

travel

GOLDEN GETAWAY

Visitors take in the beautiful views, the adventurous outdoors and the laid-back city life that the San Francisco Bay Area has to offer

Ferry rides across the water, hiking through the hills and shopping in unique stores make the Bay Area of California a treat for any traveler. There's more to it than just the city alone; the surrounding small towns in nearby Marin County are a treasure themselves.

WHY SHOULD I GO?

Nestled on the northern coast of California, San Francisco is the main destination of the Bay Area. Today, the city's most famous site is the spectacular Golden Gate Bridge, which opened in 1937. But nestled around the city is a plethora of small burgs where the rich elite choose to settle down. One of these towns is Tiburon, with its numerous shops and restaurants. Although San Francisco is not traditionally thought of as a town and country destination, there's so much to see within the city and just outside — we recommend doing it all!

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

If you're looking to stay in the heart of

San Francisco, look no further than the Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco. In the early part of the 20th century, the building — which takes up a full city block — was actually home to Met Life Insurance, before it became a Ritz-Carlton. Located in beautiful Nob Hill, the hotel features 336 guest rooms and suites, all of which were renovated in April. Sunday brunch at The Terrace, where you'll be treated to the sounds of great jazz, is a must, as is a visit to Equilibrium, the hotel's chic urban spa. If you're looking to stay mainly in the big city, check out the Ritz's "Reconnect with the City" package, which includes deluxe accommodations, breakfast for two in The Terrace, valet parking and two San Francisco City Passes.

For the big-city traveler who craves a small town feel, just a short ferry ride away from downtown San Francisco is the quaint burg of Tiburon. Newly reopened after a \$6-million renovation is The Lodge at Tiburon. Made up of 102 renovated guest rooms and suites, the Lodge also has a cozy lounge-like library, as well as a fireplace-adorned hot tub and outdoor heated pool area with private cabanas.

The Lodge at Tiburon also boasts a top-quality restaurant and bar called Three Degrees, a fabulous destination for any true foodie. With Executive Chef Patricia Windisch running the kitchen and offering California-inspired cuisine, you can enjoy delicious items such as a taste-bending panko-crusted Alaskan halibut served with wasabi mashed potatoes, warm ginger butter and sweet-hot chili oil. It's a mixture of flavors that will bring your taste buds to a whole new level. The chef tops that off with a light pound cake covered with spring berries and champagne sabayon.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The Bay Area is the perfect destination for anyone who likes the outdoors. Put on your running shoes and hike up into the hills above Tiburon, where you can enjoy spectacular views. Trek back into town and have a cold drink at Sam's Café, a historical establishment that has been open since 1920. During the Prohibition Era, the owners at Sam's were known to secretly serve liquor to its patrons.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PHIL COBLENTZ/SFCVB; JERRY LEE HAYES/SFCVB; THE LODGE AT TIBURON; STAR TRAVEL; FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: THOMAS CONCORDIA/WIREIMAGE; JEFFREY MAVER/WIREIMAGE; JASON MERRITT/FILMMAGIC



Board a seaplane at San Francisco Seaplane Tours in Sausalito. You'll fly over the city and see spectacular views of the Golden Gate Bridge and more.



Above: Ride a cable car over to the Farmer's Market for a selection of fresh cheeses and vegetables as well as various homemade gifts. Below: The Lodge at Tiburon.



Step outside Sam's onto the pier and you can catch the ferry jaunt to Angel Island, a locale full of rich history since Spain's discovery and exploration. The Angel Island-Tiburon Ferry Company is family-owned and has been in operation since 1959. Today, it is run by Captain Maggie, a fourth-generation resident of Tiburon. Be sure to ask Maggie questions about the ferry company because she loves sharing her stories of Tiburon. Another activity offered by Captain Maggie, along with Incredible Adventures, is cage shark-diving. Yes, it might sound scary, but it is completely safe as you are lowered down into the water in a specially designed cage for watching Great White sharks.


When it's time to see the sights in the big city of San Fran, just hop onto the ferry, and in no time at all, you'll be strolling around the docks of Fisherman's Wharf. Full of fun shops and restaurants, this is one place not to be missed. Be sure and visit the Ghirardelli Chocolate Co. (located in the famous namesake square) that originated in San Francisco for homemade fudge and chocolate-covered apples. A hot lunch spot is Boudin Bakery & Café, home

of the original San Francisco sourdough bread. From amazing crab cakes to their creamy New England clam chowder, they offer something for everyone.

Purchase the San Francisco City Pass for just \$49, and you will receive a coupon booklet for such must-see attractions as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Aquarium of the Bay. You'll also get unlimited free rides on a cable car.

For another outdoor experience, Muir Woods is a must-see. Just 12 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge is this treasured national state park and monument, and one of the few locations remaining of protected redwood trees. This forest was spared mostly because it was difficult to reach, making it an amazing sight.

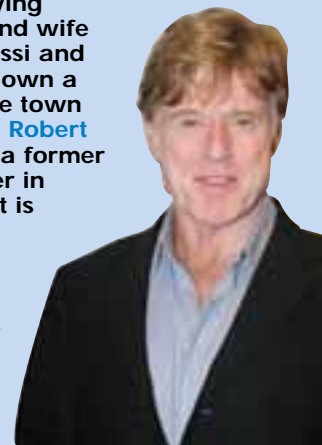
HOW DO I GET THERE?

JetBlue flies direct from New York, Washington D.C., Fort Lauderdale and Long Beach to Oakland International Airport. 

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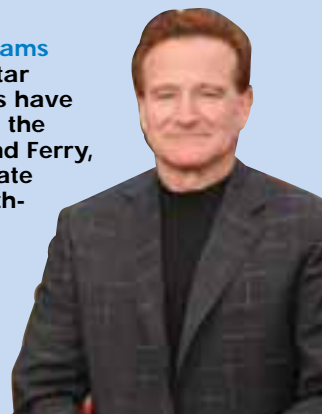
STAR TRAVEL

Tennis playing husband and wife Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf own a home in the town of Tiburon. **Robert Redford** is a former homeowner in Tiburon but is still seen around town quite often as his brother has a residence there.



Will Smith co-starred with his son Jaden in his upcoming flick, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, which filmed in the Oakland and San Francisco areas. Action flick *X-Men: The Last Stand*, starring Hugh Jackman, James Marsden, Rebecca Romijn and **Halle Berry**, was also partly filmed in the Bay Area.

Robin Williams and rock star Huey Lewis have both taken the Angel Island Ferry, while the late actress Katharine Hepburn once missed the ferryboat when she was in town.



TRAVEL TIPS

THE RITZ CARLTON, SAN FRANCISCO: RITZCARLTON.COM, OR 415-296-7465 OR 800-241-3333
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