



Tips for Summer Tourists

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San Francisco is a cacophony of contradictions. Other than the few natives—most residents are from Michigan, Pennsylvania, or Southern California, so start your geographic networking as soon as you get here—there's a sense of inferiority to New York. Yet there's also an insistence on referring to San Francisco as "The City"—as if there are no others—and a not-so-hidden neighborhood peaking order.

If you live in the Sunset, make sure it's the Inner Sunset. Pacific Heights trumps everything, unless you live on Divisadero, in which case you're better off saying you're in NoPa. Then there's the MishPot, which is not quite the Mission, not quite Potrero Hill, but anyway, there are some decent restaurants there.

There are more dogs in San Francisco than children, with lots of money spent on dog-related retail outlets, dog-services, and dog-friendly policies. There are more homeless people than in most urban areas, due to our temperate climate and liberal politics, and of course many of the homeless have dogs. Not so long ago legislation passed that banned the homeless from sitting on sidewalks. Don't worry, you'll still see plenty.

San Franciscans insist on paraben-free cosmetics, but have nearly as many blow-dry bars as bars on our iPhones. A group of naturists—the Naked Men—lounge nude at outdoor spaces and parade up and down City streets, no matter the weather. The City supervisor that represents the Naked Men's habitat, Scott Wiener—that's his real name; stop to giggle—drafted an ordinance that requires nudists to put a "barrier" between their derrieres and chairs in public venues. Rumors have it that copies of the *View* have been used for just this purpose. But not the one you're holding in your hand.

Mostly though, San Franciscans obsess about the weather, where to eat, the poor quality of public transportation, and the exorbitant real estate prices. The best way to start a conversation with a stranger: ask them what neighborhood they live in or their favorite restaurant. If you want an argument, tell them you're from Los Angeles. For some reason, it annoys people.

Whether the Weather

California is in a severe drought; 2013 was the driest year on record. Rain is desperately needed, though most San Franciscans would just as soon bask in the warm sunshine. In the City by the Bay it's not so

much about whether it's wet or dry, but the foggy cold summers. That might be why San Franciscans dislike Southern California, where summer is indeed endless, especially if you're stuck on a hot freeway.

San Francisco boasts an average temperature of 62.5 degrees. Inexplicably—even to a native—the warmest months are September and October. Heat is rarely needed in the winter—just a few minutes to get the chill out—and air conditioning is provided by the fog. Don't let the mid-day sun and warm temperatures fool you. When the fog rolls in over the ocean and creeps down from Twin Peaks, it can feel downright freezing.

The fog tends to hover over specific neighborhoods, typically sucked into the City by rising temperatures inland. It starts at the ocean and crawls toward the bay. Neighborhoods near the Pacific—the Sunset, Richmond, and Forest Hills—can be 20 degrees colder than their sunny counterparts to the east; Potrero Hill, the Mission, and South-of-Market. San Franciscans never leave the house without a jacket or sweater. You can spot a tourist by the Golden Gate Bridge emblazoned on the sweatshirt they hastily purchased when the sun disappeared and the temperature unexpectedly dropped as fog blanketed the City. And since the weather can change dramatically from one day to the next, San Franciscans tend to be dressed for yesterday's weather.

A fun fact: that fog horn you hear is ear nostalgia. Radar and GPS made the horns obsolete years ago; they only go off to create the right atmosphere.

Sustainable Sustenance

San Franciscans are insufferable about food. According to legend there are enough restaurant seats in the City for everyone in town to eat out at once; just don't try to get into Delfina without a reservation. A pile of kale that used to be pig feed is now a \$18 salad, *foie gras* has been outlawed, and wine is what you do when you see the per glass prices. Reservations are needed ahead at the most popular restaurants; without them waits can be an hour or more. Don't leave town without trying Magnolia Brewing Company, Goat Hill Pizza, Pera, The New Spot, Just for You, or Regalito's. Each in their way is a well-priced taste of San Francisco.

Oh, The Places You'll Go

Detroit automakers may wince, but there's no need to rent a car during your stay, unless you're planning an out of town trip. Parking can be scarce and expensive. There are lots of ways to get around on public transportation, costing from a couple of bucks to upwards of \$20 or more within the City.

We share, because we care. You can ride-share, car-share, bike-share, apartment-share, even partner-share, if you go to the right bar. Many locals shun taxis as an antiquated monopoly of rickety cars and drivers who insist on cash payment. Instead, there's Uber, Sidecar, and Lyft—which identifies its drivers with a giant pink furry mustache on the car's front hood. Download the Uber, Sidecar, or Lyft app and register by entering a credit card, preferably yours. When you're ready to go, click on the app, and request a car. The app's GPS system will know where you are and will tell you how many minutes—usually less than five—before your driver arrives. You can also watch a cute icon of your driver's car as it moves along the map in a decidedly cartoonish way. Many of us hold our phones up like a lighter at a 1980s concert so the driver knows who we are and, upon making contact, we promptly ask, "Are you my Uber/Sidecar/Lyft?"

When you arrive at your destination, thank your driver, jump out of the car, and you're good to go. No payment needed; the credit card will be automatically charged based on a set rate per mile/time. And

no tipping, ever. You'll receive an email within seconds confirming the rate, which is comparable, and often cheaper, than taxis.

You're getting into someone's personal vehicle. Be nice. Your driver will rate you based on a star system. And you, conversely, will have the opportunity to rate your driver. Our favorite ride-sharing app is Uber. Unless you want to arrive in high style, select UberX; it's cheaper than a black car.

You can also tap into an automobile-sharing service, which is a twist on the corporate car rental. Auto-sharing is designed to be convenient for people who want to rent cars for short time periods. You can access a vehicle any time from a number of parking pods. It's more cost-effective for locals and longer-term visitors, but if you want to try it download a Zipcar, City CarShare, or Getaround app.

If you prefer to get around on pedals, buy a 24-hour or three-day membership from Bay Area Bike Share. There are kiosks throughout the Bay Area; sign up, enter a code, wait for the green light, and pull the bike out of the rack. After your trip return the bike to any station.

Within City limits the public transportation system is called Muni, short for "Me, You, 'n I, together in one car," and includes above- and below-ground trains and electric- and diesel-powered busses. Muni is easy, clean, safe, and cheap—\$2 per ride for adults—but often slow and unpredictable, the latter referring to some of the passengers.

BART—"Boy, Aren't Rides Terrific!"—is what New Yorkers call the subway and Washingtonians name the Metro. BART runs within City limits and to cool places outside San Francisco, such as Berkeley or Daly City. BART also goes to/from the San Francisco and Oakland airports.

Caltrain is neither Muni nor BART, but rather a real train that takes techies to their cubicles in Silicon Valley.

There's a television commercial from the 1960s that features a cable car and a slightly annoying jingle: "Rice-A-Roni...the San Francisco treat." Fortunately, the commercial is no longer on the air. But cable cars are still a San Francisco treat. Locals don't ride them; the routes are limited, they're excruciatingly slow, they're cold if it's foggy out, and they're usually jam-packed with tourists. That said, cable cars are awesome, as are the old-timey street cars that ply the Castro, Market, and Embarcadero.

Pack your bags—don't forget a hoodie—bring your appetite, and stop by the ATM on your way to the airport. We look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful City by the Bay!

Great Places to Go

Tide Pooling at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve in Moss Beach, fitzgeraldreserve.org

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk

beachboardwalk.com

Hiking the trails at Land's End and Marin Headlands nps.gov

Animation Studio and Carousel at the Children's Creativity Museum creativity.org

Alcatraz Tour (book early) alcatrazcruises.com

Muir Woods

nps.gov/muwo/index.htm

Musee Mechanique

museemecaniquesf.com/

Things We've Never Done, But Always Say We're Going To

Duck Boat Tour sanfrancisco.ridetheducks.com

Segway Tour

electrictourcompany.com

Other Favorites**Ripley's Believe It Or Not at Fisherman's Wharf.**

ripleys.com/sanfrancisco/

Balmy Alley in the Mission (block-long concentration of graffiti murals) balmyalley.com

Chinatown sanfranciscochinatown.com

Japantown sfjapantown.org

Exploratorium (there are loyalists to the old location, but the new place is grand)

www.exploratorium.edu

Urban Putt urbanputt.com

Places We Think are Overrated

California Academy of Sciences calacademy.org

The entire Napa Valley

Lombard Street (Vermont Street is actually the crookedest street in San Francisco)