

1

# The Best **Full Day Tours**



# The Best in One Day



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| 2 Ride the Powell-Hyde Cable Car | 6 North Beach                  |
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**This full-day tour** introduces you to San Francisco's best-known neighborhoods—Union Square to scenic Fisherman's Wharf, historic North Beach, and vibrant Chinatown. Once you arrive at Fisherman's Wharf, the rest can be done on foot, but public transportation options are listed just in case. **START: BART/Muni: Powell or Montgomery. Bus: 2, 3, 4, or 38 to Powell St.; 30 or 45 to Geary St. Cable Car: Powell lines.**

**1 Union Square.** Start your tour at the shopping and commercial hub of San Francisco. The square itself (named for a series of violent pro-union mass demonstrations staged here on the eve of the Civil War) reopened in 2002 after a \$25-million restoration that replaced stretches of lawn with a 245-foot-long (76m) floor of granite and scattered greenery—turning it from a resting spot for the homeless into a welcoming plaza and exhibition space. All that remains from the old square is the 90-foot (27m) Victory tower, dedicated by Theodore Roosevelt after the Spanish-American War. ⌚ 30 min.; *best before 9am. Union Sq. is between Post, Geary, Stockton & Powell sts. BART: Powell or Montgomery. Bus: 2, 3, 4, or 38 to Powell St.; 30 or 45 to Geary St. Cable car: Powell lines.*

**2 ★★ kids Ride the Powell-Hyde Cable Car.** Head to the cable-car turnaround at Powell and Market streets and await the Powell-Hyde line. The first of these

engineless cars made its maiden voyage in 1873. The cable car will take you over Russian Hill. Pay attention as you crest Hyde Street at Greenwich Street—you'll catch your first breathtaking glimpse of the San Francisco Bay and Alcatraz Island. For details on how these cars work, see p 12. ⌚ 30 min.; *best before 9:30am. Powell & Market sts. \$3 per ride.*

**3 ★ Lombard Street.** "The crookedest street in the world" is in fact not even the crookedest street in San Francisco (Vermont St. between 20th and 22nd sts. in Potrero Hill is more crooked!). The zigzags were added in the 1920s, as the street's 27-degree pitch was too steep for cars. Cars are only permitted to descend, but pedestrians can take the stairs up or down on either side. The street is loveliest in spring, when the hydrangeas are in bloom. ⌚ 30 min.; *best: weekday mornings. Lombard St. (between Hyde & Leavenworth sts.). Cable Car: Powell-Hyde line.*

*Riding a cable car is one of San Francisco's most entertaining activities.*



**4 ★★ Fisherman's Wharf.** San Francisco's most visited destination is filled with history and a multitude of activities. Although most of the wharf is rife with tacky souvenir shops and overpriced restaurants, this is still a must-see for any tour of San Francisco. Consider the following minitour—it points you to the wharf's

most scenic aspects and keeps time near the throngs to a minimum. *Hyde & Beach sts.* [www.fishermanswharf.org](http://www.fishermanswharf.org). *Cable Car: Powell-Hyde line to Fisherman's Wharf, Powell-Mason line to Taylor & Bay sts; F streetcar to Jones & Beach sts. Bus 10, 30, or 47 to Van Ness Ave. & N. Point St.; 19 to Polk & Beach sts.*

## Fisherman's Wharf



**4A Victorian Park** is where you'll alight from the cable car. You'll see arts and crafts for sale as you walk towards **4B Ghirardelli Square**, built in 1893 as Domingo Ghirardelli's chocolate factory. When the factory moved in the 1960s, the building became a National Historic Landmark and now houses a mall. **4C The Maritime Museum** (p 23, bullet **7**), a three-story Art Deco structure shaped like an ocean liner, offers a free look at the city's seafaring past. A walk along the **4D Municipal Pier** affords views of the Golden Gate

Bridge. The **4E Hyde Street Pier** (p 22, bullet **4**) holds refurbished antique ships, including a 19th-century square-rigger. **4F The Cannery**, once a fruit-canning facility, now houses shops, restaurants, and the National Maritime Visitors Center. **4G' Order a crepe** from the cart in the Cannery courtyard. Now fortified, you can brave the crowds at **4H PIER 39**. Look for the infamous sea lions that have lived by the pier since 1989. ⌚ 2–3 hr.; go in the morning to beat the crowds and bring a jacket—it can be chilly year-round.





Pier 39's sea lions bathe, bark, and splash about—all around heart-melting fun.

**5 ★ Coit Tower.** The 210-foot (64m) landmark atop Telegraph Hill was erected in 1933 with \$125,000 bequeathed by local character Lillie Hitchcock Coit, who wished to add beauty to the city. Inside the tower's base are murals by several artists, many of whom studied under Diego Rivera. Commissioned as part of the New Deal's WPA, the murals have a pro-worker motif that caused a stir in their day. The fee to climb the tower is worth it: a 360-degree city view awaits you.

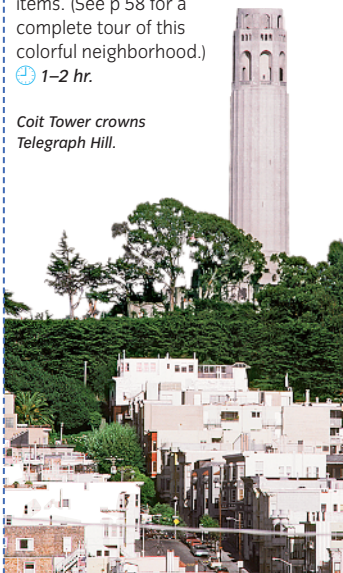
While on Telegraph Hill, look out for the flock of wild green parrots, descendents of escapee pets. ⌚ 45 min. *From Fisherman's wharf walk or take bus 39 to Coit Tower.* ☎ 415/362-0808. *Admission to the top \$3.75, \$2.50 seniors, \$1.50 kids 6–12. Daily 10am–6pm.*

**6 ★★ North Beach.** The immigrants from Genoa and Sicily who founded the Bay Area's fishing industry settled into North Beach in the 1870s—establishing a plethora of Italian restaurants, cafes, and bakeries. In the 1950s, the area's cafes and bars became a haven for writers and artists from the **Beat Generation** (p 30). Today the neighborhood is a combination of Mediterranean warmth and bohemian spirit. For more on this area, see p 52. ⌚ 1–2 hr. *From Coit Tower walk; or take bus 39 to Washington Sq. Best Mon–Sat from 11am–4pm. Sundays and early mornings shops are closed.*

**7 Mario's Bohemian Cigar Store.** Pick up sandwiches and enjoy them in **Washington Square Park** (p 54, bullet 5) across the street. **566 Columbus Ave. (at Union St.).** ☎ 415/362-0536. \$

**8 Chinatown.** The most densely populated neighborhood in San Francisco, Chinatown is home to over 14,000 residents. Take a walk down Grant Street to find shops filled with creative, eclectic knick-knacks. Chinatown locals shop on Stockton Street, which is teeming with grocery stores, herb shops, and vendors of ceremonial items. (See p 58 for a complete tour of this colorful neighborhood.) ⌚ 1–2 hr.

*Coit Tower crowns Telegraph Hill.*



## The Best Full Day Tours



If you have two days, plan your first day as detailed on p 6. For your second day, I recommend you start by going to jail! For many, a visit to Alcatraz is a major highlight—however, pre-reserved tickets are required. If you are unable to get tickets ahead of time, I've listed an alternative bay cruise. Following Alcatraz (or the cruise), you'll visit Lincoln Park, a less-visited but striking corner of San Francisco, and get a taste of 19th-century San Francisco on Nob Hill. **START: Pier 41, Fisherman's Wharf. Cable Car: Powell-Mason. Bus: 30. Streetcar: F.**




**1 ★★★ Alcatraz Island.** Spanish for “pelican,” Alcatraz was so named in 1775 by Juan Manuel Ayala for the birds that nested on its rocky shores. From the 1850s to 1933, the U.S. military used Alcatraz as a fort, protecting the bay's shoreline. In 1934, the government converted it into a maximum-security prison to house the country's most hardened criminals, including Al Capone, “Machine Gun” Kelly, and Robert Stroud (the Birdman). Given its sheer cliffs, frigid waters, and treacherous currents, Alcatraz was considered inescapable. However, the prison's upkeep cost a fortune; all supplies had to come by boat. After a 1963 prison escape, the prison was shut down. The island remained unoccupied until 1969, when Native Americans seized it to publicize American Indian rights' issues. They were expelled in 1971. Today, the National Park Service manages Alcatraz. Once inside, you'll receive a headset which plays an audio tour, including stories from former guards and inmates, and riveting tales of escape attempts. From October to mid-February, you can


tour the island itself on a walking path. Evenings, the more expensive “Alcatraz After Hours” tour is especially eerie. ⌚ 2–3 hr., including ferry ride. Take the 1st ferry of the day, if possible. Wear a jacket & walking shoes; it's an uphill walk from the ferry landing to the cellblock (motorized carts carry visitors with disabilities). The ferry sells snacks, but there's no food on the island. Pier 41, Fisherman's Wharf. 📞 415/773-1188 for information, or 415/705-5555 to reserve tickets. [www.nps.gov/alcatraz](http://www.nps.gov/alcatraz). **Note:** I highly recommend purchasing the ticket that includes the informative audio tour. Admission (ferry & audio tour): \$16, \$14 seniors 62+, \$11 kids 5–11. Without audio tour: \$12, \$9.75 seniors, \$8.25 kids 5–11. Winter daily 9:30am–2:15pm; summer daily 9:30am–4:15pm. Ferries run every half hour. Arrive 30 min. before departure in summer (45 min. in winter). After-hours tours depart at 6:15 & 7pm in summer & 4:20 & 5:10pm in winter. Bus: 30. Cable Car: Powell-Mason line. Streetcar: F.


Take a tour of Alcatraz, a former prison located on an island in the San Francisco Bay.





**2 ★ Red & White Fleet Bay Cruise.** If you were unable to pre-reserve Alcatraz tickets, take a 1-hour bay cruise with audio narration. You'll travel under the Golden Gate Bridge and around Alcatraz.



 1 hr.  Pier 43½  415/673-2900. [www.redandwhite.com](http://www.redandwhite.com). Ferry ride & audio tour: \$20, \$16 seniors 62+ & kids 12–18, \$12 kids 5–11, kids under 5 free. Check the website for discount fares. Transport: see bullet **1**.

**3** For a light lunch, the Fisherman's Wharf seafood counters sell fresh Dungeness crab from November to May. \$ (**Note:** If you don't see crates of live crabs, the crab is frozen and precooked.) For a sit-down meal with a view, try the **Franciscan** (p 105) at Pier 43½.  415/362-7733. \$\$\$

**4 ★ Lincoln Park.** This lovely park in the northwest corner of San Francisco boasts expansive lawns, eucalyptus trees, an 18-hole golf course, and breathtaking views. Walk north to the Land's End trailhead for a closer look at the Marin Headlands and western profile of the Golden Gate Bridge.  30 min.; best in the afternoon, when fog has burned off & the sun turns the Marin hills a golden color. Clement Ave. & 33rd Ave. Powell-Hyde Cable Car to Geary St., transfer to bus 38 to Geary Blvd. & 33rd Ave.; then walk or take bus 18 to Legion of Honor.

**5 ★★★ California Palace of the Legion of Honor.** Adding to Lincoln Park's splendor is this neo-classical memorial to California's soldiers lost in World War I, which opened on Armistice Day in 1924. An exact replica of the Legion of Honor Palace in Paris, it houses a fine collection of 4,000 years of art, with European paintings by Monet and

Rembrandt, among others, and international tapestries, prints, and drawings. It boasts one of the world's best collections of Rodin's sculptures, including an original cast of *The Thinker*.  1 hr. Clement St. & 34th Ave.  415/863-3330. [www.thinker.org](http://www.thinker.org). Admission \$15, \$13 seniors 65+, \$12 youths 12–17, \$3 kids 5–11; free to all every Tues. Tues–Sun 9:30am–5pm. Transport: see bullet **4**.

**6 Cable Car Museum and Powerhouse.** When British-born engineer Andrew Hallidie saw a horse and its heavy carriage fall backward down a steep San Francisco hill, he vowed to create a mechanical transportation device for the city. By 1873 the first cable car traversed Clay Street. Cable cars have no engines; instead, they are attached to an electrically powered cable that runs at a constant 9½-mph (15kph) rate through an underground rail. When it's time to stop, the car's conductor, or "gripper," pulls a lever to release the car's grip on the cable. Inside this free, fascinating museum, you'll see the cables that carry the cars. Once running over 600 cars, the system today operates only three lines.  20 minutes. 1201 Mason St. (at Washington St.)  415/474-1887.

Grab a bite of fresh dungeness crab at the Fisherman's Wharf.







A view of the Transamerica building from the top of Nob Hill.

[www.cablecarmuseum.com](http://www.cablecarmuseum.com). Free admission. Daily 10am–5pm; until 6pm Apr–Oct. Closed major holidays. Cable car: Powell lines.

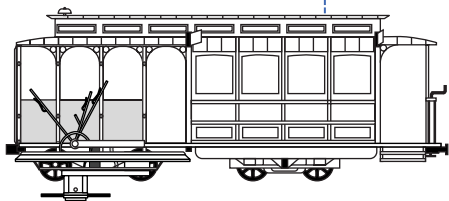
**7 ★ Grace Cathedral.** Following the destruction of the Crocker mansion, Crocker's family donated the land to the Episcopal Church to build Grace Cathedral. Completed in 1964, Grace Cathedral is built from reinforced concrete beaten to achieve a stonelike effect. Some features to look for include the main doors (stunning replicas of Ghiberti's bronze *Doors of Paradise* in the Baptistery of Florence) and the Singing Tower to the right of the main entrance, which has a 44-bell carillon. Inside, note the organ dating from 1840 and the impressive stained-glass windows, some of which depict such modern figures as Justice Thurgood Marshall, San Francisco native poet Robert Frost,

and Albert Einstein. ⌚ 25 min. 1100 California St. (at Taylor St.) [www.gracecathedral.org](http://www.gracecathedral.org). ☎ 415/749-6300. Free admission. Mon–Fri 7am–6pm, Sat 8am–6pm, Sun 7am–7pm. Bus: 1. Cable car: All lines.

**8 kids Huntington Park.** David Colton, who also participated in building the Southern Pacific Railroad, had his mansion here until he sold it to Collis Huntington in 1892. The mansion burned following the 1906 quake, and the lot lay empty for 9 years until Huntington donated it to the city. Framed by the granite walls that were once part of the Colton estate, the park is a lovely oasis in a very urban section of town. ⌚ 15 min. Taylor & California sts. Bus: 1. Cable car: All lines.

**9 Nob Hill.** This famous hillcrest neighborhood is named for its once wealthy residents, or “nabobs” as the elite of San Francisco were known. The “Big Four” railroad barons of the Southern Pacific Railroad—Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker, and Collis Huntington—built their ostentatious mansions here in the late 1870s. They were all destroyed in the fire following the 1906 quake. Today some of the city's most prestigious hotels occupy Nob Hill. ⌚ 20 min. Taylor & Sacramento sts. Bus: 1 from Clement St. & 33rd Ave. to Taylor & Sacramento sts. Visit any day during daylight hours, although the view from the Top of the Mark (see p 124), a fancy penthouse-level lounge, can also be appreciated at night.

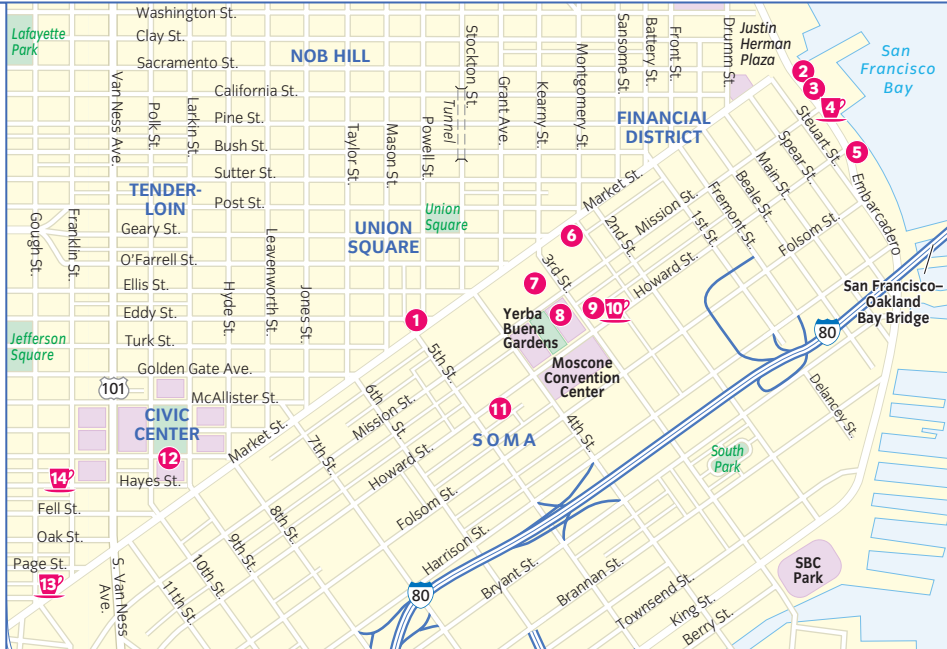
Learn how a cable car actually works at the Cable Car Museum.



## The Best in Three Days

- 1 F-Market streetcar
- 2 Ferry Building
- 3 Ferry Plaza
- 4 Farmer's Market
- 4' Frog Hollow Farm
- 5 Embarcadero Promenade
- 6 Garden Court
- 7 SoMa (South of Market)
- 8 Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
- 9 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)
- 10' Caffe Museo
- 11 California Academy of Sciences
- 12 Civic Center
- 13' Zuni Café
- 14' Vicolo Pizzeria

0 1/4 mi  
0 0.25 km



**I**f you've already made your way through "The Best in Two Days" you'll find your third full-day tour gives you a taste of the city's epicurean underpinnings, as well as its rich artistic and cultural life. You'll want the whole day for this tour. It can be done on foot, but the F-Market streetcar is an attraction in itself. **Note:** although the Civic Center is just a few blocks from SoMa, the east-west blocks are quite long. **START: From Union Sq., hop on the F-Market streetcar at the Powell St. station; exit at the Ferry Terminal loop.**

**1 ★ F-Market streetcar.** Several streetcars travel along Market Street, but the F line also heads along the scenic waterfront. Its streetcars are imported from around the world, including vintage cars from Europe and turn-of-the-20th-century trolleys from other U.S. cities. ⌚ 15 min.

*From Union Sq., enter at the Powell St. station; exit at the Ferry Terminal loop. Fare \$1.25, 35¢ seniors & kids 5–17. Avoid rush hour (M–F, before 9:30am & 4:30–6:30pm).*

**2 ★★ Ferry Building.** This 1898 building reopened in 2003 after a 4-year, multimillion-dollar renovation. Outside, you'll see a 240-foot (73m) clock tower. Inside is a collection of restaurants and gourmet-food stores offering artisan cheese, handcrafted chocolates, and other specialty foods. Make your way to the back of the building for a view of the Bay Bridge. If you are lucky, you'll visit on a day the **Farmer's Market** is being held. ⌚ 1 hr. *1 Ferry Building (at the Embarcadero & Market St.).*

*Mon–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat 9am–6pm; Sun 11am–5pm. [www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com](http://www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com). F or any Market St. streetcar to the Ferry Bldg. or Embarcadero; bus 2, 7, 14, 21, 66, or 71 to Steuart & Market sts.*

**3 ★★★ Ferry Plaza Farmers Market.** Four days a week (Tues, Thurs, Sat, and Sun), local farmers and food producers set up booths around the Ferry Building. Saturday mornings are busiest, as San Francisco residents make their regular market trek to stock up on organic fruits and vegetables, naturally raised meats, fresh-baked goods, and so on. Saturdays also feature trailer cars out back, from which city restaurants serve gourmet breakfasts. Given the penchant for using local, organic, and naturally raised produce and meats at many San Francisco restaurants—not to mention homes—this market is a hallmark of city life. ⌚ 1 hr. *1 Ferry Building (at the Embarcadero & Market St.). Tues, Thurs & Sun 10am–2pm; Sat 8am–2pm.*

*Take a ride on a vintage F-market line streetcar.*



**4** **Frog Hollow Farm.** Grab a coffee and a fruit-filled pastry here, before strolling along the scenic waterfront. **Ferry Building Market-place.** ☎ 415/445-0990. \$.

**5** ★★ **Embarcadero Promenade.** The 1989 earthquake destroyed the ugly elevated freeway that once obscured this lovely stretch of waterfront extending from SBC Park to Fisherman's Wharf. The wide sidewalk and scenic views make this a favored destination for pedestrians, bikers, and runners. Notice the Embarcadero Ribbon, a 2½-mile (4km) continuous line of glass encased in concrete, as well as the 13-foot- (3.9m-) tall metal pylons and bronze plaques embedded in the sidewalk, which are imprinted with photographs, drawings, poetry, and historical facts about the waterfront. ⌚ 30 min.–1 hr.; a walk in either direction is pleasant at any time of day, but avoid the traffic on weekday afternoons 4–6pm. Return to Market St. to catch the F-Market streetcar to the Montgomery St. station, or walk.

**6** **Garden Court.** The extravagant Palace Hotel astounded San Franciscans and bankrupted its

owner, who allegedly committed suicide a day before the grand opening in 1875. Three decades later the hotel was ravaged by one of the many fires that swept through San Francisco following the 1906 earthquake. The hotel was restored and reopened in 1909, unveiling the magnificent Garden Court with a domed ceiling made from 80,000 panes of glass. Regard this impressive room (which includes the dining room of the Garden Court Restaurant) and absorb its grandeur, then step into the Pied Piper to glimpse the \$2.5-million Maxfield Parrish painting of the same name. ⌚ 20 min. **2 New Montgomery St. (at Market St.).** ☎ 415/546-5089. [www.gardencourt-restaurant.com](http://www.gardencourt-restaurant.com). Mon–Fri 6:30am–2pm; Sat 6:30–10am; Sun 10am–2pm; tea Sat 2–4pm. BART/Muni: Powell or Montgomery.

**7** ★★★ **SoMa (South of Market).** This former industrial area south of Market Street has become a major center for art and entertainment, museums, and galleries. ⌚ to stroll through the neighborhood: 2–4 hr. Visit any time during daylight hours. **Note:** SFMOMA (see bullet **9**) is closed Wednesdays.

*The ceiling of the Garden Court is a glittering masterpiece of glass.*

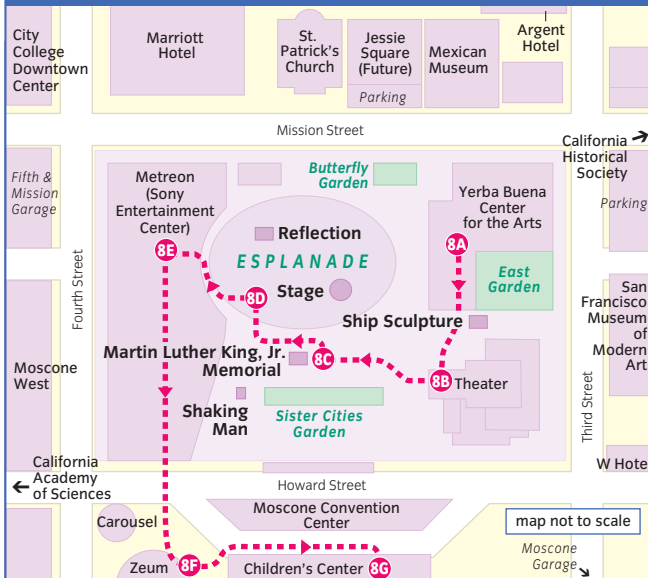




**8 ★★★ kids Yerba Buena Center for the Arts** is the cultural anchor of SoMa. It serves as a major arts-and-entertainment center, with cultural programs for adults, educational and recreational facilities for kids, and lovely gardens that serve

as an oasis in a very urban neighborhood. *Best time: daylight hours. Weekdays you'll see office workers taking a lunch break in its lovely grounds, while on weekends families with kids enjoy the slides and play areas.*

## Yerba Buena Center for the Arts/Yerba Buena Gardens



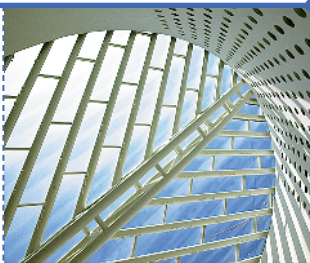
**8A ★★★ kids Yerba Buena Center for the Arts** contains three galleries for high-tech and traditional exhibitions, plus a dance space. The **8B Center for the Arts Theater** hosts dance, music, and theater performances. An architect, sculptor, and poet came together to design the **8C Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial** and its 50-foot waterfall. From May through October, the Yerba Buena Festival brings world-class musicians to the **8D Esplanade** for free concerts. The **8E Sony Metreon Entertainment Center** is a massive complex with movie theaters, shopping, and attractions like Maurice Sendak's

*Where the Wild Things Are.* 🕒 1 hr. 101 4th St. ☎ 800/638-7366. [www.metreon.com](http://www.metreon.com). Free admission. Attractions \$6–\$12. Daily 10am–10pm. **8F Zeum** is a hands-on science museum for older kids. 701 Mission St. ☎ 415/777-2800. [www.zeum.com](http://www.zeum.com). Admission \$7, \$5 kids 4–18. Wed–Sun 11am–5pm. The **8G Children's Center** has bowling, ice-skating, a carousel, and an outdoor playground. *Ice-skating & bowling:* 750 Folsom St. ☎ 415/777-3727. Skating \$7, \$5.50 kids under 13. Bowling Sun–Thurs 10am–10pm, to midnight Fri–Sat. \$3.50/game or \$20/hr. 🕒 1–3 hr. Between 3rd, 4th, Mission & Folsom sts.

**9 ★★★ San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA).** In 1995, SFMOMA moved in to its \$62-million home, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta. The permanent collection includes over 15,000 works by the likes of Henri Matisse, Jackson Pollock, and Georgia O'Keeffe. The first major museum to recognize photography as art form, SFMOMA also has numerous excellent examples by Ansel Adams, Man Ray, and others. Not enough of the permanent collection is on display at any one time, but temporary exhibits are usually excellent. ☎ 1½ hr. 151 3rd St. (between Mission & Howard sts.). ☎ 415/357-4000. [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org). Admission \$10, \$7 seniors 62+, \$6 students with ID, free for kids under 13. Half price Thurs 6–9pm. Free to all 1st Tues of the month. Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Tues 11am–6pm. Closed Wed & major holidays. Opens at 10am in summer. Bus: 15, 30, 45. BART/Muni: Montgomery St. Best time: weekdays.

**10☎ Caffe Museo.** SFMOMA's on-site cafe sells excellent soups, sandwiches, and salads (151 3rd St.; ☎ 415/357-4500; \$).

**11 ★ kids California Academy of Sciences.** The country's fourth-largest natural-history museum will be in SoMa until 2008, while a new facility is built in Golden Gate Park. The temporary location is not as expansive as its old home, but does include terrific temporary exhibits, fascinating animal life in the Steinhart Aquarium, and twice-daily, narrated penguin feedings. ☎ 1–2 hr.; weekday afternoons are best, as mornings are full with school tours. 875 Howard St. (at 5th St.). ☎ 415/321-8000. [www.calacademy.org](http://www.calacademy.org).



SFMOMA's skylight is just one of the museum's architectural highlights.

Admission \$7, \$4.50 seniors & kids 12–17 & students, \$2 kids 4–11, free for kids under 3, free for all the 1st Wed of the month. Daily 10am–5pm.

**12 ★★ Civic Center.** Less than a decade after the 1906 earthquake destroyed City Hall, San Francisco completed an ambitious new administrative and cultural center in grandiose, Beaux Arts style. It contains City Hall, with its 308-foot- (92m-) tall dome, the homes of the San Francisco Symphony, Opera, and Ballet, the main public library, the Asian Art Museum, and other notable buildings. For more details on the Civic Center, refer to the neighborhood tour on page 48. ☎ 1 hr. Most Civic Center buildings are bordered by Hayes, Franklin & Hyde sts. & Golden Gate Ave. Best time: weekdays during daylight hours.

**13☎ Zuni Café.** Treat yourselves to dinner at an SF institution, one of the first purveyors of innovative California cuisine (1658 Market St. ☎ 415/552-2522; \$\$\$; see also p 116). For a delicious (and cheaper) alternative, head to **14☎ Vicolo Pizzeria**, an alley-side gem serving memorable cornmeal crust pizzas (150 Ivy Alley ☎ 415/863-2382; \$; see also p 115). ●