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## Getaway to the City by the Bay: San Francisco, California

Travelled by [Jan Ross](#) on 22 October 2013 | [0 Comments](#)



### Travelled By

**Jan Ross**



Jan Ross has been traveling since she was an infant as her father was a career Marine Corps officer and her family traveled the globe. ...[Find out more!](#)

The first thing you need to know about your getaway to this beautiful city is that you are probably going to be cold. It doesn't matter if it is winter, spring, summer or fall, San Francisco is pretty much always chilly, especially near the bay, so wear layers or tuck a wrap or sweater in your bag because it's better to be prepared than to freeze.

This hospitable and beautiful city is so friendly that they love dogs just about as much as people. Everyone in San Francisco seems to own a dog so they are pretty much welcome everywhere, even in many of the hotels.

This is certainly true at the kitschy, boutique Argonaut Hotel which is located in the historic Haslett Warehouse right on Fisherman's Wharf. The gorgeous brick building offers truly unique accommodations, many with exposed brick walls and wooden beams and views of the Golden Gate Bridge. Built in 1907 but beautifully restored, you will enjoy the warm fireplace in the lobby and the complimentary hosted evening wine hour.



The hotel also boasts a great location as a trolley turn-around is right next to the hotel and you can hop trolleys to take you all over town – truly a unique San Francisco experience. Just be aware of which trolley you are taking back as some drop off at the other end of Fisherman's Wharf and you will have a long walk back to the hotel.

You can also easily walk to Ghiradelli Square, an iconic symbol of San Francisco and a great place to buy some fresh chocolates! Although there is no tour of the Ghiradelli factory as many people think, there are several cute shops and restaurants located here and even a local winery with wine tastings. And of course you want to get a picture of that famous Ghiradelli sign!



Before you fill up with chocolates, you might want to sample some of the local chowder. Just about every restaurant on Fisherman's Wharf will be serving some form of chowder, many in the traditional sourdough bread bowl but we tried several places and really thought the chowder at the Blue Mermaid restaurant was the best.

After your chowder and chocolate, take a stroll down the Embarcadero which is the paved roadway running along the bay by Fisherman's Wharf. With tons of shops, restaurants and activities and plenty of street vendors and performers, you can easily spend a day or two on the Embarcadero. Check out the San Francisco Bay Aquarium at Pier 39 and be sure to visit the sea lions which lounge all over the pier and any available surface to bask in the sunlight. Many of the restaurants have big windows overlooking the bay and the sea lions so ask for a view if you stop for a meal.



One of the most fascinating places to tour in San Francisco is Alcatraz Island, the former prison. Because Alcatraz is actually a National Park now, there is only one ferry line that takes you to the island and lets you embark onto the property. You can buy tickets for Alcatraz Cruises online and it's really much easier to do so as you may have to stand in a long line to board. Be sure to take the audio tour as it's truly incredible and very interesting, all about the history of the island. I recommend taking one of the late afternoon cruises as you can see the lights of the city as you cruise back to San Francisco – a truly lovely sight!



When you are ready to see more of the city, I suggest Tower Tours as they were extremely professional, well organized and the tour guides were very knowledgeable. We took the Grand City Tour in the morning and the Muir Woods tour in the afternoon because we wanted to see both areas. This was very easy to do and we just took a lunch break between the two and spent the entire day touring. You will get to see all the sights of the city from the comfort of a tour bus but there are plenty of stops to get out and take photos. We spent quite a bit of time in Muir Woods hiking around and seeing this beautiful National Park. To try some great local food, schedule a culinary tour with Local Tastes of the City7. We spent a fabulous afternoon in North Beach/Little Italy tasting everything from fresh-baked bread to éclairs to the best, freshest pizza we have ever tried. It's really an interesting way to see one of the neighborhoods in the city and it was fun to see the residents just going about their lives all around us as we strolled from one location to the next.

So, eat your way from Fisherman's Wharf to North Beach and enjoy seeing this incredible city in all its chilly glory – just be sure to take a sweater!



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