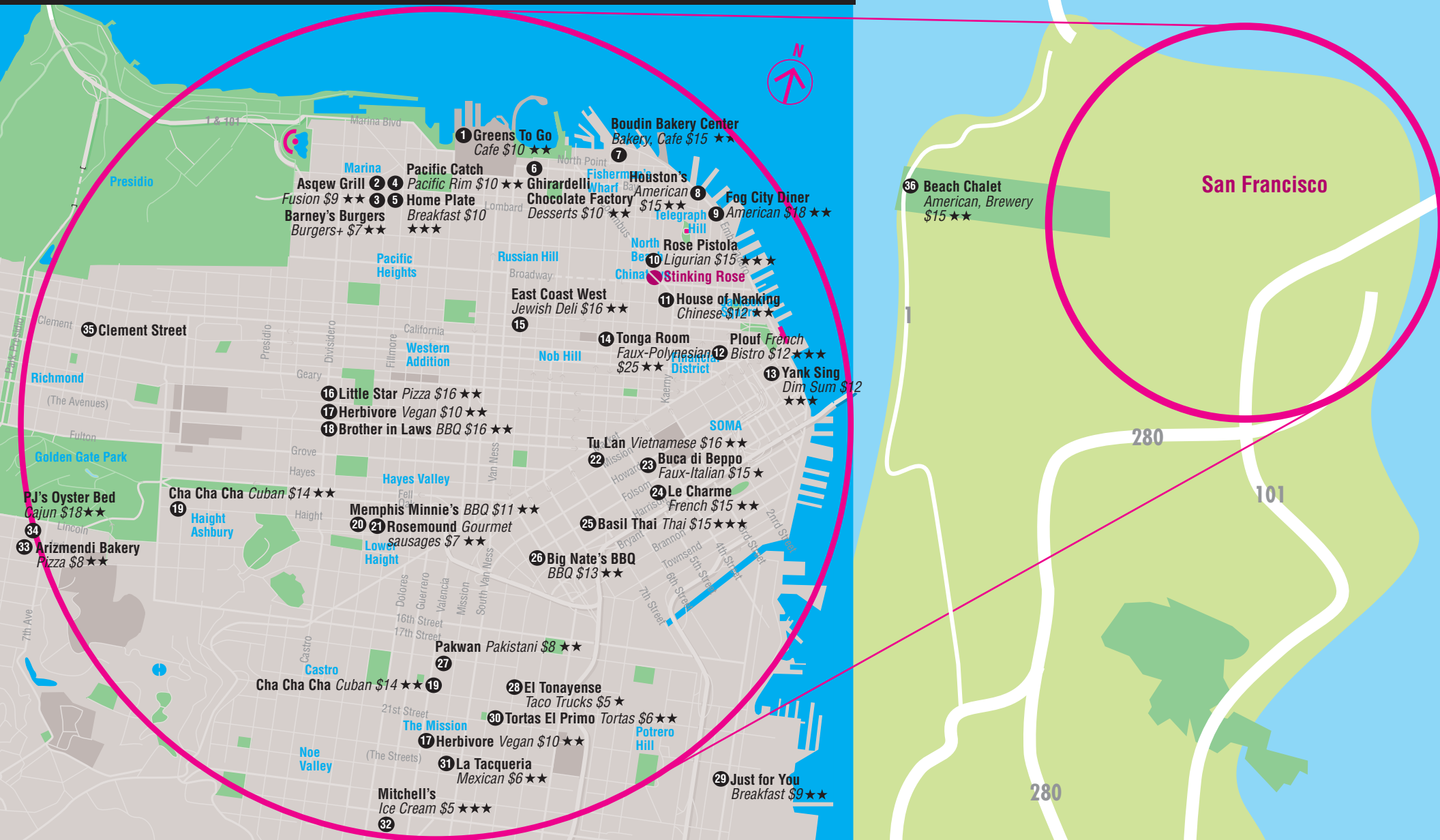
# Casual Eats

from *Experience San Francisco*, by Nathan Shedroff

You can eat very well in SF for very little—if you know where to go. Money isn't as much a factor as imagination.

Prices are average for an **entrée** (wine, appetisers, dessert, etc. additional)

©2005 Nathan Shedroff





# Casual Eats

You can eat very well in SF for very little—if you know where to go. Money isn't as much a factor as imagination.

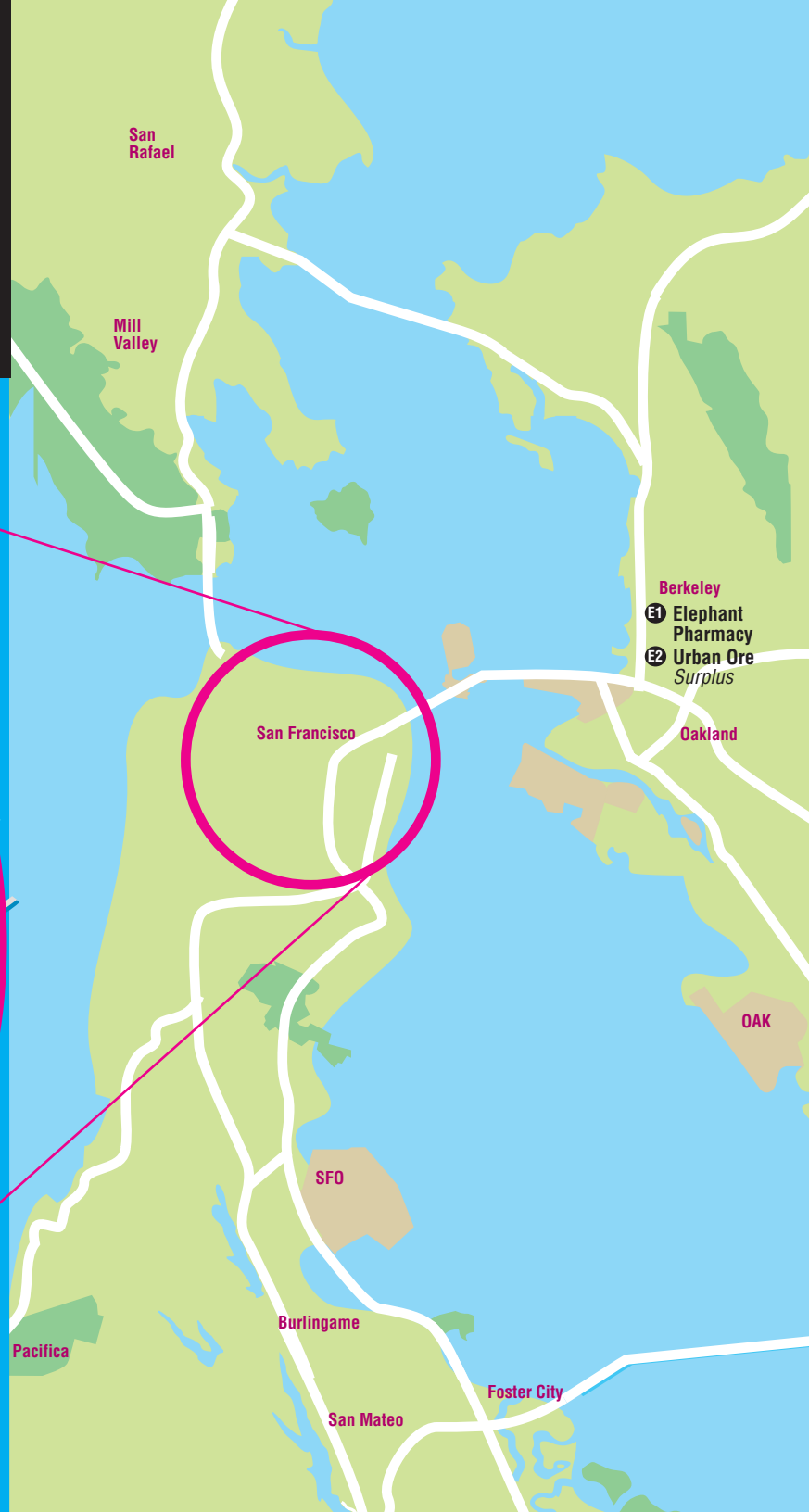
- 1 Greens To Go Vegetarian \$20 ★★**  
For lunch, the famous Greens restaurant offers a limited menu for takeout. This is perfect to grab something and eat outside on the piers (if the weather is nice). Bonus: it's right next to the conference venue in Fort Mason. Bldg. A, Fort Mason [greensrestaurant.com](#)
  - 2 Asqew Grill Fusion \$9 ★★**  
Several locations around the city, an easy, tasty, moderately-priced restaurant with an energetic crowd. Don't be afraid to mix skewers or share a table. 3348 Steiner [asqewgrill.com](#)
  - 3 Barney's Burgers Burgers+ \$7 ★★**  
Known as the best burger in SF (if you can believe that any one place could hold the crown). You can get anything veggie, turkey, or beef, but the salads are the real jewels here—especially the Cobb. 3344 Steiner [barneyshamburgers.com](#)
  - 4 Pacific Catch Pacific Rim \$10 ★★**  
Quick, fresh, tasty Asian-inspired sea food. No-nonsense, small, and energetic (like much of the Marina neighborhood). 2027 Chestnut
  - 5 Home Plate Breakfast \$10 ★★★**  
A busy local place with one of the best breakfasts in town. They're known for their scones (not dry and crumbly like you're used to) and you need to arrive early if you're not into waiting. 2274 Lombard [c.com](#)
  - 6 Ghirardelli Chocolate Factory Desserts \$10 ★**  
OK food but you're in a chocolate factory! Best to order big, decadent desserts. Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point #52 [ghirardelli.com](#)
  - 7 Boudin Bakery Center Bakery, Cafe \$15 ★★**  
A tourist trap, no doubt, but a well-done one. This bakery is the chain's flagship store with everything from meals (in the Bistro Boudin) to bread-tastings, to merchandise and, of course, you can look into the kitchen. 165 Jefferson Street [boudinbakery.com](#)
  - 8 Houston's American \$15 ★★**  
Beautiful and refined inside, the food is simple but well-done. Known for their ribs and burgers, anything from the grill—especially if Alfredo's working it—will fill you up. Big plates and lots of food. The place is busy in the evenings starting Thursday night. You may have to wait, but hang-out by the grill and watch the chefs do their thing. There may even be something in it for you. 1800 Montgomery [hillstone.com](#)
  - 9 Fog City Diner American \$18 ★★★**  
Great food, decent prices, wonderful service. A local's haunt as well as tourists in the know. A range of food for everyone and a great bar. 1300 Battery [fogcitydiner.com](#)
  - 10 Rose Pistola Ligurian \$15 ★★★**  
This restaurant is often packed with tourists but it's a worthy place to eat nonetheless. The neighborhood is wonderful to walk around. 532 Columbus Ave
  - 11 House of Nanking Chinese \$12 ★★**  
One of the most unusual restaurants you'll ever find. The lines get long but the service is unbelievable fast. Be prepared to order as you sit down and when you look up, your food will be arriving to your table. You'll be in and out in about 30 minutes but the food is extremely tasty. 919 Kearny
  - 12 Plouf French Bistro \$15 ★★★**  
Noisy, fun, coastal, authentic French (almost entirely sea food). They're packed for lunch (as is everything on this wonderful alley) but dinner is more sane (if they're open). When the weather is nice, the alley is covered in tables with lanterns hanging overhead. 40 Beldon Place [ploufsf.com](#)
  - 13 Yank Sing Dim Sum \$20 ★★★**  
A good Chinese restaurant but the best place for Dim Sum in the city (the best places in the Bay Area are in Oakland). It's been a city tradition (and still family owned) for almost 50 years. 101 Spear [yankings.com](#)
  - 14 Tonga Room Faux-Polynesian \$25 ★★**  
You may have been to Happy Hour in a cheesy tiki-themed bar before but probably not with a lightning storm—complete with rain pouring from the ceiling over the lagoon. The drinks are pricey and sweet but the atmosphere around "happy hour" is a hoot. If you don't want so much schmaltz, try dinner at a slightly later hour. In the Fairmont Hotel, 950 Mason
  - 15 East Coast West Jewish deli \$10 ★★**  
SF isn't well known for having a good Jewish deli, but this is the closest you'll get. Knishes, pastrami, even latkes are all good. 1725 Polk
  - 16 Little Star Pizza \$16 ★★**  
If you're craving Zachary's deep-dish style pizza but not the drive to Berkeley, Little Star's is almost as good. 846 Divisadero [littlestarpizza.com](#)
  - 17 Herbivore Vegan \$10 ★★**  
Vegan fare in a smart, busy environment. Cool folks of every ilk drop by here for a meal on their way to somewhere even cooler. A couple locations around the City. 531 Divisadero & 983 Valencia [herbivore-restaurant.com](#)
  - 18 Brother in Laws BBQ \$15 ★★**  
If all you want is ribs—or brisket—this is the best place to come. There's very little seating so you might consider take-out. The place isn't immaculate and there are no frills. However, if you miss the South, this place will make you feel right at home. 705 Divisadero [brotherinlaw.citysearch.com](#)
  - 19 Memphis Minnie's BBQ \$11 ★★**  
The best BBQ you're going to get in SF (tied with Brother in Laws). Memphis Minnie's offers more styles, ranging from Southern to Western to St. Louis and Kansas City as well as seating! 576 Haight [memphisminnies.com](#)
  - 20 Cha Cha Cha Cuban \$14 ★★**  
A Cuban party masquerading as a restaurant. Great food and a lot of energy, this place is always buzzing. 1801 Haight and 2327 Mission [cha3.com](#)
  - 21 Rosemund Gourmet sausages \$7 ★★**  
This very small shop in the Lower Haight serves gourmet-quality dogs and sausages and reasonable prices. If it happens to be Tuesday (Wimpie would be proud), you can order a freshly grilled chesseburger but the secret is out—they only make so many and by 1pm they're usually all gone.
  - 22 Tu Lan Vietnamese \$6 ★★**  
Incredibly inexpensive, tasty food in a... well... grimey atmosphere. This is an SF institution and known as the best Vietnamese in the City. While we don't agree, it's still an experience unto itself. Their pho is the best thing on the menu. Don't look at the floor and don't touch the walls. 8 Sixth Street
  - 23 Buca di Beppo Faux-Italian \$15 ★**  
A chain, but a fun one. It's a maze of rooms with absolutely inauthentic Italian food (nobody in Italy eats this way). The portions are ridiculously large (really, discuss them with your waiter), but the food is flavorful and the atmosphere a lively party. 855 Howard Street [bucadibeppo.com](#)
  - 24 Le Charme French Bistro \$15 ★★**  
This charming, neighborhood bistro is small but romantic. Lunch is a deal even though dinner's not that pricey. Their steak frites is fabulous. x 5th Street
  - 25 Basil Thai Thai \$15 ★★★**  
Probably the best Thai food in San Francisco. This is a great restaurant with a peaceful, beautiful interior and good service. 1175 Folsom [basilthai.com](#)
  - 26 Big Nate's BBQ BBQ \$13 ★★**  
Owned by former NBA star Nate Thurmond, this is a no-frills take-out with smoky meats. The Memphis pulled pork is especially good but there aren't many sides to choose from. They also deliver. 1665 Folsom
  - 27 Pakwan Pakistani \$8 ★★**  
SF isn't a great city for cheap Indian or Pakistani food, but this is the exception. Small, too bright, and busy, but the food is wonderful. 3180 16th Street, 653 Clay, & 501 O'Farrell [pakwanrestaurant.com](#)
  - 28 El Tonayense Taco Trucks \$5 ★**  
Possibly the best tacos in the City (tied with la Taqueria). No frills whatsoever (you're eating out of the side of a truck), but a simple, quick, very cheap meal. Harrison at 19th and 24th
  - 29 Just for You Breakfast \$9 ★★**  
This little neighborhood spot is open for lunch as well but people come her mostly for breakfast and brunch. The lines can get long on the weekends, so come early. Don't miss the authentic beigets! 732 22nd Street [justforyoucafe.com](#)
  - 30 Tortas El Primo Tortas \$6 ★★**  
Lunch only. If you've never had a Mexican sandwich (torta), you're missing something wonderful. We recommend the milanesa de pollo on dutch crunch—heated, of course. 2499 Folsom
  - 31 La Tacqueria Mexican \$6 ★★**  
These are some of the best tacos in SF (ties with El Tonayense but you can sit here). They also serve burritos but, really, the name? This place is busy! Be prepared to wait in line, though it does move quickly. 2889 Mission
  - 32 Mitchell's Ice Cream \$5 ★★★**  
Home-made ice cream and a family-owned SF institution. The line gets long in the evenings as the full-spectrum cross-section of the city shows-up for dessert. Original flavors from fruits you've never heard of—and some you never thought could taste good as ice cream, but do (like avocado). 688 San Jose Ave. [mitchellsicecream.com](#)
  - 33 Arizmendi Bakery Pizza \$8 ★★**  
Don't have time to make your way to Berkeley for a Cheeseboard pizza? The folks at Arizmendi are trained to create the same quality pizzas in the Cheeseboard style. See **Cheeseboard** in the East Bay. 1331 9th Ave. [arizmendibakery.org](#)
  - 34 PJ's Oyster Bed Cajun \$18 ★★**  
A good cajun restaurant but the best clam chowder in the city. It's a bit of a trek from the normal visitor paths but if you're looking for clam chowder in this town, this is the place to go. 737 Irving @ 8th Ave [pjssoysterbed.com](#)
  - 35 Clement Street**  
This entire street, between 1st Avenue and, say, 12 (and then again starting in the 30s), is one food haven after another—including excellent Dim Sum. The styles range the entire globe and almost all are affordable and fantastic. Don't be afraid to try something new here or duck into a place you normally wouldn't at home. No tourists anywhere in sight.
  - 36 Beach Chalet American, Brewery \$15 ★★**  
The food is great, a little pricey, and there's a microbrew on the premises. However, the real reason to come is the spectacular view of Ocean Beach—no matter what the weather is like. [beachchalet.com](#)
- Warning: The Stinking Rose Tourist Trap**  
The worst tourist trap in SF (other than Pier 39). This restaurant should be fantastic but turns-on the garlic so much that it ruins the food entirely. It's filled with tourists, anyway. Locals avoid it like the plague.

# Cool Shopping

from *Experience San Francisco*, by Nathan Shedroff

You can find all of the same chain stores you find anywhere else in the world so we ignore them completely and only discuss the unique.

© 2005 Nathan Shedroff



# Cool Shopping

You can find all of the same chain stores you find anywhere else in the world so we ignore them completely and only discuss the unique.

## 1 Sports Basement *Sporting Goods*

You won't find a more San Franciscan sporting goods store. Though there are now three locations, this is the opposite of a chain store. Picture a no-frills warehouse store packed with knowledgeable and welcoming staff with an authentic outdoor aura. The prices are very good since most everything for sale are end-runs and remainders. 1415 16th Street and 610 Mason [sportsbasement.com](http://sportsbasement.com)

## 2 SFMOMA Artists Gallery *Art*

This gallery started as the rental arm of the SFMOMA and that's still its primary focus (renting to individuals and corporations). However, selected works are also available for sale and offer an uncommon access to original art that may otherwise be difficult to find. Fort Mason, Bldg A [museumstore/artists\\_overview.html](http://museumstore/artists_overview.html)

## 3 Books Inc. *Books*

An eclectic mix and original layout make this a fun jaunt for any book lover. They have an especially good kid's section but you'll find plenty of interesting books for any taste. 2251 Chestnut, 2275 Market, & 3515 California [booksinc.com](http://booksinc.com)

## 4 Plumpjack Wine Store *Wine*

Part of the Plumpjack family, co-founded by Mayor Gavin Newsom, this wine shop is a little pricey but has an excellent, eclectic collection. 3201 Fillmore and 4011 24th Street [plumpjack.com/wine\\_main.html](http://plumpjack.com/wine_main.html)

## 5 City Lights *Books*

In case you didn't know, this SF institution was the powerhouse behind so many beat poets and writers, often publishing their work before they were "discovered" by other publishers. Lawrence Ferlinghetti created an eclectic (there's that word again) book store and alternate publishing house that is as famous for its perspective and location as it is for its selection. 261 Columbus [citylights.com](http://citylights.com)

## 6 Great China Herb Company *Herbs/Alternative Medicine*

With a doctor on duty, whether you're feeling ill or just curious, don't be afraid to peak in and talk herbs and health. There are plenty of herb stores in Chinatown but this one is especially good. 857 Washington St.

## 7 Maiden Lane

This beautiful 2-block street is filled with boutiques and cafes now but in the turn of the century (and for most of its history) this was a stree filled with brothels and bars. Aply named, the street signs are the only clue to its seedy past. You'll find interesting shops but nothing terribly original. Take note of the Circle Gallery, a Frank Lloyd Wright original.

## 8 Gumps *Department Store*

Old San Francisco meets the Pacific Rim with very tony prices. A favorite of SF socialites, Gumps is an institution and always offers a unique range of offerings and it's own perspective. 135 Post [gumps.com](http://gumps.com)

## 9 Soko Hardware *Japanese Hardware*

Hardware stores in the Japantown area stock more than merely the usual tools and fasteners, and this is the oldest one. You can also find difficult-to-find authentic products from Japan, from rice cookers and tea pots seeds and gardening supplies. 1691 Post

## 10 Kinokuniya

Need a book or magazine from Japan that you can't find anywhere else? If Kinokuniya doesn't already have it they can order it for you. Browsing the shelves is always a treat as you will be surprised by how many things delight you. Don't miss their paper store elsewhere in Japantown. 1581 Webster

## 11 Hayes Valley

This little section of Hayes started its transformation over a decade ago with just a few interesting stores (like the shoe store, Gimme Shoes). It now sports the most creative boutiques in the city, along with local artist coop stores, all filled with things you're not going to see elsewhere. It's where the interestingly fashionable go to find originality. Some highlights include **Rabat, Bulo, Friendly** and **Flight 001**. There are also plenty of great places to eat in this area.

## 12 Flight 001 *Travel Supplies*

OK, this store has three other locations now in the USA but it's still worth mentioning. The perfect place for the hip traveler, you can pick-up anything from a unique watch, special travel guides, and beautiful luggage, to a small bag of aspirin or a travel diary. It's a great place for buying stocking-stuffers for travel fiends and a great place for gifts overall. 525 Hayes [flight001.com](http://flight001.com)

## 13 K & L Wine Merchants *Wine*

One of the best selections with some of the best prices on every type of wine you can imagine. The staff is extremely knowledgeable and welcoming and great with connoiseurs as well as newbies. 638 4th Street [klwines.com](http://klwines.com)

## 14 Limn *Furniture*

Quite possibly the coolest and most expensive furniture you will ever touch—and probably only touch. Limn has it's own perspective and a beautiful, sprawling collection of buildings, courtyards, and galleries that will keep you amazed at ever clever turn. Upstairs, don't miss the stunning Scandinavian-clean interior of the RV! 290 Townsend [limn.com](http://limn.com)

## 15 Body Manipulations *Tattoos and Piercings*

With its light, airy interior, knowledgeable staff, and sly humor, this is the antithesis of what most people envision in a tattoo parlor. The staff are smart and creative. Some look a little tough but are really sweethearts. If you're curious or considering, this is a great place to learn and experiment. If you're serious and hardcore, you can't find more experience or indulgence. 3234 16th Street [bodym.com](http://bodym.com)

## 16 Paxton Gate *Eclectic Gardening Supplies*

Next door to The Pirate Store, Paxton Gate redefines eclectic. Need some taxidermied bugs or mice (in poses acting out Hamlet)? Perhaps you've been looking for whale penis bones or carnivorous plants (it is a garden store, after all). As odd as all of this sounds, it's never self-conscious or trying to hard, it's always fascinating, and always inspires awe. 824 Valencia [paxtongate.com](http://paxtongate.com)

## 17 826 Valencia (the Pirate Store) *Books and Piate Supplies*

When local celebrity writer Dave Eggers moved back to SF from New York City, he wanted to create an after-school creative writing program for high school students. After securing this space in the mission, he was told it was only zoned for Retail and not non-profit "writing programs." What to do? He decided to open a store that would sell things no one would want to buy (and put the program space in the back). What kind of store could he open? Why, a pirate store, of course! Originally, he sold lard and eye patches (or maybe peg legs) but now the stores sells an incredible collection of pirate and non-pirate merchandise (such as the books published by the program and his publishing house, McSweeney's. It's a must see and will take you an hour at least to make your way around the small storefront, reading the little signs, opening the drawers, pulling up the trap doors in the floor, and then buying something you never knew you desperately needed. 826 Valencia [826valencia.com](http://826valencia.com)

## 18 Den *Used Furniture*

Den is smaller and more personal than X-21. They have a much more eclctc, low-key collection (though it's constantly turning over). You might find fewer classics but more unusual items here. 849 Valencia [densf.com](http://densf.com)

## 19 X-21 *Used Furniture*

Used Modern Furniture is big business these days and the prices will shock you (which is always fun). This is probably the biggest store in the Bay Area and is perfect for both the serious collector and the serious looklool. 890 Valencia [x21modern.com](http://x21modern.com)

## 20 Ads Hats *Hat Store*

Hats haven't exactly been "in" but this is the place to be inspired. These hats are incredible, well-made, inventive, and range from elegant to silly. You'll feel like a kid again ever if you're buying something "grown-up." They have mens and womens hats but the selection of the latter is really what this store is about. 758 Valencia [adshats.com](http://adshats.com)

## 21 Pharmaca *Compounding Pharmacy*

If you've never been to a compounding pharmacy, it's worth a trip. Compounding pharmacies help develop a holistic view of your health and then custom mix your pharmaceuticals into one pill or portion (alleviating the need to mix and match from many sources on your own. Though this is a small national chain, it's a wonderful atmosphere with knowledgeable staff. 925 Cole [pharmaca.com](http://pharmaca.com)

## 22 Wishbone *Eclectica*

Difficult to describe, it's better just to come and see. Wishbone offers clothes, toys, housewares, and lots of other things in its small boutique but everything is hip and unusual. It's pretty pricey but it's worth the visit even if you don't buy anything. 601 Irving Street [wishbonest.com](http://wishbonest.com)

## 23 Toy Boat *Desserts, Cafe, and Toys*

Not just a toy store but it's know for its very cool collections of collectable toys. You can get great ice cream, other desserts or something to drink here while you scan the store for models, Pez dispensers, action figures, and more. They don't have a huge supply or selection but everything they have is fun and will bring back memories. 401 Clement @ 5th Ave [toyboatcafe.com](http://toyboatcafe.com)

## East Bay

### 31 Elephant Pharmacy *Pharmacy*

Owner/pioneer Kathi Lentzsch has created the legitimate three-way lovechild of what used to be called an apothecary, an Eastern alternative health practice, and a Walgreens (minus the bad lighting). You can find all of the normal stuff but you'll find everything for your health from every possible tradition along with truly knowledgeable store clerks, and an atmosphere that invites you to stick around. 1607 Shattuck, Berkeley [elephantpharmacy.com](http://elephantpharmacy.com)

### 32 Urban Ore *Surplus*

One of the only surviving salvage yards in the Bay Area, you'll find a lot of junk but also a lot of gems amid it. Need vintage faucets for a Victorian remodel? This is the place. There's no telling what you'll find and it's constantly changing. Mostly, they do know the value of much of it so don't expect any bargains. But, it is a fascinating time wandering around. 900 Murray, Berkeley [urbanore.citysearch.com](http://urbanore.citysearch.com)





# Cafe Culture/People Watching/Relax/Big Kids

## Cafe Culture:

Until New Orleans is rebuilt, San Francisco is probably the most European of cities in the USA. Sidewalk culture thrives, despite the often cool weather. Quality coffees and teas abound and there are dogs a plenty.

### **01** The Grove

A full restaurant too, but this is a great place to get a cup of tea or java and something to nibble on. 2016 Fillmore

### **02** Citizen Cake

While the prices are high, the quality is stellar. Save your money on dinner somewhere else and just pop-in for a coffee or tea and a treat. 399 Grove [citizencake.com](http://citizencake.com)

### **03** Citizen Cupcake

Less exclusive than the main location, but much easier to get to. Most people don't know about this delectable spot on the top floor of the Virgin Megastore. 2 Stockton Street [citizencake.com](http://citizencake.com)

### **04** Samovar *Pan-Asian*

Impeccable but pricey teas with light, intriguing food. 498 Sanchez [samovartea.com](http://samovartea.com)

### **05** Tartine Bakery *French*

Exactly what you miss about Parisian mornings. The best French pastries and light lunches possible. 600 Guerrero @ 18th [tartinebakery.com](http://tartinebakery.com)

### **06** Atlas Cafe

An original, eclectic mix of food, drinks, people, and dogs. Outdoor is nice as long as it's not raining. Low-attitude and friendly place. You'll probably overhear small start-ups discussing their plans (it's 1993 again!) and feel free to share a table and meet someone new. 3049 20th Street [atlascafe.net](http://atlascafe.net)

### **07** Farley's

Quiet and very local. Try to look like you live there and the locals won't sneer. Great drinks and treats in a casual, dog-friendly part of town where tourists never go. 1315 18th Street

## People Watching:

San Francisco is one of the strangest (and we mean that in the best possible way) people-watching cities ever. Almost any street corner can work but we've highlighted some of the best areas here:

### **P1** Crissy Field

### **P2** Marina Green

### **P3** Anywhere along The Embarcadero

### **P4** Market Street in the Financial District (especially around lunch)

### **P5** Folsom Street between 7th and 11th (especially in

### **P6** Castro Street

### **P7** Ocean Beach

### **P8** Fort Funston (OK, this is more about dog-watching)the evenings)

## Relax:

San Franciscans know all about the good life. It's a full-time sport in this city. There must be more masseurs and masseuses per capital here than anywhere else on the planet. There's also been a recent surge in day spas and other ways to pamper one's self.

### **R1** Kabuki Hot Springs \$20

Recently remodeled, Kabuki offers hot tubs, cold pools, steam room, sauna, and the standard spa fair (massages, wraps, facials, etc.), but they mostly alternate women-only and men-only days so plan accordingly. The facilities are beautiful and serene and the atmosphere relaxed and welcoming. 1750 Geary [kabukisprings.com](http://kabukisprings.com)

### **R2** Mani Pedi \$15

There are nail places all over the city but these two stores (across the street from each other) are especially good. 1447 20th Street [manipedi.com](http://manipedi.com)

### **R3** Japanese Tea Garden \$5

This quite, beautiful garden is a great place to relax, read, or write a novel—if the weather's nice. Admission is separate from buying a pot of tea or something to eat but the gardens are immaculate. 1 Tea Garden Drive

### **R4** Harbin Hot Springs \$30

Beautiful, relaxing, communal, and very crunchy. Clothing is optional most everywhere (but the restaurant) and the crowd ranges from hippie to yuppie. Silence is strictly enforced around the pools but the vibe is mellow everywhere else. [harbin.org](http://harbin.org)

### **R5** Somona Mission Inn \$500 (inc. one night stay)

A trek to Somona and probably overpriced, but you'll find a wide array of ways to dunk, wrap, or work your body into relaxation submission. 100 Boyes Blvd, Sonoma [fairmont.com/sonoma](http://fairmont.com/sonoma)

### **R6** Osmosis \$85

Renowned for their enzyme baths (it's not nearly as bad as it sounds), this quiet, unique spa is unlike all of the others. You start with an enzyme tea that warms you from the inside as it starts to catalyze while relaxing in one of the Japanese gardens. Next, you sit in a vat covered to your neck with cedar sawdust soaking in the same enzymes (their catalyzation provides the natural warmth). Then, after a thorough dust-off and shower, your massage awaits you upstairs. It's the best way to turn to Jell-O inside of two hours. You'll need reservations well in advance. 209 Bohemian Hwy, Freestone [osmosis.com](http://osmosis.com)

### **R7** Claremont Inn \$250+

Another tony spa (this one, in the East Bay) sporting all of the regular treatments but, here, you can also rent the isolation tank (not your typical spa fare). 41 Tunnel Road, Berkeley [claremontresort.com](http://claremontresort.com)

## Big Kids:

San Francisco is an especially easy city to discover the child you were—years ago or minutes ago.

### **K1** Exploratorium \$13

Still the mold for what most science museums are trying to be. It's noisy, chaotic, and some of the exhibits may be broken but if you're well-versed in learning theory you'll immediately recognize the participatory and experiential style. A delight for all of the senses. See while it's still at the funky, beautiful Palace of Fine Arts—before they move. The exhibits can keep any curious soul—of any age—engaged for hours. [exploratorium.edu](http://exploratorium.edu)

### **K2** Tactile Dome \$16 (inc. Exploratorium admission)

A little-known attraction inside the Exploratorium, but you need reservations! It's a maze in utter darkness and all you have is your sense of touch to guide you up, over, and across incredible surfaces. You don't even need to get stoned to lose yourself in the sensations. [exploratorium.edu/visit/tactile\\_dome](http://exploratorium.edu/visit/tactile_dome)

### **K3** Theatersports \$15

Quite possibly the most creative experience you watch. Theatersports is an international organization but the San Francisco chapter is especially adept at this tag-team, no holds-barred improv. Matches run most weekend nights and classes are taught most weeknights and weekend days. Fort Mason, Bldg B [improv.org](http://improv.org)

### **K4** Tattoo Museum *Free*

A working tattoo shop with a nice collection of artifacts and past designs. 841 Columbus [yletuttletattooing.com](http://yletuttletattooing.com)

### **K5** Cartoon Art Museum \$6

An innovative idea and collection and easily located right downtown. Check the website for the current shows. One of the up-and-coming museums in SF. 655 Mission [cartoonart.org](http://cartoonart.org)

### **K6** Anchor Steam Brewery Tour *Free*

Just what it sounds like. Immerse yourself in the smell of hops and the noise of the equipment and polish-off a sample at the end (the only way to get samples is to take the tour). 1705 Mariposa [anchorbrewing.com](http://anchorbrewing.com)

### **K7** Bay Model *Free*

Across the bay in a Sausalito warehouse, lies a scale model of the entire SF Bay with working hydrodynamics! Built by the Army Corps of Engineers, it's still in use studying water flow in the bay—mostly for trying to fix the bay's ailing health these days instead of dreaming-up new ways to dam or redirect the water. 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito [spn.usace.army.mil/bmvc](http://spn.usace.army.mil/bmvc)

### **K8** Barbie Doll Hall of Fame

Tacky, silly, fascinating, and fun. 433 Waverley Street, Palo Alto, 650/326-5841

### **K9** Pez Museum \$3

Even tackier, sillier, more fascinating, and still fun. This collection now includes a classic toy collection with the likes of Mr. Potatohead and more. 214 California Drive, Burlingame [spectrumnet.com/pez](http://spectrumnet.com/pez)





# Geek Pilgrimadges

Go if you must, stay if you will, can you please just not geek-out for one trip?

- 61 Fry's Electronics** *Tech Everything*  
The best store ever conceived to supply the canonical geek with everything (really, everything) he could need (and, unfortunately, it's still mostly for men). Need a new transistor, chip, or cross-over cable? How about the latest PDA, big-screen or WiFi hub? Don't forget to stock-up on chips, soda, magazines, deodorant, and software while you're there. We've never seen condoms or tampons there, though. It figures.
- 62 Apple Store** *Apple Stuff*  
You've seen them all over the world now but they're still a retail oasis of calm and cool—and free WiFi access. Downtown: 1 Stockton, Also: Stonestown, Corte Madera, Burlingame, Palo Alto, Stanford Shopping Center, Santa Clara, San Jose, Walnut Creek, and the Company Store on Apple's Campus in Cupertino (also known as the Mothership). [apple.com/retail](http://apple.com/retail)
- 63 CompUSA** *Olde-time Computer Store*  
Pass.
- 64 SLAC** *Free*  
Possibly the coolest technical toy in the state. The **Stanford Linear Accelerator Center** is still used heavily and sports accelerators in the double-digits of all sizes and shapes. The main accelerator path for the big chambers is two-miles long and runs under highway 280 just south of Sand Hill Road. Tours are available and not nearly long enough. At one point, inside the arrow-straight two-mile long shed, you look down the corridor and the vanishing point collapses before the building ends! Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park [www.slac.stanford.edu](http://www.slac.stanford.edu)
- 65 Xerox PARC and Interval Research** *(RIP)*  
If you know where to look (and what they represented), you can still find these legendary buildings where dreams almost came true. XeroxPARC was the prototypical research center, developing more ground-breaking innovations than anyone can name. It didn't help them, though, to be successful with most of them. The XeroxPARC building was a gem with its mesa design easing into the hillside and creating innovative spaces for inventive people to collaborate. PARC: 3333 Coyote Hill Road, Palo Alto [parc.xerox.com](http://parc.xerox.com) Interval: 1801 Page Mill Road, Bldg C, Palo Alto
- 66 Computer Museum History Center** *Free*  
Fresh with a new home, only a fraction of the collection is viewable (the rest is reportedly stuffed into storage units in Silicon Valley). These dedicated volunteers know their shit and have stuff no one else dares to show. Donate lots of money so they can put it all out for people to see the history of the device that has changed all of our lives. 1401 North Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View [computerhistory.org](http://computerhistory.org)
- 67 Intel Museum** *Free*  
Small, interesting and very Intel-focused (what did we expect?). It's a schlep down to Santa Clara but if you're already in the neighborhood... 2200 Mission College Boulevard, Santa Clara [intel.com/museum/](http://intel.com/museum/)
- 68 The Tech** *\$10*  
The typical technology museum now ubiquitous around the Western world. Much more professional than the Exploratorium but not as interesting and certainly not as fun. 201 South First Street, San Jose [thetech.com](http://thetech.com)

- 69 Bay Model** *Free*  
Across the bay in a Sausalito warehouse, lies a scale model of the entire SF Bay with working hydrodynamics! Built by the Army Corps of Engineers, it's still in use studying water flow in the bay—mostly for trying to fix the bay's ailing health these days instead of dreaming-up new ways to dam or redirect the water. 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito [www.spn.usace.army.mil/bm/vc/](http://www.spn.usace.army.mil/bm/vc/)

# Captivating Views

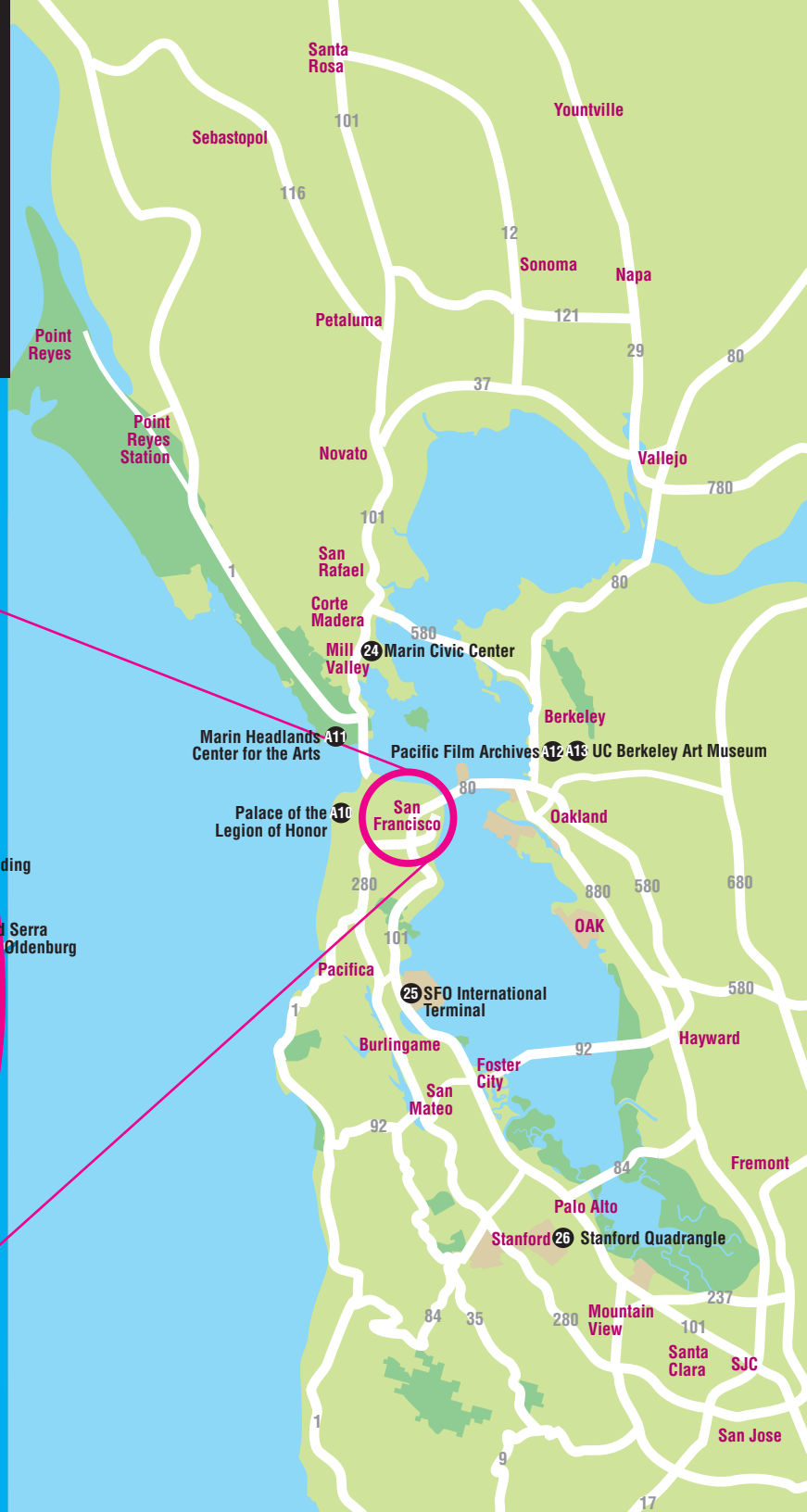
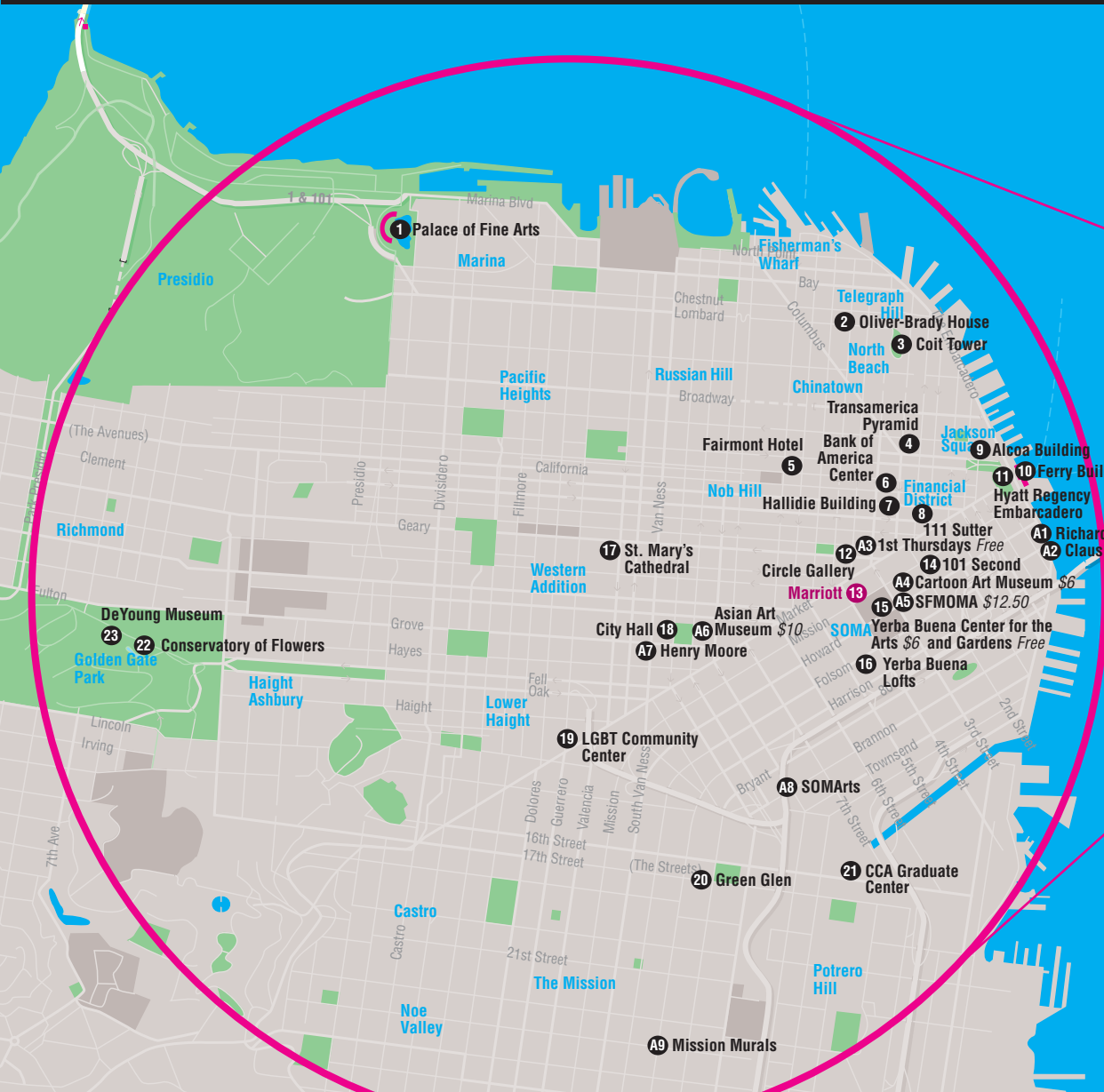
What would you expect from a city surrounded by water with so many hills? Ditch the car and go for an urban hike.

- 70 Golden Gate Bridge**  
Another tourist icon that avoids becoming a trap. The bridge itself is as spectacular as the views. If you have access to a bike (or have time to rent one), bike across to the Marin Headlands. Otherwise, park the car on either side and walk the length and back. Bring your camera! [goldengatebridge.org](http://goldengatebridge.org)
- 71 Fort Point**  
Fort Point is at the end of the walk through Crissy Field along the coast west of Fort Mason. An actual, old military fort, it's now a museum. Whether or not you go inside, however, the views of the bridge towering overhead, the surfers rounding the point, and the sailboats in and out of the gate are relaxing and unique. [nps.gov/topo](http://nps.gov/topo)
- 72 Aquatic Park**  
On your way to or from Fort Mason, take the time to walk the short walk out onto the pier protecting Aquatic Park. As rundown as it is, you'll still feel like you're almost walking right into the bay.
- 73 Lombard Street**  
Terribly touristy, this is still a beautiful street. While it's not actually the crookedest street in the World—Vermont Street to the South on Potrero Hill is much more crooked, more fun, and virtually empty—it is a pretty, picturesque street. Try to come off-peak hours (say, weekday mornings) to avoid the crowds and drive as slowly as you can get away with. But, don't forget that the best views of the street are actually from the bottom and not from the top.
- 74 Coit Tower** *\$3*  
One of the most beautiful examples of Art Deco architecture, this 210 foot tower on the top of Telegraph Hill was a gift willed to the city from Lillie Hitchcock Coit on her death to honor the city's volunteer firemen. From the top, the view is spectacular but the real jewels are the WPA-era murals in the lobby. [coittower.org](http://coittower.org)
- 75 Filbert Steps**  
Most residents along these stairs can't drive to their homes. They must haul their belongings and groceries along the steep stairs but the quiet elegance and beautiful views are obviously worth the hassle. You can walk these steps at any time but they are at their most spectacular in the early morning or just before sunset. There's nothing mysterious or dramatic about the design of these paths, it's all in the enjoyment of the experience.
- 76 Carnelian Room**  
The Carnelian Room is a regal and slightly stuffy bar and restaurant at the top of the Bank of America building, the second-largest building in San Francisco. However, it is the tallest restaurant as well as the tallest public viewing lounge in the city since the Transamerica Pyramid has neither at its 48th floor. There are 6 different rooms but several are for private parties only. Skip dinner and just have a drink. Even if the city is fogged-in, it's sometimes clear at the top of the tower (above the fog line). [carnelianroom.com](http://carnelianroom.com)
- 77 St. Francis Elevators**  
A San Francisco institution, now. Walk in through the lobby like you're staying there and straight to the back and right of the building. Here you will find the glass elevators that whisk you to the top of the tower—hanging precariously off the side of the building. The view is stunning but, more than that, the ride is surprisingly swift and smooth—making it all the more eerie. You start-out in the dark for the first few floors and then rocket-out into the daylight with dramatic speed. You'll find you could probably ride the elevators all day and not get bored. [westinstfrancis.com](http://westinstfrancis.com)
- 78 Twin Peaks**  
The only good way up is to drive, though the parking is ridiculous during normal hours. You can also take the #37 Muni—if you can find it. The whole city is laid-out in about 270°—from the North Bay to the South. Best at sunrise.
- 79 Staircase Walks**  
The map might not show it but San Francisco's streets are down-right zany. Who would orient streets straight up the steepest hills instead of spiraling around them like everywhere else in the world? Streets, of course, aren't the only vertical climbers. Walking the stairs in several places in the City is both a hike and a reward. [sisterbetty.org/stairways/](http://sisterbetty.org/stairways/)
- Filbert Steps  
Green Street Stairs  
Greenwich Street  
Iron Street Stairs  
Saturn Street
- 80 McKinley Square**  
This little neighborhood park has a terrific view of the city facing west—perfect at sunset. It also sits at the top of the truly crookedest street in the world: Vermont St.
- 81 Sutro Baths**  
At the end of Geary Street lies the remains of the once-great Sutro Baths, a water resort from the turn of the century. There isn't much left but the foundation but you can walk the stairs along the rocks, walk through the natural tunnel and pop-out on the other side in your own private piece of the coast. [sutrobaths.com](http://sutrobaths.com)
- 82 Fort Funston**  
Out at the lower west corner of San Francisco is the only place left where dogs can run unleashed on the beach. If you're a dog-lover, this is dog-city. The hike up and down to the beach is always refreshing—in any weather. Or, just sit and look West from the lookout (just behind the paraglider launch point) and gaze across the ocean uninterrupted to the horizon. [nps.gov/goga/fofu](http://nps.gov/goga/fofu)
- 83 Treasure Island**  
Probably, the best view of San Francisco and the entire Bay Area! You'll have to drive here (take the first exit once you're on the Bay Bridge heading East) but it's worth it. You'll find yourself in the middle of the Bay on an old Navy base with simply stunning views.
- 84 Marin Headlands**  
The views of the Pacific Ocean (including the Farrallon islands on a clear day) are wonderful. The headlands park is, itself stunning. [nps.gov/goga/mahe](http://nps.gov/goga/mahe)
- 85 Mt. Tamalpais**  
It's best to mountain bike up but you can hike and even drive most of the way. [mttam.net](http://mttam.net)
- 86 Point Reyes**  
All the way to the end of the road, there are countless places to stop and take in the views. [nps.gov/pore](http://nps.gov/pore)
- 87 Mt. Diablo**  
Further out, this mountain offers views of the entire central valley and is used to survey North and Central California. [parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=517](http://parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=517)
- 88 Windy Hill Open Space**  
Views of the entire South Bay and Peninsula.
- 89 Montebello Ridge**  
Incredible views of the South Bay. Best in the Fall when Ridge Vineyard's grapes next to the trail are ripe and starting to ferment. [ridgewine.com](http://ridgewine.com)

# Art + Architecture

from *Experience San Francisco*, by Nathan Shedroff

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# Art

San Francisco is not a great art city. The big museums are passable at best (SFMOMA actually owns Jeff Koons' piece, *Bubbles*) but good shows come through nonetheless. While there is a lot of interesting avant-garde art being created in the city, most of the art sold in the galleries and shown in the museums is very safe and conservative (reflecting the tastes of the more traditional buyers) and usually vetted first by New York. You'll probably have to go to New York or Los Angeles to see some of this city's best art. The real exception to this is the newly opened de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park.

- A1 Richard Serra 2001**  
Play nice and talk your way into the lobby of GAP's headquarters. Unusual for Serra sculptures, this one rises 60 feet to fit into the tall but narrow space. 2 Folsom
- A2 Cupid's Span Claus Oldenburg 2002**  
Even many Oldenburg fans aren't wild about this sculpture shot into The Embarcadero at the end of Folsom Street. They point out the the arrow's never left the bow. At the very least, the question hangs: "What distracted Cupid so much that he dropped everything?" Folsom and The Embarcadero
- A3 1st Thursdays**  
Independent galleries in two large buildings downtown open their doors to the arterati on the first Thursday of every month. It can get crowded, there is sometimes wine and snacks, and the selection between the galleries is across a wide, diverse spectrum. You'll find some ridiculous things but, more often, some thoughtful pieces that will surprise and move you. 567 Sutter (and other locations)
- A4 Cartoon Art Museum \$6**  
An innovative idea and collection and easily located right downtown. Check the website for the current shows. One of the up-and-coming museums in SF. 655 Mission [cartoonart.org](http://cartoonart.org)
- A5 SFMOMA \$12.50 (1st Tuesdays: Free)**  
Not as great a museum as everyone in town wishes but the building itself is quite nice. The photography and design collections (and shows) are usually very good. The other rotating shows are very hit-and-miss. The permanent collection is a decent pass of the modern masters with some ludicrous contemporary pieces thrown in (like Jeff's Koons' bigger-than-lifesize gilded porcelain portrait of Michael Jackson with chimp, *Bubbles*). 151 3rd Street [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org)
- 15 Yerba Buena Center for the Arts \$6 (museum)**  
This is the only high-end venue for edge art in SF and it's ground-breaking shows are often excellent, though sometimes, they're so self-conscious and trying so hard, that they just look silly. 701 Mission [ybca.org](http://ybca.org)
- A6 Asian Art Museum \$10**  
The old public library has been renovated and transformed into a wonderful space filled with this museum's incredible collection (one of the finest asian collection in the world and the biggest collection of Chinese bronzes outside of China and Kansas City). The collection spans throughout Asia and from ancient times to present. 200 Larkin [asianart.org](http://asianart.org)
- A7 Reclining Figure in Four Pieces Henry Moore 1973**  
One of Moore's nicest reclining nudes lays on the corner in front of the Symphony. Pity it doesn't have a quieter setting, but the Symphony building itself is a beautiful backdrop. Van Ness and Grove

- A8 SOMArts**  
This independent, eclectic coop inhabits a warehouse in SOMA and sponsors some of the only truly avant-garde art in SF. It is a favorite of Burning man fundraisers and the space hosts shows and events on a sporadic schedule. Definitely check the website before venturing over. 934 Brannon [somarts.org](http://somarts.org)
- A9 Mission Murals**  
Some of the best art in the City is on the exterior walls of buildings all over the Mission district. In particular, the Women's Building on 16th street is spectacular. You can get a walking map of all of the murals, or even catch a tour, from the Precita Eyes Visitors Center. 2981 24th Street [precitaeyes.org](http://precitaeyes.org)
- 23 de Young**  
Newly rebuilt in a stunning, controversial Hertzog and de Meuron building, this museum's contemporary exterior doesn't disclose the ancient artifacts within. This is the newest building in the city and an extravagant, controversial reinterpretation of what a museum should be. Despite the controversy, it works—and well. 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive [thinker.org/deyoung](http://thinker.org/deyoung)
- 10 Palace of the Legion of Honor**  
Recently renovated, this museum is no where near the rest of the SF art scene but draws a crowd nonetheless with its collections and exhibits. It specializes in European and ancient art. Lincoln Park, 34th Street and Clement [thinker.org/legion](http://thinker.org/legion)
- 11 Marin Headlands Center for the Arts**  
This is an intriguing outpost inside the Marin Headlands that run several programs, including an artist-in-residency that focuses on emerging artists. The art is some of the most avant garde in the entire Bay Area. The building itself is a thoughtful renovation of an army barracks—don't miss the bathrooms on the ground floor! 944 Fort Barry [headlands.org](http://headlands.org)
- 12 Pacific Film Archives \$8**  
One of the West Coast's best venues for experimental and archival film. Check showings online. 2575 Bancroft [bampfa.berkeley.edu](http://bampfa.berkeley.edu)
- 16 UC Berkeley Art Museum \$8**  
The building itself is a beautiful space. The collection includes the largest number of Hans Hoffman's work anywhere in the world (and there's a permanent display). The rest of the galleries vary with shows but contemporary art is a big focus. 2626 Bancroft [bampfa.berkeley.edu](http://bampfa.berkeley.edu)

# Architecture

Despite the TransAmerica building's icon status around the world, San Francisco isn't really known for its architecture. There are definitely some wonderful buildings—and some truly hideous ones as well—but, overall, it doesn't rival Chicago, New York City, London, or even Los Angeles (now). The city's historic buildings are some of the best examples. The invention of the glue-together "loft" has ruined much of SOMA where lenient taxation policies have allowed these cheaply-built, overpriced me-too buildings to populate nearly every alley and street.

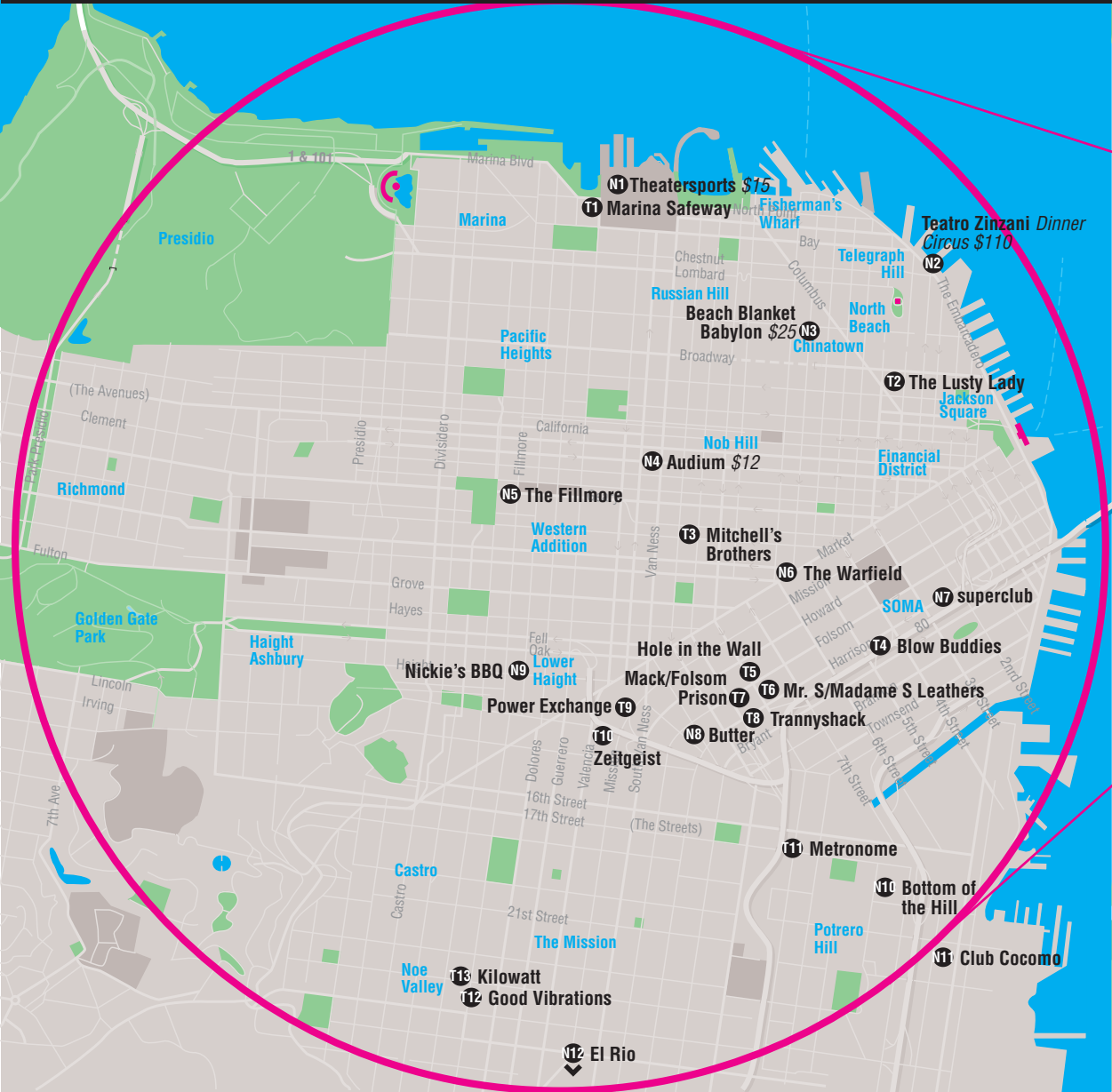
- 1 Palace of Fine Arts Bernard R. Maybeck**  
This is the last remnant of the Pan Pacific Exposition in 1915. The beaux-art colonnade and dome along the reflecting pond was so loved by the city, they it was recast in concrete (the original was plaster) and preserved. It's still a relaxing place to walk or sit.
- 2 Oliver Brady House Jim Jennings 1993**  
340 Lombard
- 3 Coit Tower Arthur Brown Jr. 1932**
- 4 Transamerica Pyramid William L. Pereira 1972**  
One of the most distinctive buildings in the world, the 853 foot high structure has been a part of the San Francisco skyline since 1972 when it was completed. The tip of the 212 foot spire on the top of the building isn't accessible to the public, but there is a virtual observation deck at its base (on the 48th floor) that includes monitors for four cameras mounted at the tip of the building. It's still a fascinating view from the tallest building in San Francisco even if mediated by cameras
- 5 Fairmont Hotel Julia Morgan (lobby) 1907**
- 6 Bank of America Center SOM, Belluschi+ 1969**
- 7 Hallidie Building Willis Polk 1918**
- 8 111 Sutter Schultze and Weaver 1926**
- 9 Alcoa Building Gensler 1965**
- 10 Ferry Building A. Page Brown 1898**
- 11 Hyatt Regency Embarcadero John Portman 1972**  
A typical John Portman design for the, now, ubiquitous brand, despite it's 70s vision and bits of glitz, it still works. The space inside is wonderful, due largely to the giant sculpture by Charles Perry. It's quiet (thanks for the white noise supplied by the fountain), soaring, and just a little tacky but it's so honest about itself that you can accept it like a goofy aunt stuck slightly in a different era.
- 12 Circle Gallery (originally) Frank Lloyd Wright 1949**  
One of the very few Wrights in the Bay Area, this little gallery most practically a charrette for his later (and much larger) Guggenheim Museum in New York City. He would famously visit when in town, walking from the St. Francis where he stayed, and berate the owners for rearranging the display cases and "ruining" his plan. They would smile, apologize, and put everything back they way it was as soon as he left (since his plan just didn't work for them). Currently, it's called the Xanadu Galley.
- 13 Hall of Shame: Marriott (Jukebox) DMJM 1989**  
Just about any tilt-up loft complex in SOMA can and does qualify for the Hall of Shame but, truly, the one shining beacon of "bad idea" architecture in SF is the Marriott on 4th Street. Dubbed "Juke Box" (and not affectionately), it is a lesson in ill proportions and is the rightful grandfather of "bling." Sadly, some of the flashy details up high on its towers could have actually been nice had the overall shape not sprawled with no outward reason. Feel free to laugh and point. The building is used to it.



# Rock the Night Away/ Looking for Trouble?

from *Experience San Francisco*, by Nathan Shedroff

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# Rock the Night Away

Not as big a music town as New York or Los Angeles—or even Chicago—but you can find a wide variety of experiences if you know where to look.

- 11 Theatersports \$15**  
Quite possibly the most creative experience you watch. Theatersports is an international organization but the San Francisco chapter is especially adept at this tag-team, no holds-barred improv. Matches run most weekend nights and classes are taught most weeknights and weekend days. Fort Mason, Bldg B [improv.org](#)
- 12 Teatro Zinzani Dinner Circus \$110**  
Imagine the best circus (sans animals) inviting you to dinner on the stage and letting lose like you know they do when the audience has gone home. Silly, dramatic, funny, lively, and risqué, these performers make you forget the meal altogether—though the food is decent—and pull you into the performance, literally. You can't possibly have a bad experience here if you like people at all. Pier 29 [love.zinzanni.org](#)
- 13 Beach Blanket Babylon \$25-75**  
There's not much we can say that would do it justice. Singing, dancing, and amazing costumes only tell part of the story. This SF institution is an experience all its own, slyly written and performed, sending-up countless celebrities, politicians, and San Francisco itself with wit, much fun, a good dose of bawdiness, and a sweet reverence—much like San Francisco itself. 678 Green [beachblanketbabylon.com](#)
- 14 Audium \$12**  
A unique sonic environment, this 30 year old listening room is almost an instrument itself. While the analog licks are a little hackneyed, their mix changes in realtime with the conductor. Performances are nightly. 1616 Bush [audium.org](#)
- 15 The Fillmore**  
A legendary venue for rock and folk performances, this theater is still going strong. The whole Fillmore neighborhood is steeped in music history. Check out the Jazz clubs just on the other side of Geary. 1805 Geary [thefillmore.com](#)
- 16 The Warfield**  
One of the larger auditoriums for music performances. Most of the bigger bands and musicians who come through town play here. Check the website for the schedule. 982 Market [thefillmore.com/warfield.asp](#)
- 17 supperclub**  
After the 3-hour meal is over, this restaurant and performance space opens to the public as a bar. You never know what and who you might encounter here. 657 Harrison [supperclub.com](#)
- 18 Butter**  
What do you get when you mix hip hop and white trash? Smooth, creamy, butter, apparently. Their motto, "2 turn tables and a microwave," gives you a sense of this bar's mix. Dance, drink, and order tator tots or Hungry Man® entrées out of the back of the trailer. 354 11th Street [smoothasbutter.com](#)
- 19 Nickie's BBQ**  
Groove, acid jazz, funk, and hip hop all clash hear harmoniously. This little bar is small and gets packed tightly. It gets hot and sweaty but is always friendly. Just don't think about a fire. 460 Haight [nickies.com](#)

- 10 Bottom of the Hill**  
Seven nights a week, this club serves up some of the best live music in the city, ranging from rock to punk, folk to funk. 1233 17th Street [bottomofthehill.com](#)
- 11 Club Cocomo**  
A recent addition in an unlikely neighborhood but with an unusual bonus: plenty of parking! Club Cocomo has an outdoor bar, leans toward salsa, caribbean, and rock, and attracts a fun, diverse crowd. Dress classy. 650 Indiana [clubcocomo.com](#)
- 12 El Rio**  
Loud, fast, and fun, El Rio serves-up everything from Salsa to Rock in a wonderfully mixed (age, gender, sexuality, race, culture, etc.) crowd. This place has great energy. 3158 Mission [elriosf.com](#)
- 13 Yoshi's**  
Probably, the hottest jazz scene in the Bay Area. If you want the real thing, it's worth the drive. 510 Embarcadero, Oakland [yoshis.com](#)
- 14 Eli's Mile High Club**  
The most authentic blues in the Bay Area. Head across the Bay Bridge to Oakland and this old club just drips with the blues. 3629 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland [oaklandmilehigh.com](#)

# Looking for Trouble?

And you thought we were going to leave out the seedier things San Francisco is known for...

- 11 Marina Safeway**  
Looking for romance without the bar scene? Just do your shopping here. It's been known for decades to be a better hook-up place for the more traditional singles that Marina attracts. 15 Marina Blvd. [safeway.com](#)
- 12 The Lusty Lady ~\$40**  
Woman-owned and operated, this strip club is just seedy enough to be satisfying without feeling dangerous. The women are friendly and part-owners so they feel much more empowered than other places—and it shows. 1033 Kearny [zbone.com/basca/clubs/lustylady.htm](#)
- 13 Mitchell Brothers' O'Farrell Theater ~\$100**  
Definitely not for everyone, The Mitchell Brothers is one of the most notorious strip shows on the planet. What makes this place noteworthy are the innovative ideas that create unique experiences. For example, the Copenhagen room where the performers are lit only by flashlights wielded by the patrons. 895 O'Farrell [zbone.com/basca/clubs/mitchellbrothers.htm](#)
- 14 Blow Buddies \$17**  
The bath houses are gone but the sex clubs left in their wake just don't bother with the former's pretense. You can find pretty much anything you're into but be on disease control and you're responsible for yourself. 933 Harrison [blowbuddies.com](#)
- 15 Hole in the Wall**  
Now here's the seedy. This bar looks the part but attracts a surprising array of different types. You'll see some business suits (though not, necessarily, worn by business men), leather, jeans, guys in only jockstraps, clown outfits, and anything else under the sun—even the odd woman. It looks and feels intimidating but the staff and patrons are remarkably friendly. 289 8th Street [holeinthewallsaloon.com](#)
- 16 Mr. S/Madame S Leathers**  
Probably the best-stocked leather, S&M, B&D, and sex toy store ever. It's a tour de force, really. They make many of their own... err... devices. Truly for the hardcore but fascinating even for the uninitiated. 385 8th Street [mr-s-leather.com](#)
- 17 Mack/Folsom Prison \$20**  
Another gay sex club. 1285 Folsom [mackfolsomprison.com](#)
- 18 Trannyshack Tuesdays at The Stud \$7**  
The City's longest-running transvestite review always has original performances. Presided over by Heklinka, this is a local institution for more than just trannies and their admirers. 399 9th Street [trannyshack.com](#)
- 19 Power Exchange \$15-\$75**  
Power Exchange is notable as the only bi/straight sex club in the area, with regular events and themed nights. It can be really pricey for single guys, though. Play nice—and safely. 74 Otis Street [powerexchange.com](#)
- 10 Zeitgeist**  
This is an active biker bar but one that welcomes dorks on bicycles and even cars as well. The inside is pretty worn but everyone comes here for the vast backyard anyway (and it's many picnic tables). Order a beer and a burger and rub shoulders with someone who would normally scare you but could just become your next good friend. 199 Valencia