

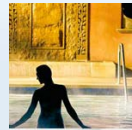
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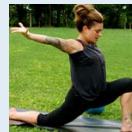
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Girlfriends Getaway to the City by the Bay

By: [Jan Ross](#)

Wednesday,
June 5th, 2013



credit:mdalmuld



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The first thing you need to know about your completely fabulous getaway to San Francisco is that you are going to be friggin' cold. Doesn't matter if it is winter, spring, summer or fall, this beautiful city is pretty much always chilly, especially in the evenings, especially near the bay, especially if you are actually on the bay taking a tour. So wear layers or tuck a wrap or sweater in your bag because it's better to be prepared as the Boy Scouts always say.

Beautiful and Kitschy in San Francisco: Argonaut Hotel

Being toasty warm will help you enjoy your visit to this hospitable and friendly city where they are so very 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 is owned by Kimpton so you can expect a 4-Diamond experience with comped wireless internet, a 100% smoke free environment, pet-friendly accommodations, in-room spa experiences, and the usual great Kimpton service. It 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.



Chocolates and Chowder

You can also easily walk to the [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 which actually sounds pretty good to me, 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. It's located right beside the Argonaut Hotel and is accessible through the lobby so it's very convenient. Try the corn chowder in addition to the clam chowder as both are excellent.

Our Top 'Must-See' Places for a Fun Bay Getaway

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, you can easily spend a day or two on the Embarcadero. If you are aquarium lovers like us, you will enjoy San Francisco's [Bay Aquarium](#). The aquarium is located at Pier 39 and is open every day but the hours vary by season, so check the website. Be sure to check out the 3-D films in the theatre as they are really incredible. In addition to the shops, there will also probably be street vendors selling all kind of items and this is a great way to find some really interesting and unique jewelry items. There will also be plenty of street performers of all forms including some surprisingly great musicians.

While you are at Pier 39, be sure to check out 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. It's also a good idea to get to the dock early as there will be lots of other people waiting to board. This is also one of those times when you will need that sweater or wrap you have in your backpack, especially if you want to be outside the ferry, enjoying the view as you cruise towards the island. Be sure to take the audio tour as it's truly incredible and very interesting 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 great. Very professional, well organized and the tour guides were very knowledgeable. We actually 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 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. If you are really interested in nature and want to spend more time hiking, it would be a good idea to come back on your own as the time on the tour is rather limited.

Foodie Tour in a Foodie City

If you like great food (and who doesn't?) schedule a culinary tour with [Local Tastes of the City](#). 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 San Francisco in all



its chilly glory - just be sure to take a sweater!

Jan Ross is a freelance travel writer who has been traveling the world since way back before she can even remember. Her dad was in the Marine Corps so she is used to packing up at a moment's notice! She loves writing hotel and restaurant reviews since it means she gets to stay in fabulous places and eat wonderful food. She especially loves writing spa reviews because that means she gets phenomenally pampered and, seriously, who does not like that? She has visited lots of places but still gets a thrill of excitement when she boards a plane, steps into a new hotel room, or sees a new location for the first time. And she hopes that thrill never, ever goes away.

For more information on Jan, visit her website at WanderlustWonder.com.



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What all the girls are saying:

Posted By : Posted By : Ofelia Ewing

[June 11, 2013 at 10:52 AM](#)

There are 3 cable car lines: Powell-Mason, Powell-Hyde, and California. The Powell-Hyde line traverses the steepest hill of the system just north of the famous crooked stretch of Lombard Street, but each line has unique offerings. The two Powell lines are wildly popular with tourists, and it is not uncommon to find long lines at the Powell, Hyde, and Mason terminals. For better luck avoiding the long lines, try boarding either Powell line en route, or catch the California line. Also, cable cars are not as busy during the early morning and late evening hours. Bay-Taylor for those wishing to go to Fisherman's Wharf or Pier 39.

