



San Francisco's Fun Facilities

San Francisco's often thought of as a city for sophisticates. Actually, it's a fun town for all, especially small fry. Thanks to a young-at-heart citizenry, the downtown abounds with facilities which seem tailor-made for the family's vacation budget.

Take, for instance, that cross between a Toonerville Trolley and a roller coaster, the San Francisco cable car. After 100 years of service, these one-of-a-kind carriers are taking a \$58.2 million breather. That's what it's costing to renovate the cars, their tracks, cables and control center. But they'll be back, clattering up soaring hills and down swooping dales, by the summer of 1984.

In the meantime, would-be passengers can climb aboard and take pictures of cable cars at four sites: Hyde Street Pier at Aquatic Park; 101 California Street, and Justin Herman Plaza, foot of Market Street. The Cable Car Museum containing three vintage cars, including the original launched in 1973; 57 scale models of every type of cable car ever operated in the city; historical photos, and machinery, is located during the interim on the podium level of Four Embarcadero Center. It's open without charge from 10 to 6 Mondays through Saturdays. At the Victorian Plaza and Fisherman's Wharf — turn-about points for two of the city's three cable car lines — a nautical wonderland unfolds for small fry. Admission is free to the National Maritime Museum building's fascinating collection of ship figureheads, replicas, sea anchors, shipwreck relics and all manner of sea lore, open from 10 to 5 daily at Beach and Polk Streets.

The early (1890-1915) California coastal vessels moored at Hyde Street Pier, a block east of the Maritime Museum, have been restored from stem to stern. Here you can clamber over a square-ended scow-schooner, hearing their sagas over By-Word headsets. This, too, is an admission-free component of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

A fleet of brightly painted fishing boats berths a few steps east of Hyde Pier. The picture they make bobbing in their basins or chugging into ports to land their shining catches is one for a child's memory book.

Fisherman's Wharf itself, with its sidewalk seafood stalls, steaming crab pots, curios and carnival atmosphere, has a spellbinding effect on young beholders.

From Piers 39 and 41 you can catch a sightseeing boat for an hour and 15 minute cruise of the Bay, passing beneath the mighty spans of the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges



San Francisco's Lincoln Park Municipal Golf Course is considered one of the roughest in the country ... because you can't keep your eye on the ball. You look north and see the Golden Gate Bridge (in background). Look east and you'll see another span, the eight-and-a-half mile long Bay Bridge. Look behind you and you see the sparkling white towers of The City itself. The 18-hole public course is situated near Land's End where the Pacific begins. (photo courtesy of San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau)

(fare \$4 for 5-11 year olds, \$8 for adults). Launches depart every 45 minutes between 9 and 2:45 (later in summer) for the once-dread island of Alcatraz (\$2 for ages 5-11, \$3.50 for adults). Helicopters home at Pier 43, taking off from 9:30 a.m. to sundown on five-minute aerial tours of the port (adults \$12, kids \$6). Or you can pack a picnic hamper for a day's outing on Angel Island. Water carriers cast off from Pier 43 on weekends and holidays for the 730-acre island, once an army bastion and immigration station, and the picturesque port of Tiburon. The Angel excursion is \$5; \$2.50 for 5-11'ers, roundtrip.

While you still have your sea legs, climb the gangplank of the "Balclutha," the exhibition ship riding the tide at Pier 43. Visitors can prow the passageways of this three-masted deepwaterman, reliving adventures from Joseph Conrad, Richard Henry Dana and Robert Louis Stevenson, any time between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. daily (adults \$2; children under 12 free with adult, 25¢ without).

Beyond the "Balclutha," a moldering maritime facility has been transformed into a rustic, two-tiered village. Pier 39, as this specialty complex is called, juts 1,000 feet into the bay and is bracketed by boat marinas. Its attractions include outdoor entertainment, a two-decker carousel and Funtasia with a bucking mechanical bull, bumper cars, a simulated (on film) roller coaster ride and over 200 video games.

The 32 bus covers the waterfront. From it you can see what ships are in port and where along the Embarcadero you'd like to alight for a closer look.

The Ferry Building, an Embarcadero landmark since 1903, is a terminal again. From its south side dock ferries depart frequently for the Mediterranean-like village of Sausalito and Larkspur Landing near San Quentin. The one-way crossings cost \$2.50 weekdays, half-fare for 6-12 year olds.

Back downtown, it's a short trek from the Wild West to the fabled Far East. The Wells Fargo Bank's History Room at 420 Montgomery Street in the financial district houses an authentic Concord Stage, shotguns, treasure boxes, gold specimens and dioramas depicting the Barbary Coast — open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on banking days, without charge. Chinatown, two blocks up Nob Hill, is a perpetual street pageant. The market sector north of Jackson Street on Grant Avenue and along nearby Stockton Street offers some wondrous sights for young eyes. Storefronts display such exotic edibles as dried snails and sea horses, lichee nuts, sharks' fins, eels, octopuses, tanks-full of fish, rows of golden-glazed roast ducks.

As everyone knows, the Golden Gate Bridge is one of San Francisco's most magnificent accessories. But not all visitors are aware that they can walk across this spectacular span, enjoying a priceless view toll-free. Your little leaguers will get a big thrill out of gazing down-down-

(continued on page 56)

(continued from page 55)

down into the stacks of oceangoing vessels from the 220 foot high pedestrian-way. They may even get a gull's view of the flying deck of a mighty aircraft carrier. The sidewalk is also open to cyclists. Bridgebound buses depart every half hour for Marin County from downtown points (phone 332-6600). It's a 75¢ ride to the toll plaza on the city side of the bridge and a 3.4 mile hike to the bridge's northern end and back.

In the Presidio, directly below the bridge's southernmost support, stands a Civil War relic. Built between 1853-1861 to guard the Golden Gate, Fort Point became a National Historic Site by act of Congress in 1970. It's open to the public without charge from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

Northeast of the Presidio's main gate, the Palace of Fine

Arts, a romantic relic of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, rises out of a swan-filled lagoon. Restored in 1967, the Palace houses an intriguing Exploratorium of science, technology and human perception — under 18 free; call 563-3200 for hours.

Point Lobos is another good place to savor the flavor of this maritime metropolis and entertain the kids in the bargain. The Cliff House is a regular stop for sightseeing coaches and the No. 38 bus originating downtown on Geary Street. Seal Roacks' frolicsome colony of sea lions can be seen from the Cliff House and the public esplanade behind it.

Below Cliff House Village the Pacific combers roll in
(continued on page 57)



Restaurant patrons at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco can watch the brightly colored boats chug into port with their catches. (photo by Richard Osborn courtesy of San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau)

(Continued from page 56)

along Ocean Beach. Though intrepid board-surfers can be seen in action at Kelly's Cove just south of the Cliff House, would-be swimmers should be warned that the inshore currents are too treacherous to permit more than wading.

San Francisco's great Zoo can be reached from the beach on the L streetcar from Downtown Market Street. This four-footed world of everything from antelopes to zebras is open from 10 to 5 daily — \$2.50; free for youngsters under 15 when accompanied by an adult (call 661-4844 for information). Among its more than 1,000 inhabitants are snow leopards, pigmy hippopotamuses, musk oxen, siamangs and white rhinoceroses. Talking boxes tell all about them when you turn a key. So do the guides who take visitors on a 20-minute Zebra Zephyr tour of the 70-acre grounds (children 75¢, adults \$1.50).

In the adjacent Children's Zoo youngsters of all ages can pet, feed and play with baby animals. There is also a Nature Trail where young environmentalists can commune with raccoons, rabbits, skunks, opossums and the like in their natural habitat. The playground next door has sand pits, slides and a carousel.

Golden Gate Park is a recreational story in itself. Its magnificently landscaped 1,017 acres are a center for every sort of outdoor diversion from picnicking to horseback riding. There's instructive entertainment to be had at the Park's Steinhart Aquarium, home of more than 10,000 marine denizens, including large, fast-swimming species circling in a giant spiral of sea water, and Morrison Planetarium where celestial productions are projected on the 65-foot dome. On the shores of nearby

Stow Lake, a mile and a quarter around, you can rent waterbugs, waterbikes, canoes and motor boats.

On the opposite side of the Golden Gate, within sight of the skyscrapers, is an astonishing sweep of open country. The Marin County portion of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area reaches north for 20 miles, encompassing rugged headlands, beaches, coastal fortifications, lagoons, picnic facilities, wildlife sanctuaries, redwoods, ranchlands and 100 miles of trails. What's more, it adjoins another vast federal preserve, the 67,000-acre Point Reyes National Seashore, to the north.

Twenty-three miles south of San Francisco, Marine World/Africa U.S.A. at Redwood city harbors performing killer whales and dolphins, parrots and aquarian acts, a Jungle Theater, elephant and camel rides in a 60-acre waterland and wildlife preserve and a "Whale-of-a-Time" play area for 3-14 year olds. Exotic animals roam free in its jungle compounds. General admission is \$9.95 for adults, \$7.95 for pre-teenagers, no charge for toddlers.

Another multi-faceted family fun center is situated 45 miles south of the city at Santa Clara. Marriott's Great America combines the latest in thrill rides, a double-decker carousel, theatrical extravaganzas and historic theme-towns (Yukon Territory, Orleans Place, Yankee Harbor, etc.).

This gives but an inkling of the funfest San Francisco has in store for holiday-minded families. The point we hope we've made is that this is an easy place to entertain children. And at modest cost. ■

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