

**Guidebook through The Wild Wild West**

**A complete 3 week guided tour with  
maps, routes, options and extra information**

**Angie Franssen**

**2018**

## Introduction

Dear traveler, thank you for coming on this adventure with me. This guidebook will guide you through the western states of the United States of America. It will give you day-by-day route information, maps, newsworthy information, activities, suggestions and addresses. The only thing you'll have to do is book your hotels and a car (or motorhome), or arrange a fly-drive holiday (where the hotels are booked for you) and take this book with you as your personal guide.

This book consists of a full 20-day tour, starting and ending in San Francisco. You can always adjust your travels, therefore we have added various options for shorter trips also, including departure and arrival information for the four major cities along the way.

This book was written between 2016 and 2018, latest update in 2018. Be aware that situations, sites, routes and/or fees can change. We are not responsible for mis-information given to you through this guidebook. We are merely here to show you around and teach you a thing or two about the country, people and sites you're about to visit.

Every year we try to update and check all the fee information, phone numbers, websites and roads. We are very sorry if you have found that one of these things is not correctly written down. Please contact us, if you will, so that we can adjust this information for the next edition, and our next travelers.

Rest me to say: Have a great trip! We hope you will enjoy yourself 😊

Don't forget to take lots of pictures either 😊

With love,

Angie Franssen

*The author*

### **About the author**

Angie has been working in the tourism sector for almost two decades. She has a Master's Degree in Cultural and Social Anthropology and she has also been a tourdirector for the largest touroperator in the United States. Writing is one of her passions and the combination of the above is the reason this guide came into being..

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## General Information United States

Before you start booking your flights and hotel rooms, you might want to check the following general information.

### Things you need to know and bring

Don't forget the following items and documents on your travels. If you don't have the proper documentation when asked for, entrance to the United States will be rejected. If you are renting a car, motorcycle or motorhome, be sure to have all the mandatory paperwork with you, otherwise rentals won't be issued.

#### **Travel Documents / Visas**

All foreign nationals need to be able to have and present a valid passport and visa.

##### ***Passport validity***

Passports need to be valid for at least 6 months after the departure date.

##### ***Visa***

- Visas are issued by a US consulate or embassy in the country of residency.
- Visitors whose country is member of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), need to register before entering the United States. VWP travelers need to obtain authorization via the ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) and valid proof must be carried with them. More information and a list of participating Visa Waiver Program countries can be found here: [www.dhs.gov/visa-waiver-program-requirements](http://www.dhs.gov/visa-waiver-program-requirements). ESTA application fees apply. Applications must be done at least 72 hours prior to departure to the USA.
- Visas are valid for 90 days from date of arrival (tourism and business).

##### ***Address & Purpose***

At entering the United States, an address of residency can be asked for. This can be the address of the first hotel you are staying at.

When asked for the purpose of your visit you must fill in 'tourism' as you will be going on a touristic tour.

##### ***Return Tickets / Departure Requirements***

No actual proof of departure tickets is normally asked for, but keep in mind that a tourism visa is only valid up to 90 days, after which you'll HAVE to leave the United States.



**Vaccinations**

There are no vaccination requirements for visitors to the United States.

**Health Insurance / Declaration**

Check in your own country for travel health information and travel insurance requirements and documentation.

**Medication**

Bringing necessary medication to the United States might cause problems if there is no official doctor's statement available. Some medication is seen as 'drugs' and can be illegal. Always have a receipt and doctor's statement with you.

**Driving License**

Driving in the United States requires a valid driver's license, and most often an international driver's license.

***Rentals***

Renting a car, motorcycle or motorhome requires a valid driver's license for the concerned vehicle/motor and often also an international driver's license. Specific mandatory documents vary per state. Check the requirements at the websites of the rental companies, or send them an email for more specific information.

***Age***

The age at which you can rent a car, motorcycle or motorhome, the specifics and restrictions differ per state. Check the requirements in the specific state you want to rent a car, motorcycle or motorhome. Or you can check the requirements at the websites of the rental companies, or send them an email for more specific information.

***International Driver's License***

International driver's licenses can be easily obtained in most countries. All you need is a valid driver's license and money to pay the fee.

Check with the appropriate driver's association in your home country for requirements about how and where to obtain an international driver's license.

**Bringing animals**

Requirements for traveling with animals depend on the type of animal, purpose, airline and policies in the country of departure. Check the specifics online, at airline websites or ask the US consulate or embassy in your country.

## Import / Export

Generally, free non-taxed items brought to the United States by non-residents include:

- 200 cigarettes and 100 cigars
- 1 liter alcohol (persons 21 and older only)
- \$100 worth of gifts
- \$10,000 in cash, money order or travelers cheques

The above mentioned allowances vary per country. Check the website of your airline or ask the US embassy or consulate in your home country for more information.

Export limitations also vary per country. Check the website of your airline for more information.

## Tourist Information Services

Keep the following information with you at all time. The 'in case of emergency' can always happen.

### Tourism Authority

The United States does not have one tourist office for the whole country. Each state has its own tourism offices. General information can be obtained through [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) though.

More specific information can be found on [usa.gov/recreation-and-travel](http://usa.gov/recreation-and-travel).

### Embassy / Consulate

Find the US embassy in your country via [usembassy.gov](http://usembassy.gov).

Most foreign embassies are located in the capital of the US, Washington DC.

Consular offices are present in several states (not in all states though!)

Look for your own embassy or consulate locations in the USA, via [state.gov](http://state.gov).

### Emergency Numbers

The only emergency number you have to remember is **911**.

This number is for the services and assistance of the police, fire department and ambulance.

In some states the number **311** can be used for non-emergency police or city services. And in some states, calling **#77** from a mobile phone connects you to the Highway Patrol. However, this last service is not recommended, as the working of the '#'-services also depend on the mobile providers and their policies.

## Personal Safety

The United States is not a dangerous country (don't believe everything you see in movies).

Stick to some 'golden rules':

- Keep your wallet and purse with you at all time
- Keep the emergency numbers (police and/or embassy) close in case of emergency
- Don't go looking for trouble, be aware of the general warnings that apply
- Don't go wandering off to neighborhoods with a bad reputation
- When driving, keep the number of the rental company close in case of emergency
- Try to book accommodations in advance
- Stay off private property

## General Information

Properly read the following general information so that you are prepared before you enter the United States.

**Name:** The United States of America. Most commonly referred to as “The U.S.” or “The States”.

**Political System:** Federal Presidential Constitutional Republic, with 50 states.

**President:** Current president, chosen in the 2016 elections, President Donald Trump (Republican). Barack Obama (Democrat) was president before Trump, from 2008 to 2016.

**Capital:** Washington D.C. (District of Columbia). This District of Columbia is a special federal district, belonging to no state. This should insure the districts independence from any state-influence. Citizens of DC are not represented in the American Congress because they don't belong to any state, but they are allowed to vote for a president.

### State Capitals:

California: Sacramento , Nevada: Carson City , Utah: Salt Lake City, Arizona: Phoenix .

**Language:** The most spoken language is (American) English. Spanish is often spoken as second language and by the Latin American communities.

**Religion:** 70% Christian and 23% non-religious. The rest is made up of Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and other faiths.

**Flag:** 13 horizontal stripes in alternating red and white, referring to the 13 original British colonies. A blue rectangle in the upper left corner with 50 small 5-pointed stars refers to the current 50 states. Often used nicknames for the flag are “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “The Stars and Stripes”.

**Population** (est. 2016): 324.720.797.

**Date format:** MM-DD-YYYY. Be aware of this date format. You might be used to something different. In the US, the month is always mentioned before the day!

### **Currency / Banks & ATMs / Sales Taxes**

#### ***Currency***

The currency in the United States is the American Dollar '\$'. One dollar is divided into 100 cents. The dollar consists of paper bills and coins.

**Paper notes:** \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5, \$2, and \$1.

**Coins:** 1 dollar, 50 cents (half dollar), 25 cents (quarter), 10 cents (dime), 5 cents (nickel) and 1 cent (penny)

Current exchange rates can be found on [xe.com](http://xe.com).

#### ***Debit/Credit cards and regular bank cards***

America is a country where almost everyone only pays with credit/debit cards. All major credit cards are normally accepted everywhere.

Most accepted credit cards are MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Diner's Club

Larger stores, supermarkets and restaurants accept payments done with regular bank cards.

#### ***Travelers Cheques***

Travelers cheques used to be an easy way to pay, before the time that most bank cards were accepted at ATMs. Now that foreigners can use their own bank cards and credit cards, the Travelers Cheques are hardly used anymore.

#### ***Banks, ATMs (cash machines) and currency exchange***

Various bank offices can be found in most cities and towns all throughout the United States. Most of these offices have at least one ATM (automated teller machine) available. ATM machines can often also be found inside grocery stores or other shops.

There is no reason to bring a lot of American Dollars with you upon arrival. You can get cash dollars out of the ATMs. International transactions might cost you extra money, and some ATMs charge an extra couple of dollars, for using their services, too. Ask your own bank what the costs are for foreign services and transactions.

Foreigners cannot use all ATMs. You have to look at the symbols and signs on your own bank card and compare these with the ones on the ATM, like 'cirrus' or 'maestro'. Don't forget to switch or adjust your bank card to 'worldwide' use. Some cards are restricted to only be used in country of issue.

Exchanging your own currency into American dollars can be done at any bank office and at smaller exchange offices found in most touristic areas. The smaller (non-bank-related) exchange offices might give you a less favorable exchange rate than banks would. If you are not sure which one to use, look at the rates published and choose the cheapest.

### ***Sales tax***

The prices in America are normally (99% of the time) advertised excluding the sales tax. This might be confusing if you are not used to it. Most countries in the world advertise prices that include these taxes, meaning that the price you see on the product is the price you pay.

In the United States, sales taxes vary per state, and therefore, sales taxes are added at the cash register. Be aware that a product advertised as \$1 might end up costing you \$1,10.

### ***Tipping & Service Charge***

Tipping, paying extra for services, is part of the American system. It is considered very rude if you don't tip. Salaries are even based on tips as well. Workers get paid a lower income, because they are supposed to receive a part of the tips as well, adding up to a 'full' income. It's a 'nice' excuse for companies not to pay their workers too much of course, but that's just how the system works.

Tips are between 10% (bad service) and 20% (excellent service) of the bill, excluding sales or service taxes.

Normally, tips are left on the table (in a restaurant) after paying the bill in cash.

If you pay with a credit card, the waiter will come back with a 'temporary' receipt for you to sign. Most of the time, this receipt has a separate line for 'tips' to be filled in by you, and a line for the total amount of the bill.

You could also pay the bill amount with credit card and leave the tip in cash on the table.

Be aware that sometimes the tips ARE included separately on bills, for instance at certain restaurants. Check the receipt before you pay anything, or before you add a percentage to the total for tips.

It might happen that the bill is a lot higher than you anticipated. In that case, an extra service charge might have been added. This service charge must be mentioned on the menu, so don't forget to read the fine print!

The added service charge is NOT a 'tip' for the workers, and is non-negotiable!

### **Time Zones**

The United States has four different time zones. Actually there are nine, if Alaska, Hawaii and the smaller islands are included as well. Here, we stick to four:

Pacific Time Zone (PST/PDT)

Mountain Time Zone (MST/MDT)

Central Time Zone (CST/CDT)

Eastern Time Zone (EST/EDT)

All states (except Arizona) observe 'daylight saving time', changing the time an hour either forwards during the summer months or backwards in the winter. Daylight-saving time starts on the second Monday in March and ends on the first Sunday in November. Indicated abbreviations for the various time zones changes during daylight-saving from "S" (standard) to "D" (daylight-saving).

Traveling through Arizona in the summer can get a bit confusing considering time zones. Arizona is the only state with an exception considering 'summer daylight saving' as they don't observe it. The state is located in the Mountain Standard Time Zone, but in the summer, the time is the same as the Pacific Time Zone. This means that in Arizona, you don't have to change the clocks twice a year.

Pay attention when you are traveling through Arizona and the Navajo Nation, as the Navajo Nation DOES observe summer daylight-saving. The Hopi Nation, located within Navajo Nation does NOT observe summer daylight-saving though!

### **Temperature / Climate**

Temperatures in the United States are measured in Fahrenheit (F). If you are used to Celsius (or Centigrade), this calculation might come in handy.

Fahrenheit = Celsius x 9/5 + 32

Celsius = (Fahrenheit - 32) x 5/9

20 F = -7 C  
 32 F = 0 C  
 45 F = 7 C  
 60 F = 15 C  
 70 F = 21 C  
 80 F = 27 C  
 90 F = 32 C

### ***Climates***

The United States knows nine different climate zones. If you draw an imaginary line through the middle from north to south, four climate zones can be found in the east, and five in the west. Following the route of this guidebook, you will encounter four of these climate zones: Mediterranean (California), Alpine (California & Arizona), Desert (California, Nevada, Utah & Arizona) and Semi-Arid (Arizona).

*Source: US Climate Data*

### ***Climate San Francisco - California***

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>
Average high in °C:	13.8	15.7	16.6	17.3	17.9	19.1
Average low in °C:	7.6	8.6	9.2	9.6	10.6	11.6
Av. precipitation in mm:	114	113	83	37	18	4
Days with precipitation:	11	11	10	6	4	2
Hours of sunshine:	165	182	251	281	314	330

	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Average high in °C:	19.2	20.1	21.2	20.7	17.3	13.9
Average low in °C:	12.2	12.8	12.8	12.1	10.1	7.8
Av. precipitation in mm:	0	2	5	28	80	116
Days with precipitation:	1	1	1	4	7	10
Hours of sunshine:	300	272	267	243	189	156

### ***Climate Los Angeles - California***

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>
Average high in °C:	19.5	19.4	19.7	20.8	21.3	22.7
Average low in °C:	10.5	10.3	10.7	11.7	13.1	14.7
Av. precipitation in mm:	101	129	72	25	8	3
Days with precipitation:	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hours of sunshine:	-	-	-	-	-	-

	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Average high in °C:	25.1	25.9	25.7	24.1	21.8	19.3
Average low in °C:	16.5	16.8	16.4	14.9	12.5	10.4
Av. precipitation in mm:	1	1	6	23	35	70
Days with precipitation:	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hours of sunshine:	-	-	-	-	-	-

### ***Climate San Diego - California***

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>
Average high in °C:	18.4	18.3	18.7	19.7	20.3	21.6
Average low in °C:	9.4	10.4	11.8	13.3	15.2	16.7
Av. precipitation in mm:	50	58	46	20	3	2
Days with precipitation:	7	7	7	5	2	1
Hours of sunshine:	216	212	262	242	261	253

	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Average high in °C:	23.7	24.7	24.4	22.7	20.6	18.2
Average low in °C:	18.6	19.3	18.4	15.9	12	9.1
Av. precipitation in mm:	1	1	4	14	26	39
Days with precipitation:	0	0	1	3	4	6
Hours of sunshine:	293	277	255	234	236	217

### ***Climate Las Vegas - Nevada***

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>
Average high in °C:	14.4	16.9	21.3	25.7	31.6	37.1
Average low in °C:	4.1	6.3	9.7	13.4	18.8	23.7
Av. precipitation in mm:	14	19	11	4	3	2
Days with precipitation:	3	4	2	1	1	0
Hours of sunshine:	244	248	313	345	387	402

	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Average high in °C:	40.1	38.9	34.4	27	19.1	13.7
Average low in °C:	27.2	26.3	21.7	14.7	8.1	3.7
Av. precipitation in mm:	10	8	6	7	9	13
Days with precipitation:	2	2	1	1	1	3
Hours of sunshine:	390	368	336	303	246	235



***Climate Phoenix - Arizona***

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>
Average high in °C:	19.6	21.5	24.9	29.6	34.9	39.9
Average low in °C:	7.6	9.3	11.9	15.7	20.8	25.4
Av. precipitation in mm:	23	23	25	7	3	1
Days with precipitation:	4	4	3	2	1	1
Hours of sunshine:	248	244	314	346	404	404
	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Average high in °C:	41.2	40.2	37.7	31.4	24.2	18.9
Average low in °C:	28.6	28.2	24.9	18.2	11.5	7.1
Av. precipitation in mm:	27	25	16	15	17	22
Days with precipitation:	4	5	3	3	2	4
Hours of sunshine:	377	351	334	307	267	236

***Climate Monument Valley - Utah***

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>
Average high in °C:	5.7	9.7	15.3	20.2	25.3	31.7
Average low in °C:	-3.7	-0.7	2.9	6.4	11.3	17
Av. precipitation in mm:	13	14	15	11	14	4
Days with precipitation:	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hours of sunshine:	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Average high in °C:	34.3	32.8	28.4	21.1	12.3	6.4
Average low in °C:	19.9	19.2	14.9	8.1	1.7	-2.7
Av. precipitation in mm:	21	23	17	22	16	12
Days with precipitation:	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hours of sunshine:	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Electricity**

The United States use a **110 Volt** electricity system. If you are used to 220V in your own country, you probably need to bring some adapters with you.

Some electrical devices might even not work on the lower voltage.

If you have any questions, ask your local electrician or appliances store.

Plugs for electric devices are also specific American. For instance, the European plugs will not fit into the American sockets. Travel-plugs can be the answer. These can be ordered online, bought at local electricity stores or in some travel shops. Hotels can sometimes have some adapters for rent too.

## Length and other measurements

The American measurements are not done via the metric system. This might cause some confusion when you want to know how far away something is, or how much something weighs.

Here is a simple list of the most common measurements you can encounter:

1 inch = 2,54 cm	12 inch in 1 foot
1 foot = 30,47 cm	3 feet in 1 yard
1 yard = 0,91 m	
1 mile = 1,609 km	1 km = 0,621 mile
1 ounce = 28,35 gram	
1 pound (lbs) = 455 gram	
1 pint = 0,473 liter	
1 quart = 0,946 liter	
1 gallon = 3,785 liter	gas stations count per gallon!

## Water

Almost everywhere, the water from the tap is perfectly safe to drink. The only 'problem' you could have is the fact that it's percentage of chlorine might be higher than what you are used to. So, it smells and tastes a little bit different. If you don't like the taste, you can buy bottled water from every supermarket (big and small).

## Restaurant etiquette

In fast food restaurants, you go to the counter and order your meal either 'to go' or 'for here'. At fancier restaurants, you have to 'wait to be seated'. That means that you wait till a waiter/waitress brings you to your table.

It's good to figure out exactly what you want to eat before you order. Americans have many choices, for instance 'water' can be flat, sparkly, with lemon, hot, cold, large, medium or small. Eggs can be made 'scrambled', 'sunny side up' or 'over easy'. This list goes on and on for almost every item, so it's good to know what you want and not have to ask the waiter/waitress to explain the whole menu to you.

Meat options include 'rare' (red), 'medium rare', 'medium', 'done' and 'well done'. If you want to exclude the chance of accidental food poisoning, it's best to always ask for 'done' or 'well done'.

'Free refills' is another thing you might not be used to. Most of the time, and in most restaurants, free refills are given for soda drinks and coffee. You can refill your cup at a soda machine, or a waiter/waitress will keep filling up your cup of coffee.

To make sure you don't drink too much coffee, leave some in the cup or put a coaster on top, so that the waiter/waitress knows that you don't want more.

Also, since there are free refills, you don't have to order a super-large-size cola from the menu. A small size will do just fine because you can refill it if you want some more. The refills don't apply to alcoholic drinks!

Americans are used to getting a lot of ice in their drinks. If you don't want half your cup to be filled with ice, meaning that you get less of what you actually ordered, just say 'no ice please', and they'll leave it out.

Soda machines have a separate ice lever for when you do want to add ice into your drink. Vending machines in hotels also offer ice, either in a soda machine or a special ice machine.

## **General communications**

### ***Greetings/Saying goodbye***

Americans normally start with the phrase "How are you?". They don't expect a long answer or in-depth analysis. A simple and easy "Fine, thank you", or "Fine, how are you?", is enough. It is more a general acknowledgement than an invitation to get to know you better, or an invitation to a longer conversation. After the initial contact, people start to go on with their business again. So, don't be surprised if they don't ask more questions, or leave you after those few sentences.

Leaving a place, or saying goodbye is usually also done through a simple "Goodbye" or "Have a nice day". If someone says to you "Goodbye" first, you can respond by saying "Thank you, you too".

### ***Apologies***

Americans are very friendly and tend to apologize often, to everyone and for anything. The phrase "Excuse me", can be used in many different situations, when you want to pass someone in a small space for instance.

Don't be surprised if you hear Americans say "I'm sorry" a lot as well. Depending on the situation, a simple "Don't worry" or "It's fine" will be sufficient in most cases.

### **Holidays**

Holidays will be explained in detail further along in the guidebook. A general list of holidays is mentioned here, to inform you of these days and possible 'problems' you might encounter because, on these days, stores, parks and museums can be closed.

**General holidays**

- New Year's Day                      January 1st
- Martin Luther King Day            January third Monday
- Washington's Birthday            February third Monday
- Memorial Day                        May last Monday
- Independence Day                 July 4th
- Labor Day                             September first Monday
- Thanksgiving                        November fourth Thursday
- Christmas                             December 25th

**Other unofficial, but widely celebrated, days**

- Groundhog Day                      February 2nd
- Lincoln's Birthday                 February 12th
- Valentine's Day                     February 14th
- St. Patrick's Day                    March 17th
- April Fools' Day                     April 1st
- Earth Day                             April 22nd
- Columbus Day                        October 12th
- Halloween                            October 31st
- Veteran's Day                        November 11th

**Calling to USA / outside USA + mob providers*****Calling to the United States***

Calling to the US from any outside country starts with the number 00 or '+' sign. The country code for the US is '1'. A phone number in the US will consist of "1 + area code + local number". It will look like '1 555 123 4567'. You will need to add the '00' or '+' before the number, so it will look like '00 1 555 123 4567' or '+ 1 555 123 4567'.

***Calling from the United States***

Calling from the United States to another country will include an 'US exit code', the country code of the country you are trying to call, followed by the area code and local number. For instance, calling to the Netherlands will look like '00 11 31 1234 56 7890'. Calling or texting Australia will start with '011 61', before entering area code and local number.

Always look up your country's code. It's not possible to call another country without this number!

***SIM cards***

If you spend more time in the United States, it might be easier and cheaper to buy yourself a US sim card for your phone. Some of the larger providers are Verizon, AT&T, T-mobile and Sprint. You can buy your temporary SIM card from most of these offices, and sometimes also from larger stores such as Target.

Check the various 'plans' they have on offer before you actually buy the card. Some plans include calls, messages and internet at various rates.

**WiFi and Internet**

WiFi is almost everywhere available, some for free, some for a small fee. Hotels almost always offer free WiFi for their customers, and a 'media center' (area with one or two computers and printers) could be available too.

Since WiFi is so widely available, the 'cyber cafes' or 'internet cafes' have almost all disappeared. In some touristic areas in larger cities, you might still be able to find them though. If your hotel has no WiFi and no computer, ask the counter for the available options in the neighborhood.

Some great WiFi, for a quick mail check or Facebook upload, can also be found in most larger stores such as Target, or in larger shopping malls. Fast food restaurants and Starbucks also offer WiFi for free, as do most other coffee places and restaurants.

**Mail / Postal Services**

Sending postcards works the same in the United States as it does in the rest of the world, you only need a stamp and a post office (or mail box). Post offices can be found in almost all towns and cities, and mail boxes often also stand outside local business areas and malls. You can recognize these by the blue-white eagle-logo of the United States Postal Service.

If you want to send a package, you should either go to a post office, or go to an office of one of the many other postal service providers such as UPS, DHL, FedEx or EMS.

Don't forget to add the name of the country in the address, otherwise the post office will not know where (on Earth) the address is supposed to be located.

**Photography**

Photographs can be taken anywhere, unless stated otherwise. In most museums it's free to take pictures, unless there's a sign that says you can't.

Taking pictures inside casinos is not always allowed. This is to protect the people that are in the picture involuntarily. These rules protect the privacy of everyone else involved.

If you take pictures of people, please respect them. For instance, if the photograph involves homeless people, be sure to give them some money afterwards, and should you want to take a picture of a Native American, give them a few dollar as well.

### **Smoking and drugs**

Americans are pretty health-orientated. Smoking in public is not usually done. Of course, Americans smoke too, but they do that in places where less people are, at home, or in smoking-areas. If you do smoke outside in public, you might get 'nasty' looks from people.

Smoking in public areas such as restaurants, malls, train stations or bars is forbidden.

Drugs are illegal in the United States. It's your own choice if you want to use drugs, but don't be surprised to find yourself at a police station for 'using' or 'possession'.

### **Police**

Hopefully, you will not have to meet the police. But, in case of speeding, which might happen to anyone at any time, you might want to read the following information.

Golden rule: always show respect!

If you get stopped along the way, go to the side of the road, turn off the engine, scroll down your (driver) window and keep your hands on the steering wheel. The police officer will come to you and will probably ask you for 'license and registration'. Slowly, hand him/her your driver's license and the papers for the car. Follow the information and directions given to you and always stay friendly. If you keep giving them respect, they will respect you too.

Try not to make any sudden movements because police officers in the United States have seen much more violence towards them than you'd know.

Police officers in the United States are addressed as 'officer', never as 'cop'.

### **Disabilities**

More and more places are suitable for people with disabilities, but for this trip, not all places are wheelchair accessible! Be sure to check the specific websites for more detailed information about accessibility and various other options.

Some places on this tour could also be tough for people with leg-problems or walking disabilities. Read the information given in the guidebook and choose your options wisely.

**Children and senior discounts**

Entrance fees may vary for children or seniors. The ages are not always the same though. Ask at the counter if you are eligible for discounts.

**Public restrooms**

America has a lot of public restrooms available for everyone. Most restrooms available at the various sites listed in this guidebook will be mentioned, but if you need to find another public restroom, don't be shy to ask locals for more information.

**DVD region code**

If you are planning on buying some DVDs on your trip, be sure to check the 'region code'. The United States region code is 1. Europe has region code 2. This means that the DVDs you buy in the States are not playable in Europe! This does not apply to CDs.

## Before You Book

Book your tickets for any optional excursions, attractions or other things you would like to do.

Check the dates before you book to be sure to reserve places for the right days.

### Activities

#### San Francisco

- Alcatraz - [alcatrazcruises.com](http://alcatrazcruises.com)

#### Las Vegas

- Show tickets - [vegas.com/shows](http://vegas.com/shows)
- Hoover Dam excursions - [www.canyontours.com/hover-dam-tours](http://www.canyontours.com/hover-dam-tours)
- Helicopter flights - [maverickhelicopter.com/tour-lasvegas-nights.aspx](http://maverickhelicopter.com/tour-lasvegas-nights.aspx)
- Indian Skywalk Adventure tour - [papillon.com/las-vegas-tours/airplane-west-rim-landing-tours/indian-country-adventure-with-skywalk](http://papillon.com/las-vegas-tours/airplane-west-rim-landing-tours/indian-country-adventure-with-skywalk)
- Red Rock Canyon tours - [pinkadventuretours.com/las-vegas-tours/red-rock-canyon](http://pinkadventuretours.com/las-vegas-tours/red-rock-canyon)
- Balloon rides - [vegasballoonrides.com](http://vegasballoonrides.com)
- Horse riding tours - [cowboytrailrides.com](http://cowboytrailrides.com)
- Area 51 tour - [vegassightseeing.com/area-51-tour](http://vegassightseeing.com/area-51-tour)

#### Bryce Canyon

- Ebenezer Dinner & Show - [ebenezersbarnandgrill.com](http://ebenezersbarnandgrill.com)

#### Page

- Antelope Canyon tour - [antelopecanyon.com](http://antelopecanyon.com)

#### Monument Valley

- Monument Valley ground tour - [gouldings.com](http://gouldings.com)
- Monument Valley horseback tours - [toursacred.com/tours](http://toursacred.com/tours)

#### Grand Canyon

- Helicopter tours - [papillon.com/grand-canyon-national-park](http://papillon.com/grand-canyon-national-park)

#### Phoenix

- Cowboy dinner - [rawhide.com](http://rawhide.com) (Chandler) or [rockinr.net](http://rockinr.net) (Mesa)



## Los Angeles

- Disneyland - [disneyland.disney.go.com](http://disneyland.disney.go.com)
- Universal Studios - [universalstudioshollywood.com](http://universalstudioshollywood.com)

## National Park Cards Information

The National Park Card is maybe the best option if you are planning to visit all the national parks described in this guidebook. The option would be the "Annual Pass", valid for 12 months from the day of purchase, and valid for all national parks in the entire USA.

Costs per card are \$80 and can be bought online through [nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm](http://nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm) or at the office of the first national park you visit.

One pass will cover the entrance of one vehicle and its passengers (at 'vehicle charge' parks/places) and 1 pass owner plus 3 extra passenger age 16 and older (at 'per person' parks/places). There is no entrance fee for children age 15 and younger. If you travel with more than one vehicle, you need to either pay the regular entrance fees for the second vehicle, or buy an extra card. Only the vehicle (and passenger) with the card owner are covered.

If you are traveling on a motorcycle, the card will be valid for two motorcycles and passengers, but you'll have to arrive at the same time at the entrance.

If you are riding around on a bicycle, the card is valid for 4 persons. For cycling, other rules per park/place may apply. Be sure to check the entrance fees and regulations regarding all national parks/places you may wish to visit upfront.

Additional information on rules and regulations can be found at the FAQ page of the USGS: [store.usgs.gov/faq#Annual-Pass](http://store.usgs.gov/faq#Annual-Pass)

## On-route National Parks/Places where the National Park Card can be purchased:

### California

- Alcatraz Island, San Francisco
- Death Valley National Park, Death Valley
- Joshua Tree National Park, Twentynine Palms
- Golden Gate NRA, San Francisco (6 offices)
- Mojave National Preserve, Kelso
- Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Park, Three Rivers
- Sequoia National Forest (5 offices)
- Sierra National Forest (6 offices)
- Yosemite National Park, El Portal

## Arizona

- Coconino National Forest (5 offices)
- Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Page
- Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon
- Kaibab National Forest (4 offices)
- Montezuma Castle National Monument, Camp Verde
- Rainbow Bridge National Monument, Page
- Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Flagstaff
- Tonto National Forest (7 offices)
- Tuzigoot National Monument, Clarkdale
- Wupatki National Monument, Flagstaff

## Utah

- Bryce Canyon National Park, Bryce Canyon
- Dixie National Forest (5 offices)
- Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, Kanab
- Zion National Park, Springdale

## Nevada

- Great Basin National Park, Baker
- Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Boulder City
- Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Las Vegas

## Camping

When you are camping on your trip, you might want to make reservations upfront. In the high season, campsites at the major sites and cities may be completely booked full. Information on camping at the national parks will be very useful and the official website will let you make reservations as well: [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

- ❗ **Watch out:** Camping is NOT included in the 'National Park Card'. Additional camping fees apply!

## Extra information on routes

Throughout this guide, you will also learn a lot about the United States in general. Extra information is given to you every day. You will get to know things like history, school systems, politics, economics, and much much more.

- Each day starts with a short explanation of the whole route and places to visit
- Every route is given in parts, including the miles (kilometers) and estimated travel time
- Information about the places you pass and visit is given in black text
- Extra information about the US customs, US history, areas, routes and places is given in purple and brown blocks.
- Extra information about wild life, plants and geology is given in green blocks
- Some optional activities are mentioned in blue blocks

Times that are given every day are guideline-times taken from the Google maps. These times may vary according to traffic and landscapes. Most times given are the fastest times, driving at the allowed speed. You might drive slower in the mountains where the roads are winding.

Information given is subject to changes. The book is written between 2016 and 2018, but rules and regulations might have changed. Every year, the information in the guidebook is checked thoroughly, but it could be that some information is incorrect or missing. The author nor the publisher is responsible for incorrect information.

Before you start driving, you might want to read the following basic rules for driving in the United States, if you haven't done that yet. It shouldn't be all too different from driving in your own country, but some things might vary.

### Road rules in the USA

- Driving is done on the right side of the road. This is done in most countries of the world, but some countries prefer to drive on the left side. If you are coming from a country where you drive on the left side of the road, don't forget to keep RIGHT.
- Traffic lights are easy, they either jump from red to green and back to red, or from red to green via orange to red. Green = go, red = stop and orange = watch out the light is changing.

- You must follow the traffic lights at all time, but turning right is free most of the times. That means that you don't have to wait for a green light, unless this is indicated otherwise. There might be signs that say "no turn on red", which indicate that you will have to stop. There could also be specific traffic lights for right-turns, which also show that you cannot turn right freely.
- Stop-signs indicate that coming to a full stop is mandatory. You have to stop. Fines for not coming to a complete stop can be high, especially when you forget to stop in a school district.
- Yield-signs indicate that you have to watch out for other traffic and that you have to give way to that. Yield-signs don't mean that you have to come to a complete stop, but other traffic might force you to.
- Traffic on a roundabout has priority. You have to let them go first before you can enter the roundabout yourself.
- Stop when pedestrians start to cross the street on the special pedestrian crossing (the ones with the white stripes).
- The typical American yellow school buses have priority in all cases and over all other traffic. Don't overtake a parked school bus, there might be children crossing the street. Fines involving school buses are enormous, so be careful.
- Always drive according to the indicated speed. There just might be a police officer behind you and they will stop you right away to hand you a speeding ticket.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Don't text and drive either! Keep your phone away, or stop the car before using it.

More extensive rules can be found on the internet: [www.usa.gov/visitors-driving](http://www.usa.gov/visitors-driving).

Also, don't forget to get your 'international driving license' before you come to the United States. Different rules may apply for different countries. If you have questions, ask the American embassy or consulate in your country.

## How this book writes the highways, interstates and state roads

To be completely clear, I have to mention how (in what way) we write down the names of the roads. Sometimes, other books or maps write the roads in a slightly different way. This might be confusing, therefore I have to address it here, before you start driving. The maps, icons and directions given in this guidebook are derived from Google Maps.

Well, interstates are easy. They have a blue shield with a red top part saying "Interstate". Here they are referred to as "I-xx" roads, with the "I" (capital I) from Interstate.

Highways always have the “US” in front of them, when they are officially mentioned. In this guidebook, they are referred to as “H-xx” roads, with the “H” from Highway.



The state roads/routes/highways, often written as ‘CA-xx’ (when in California) or ‘UT-xx’ (when in Utah), are all written the same, as “SR-xx”, from State Route. So, the CA-xx is the same as the SR-xx. If that is confusing, just follow the number, the rest doesn’t matter that much.



To make it more clear, various roads can be written in different ways, but the number is what you’re supposed to be looking at, then you’ll be fine!



For instance:

- US Highway 1 = US Route 1 = US 1 = **H-1**
- State Route 34 = Route 34 = **SR-34**
- Interstate Highway 495 = Interstate 495 = **I-495**

## How this book marks the stuff



= ideas and optional activities



= extra / background information



= historic events and information



= natural, geological or biological information (rocks, plants and animals)

## Day 1.1: Arrival San Francisco

Welcome to San Francisco! I hope your trip went smoothly and that you can't wait to start your tour through the west of the United States. You will be covering some miles, but you will see a lot of fascinating things on the way.



## San Francisco SFO International Airport

Visitors coming from outside of the United States normally enter the country at San Francisco SFO airport. The other airports in the region are mainly for national flights.

SFO Airport has three terminals for national flights (gates B, C, D, E and F) and two terminals for international flights (gates A and G).

International arriving passengers must be cleared by the US Customs and Border Protection before they are allowed to enter the United States. Many countries already have this clearance facility at their own airports, making the clearance at SFO easier and faster.

At [flysfo.com](https://www.flysfo.com) you can find the current status of you flight, as well as other specific information.

## Getting to the hotel from SFO Int'l Airport

There are several ways to get to your hotel. You can either take a taxi, a shared van, a hotel shuttle, app-based rides or by public transport.

### Taxi

You can find the taxis outside the terminal. Follow the signs 'ground transportation' and you will find the taxis waiting in a line. A trip to the center of San Francisco costs between \$40 and \$65, and takes about 20 minutes.

### Lyft / Uber

The modern taxi services from Lyft and Uber are also available in San Francisco. You need to install the proper apps on your phone and arrange a ride through the app.

For the international terminal: The pick-up place for the app-based rides will be from the Departures Level on the curb.

For the domestic terminals there are two pick up places:

Either via "shared services" (Uber Pool/Express Pool or Lyft Shared), pick up on Level 5 of the domestic garage

Terminal 1: Domestic Garage Level 5 – section B

Terminal 2: Domestic Garage Level 5 – section D

Terminal 3: Domestic Garage Level 5 – section F

Or via "non-shared services" (UberX/Lyft Classic/Wingz), pick up on Departures Level on the curb.

Don't forget to check your pick up location.

## Shared Van

Shared Van rides are the easiest way to get to your hotel. Follow the signs 'ground transportation' and walk to the shelters outside. You will see the sign 'shared vans'. You do not have to have a reservation, but you can make a reservation online before your trip at the various websites. Prices vary per company. Trips take between 30 and 90 minutes, because the vans have to drop off passengers at multiple locations. You can still join a van when you did not make a reservation. Just walk outside and talk to the person-in-charge (most of the time they are holding an iPad) who stands near the sign. They will schedule you in and your van will arrive shortly after.

### Shared Van Companies

Airport Express	<a href="http://airportexpresssf.com">airportexpresssf.com</a>	415.775.5121
American Airporter Shuttle	<a href="http://americanairporter.com">americanairporter.com</a>	415.202.0733
Quake City Shuttle	<a href="http://quakecityshuttle.com">quakecityshuttle.com</a>	415.255.4899
SuperShuttle	<a href="http://supershuttle.com">supershuttle.com</a>	800.258.3826

## Hotel Shuttle

Sometimes, the hotels have their own airport shuttle service. This service is usually free and can be booked through the hotel, as soon as you book your room. Don't forget to ask for the specifics, such as pick-up location, when you book your transfer.

## Rental Cars

There are several options for rental cars. Many rental companies are located near the airport at the 'Rental Car Center', and some companies have offices throughout the city. You can either pick up your car immediately after arriving, or you can pick it on the day of departure.

If you are planning to pick up your car right away, be aware of the fact that parking is scarce in the city. You are also not allowed to park everywhere, and it will cost you. If your hotel has a parking area, don't forget to make a reservation for a space when you book your hotel.

I would recommend to go to your hotel after you arrive, and that you pick up the car in the morning on the day of departure. This makes it less stressful for yourself and you know you won't get in trouble with the police for parking in the wrong spot, or for not paying a parking fee. You can take a taxi, app-based ride, shuttle or shared van back to the airport (if your car rental company is located there) or to the location of the company in the city. Your hotel will be able to help you out as well, should you need more information.

Check the location of your hotel, and the locations of the various rental car companies before you book your car! This can save you a lot of hassle and time.



### Airport Rental Car Center

The counters of the various car rental companies are located in the special 'rental car center'. You can reach this location by taking the AirTrain Blue Line from the terminals. Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Enterprise, National and Thrifty are located on the fourth floor. Hertz and Fox are located on the first floor. All companies are open 24 hours per day.

#### The address of the Rental Car Center

780 N. McDonnell Road

#### The information for the Rental Car Center companies

Alamo	<a href="http://alamo.com">alamo.com</a>	844.370.8302
Avis	<a href="http://avis.com">avis.com</a>	650.877.6780
Budget	<a href="http://budget.com">budget.com</a>	650.877.0998
Dollar	<a href="http://dollar.com">dollar.com</a>	866.434.2226
Enterprise	<a href="http://enterprise.com">enterprise.com</a>	650.697.9200
Fox	<a href="http://foxrentacar.com">foxrentacar.com</a>	415.917.2713
Hertz	<a href="http://hertz.com">hertz.com</a>	650.624.6600
National	<a href="http://nationalcar.com">nationalcar.com</a>	844.370.8301
Thrifty	<a href="http://thrifty.com">thrifty.com</a>	877.283.0898

### San Francisco Car Rentals

If you booked a car from any of the other car rental companies, it's best to pick up your car in the morning of your departure, but that also depends on your plans before the tour of course.

#### Car rental companies served by a free shuttle service from the SFO Rental Car Center

Advantage	323 South Canal St	650.343.3052	7.30am-12am
Airport Van Rental	820 Malcolm Rd	650.952.5543	6am-midnight
City Rent-a-Car	349 Mason St	415.359.1331	8am-3pm
Payless Car Rental	1440 San Mateo Ave	650.583.9800	6am-10.30pm
SilverCar	237 Harbor Way	650.273.7110	5am-11pm
Sixt	435 South Airport Blvd	415.658.9800	24hours

### Public Transport

The cheapest way to get from the airport to your hotel is by public transport.

### BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit)

BART tickets must be bought before you get on the train. Tickets can be bought online on the BART website, [bart.gov](http://bart.gov). When you book your trip you will receive a voucher. These vouchers must be redeemed at the SFO/BART Information Booth, located in the

International Terminal G, at the bottom of the AirTrain escalator, between 8am and midnight. Ticket prices are from \$20 per person for a return trip.

The train leaves from the airport, but only stops at specific stations along the way. Be sure to check where your hotel is located and choose the best drop off location for you. Downtown stations are located at Civic Center, Powell Street, Montgomery Street and Embarcadero. Most hotels are situated within walking distance, but be sure to check this before you book any tickets.

The entrance to the BART station at the airport is near the Information Booth. Trains run every 15 to 20 minutes and a one-way trip will take about 30 minutes.

### **SamTrans Public Buses**

SamTrans has four lines you will be able to take from the airport: Route SFO, 292, 397 and 398. These buses ride along Mission Street, which is located parallel to, and south of, Market Street. All lines stop at the Transbay Terminal on Mission Street, Embarcadero. Payments should be done in exact cash.

Routes 292 and 397 also stop at the Rental Car Center.

Bus stops are located at:

- \* Terminal 2: Arrivals/Baggage Claim Level – center island adjacent Courtyard 2
- \* Terminal 3: Arrivals/Baggage Claim Level – curbside adjacent Courtyard 4
- \* International Term: Level 1 at Courtyard A and curbside adjacent Courtyard G

[samtrans.com](http://samtrans.com)

- Single fare INTO San Francisco, lines SFO, 292, 397 and 398      \$2.25
- Single fare OUT of San Francisco, lines SFO, 292, 397 and 398      \$4

## Day 1.2: Getting Around & Day Trips

Find out how to get from place A to place B with all the options available. If you have more time to spare, check out the fun day trips you might like.



## Getting Around

Now that you have arrived at your hotel, you probably would like to explore the city. A more elaborate description of things to do in San Francisco is given in the next chapter “San Francisco City Tour by Car”.

San Francisco is a large city situated on a small peninsula. On a map, locations might seem close, but if you are planning on walking around, you will be surprised by the distances. Public transport is available within the center and it will only cost you a small bit of planning before you can start your own exploration.

If you are staying in San Francisco for a couple of days, and you are planning on touring the city by public transport, you might want to consider buying a visitor passport. These passports are valid on all MUNI bus lines, MUNI metro lines, historic streetcar lines (E and F line) and all cable car lines. Visitor passports are available for 1, 3 or 7 consecutive days.

- One day visitor passport                      \$22.00 (\$23.00 effective 1/1/2019)
- Three day visitor passport                    \$33.00 (\$34.00 effective 1/1/2019)
- Seven day visitor passport                    \$43.00 (\$45.00 effective 1/1/2019)

### MUNI Bus

The SFMTA (San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency) offers various public transport routes by bus or train. MUNI has made a great map with all the routes. You can download this map from their website, [sfmta.com](http://sfmta.com), or you can buy one from one of the vendors in the city. MUNI bus and rail lines run through the whole city, which means that you can basically go anywhere you want to go.

Single fares can be paid for with the use of the MuniMobile app (the official SFMTA app), with a Clipper Card (an all-in-one transit card) or with cash. If you pay with cash, be sure to have enough exact change with you. Tickets are valid for 120 minutes. This means that you can change lines 'for free' as long as you stay within these 120 minutes. Ask the driver you're your fare receipt, called a 'transfer', if he doesn't give you one automatically. You will receive a ticket that you can use on the following trips. Transfer tickets are also valid on the MUNI metro lines, historic streetcars and cable car lines.

- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail      \$2.75 by cash
- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail      \$2.50 by MuniMobile
- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail      \$2.50 by Clipper Card
- Children (5-18) and seniors (65+)            \$1.25 by Mobile or Card
- Children (5-18) and seniors (65+)            \$1.35 by cash

## MUNI metro

MUNI has six metro lines which run through the city. All lines come together on the north side of Market Street, from Van Ness to Embarcadero. Here, you can get on, or transfer from, any line. The website [sfmta.com](http://sfmta.com) offers a map of all the lines and stops which you can download.

MUNI metro runs underground and above. Underground stations run underneath Market Street. Between Civic Center and Embarcadero it runs underground next to the BART trains. If you get on from an underground station, you will need to buy a ticket from one of the vending machines before you can enter the gates. If your train arrives above ground, you can pay inside the train at the machine located inside at the front door, with exact change!

- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail      \$2.75 by cash
- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail      \$2.50 by MuniMobile
- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail      \$2.50 by Clipper Card
- Children (5-18) and seniors (65+)          \$1.25 by Mobile or Card
- Children (5-18) and seniors (65+)          \$1.35 by cash

Transfers from MUNI buses and historic streetcars are valid on the MUNI metro lines, as long as you stay within your 120 minutes. Transfer tickets must be shown at an agent at the gates, before entering an underground station.

## Cable Car

The San Francisco cable cars are the only 'moving' national historic landmark in the United States. Of course you will want to ride one, because you haven't experienced San Francisco fully if you didn't experience a ride on a cable car.

There are three cable car lines: Powell-Mason, Powell-Hyde and California. Cable car tickets are bought inside the cable car, just have a seat and the conductor will ask you for it. Cable car tickets are only sold for one trip. As soon as you get out, you will have to pay the full fare again for a next trip. MUNI transfers are not valid. Holders of visitor passports are able to get on as many rides as they want. These passports are available for purchase from the cable car conductor.

- One single fare    \$7

## Trolleys/Historic Streetcars

San Francisco has two trolley, or historic streetcar, lines: E-Embarcadero and F-Market & Wharfs. The F-line is a tourist attraction, and a must-do when you are in San Francisco. This line operates between the Castro area, via Embarcadero, to

Fisherman's Wharf. The E-line runs between Fisherman's Wharf and the intersection of King Street and 4th Street.

MUNI transfers are valid on the E and F lines, as long as you stay within your 90 minute transfer time. Fares are payable in exact cash only. You can pay inside the vehicle, at the front door by entering your cash into the machine. If you need a transfer, don't forget to ask the driver for a paper receipt.

- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail \$2.75 by cash
- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail \$2.50 by MuniMobile
- One single fare on the MUNI bus or rail \$2.50 by Clipper Card
- Children (5-18) and seniors (65+) \$1.25 by Mobile or Card
- Children (5-18) and seniors (65+) \$1.35 by cash

### **Ferries**

San Francisco is not the only city that is situated at the large inland bay. Cities such as Oakland, San Mateo, Berkeley and Vallejo are all surrounding the water. These cities are best visited by car, but some tourist attractions are also accessible by ferry.

### Bay cruise

A great way to just cruise around on the bay, see the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz Island (for a distance), see the sea lions at Pier 39 and hear information about several other islands in the bay, you should go on a bay cruise.

Cruises normally take about an hour, and you can sit outside, but also inside because it can get really windy in the bay!

Reservations are not required, but you need to get to the ticket office in time (30 min before departure at least) to buy tickets.

- Blue & Gold Fleet (from Pier39) \$33 (adults)
- Red & White Fleet (from Pier43 ½) \$33 (adults)

### Alcatraz Island

A well-known attraction of San Francisco is the prison island Alcatraz. Tickets are best bought online, and well-ahead of time, 3 months ahead is normal! Tickets are sold out fast, especially during the busy summer season. You can buy the tickets online at [alcatrazcruises.com](http://alcatrazcruises.com), the official ticket website. When you book your ticket online, you will need to select a date and a time. Be sure that are you in San Francisco and available for your tour.

Tickets include the ferry trip, the National Park fee and a audio tour, available in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Mandarin. Ferries depart from Pier 33, at Embarcadero.

- One adult ticket (18-61), prices from \$38.35
- Juniors (12-17) \$38.35
- Children (5-11) \$36.10
- Toddlers (4 and under) free

### Sausalito

Sausalito is a picturesque little artsy place on the other side of the bay. The ferry runs between Pier 41 or the Ferry Building and Sausalito harbor, through the bay. You will have a nice view of the San Francisco skyline, the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz on the way.

- Pier 41 Blue & Gold Fleet one-way \$12.50
- Ferry Building Golden Gate Ferry one-way \$11.75

If you are in the possession of a Clipper Card, you can use it with the Golden Gate Ferry, departing from the Ferry Building. You'll only pay \$6.75 for a one-way ticket.

### **Hop-On Hop-Off**

The Hop-On Hop-Off bus is a wonderful way to explore the city without having to drive or walk yourself. Various packages for the bus are offered, some packages also included entrance tickets to attractions. An English speaking guide will be present on the bus.

The basic hop-on hop-off bus routes show you all the famous places in San Francisco, such as Fisherman's Wharf, Embarcadero, Union Square, Golden Gate Bridge, Presidio, Golden Gate Park, Painted Ladies, Chinatown and Pier39 (and much more!).

The Classic/Basica/City Day Tour starts from Fisherman's Wharf, for all three mentioned bus companies. The loop is between around 2.5 hours long and you can hop off and hop on at any stop along the way.

- Buses run daily from 9.00am to 5.00pm
- Every 15-30 min
- Prices from \$49 (adult – online) and \$34 (child – online)
- Valid for 24 hours

### Companies that offer hop on-hop off bus tours

City Sightseeing	<a href="http://city-sightseeing.us">city-sightseeing.us</a>	2800 Leavenworth St
Gray Line San Francisco	<a href="http://graylineofsanfrancisco.com">graylineofsanfrancisco.com</a>	2627 Taylor St
Big Bus San Francisco	<a href="http://bigbustours.com">bigbustours.com</a>	99 Jefferson St

If you have booked online tickets, be sure to bring printed out vouchers! Some ticket offices don't accept vouchers on phones or tablets. Follow the instructions provided with the booking.

Be careful when you book a tour ticket that includes entrance to Alcatraz Island. These tickets are based on availability. Booking through any website (other than the official ticket site) does NOT guarantee availability for Alcatraz and might even lead to ticket cancellation when Alcatraz is booked full.

## **Bicycle**

Another great way to see the city of San Francisco, and feel energetic afterwards, is by bike. Although the city is built on hills, cycling tours can still be great fun. Various companies offer rental bikes for self-guided tours and guided tours through the city and Marin County (on the other side of the Golden Gate Bridge).

You can choose between 'normal bikes', kids bikes and extras, tandems, electric bikes, road bikes and mountain bikes.

Regular bike rental prices start from \$8 per hour / \$32 per 24 hours, and come with a helmet, lock and map. Booking a bicycle online can be around \$7 (per day) cheaper.

### Bicycle rental companies

Blazing Saddles	<a href="http://blazingsaddles.com">blazingsaddles.com</a>	2555 Powel St
By City Bike Rentals	<a href="http://baycitybike.com">baycitybike.com</a>	501 Bay St
Bike and View	<a href="http://bikeandview.com">bikeandview.com</a>	1772 Lombard Street
City Ride Bike Rentals	<a href="http://cityridebikerentals.com">cityridebikerentals.com</a>	370 Linden St
SF Bicycle Rentals	<a href="http://bikerentalsanfrancisco.com">bikerentalsanfrancisco.com</a>	425 Jefferson Street

## **Go-Cars**

The little yellow cars you can see driving around town are the GoCars. The cool cars are GPS-guided and the car itself is the tour guide and storyteller.

Tour prices vary between \$60 (1 hour basic tour) and \$234.50 (very extended). Prices are for 2 people in 1 GoCar.

### Locations

Fisherman's Wharf	431 Beach Street
Union Square	321 Mason Street

More information on the various tours and packages can be found on [gocartours.com](http://gocartours.com)



## Segway & Electric Scooter

The segways are still very much alive and visible in San Francisco, and if you want an unique city experience, the segway is the way to go. Electric Scooter are on the rise. Most segway companies also offer tours with the electric scooter.

Segway tours vary between \$55 and \$150

Private tours vary between \$85 and \$150

Segway rentals available from \$50 per 1 1/2 hours

### Segway tours and rental companies

Electric Tour Company	<a href="http://electrictourcompany.com">electrictourcompany.com</a>	757 Beach St
Segway SF Bay	<a href="http://segwaysfbay.com">segwaysfbay.com</a>	2949 Balboa St
City Segway Tours	<a href="http://sanfrancisco.citysegwaytours.com">sanfrancisco.citysegwaytours.com</a>	333 Jefferson St
Golden Gate Park Segway Rentals	<a href="http://goldengateparksegwaytours.com">goldengateparksegwaytours.com</a>	82 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr

## Day Trips from San Francisco

### **San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge**

This bridge is part of the Interstate 80. It is a toll-bridge and runs from San Francisco to Oakland. Construction started in 1933 and it opened in 1936, six months before the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge.

The idea of the construction of a bridge came during the gold rush, when most transport was done by boats. San Francisco also still missed a railroad connection, so traffic on the water was the only way.

### **San Mateo Hayward Bridge**

This bridge is 6.8mile (11km) long and was opened as a toll-bridge in 1967. It is the longest bridge in San Francisco and you might have seen it already when you flew into town.

### **Treasure Island**

Treasure Island is an artificial island (man-made), constructed between 1936 and 1937 as area for the festivities surrounding the 'Golden Gate International Exposition' in 1939, the celebrations for the openings of the two bridges; the San Francisco-Oakland Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge. After the event the island was supposed to become a port for 'flying boats'. However, as result of World War II, the island was turned into a marine base between 1941 and 1997.

### **Sausalito**

Sausalito is located on the other side of the bay, on the other side of the Golden Gate Bridge, in Marin County. It is known for its picturesque surroundings, artistic community and the amount of 'houseboats'.

During the Prohibition (1920-1933, the prohibition of sales, production and transport of alcohol) Sausalito was an ideal location for smugglers as the coastline, rocks and fog made it very hard to control and supervise.

[sausalito.com](http://sausalito.com)

### **Yerba Buena Island**

Yerba Buena Island is a natural island between San Francisco and Oakland, which connects the two parts of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The island's name refers to the old name of San Francisco 'Yerba Buena' (good herb), and it used to be the place of a fort that protected the harbor, bay and cities.

**Angel Island**

Angel Island lies in the bay between Marin County and San Francisco, not far from Alcatraz Island. Not many people live on the island as it's currently a national historic park, mainly used for short holiday breaks or daytrips.

The island used to be a ranch, army base, fort, quarantine camp and immigration station for the Asian immigrants. It was therefore also called the "Ellis Island of the West" (Ellis Island was the immigration station in the bay of New York City).

Day trips to the island are organized, but strict rules apply: dogs are not allowed, fires are prohibited, traveling at night is prohibited (personal safety and safety for the park), roller skates and skateboards are prohibited (due to the terrain, it's all steep). It is allowed to bring your own bicycle though, or you can rent one on the island, as the island's nature is just breathtaking.

[angelisland.com](http://angelisland.com)