

ONE SHORT DAY

San Francisco in Less Than 24 Hours

Twenty-four hours is not a lot of time. But with some advance planning, lots of caffeine, and really comfortable shoes, you can see quite a bit of the City by the Bay. To maximize your time, our one-day tour starts and ends in Union Square and sticks primarily to the northeast portion of the city. You can go farther afield on your next visit.

BY LAUREN HAUPTMAN PHOTOS BY ROBERT DEBUSSCHERE



7:30 am Yes, it's early, but there's a lot of ground to cover. Start with Swedish pancakes at Union Square institution Sears Fine Food (439 Powell St.) unless it is a busy Saturday. Then head south down Powell to Market Street, and make a left. Head toward the bay (east) on Market until you hit the Ferry Building.

If it is Saturday, try breakfast at the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market. Some of San Francisco's best restaurants set up outposts here, and you'll have a fantastic breakfast while taking in the bay views.

After breakfast, stroll through the Ferry Building Marketplace's gourmet shops. Pick up some fleur de sel caramels at Recchiuti Confections or Parisian macaroons at Miette; stash them for a sugar pick-me-up later.

Exit the Ferry Building, and head west on Market Street back toward Union Square.

10 am Line up for the cable car at Powell and Market streets. Hop on the Powell/Mason line, which will take you to Fisherman's Wharf. Sing the Rice-A-Roni song along the way.

When you get to the final stop, hop off and head toward the water, then east (right, if facing the water) about four blocks to Pier 39. Visit the famous sea lions who make their homes on the docks.

11 am Turn back, and head west to Fisherman's Wharf, where you'll find boats and T-shirts as far as the eye can see. If you're hungry, get some chowder (preferably in a sourdough bread bowl) or fresh crab (in season) from one of the many stands that sit along the wharf.

Still going west along the water, you'll hit Ghirardelli Square (on your left at Beach and Larkin streets). Shop, then sit down for a hot-fudge sundae at the Ghirardelli Ice Cream and Chocolate Shop. If you're not hungry, order a small one and force yourself.

12:15 pm Continue west along the water to Aquatic Park, which was built in 1939 as a public bathing club. Feel free to walk through the National Maritime Museum, which is also a good spot for a bathroom break.

Keep heading west on the Golden Gate Promenade, up a slight incline ("slight" is relative in San Francisco; be thankful you're not one of

the unwitting bike riders struggling up the hill) into Fort Mason. On the top of the hill to your left (Upper Fort Mason) is a lesser-known park with a beautiful view of the city.

Down the slope and to your right is Fort Mason Center. If you're hungry (we're always hungry), stop in Building A, get something veggie wonderful from Greens to Go, and perch yourself along the water to eat your lunch.

1:15 pm Continue west along the Marina Green for breathtaking views of the bay, Alcatraz, and, of course, the Golden Gate Bridge. Pass the boats of the Marina, as well as joggers, bikers, and puppies. Walk along Marina Boulevard to Baker Street, where you'll turn left. To your right is the splendid Palace of Fine Arts, a remnant of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exhibition. Feed the ducks in the lagoon as you continue along Baker to Union Street, and make a left.

Sit down for a hot-fudge sundae at the Ghirardelli Ice Cream and Chocolate Shop. If you're not hungry, order a small one and force yourself.

2 pm Union Street, between Fillmore and Franklin streets in the Cow Hollow neighborhood, is one of San Francisco's favorite shopping destinations, with lots of local shops and fewer chain stores. There are also great cafés in which to grab a snack and people-watch. Walk up one side of Union to Franklin, and back on the other side until you are back at Fillmore.

3 pm At this point, you can either climb a crazy steep hill south up Fillmore Street or hop on the Muni 22 Fillmore bus to Pacific Street. The stretch of Fillmore between Pacific and Bush is our favorite San Francisco treat, as some of the city's best local shops and restaurants live here.

3:45 pm Go to the corner of Fillmore and California streets (you can also take the 22 bus straight there from Union Street), and hop on the

Muni 1 California bus. Take the bus up several hills to Jones Street—the very top of Nob Hill. The view toward the bay from the corner of Jones and Clay is one of the most photographed in the city.

Head south on Jones for one block, turn left on Sacramento, then right on Taylor. Look to your right: No matter your religious affiliation, Grace Cathedral is impressive. Up the steps and through the gorgeous front doors is the AIDS Interfaith Chapel, which hosts a triptych completed by artist Keith Haring weeks before his death.

Continue east on California Street (toward the bay). Past the park on your left will be the Fairmont Hotel, rebuilt by Hearst Castle architect Julia Morgan after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The Beaux-Arts lobby is worth a peek. Continue east on California to Powell Street, and either hop on a cable car headed back down the hill or walk straight down Powell to Union Square.

4:30 pm Hop off at Post Street, and enter Union Square. On the Powell Street side is the Tix Bay Area booth. Get discounted tickets to the ballet, opera, or symphony for tonight.

5:30 pm The ballet, opera, and symphony all make their home on Van Ness Avenue in the Civic Center area, which is bordered by Hayes Valley. This very hip area is home to many uniquely San Francisco shops and tons of restaurants. Take a taxi from Union Square to Hayes Valley (the corner of Hayes and Gough streets is a good drop-off point). Have a pre-performance dinner anywhere along Hayes or Gough.

10:30 pm When your show ends, head to Citizen Cake at the corner of Gough and Grove streets. Acclaimed local chef Liz Falkner made her name with her incredible pastries, so it's the perfect place for post-show dessert.

11:30 pm Hop in a cab—cabs here are not always easy to hail, so you may want to have one called for you. Get dropped off at Union Square's Sir Francis Drake Hotel at Post and Powell streets, and head straight up 21 floors to Harry Denton's Starlight Room for a glass of champagne, 360-degree views, and music, music, music.

This is the perfect place to spend the rest of your one not-so-short day in San Francisco, dancing the night away.

