

San Francisco TOURISM TIPS



THE PERFECT DAY IN CHINATOWN

A SELF-GUIDED ONE-DAY TOUR OF THIS “CITY WITHIN A CITY”

10am: Start Your Walk at Portsmouth Square

This is the central meeting place for many locals in this neighborhood. Stroll through the park and watch the locals in action. You will see everything from individuals doing Tai Chi to groups of men smoking and chatting the day away.

10:15am: Exit the Park on Washington Street

Once you leave the park, cross the street to the side where you see the Chinatown Restaurant. From here, walk uphill about a half a block until you see the green and red East West Bank.

This building was the first Chinese telephone exchange in the US. The telephone exchange moved out many years ago and it is now home to the East West Bank.. It features traditional architecture and will give you a small sample of the beautiful and colorful buildings throughout this neighborhood.

Walk back down the hill to Wentworth Place and take a left. As you stroll down this alley, take a look around for a behind the scenes look at local life in this district.

Walk one block to Jackson Street for a look at the pharmacy on the corner of Wentworth and Jackson. It's the oldest pharmacy in SF's Chinatown.

From here, head across the street and up the hill to Beckett Street. This is another small “alley” street.

QUICK FACTS

San Francisco is home to the largest Chinatown district in the US. It's also the only one with an authentic Chinatown Gate in North America.

This tour takes you on an amazing journey of this district's top attractions and activities. [Click here for the full itinerary with a few more details on each stop.](#)

11am: Admire the Ma Tsu Temple

As you walk down Beckett Street, you will see a building with red circular decorations out front (featured in the picture above). That is the Ma Tsu Temple.

When you arrive, step inside for an up close look at this modern Buddhist and Daoist Temple.

You may feel a little uncomfortable at first, but this temple welcomes visitors. The woman that works here most of the time does not speak much English, so don't be offended if she is unable to answer your questions.

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12pm: Sample a Fortune Cookie at the Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory

Your next stop is about two blocks away. Head back to Jackson Street and take a right (you will head slightly uphill). Cross Grant Street and look for Ross Alley. It's about a half block up from Grant Street.

Head down Ross Alley about a half a block until you reach the Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory. It's a small building, so don't walk too fast or you might just pass by it!

Even though this is a working factory, they welcome visitors. When you arrive, you will see a man sitting by the door and he will indicate if it's okay to enter.

You can then step inside to see how they make their fortune cookies. He usually offers up a sample. You can also buy a bag off the shelf (just make sure you have the nice gentleman help you).

You can take pictures, but they will request a \$1 'donation'.

1pm: Enjoy Dim Sum for Lunch

The great thing about Dim Sum is that it is cheap, cheap, cheap! You can also try a variety of dishes.

One of my favorite places is Delicious Dim Sum at 752 Jackson Street. They are open every day except Wednesday (an alternative is Good Mon Kok Bakery at 1039 Stockton Street).

2pm: Learn the Local History at the Chinese Historical Society

After lunch, head north on Stockton Street to Clay Street. Head up the hill one and a half blocks to the Chinese Historical Society Museum. This small museum focuses on the history of the Chinese in America.

Here you can learn more about what it was like to cross the Pacific Ocean with the dreams of starting a new life in the US. They also have an amazing display that outlines the impact of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

3:30pm: Walk Through the Kong Chow Temple

Head back down to Stockton Street and take a right. The second building on your right (855 Stockton) houses the Kong Chow Temple. Take the stairs or the elevator to the top floor to find the temple.

This temple also welcomes visitors.

It's an important temple as it displays the oldest Chinese artifacts in the US. It's small and a little dusty, but look past this in order to find this temple's real beauty.

4:30pm Shop for Bargains on Grant Avenue

End the day with a little shopping. In Chinatown. Here you will find a variety of things from jewelry to SF themed gifts.

If you are a true bargain shopper or are more adventurous, then walk through the alleys just one block up from Grant Avenue to find some even better deals!

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