

San Francisco offers a plethora of wonderful opportunities for tourists

By Mike Cohen
The Suburban

SAN FRANCISCO — The last time I visited San Francisco was some 22 years ago. It was a short trip of a few days tied into business. When we decided last winter that California would be the choice for our summer vacation, we all agreed that at least one week was necessary in San Francisco to cover as much ground as possible. Well let me say it was still not enough time.

Measuring 49 square miles, this very walk-able city is dotted with landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge, cable cars, Alcatraz and the largest Chinatown in the United States. A stroll of the city's streets can lead from Union Square to North Beach to Fisherman's Wharf, with intriguing neighbourhoods to explore at every turn. Views of the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay are often laced with fog, creating a romantic mood in this most European of American cities.

More than 25.1 million people visited the destination, spending in excess of \$9.69 billion in 2016.



PHOTO: SF TRAVEL

The Golden Gate Bridge, one of the most famous bridges in the world, manages to impress even the most experienced travelers.

The Golden Gate Bridge, one of the most famous bridges in the world, manages to impress even the most experienced travelers with its stunning 1.7-mile span. Approximately 120,000 automobiles drive across it every day. A pedestrian walkway also allows the crossing on foot, and bikes are allowed on the western side.

Cable cars have been transporting people around San Francisco since the late 19th century. The cars run on tracks and are moved by an underground cable on three routes. Their familiar bells can be heard

ringing from blocks away. Tickets (\$7) may be purchased at the cable car turnarounds at the ends of each route.

Fisherman's Wharf is also home to Pier 39, a festive waterfront marketplace that is one of the city's most popular attractions. A community of California sea lions has taken up residence on the floats in the Pier 39 Marina and visitors line the nearby railing to watch their antics. From there it's a short walk to the San Francisco Dungeon and Madame Tussauds, Ripley's Believe It or Not! and the famous crab vendors selling walk-



PHOTO: SF TRAVEL

The sea lions at Fisherman's Wharf.

away crab and shrimp cocktails.

Union Square is the place for serious shoppers. Major department stores and the most exclusive designer boutiques line streets like Post, Sutter, Geary, Grant, Stockton and Powell. The Westfield San Francisco Shopping Centre houses the largest Bloomingdale's outside of New York and the second largest Nordstrom in the U.S.

The entrance to Chinatown at Grant Avenue and Bush Street is called the "Dragon's Gate." Inside are 24 blocks of hustle and bustle, most of it taking place along Grant Avenue, the oldest

street in San Francisco.

San Francisco is home to internationally recognized symphony, opera and ballet companies, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Asian Art Museum, the de Young Museum, the Legion of Honor and the California Academy of Sciences — the only place on the planet with an aquarium, a planetarium, a natural history museum, and a four-story rainforest all under one roof.

You can see Mike Cohen's detailed story on San Francisco at www.thesuburban.com ■



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