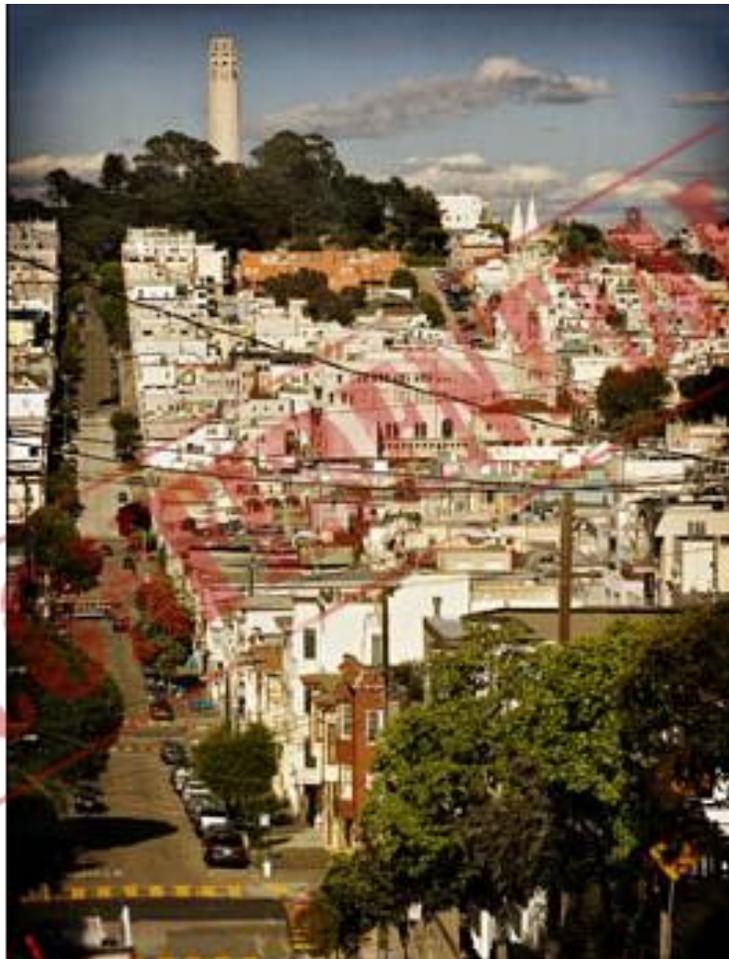


# San Francisco Must-See *Top Five Things to do...*



us on



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## Lombard Crooked Street, San Francisco

Lombard Street is San Francisco -- and America's crookedest street. What does this mean? The steep, hilly street was created with sharp curves to switchback down the one-way hill past beautiful Victorian mansions. The street is paved with bricks and is an amazing site to see as demonstrated by the photo above.



If not for the byzantine curves, easing out this treacherous slope, people would be killed rolling down. For an idea of how steep this street really is, go two blocks up, to Filbert Street and peer down over the ridge. Lombard is even steeper.



the spring and through the entire summer, Lombard Street is alive with color, as the chrysanthemums, and

Some of the classiest and most expensive Real Estate in the city, exists on Lombard Street. This Russian Hill neighborhood, somehow possesses stately mansions, condos and townhouses, even with the endless array of tourists pouring down the street every day. In

other well tended flowers are in full bloom.

The best place to photograph the street, is from Leavenworth Street, at the bottom - looking up. You will see cars headed down slowly, daring souls walking up, and down the sides, while the flowers and buildings provide dazzling color. It is truly an incredible sight.

To get to Lombard Street, take the Hyde Street Cable Car line, which stops on the crest. From this beautiful vantage point, you can also see down Hyde Street to Ghirardelli



Square, Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz and the rest of the Bay. Looking east, North Beach, Telegraph Hill, and the Bay Bridge present a breathtaking sight.

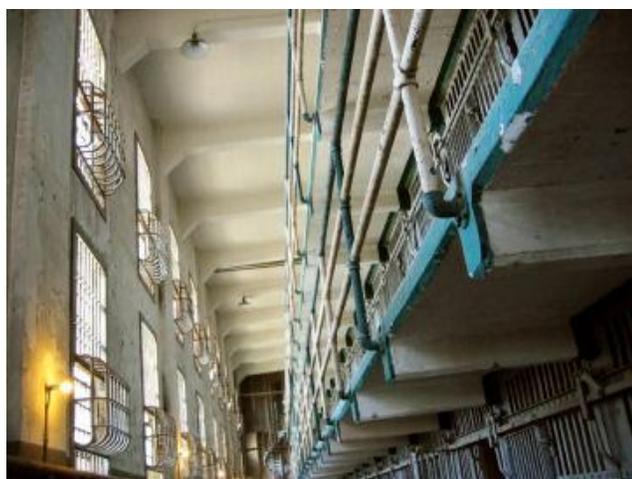
Lombard Street is not only "The Crooked Street." It continues in both directions, going all the way east, up Telegraph Hill to Coit Tower, and continuing west down through the Marina, where it becomes the major conduit to Golden Gate Bridge. A walk in either direction makes for a pleasant hike.

Yet it is the crooked part that keeps the people talking. For a treat, get a San Francisco taxi ride down Lombard late at night - fast! Guaranteed, you'll remember that ride long after you've left San Francisco.

## San Francisco's Alcatraz Island



Out in the middle of the San Francisco Bay, the island of Alcatraz is a world unto itself. Isolation, one of the constants of island life for any inhabitant - soldier, guard, prisoner, bird or plant - is a recurrent theme in the unfolding history of Alcatraz. The island offers a Alcatraz close-up look at a historic and infamous federal prison. Visitors can explore the remnants of the prison, and learn about the Native American occupation of 1969 - 1971, early military fortifications and the West Coast's first (and oldest operating) lighthouse. These structures and the island's many natural features - gardens, tide pools, bird



Colonies, and bay views beyond compare, are being preserved by the National Park Service. The views from Alcatraz are incredible.

The history of the island includes military use as a fort, an army prison camp, a Native American peace community, and the location of America's most dangerous criminals. The prison held Al Scarface Capone and Robert "The Birdman" Stroud. The island was featured in movies including *Escape from Alcatraz* with Clint Eastwood and *The Rock* with Sean Connery. For prisoners, the worst torture was how close, but unattainable, was life in San Francisco. At night, prisoners could even hear parties and laughter across the bay.

The island is also a wildlife sanctuary with birds, and tide pools filled with crabs and sea-stars. Western gull and black-crowned heron colonies are prevalent. Roses still grow by the old Warden's house. Here is what you will see on your visit to Alcatraz.

*Sarah writes, "Went to Alcatraz...kind of spiritual place not in a religious sense but felt like people from the past were watching me....you listen to a walkman with recordings from inmates and wardens as you walk round and I nearly had a complete anxiety attack in the solitary confinement cell ...what a bastard of a place to spend a decade or too.....too many good views of the city..so close yet so far away...went on a guided walk and heard about the "great escapes" which was kind of cool...."*



## Golden Gate Bridge- San Francisco



Looking for images, pictures, and pics of the Golden Gate Bridge to use for wallpaper and screensavers or just enjoy? Check out our album of custom photos and favorite Golden Gate Bridge posters.

This landmark defines San Francisco. The gateway where the Bay meets the Pacific Ocean, the Golden Gate Bridge has established the boundary to riches for people throughout history. For a relaxing trip to the Golden Gate Bridge, try a San Francisco limousine tour. But what can you do once you get there?

- One of the nicest things you can do in San Francisco is to walk along the beach -- Crissy Field -- in the shadow of Golden Gate Bridge. It is about a one hour walk with tons of parking available right at the waterfront. Just drive to Safeway on Marina Boulevard and continue on Marina Boulevard for about one half mile to park just past Safeway in the water-side parking lot (huge) at Fort Mason. This parking lot is actually FREE! You can then walk along the beach and a new tide pool area that has been created to preserve birds. The walk goes for about one mile, past the volleyball fields, past windsurfers until you are

right under the Golden Gate Bridge. I love to take this walk and the Crissy Field area has been completely redone from it's Army pave-over to a beautiful grassy field with many birds, joggers, roller bladers, and walkers. Crissy Field is also one of the world's best beach locations for windsurfing. This area was once an airfield with hangers. For all that we hate Fisherman's Wharf, we love Crissy Field's view of the waterfront and Golden Gate Bridge. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

- Ride a bike across the bridge - there are protected one-way bike lanes on the bridge. It can be very windy to ride across so dress warmly. If you continue a short way, you will end up in Sausalito -- a great place for a fun (but pricey) lunch. Bike Rentals are available throughout Fisherman's Wharf for around \$8/hour or \$32 per day.
- Walk across the bridge - this takes a little (lot) more time than the bicycle but is an experience you will never forget. It can be very windy to walk across so dress warmly with a good jacket.
- On either side of the bridge are small parking lots where you can view the Bay, ocean, and Marin Headlands.
- Another way to view the bridge is via a ferry or group boat charter. With the ferries, you can bike one way, and ferry back from Sausalito or Tiburon (Marin County cities).
- Visit the Presidio - a former army base now converted to a beautiful park. The Presidio bounds the Southern (San Francisco) end of the bridge and connects the Marina District to the Richmond District. It features beautiful bayshore, sandy beaches, and great walks and bike rides. The Presidio is a popular area for windsurfing and fishing.
- The Presidio features one of the City's largest nude beaches -- Baker Beach. The beach is partially clothed, but as you continue to the more secluded end of the beach, clothing becomes optional.

## Muir Woods Ancient Redwood Forest

*Enter a Peaceful World of  
Wonder...*

**Hours:** 8am to sunset every  
day

**Cost:** \$3/person + optional  
donations

**Not Allowed:** Bicycles, Pets,  
Horses, Smoking, Picnicing,  
Camping, Portable Radios



Get away from the city and relax at Muir Woods, just a short drive of under an hour from downtown San Francisco, over the Golden Gate Bridge. You can enjoy a beautiful, ancient redwood forest that is truly unique for just \$3 per person. The winding drive to the forest through the Marin Headland hills is truly special. Make sure to dress a little warmer for the cool, shaded, moist area.

The redwoods reach for all the sun they can get, and the forest floor tends to be cool and damp. In this photo, a small amount of light has penetrated the redwoods to reach the ground. There are 3 walks, from one-half hour to 1.5 hours, and much longer hikes if you wish. The forest park is actually paved to make it easy for wheelchairs and mothers with strollers. The longer hikes are unpaved. The 560 acre park includes six miles of paved, mostly level trails on the canyon floor.

In California, there are two different species of redwood. The coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) is what you will find in Muir Woods. Though most of old-growth coast redwoods have been logged, some are protected. You will find these protected redwoods

in Redwood National and State Parks throughout Oregon and California. The forest at Muir Woods was spared because it was hard to get to.

The other specie of redwood is the giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*). These type grow larger in bulk but is less tall than the coast redwood. Giant sequoias can be seen in Yosemite and Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks.



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The coast redwoods are the tallest living things. The Bohemian and Cathedral groves contain the biggest trees in Muir Woods---one 252 feet tall and one 14 feet wide. Most of these trees range in age of 800-1000 years old!

How are these coast redwoods able to get this old? The coast redwood has been able to mature and have survived fires due to their thick bark. The bark is spongy and fibrous and can range in thickness anywhere from 6 to 12 inches. The bark acts as insulation against fire damage. The forest's long-term ecological well-being benefit from fires because it clears the floor of duff so redwood seeds can reach mineral soil.

**GPS Location Finder: Latitude: 37.8989199 (North)**

**Longitude: -122.57051 (West)**

## Twin Peaks San Francisco's Best View



Why visit Twin Peaks? The view, the view, the view. Being almost at the geographical center of San Francisco there is no finer place to see the city than atop Twin Peaks. With its panoramic views, Twin Peaks should be a must-stop on every tourist's list of places to go.

Named for its two virtually identical summits, Twin Peaks, stands at an elevation of about 922 feet, second highest in San Francisco. Though, best known for its viewpoint, Twin Peaks has practical uses as well. The lower portion of Twin Peaks has been developed into a residential community with colorful houses built into the hillside providing optimal views for their residents.

The top of the hill is littered with a handful of transmission towers, that may not look good from far away, but don't worry, once you're up on the summits, you will barely notice they are there. Twin Peaks also houses the Summit Reservoir, a 14 million gallon water hold. The reservoir was built in 1954, and provides drinking water to residents, water for local fire departments, and is a necessary water source to the birdlife in the area.



Aside from the transmission towers and the reservoir, the top of Twin Peaks has remained undeveloped. This undeveloped portion of Twin Peaks has been slated as a Natural Area, and is preserved by the Natural Areas Program (NAP), a division of the San Francisco Recreation and Parks department. This Natural Area acts as a preserve for native vegetation, allowing indigenous plant life to grow virtually untouched.

The area also acts as home to an array of natural wildlife, including raccoons, skunks, opossums, white crowned sparrows and redtail hawks. Most importantly, Twin Peaks is only one of three areas that provides a home to the endangered Mission Blue Butterfly. Most of the plant life the Mission Blue Butterfly needs to survive has been destroyed by development, but Twin Peaks has been able to restore and sustain much of this natural plant life, providing a safe place for the butterfly to survive.

### Transportation to Twin Peaks:

From Market Street, drive southwest. Market turns into Portola; continue on Portola and at the second traffic light, turn right onto Twin Peaks. Drive uphill and park at the signed parking lot.