

# San francisco the top three stops to make

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## San Francisco: The Top Three Stops to Make

People who visit San Francisco often do not have all the time they'll need to see everything there is to see in the city. It has an incredible shopping district, the trolley cars, Lombard Street, the piers and any number of other attractions that might prove interesting to the average tourist. Then there are the water activities, exploration of the areas just outside San Francisco, such as visiting the wine country, and the many other things to do in and around the city. People who are short on time and confused on itineraries should plan their activities to suit their interests, but should not miss visiting the Golden Gate Bridge, Chinatown or Alcatraz sometime during their stay. The Golden Gate Bridge was the world's longest suspension bridge, at 1.7 miles (4, 200 feet) long, for 27 years following its completion in 1937 with two towers that each stand taller than the Washington Monument. It crosses Golden Gate Strait, which is about 400 feet deep and serves as the gateway to the harbor city. It can be seen from a variety of locations throughout the city. One favorite is from the top of the Marin Headlands, which offers the fun of a hike and some exercise with a tremendous view of the harbor and city. Another favorite is from the top of the Coit Tower, which also affords a glimpse of the famously twisty Lombard Street and Alcatraz. Water tours are offered for just about any time of the day, leaving from the famous San Francisco piers that will take visitors under the bridge and around Alcatraz Island. Alcatraz itself offers a view of the bridge and visitors can also opt to see it by picnicking at Golden Gate Park or by biking, walking or driving over it.

Alcatraz Island, from which one can get a nice view of the Golden Gate

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Bridge and that will also be visible from many approaches to the Golden Gate, is the home of the famous Alcatraz Prison, now closed and offered as a tourist attraction. Ferries run to the island every half hour during peak seasons and tours are offered once on the island. The tours will take visitors through the various cell blocks, demonstrating the living conditions of the prisoners there, offering information about various prison escape attempts and touring through Cell Block D, the home of the Birdman and showcasing other interesting pieces of information about the prison and the island on which it stands.

One other location that must be visited before leaving the city is San Francisco's Chinatown. It is the oldest Chinatown in the United States and formed in the mid-1800s as a result of the large-scale immigration of Chinese seeking work along the nation's railroads. Within Chinatown, there are numerous attractions and events happening all the time. One attraction is the Dragon's Gate on Grant Avenue at Bush Street. Stockton Street enables visitors to step briefly out of the United States into the center of Hong Kong, with fish markets and all kinds of other merchant stalls. Finally, something is always happening in Portsmouth Square.

While there are many things to do and see in and around San Francisco, these three attractions are nearly must-sees for the first-time visitor.

Fortunately, each of them has something to offer regardless of a person's activity preference. With these three attractions seen, one can truly go home and say they have seen the essence of the city by the bay.