



San Francisco International Dragon Boat Festival

Fellow Paddlers,

The following pages contain some useful information on various items such as currency exchange, entertainment, and restaurant suggestions that are, first and foremost, within walking distance of the Parc55 Hotel. If you're staying at the Parc55 Hotel, I highly encourage you to just walk around and explore the immediate area to familiarize yourself with the street names. There's a lot to see. Hopefully, these pages will help make your stay in San Francisco more enjoyable and stress-free when it comes to planning on what to do next or where to eat. So enjoy!! Read on and make sure you find the two secret tips.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE:

- San Francisco International Airport – not the best place for exchange rates, but taxis, shuttles, and BART **do not** accept foreign cash. Just exchange enough to get you going.
- Bank of America – 1 Powell St. Located across the street from the Parc55 hotel. Open M-F 9am-6pm, Sat 9am-2pm. Your best bet at getting the best exchange rate. No commission fee charged.
- Money Exchange (The Change Group) – 114 Powell St., between Ellis St. and O'Farrell St. Located 2 blocks from the Parc55 hotel. Check it out and compare. Commission fee may be charged
- Parc55 Hotel – hotel guests only. Perhaps as a last resort only as I'm sure their exchange rates aren't the best.

CONVENIENCE STORE / GROCERY / PHARMACY:

If you need to stock up on bottled water, need bananas, or Motrin, they're all within a few blocks away from the Parc55 hotel.

- Ellis & Powell Grocery – 119 Ellis St., between Cyril Magnin and Powell Streets. Located ½ block from the Parc55 hotel.
- Fred's Food Mart – 300 Mason St., at corner of O'Farrell St. Located 2 blocks from the Parc55 hotel.
- Rite Aid (pharmacy)– 60 O'Farrell, between Stockton and Grant Sts. Located 4 blocks from the Parc55 hotel.
- Walgreen's (pharmacy) – 825 Market, near corner of 4th and Market; 135 Powell St. between Ellis and O'Farrell Streets.

INTERNET AND EMAIL :

- Sony Metreon Center – 101 4th St., (at corner of Mission St.). Free email computer stations upstairs in the Sony Store. Located 3 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. 15-minute time limit (self-imposed).
- CompUSA – 1 O’Farrell St. (at corner of Grant Ave.). Free computer stations inside. Located 5 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. 15-minute time limit (if others are also waiting).
- Parc55 Hotel – Broadband connection in every room and in their Business Center. Fees applicable.

ENTERTAINMENT:

ONLY IN SAN FRANCISCO –

- Cable Car Ride – 1 Powell St. The cable car turnaround hub is only 1 block from the hotel. Though lines can be long at times, you can ride a cable car into Chinatown, North Beach (Little Italy), and Fisherman’s Wharf. Can purchase tickets at the Parc55 Hotel.
- MLB Baseball Game - Check out the San Francisco Giants and their home at SBC Park, considered one of the country’s best baseball stadiums. The SF Giants are at home playing against the Philadelphia Phillies (8/22 – 8/24), the New York Giants (8/26 – 8/28), and the Colorado Rockies (8/29 – 8/31). Visit the official website for the full schedule and start times at www.sfgiants.com
- Golden Gate Bridge – One of the most universally recognized landmarks the world over. A better photo op would be to walk across the bridge and up to the Marin Headlands where you can have an unimpeded view of the entire bridge and SF city below you. Great even on foggy days.
- Fisherman’s Wharf – Purely for tourists, but still fun nonetheless. Must have the Dungeness crab if they’re in season. Other highlights include Pier 39 and the resident sea lions, Ghirardelli Square, and The Cannery.
- Alcatraz Island – Since 1858 Alcatraz has been successively a fortification, a U.S. military prison, an army disciplinary barracks, a federal penitentiary, and an American Indian stronghold. Sign up for a tour at Fisherman’s Wharf and see firsthand why even in ruins, Alcatraz is a spellbinder and where "One of the prisoners said it was like living in a tomb." More information at Fisherman’s Wharf.
- Chinatown – The oldest Chinatown in the country. The entrance to Chinatown at Grant Avenue and Bush Street is called the "Dragon's Gate." Inside are 24 blocks of hustle and bustle, most of it taking place along Grant Avenue, the oldest street in San Francisco. This city within a city is best explored on foot; exotic shops, renowned restaurants, food markets, temples and small museums comprise its boundaries. You can buy ancient potions from herb shops, relax and enjoy a "dim sum" lunch or witness the making of fortune cookies. The Dragon’s Gate is only 7 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
 - additional information and tours can be arranged with the **Chinatown Community Development Center** 1525 Grant Avenue, 415.984.1453. Check out their Chinatown “Back Alley Tours”. Really cool!! <http://www.adoptanalleyway.org/cats/tourinfo.html>
 - **Chinese Culture Center** 750 Kearny Street 415.986.1822. They also do guided Chinatown tours as well. <http://www.c-c-c.org/act/walk.html>

- Beach Blanket Babylon – 678 Green Street (Club Fugazi). Steve Silver's zany musical revue spoofs popular culture, featuring excellent singers sporting enormous hats and stunning costumes. In its 25th year, Wednesday-Thursday 8pm, Friday-Saturday 7pm & 10pm, Sundays 3pm & 7pm. One of the most fun theater shows you'll ever see. Information 415.421.4222 Admission: \$25 - \$70
- San Francisco City Hall – 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place. San Francisco City Hall has often been referred to as "The Crown Jewel" of the finest ensemble of classical architecture in America. It was originally opened in 1915, and is now designated a national landmark. Many regard it as one of the most important buildings in America. Its dome is one of the largest in the world, rising 306 feet above the civic center national historic district. Located 7 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. Free tours avail.

Secret Tip # 1: Visit www.sfvisitor.org. Be sure to send for the free Visitor's Kit. This San Francisco Basic Visitor Information Kit is the quintessential tool for planning your next visit to San Francisco. Stop by the Visitor Information Center located below the cable car turnaround at Market and Powell Streets to pick up the latest edition of the San Francisco Book, our guide to what's currently happening in The City.

SHOPPING –

The Parc55 hotel is located right in the heart of Union Square, San Francisco's famous shopping district. Everything and anything you want to buy is within walking distance. If you walk within 6 blocks of every direction from the hotel, you should well cover all that Union Square has to offer. Just go exploring. Listed are a few suggestions to check out.

- San Francisco Centre – located at 5th and Market Streets. Very nice mall with Nordstrom's as their anchor store, occupying the top 4 floors. 1 block from the hotel.
- Macy's - 170 O'Farrell Street. This is the flagship store on the entire West Coast. There's even a separate building for Macy's Men across the street. Located 4 blocks from the hotel.
- DSW Shoes – 111 Powell St., between Ellis and O'Farrell Streets. Shoes, shoes, and more shoes!!! All brand name men's and women's shoes at discounted prices. 2 blocks from the hotel.
- The Wine Club – 953 Harrison St., between 5th and 6th Streets. Looking to take home some choice California Napa and Sonoma Valley vines, but don't have time to go to the actual wineries? The Wine Club has a very wide selection at very reasonable prices. Approximately 4 blocks from the hotel. Please visit www.thewineclub.com for more information.
- The North Face – 180 Post St., between Grant and Kearny Streets. Who hasn't heard of the North Face? Offering some of the coolest tech gear anyone could ever want.
- The North Face Outlet – 1325 Howard St, (between 9th and 10th Streets). Discontinued or previous season products at a fraction of the retail price. It's worth the 25-minute walk from the hotel.
- Nike Town – 278 Post St., corner of Stockton St. Sporting apparel for almost every known sport played. Nike's "swoosh" logo is almost universally recognized. Just remind yourself when paying for those \$150 pair of shoes that you're gonna "Just Do It".
- R.E.I. (Recreational Equipment, Inc.) – 840 Brannan St. The M.E.C. for all you Canadians, although I think the products available here are better. For all your outdoor recreational gear, look no further. Located 9 long blocks from the Parc55 hotel. About a 20 minute walk, but well worth it!!

MUSEUMS / GALLERIES –

- San Francisco MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) and Yerba Buena Gardens– 151 3rd Street (between Mission and Howard Sts.). One of the world’s most innovative museums of modern and contemporary art. The first museum on the West Coast devoted solely to 20th century art. Located 5 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. Please visit www.sfmoma.org for more information.
- San Francisco Asian Art Museum – 200 Larkin Street. The SF Asian Art Museum is one of the largest museums in the Western world devoted exclusively to Asian art. Its holdings include nearly 15,000 treasures spanning 6,000 years of history, representing cultures throughout Asia. Located 6 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. Please visit www.asianart.org for more information.
- Gallery Row – fine art galleries located along GEARY STREET from Stockton to Taylor Streets. Beginning street located 4 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- California Academy of Sciences – 875 Howard Street, between 4th and 5th Streets. Founded in 1853 as the first scientific institution in the West, the California Academy of Sciences' mission is to explore and explain the natural world. The Academy has 2 main areas all rolled into one location, a Natural History Museum and the Steinhart Aquarium. Visit www.calacademy.org for more information.
- Exploratorium – 3601 Lyon St. (Palace of Fine Arts). Housed within the walls of San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts, the Exploratorium is a collage of over 650 science, art, and human perception exhibits. The Exploratorium is a leader in the movement to promote museums as educational centers. Really cool, hands-on, and interactive exhibits. Visit www.exploratorium.edu for more information.
- Japanese Tea Garden – corner of Tea Garden @ Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (Golden Gate Park). The Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park is the oldest public Japanese garden in California. It is a direct descendant of the California Mid-Winter Exposition held in the park in 1894. The Tea House within the Japanese Tea Garden is a place where you can sip tea and quietly converse while admiring the surrounding beauty. Please visit www.frp.org/japanese_tea_garden.asp for more information.
- San Francisco Cable Car Museum – 1201 Mason St. (corner of Washington St.). Operated since 1873, the only cable-driven car in the county. This museum traces the history of the cable car as well as displays the mechanicals that are still in operation. Free Admission. Open 10:00am – 6:00pm. Please visit www.cablecarmuseum.org for more information.

THEATER / PLAYS / SHOWS / MOVIES –

- TIX Box Office – Union Square Plaza (corner of Geary and Powell Streets). Buy half-price tickets to various theater shows and plays during the day of performance. Get there early in the morning. Box office located 4 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Beach Blanket Babylon – 678 Green Street (Club Fugazi). Steve Silver's zany musical revue spoofs popular culture, featuring excellent singers sporting enormous hats and stunning costumes. In its 25th year, Wednesday-Thursday 8pm, Friday-Saturday 7pm & 10pm, Sundays 3pm & 7pm. One of the most fun theater shows you'll ever see. A San Francisco “must see”. Information 415.421.4222 Admission: \$25 - \$70.

- American Conservatory Theater – 415 Geary Street. San Francisco's Tony Award-winning theater company, A.C.T. The 2005-2006 season opens with the CanStage production of *The Overcoat*, created by award-winning physical theater artists Morris Panych and Wendy Gorling, adapted from Nikolai Gogol's short story "The Overcoat" and featuring music by Dmitri Shostakovich. A sprawling, startling, and funny theatrical event featuring a cast of 22 actors, a two-story set, and more than 80 costumes, *The Overcoat* has been hailed by Time magazine as "a piece of bravura theater-making that mixes Buster Keaton with Gogol and purrs like a Rolls Royce." A bold portrait of one man's dangerous desire to be accepted, *The Overcoat* opens at the Geary Theater on the heels of sold-out international tours. 415.749.2228 (Box Office). Visit www.act-sf.org for more information.
- SONY Metreon Center – 101 4th St., (at corner of Mission St.). A first-of-its-kind entertainment and technology marketplace. Covering 350,000 square feet on four levels, Metreon houses 15 movie theatres, an IMAX theatre, three interactive attractions, nine restaurants and world-class shopping. Located 3 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.

COOLEST BARS WITH THE HOTTEST SCENE –

- Clift Hotel (The Redwood Room) – 495 Geary St. at Taylor St. Located 3 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- First Crush – 101 Cyril Magnin St. at Ellis St. located across the street from the Parc55 Hotel.
- W Hotel – 181 Third St. at Howard St. Located 4 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Jillian's – 101 4th St., (at corner of Mission St.). Inside the Sony Metreon Center. Located 3 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Thirsty Bear – 661 Howard St. (between 2nd and 3rd Sts.). Located 4 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar – Fairmont Hotel, 950 Mason St. at California St. Located 8 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. Fun, casual place to hang out. Cool lighting and rain storm effects.
- Cityscape – San Francisco Hilton Hotel, 333 O'Farrell St. (btwn Mason & Taylor Sts.) Located 3 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- The View (Marriott Hotel) – 55 4th St. (at Mission St.). Located 2 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Johnny Foley's Irish Pub – 243 O'Farrell St. btwn Mason and Powell Sts. Located 2 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Fuse – North Beach. 493 Broadway (corner of Kearny St.) Really fun and slick bar. 15-20 minute walk from the Parc55 Hotel. Or cab it.
- Sake Lab – North Beach. 494 Broadway (corner of Kearny St.) Across the street from Fuse. Best selection of sake in town. 15-20 minute walk from the Parc55 Hotel. Or cab it.
- Savoy Tivoli – North Beach. 1434 Grant Ave. (btwn Green and Union Sts.) North Beach's best bar/café. It's been around since 1907!!
- Crow Bar – North Beach. 401 Broadway. Dive bar, but cool nonetheless.
- Vesuvio Bar – North Beach. 255 Columbus Ave. (btwn Broadway and Pacific Sts.).
- Mars Café – 798 Brannan St. (corner of 7th St.). Located 7 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.

NIGHTCLUBS TO GET YOUR GROOVE ON –

- Ruby Skye – 420 Mason St. (between Geary and Post Sts.). One of the hottest clubs in the City. Lots of beautiful people to see and be seen. Huge main dance floor, upper mezzanine level, full bar on both levels, stage shows on weekends. Costly though. \$20 cover. Located 4 blocks from the Parc55.
- Club NV – 525 Howard St.(between 1st and 2nd Sts.). Step out in style! Club NV is stylish and sophisticated. San Francisco's newest elegant night spot. Enjoy 2 separate dance rooms, multi level lounge, and three fully stocked bars. Located 5 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. Hot!! Hot!! Hot!!
- 330 Ritch Bar /Club – 330 Ritch St (Brannan & Townsend @ 3rd St.). 330 Ritch caters to young hip-hop & salsa enthusiasts and those looking to have a fun night of dance, food and music. Located 7 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. Always a good time.
- Ten15 Folsom Club – 1015 Folsom (between 6th and 7th Sts.). Best known as ground zero for techno music lovers, 1015 Folsom also features top international deejays and off-the-wall live acts. There are three levels -- big name acts on the main stage on the center level; experimental deejays in the basement, spinning for an alternative crowd; and "easy listening" upstairs in black-lit ambience. With six bars and parties that often go until dawn, 1015 remains an important spot on San Francisco's dance scene map. Located 4 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Paradise Lounge – 308 11th St.(corner at Folsom St.). San Francisco's legendary club is back. Fully renovated, with 2 dance floors, 3 full bars, and lots of intimates coves scattered throughout. Located 10 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Slim's – 333 11th St. (@ Folsom St.). Slim's is a live music nightclub dedicated to providing the public with excellent service, a congenial atmosphere, good food & drinks, and the finest of American Roots Music--Blues, R&B, Cajun/Zydeco, Jazz, Alternative, and more. Pollstar Magazine has voted Slim's the best nightclub in America five out of the last eleven years, and for the past two years Slim's was awarded Best Bar & Club by the readers of the San Francisco Chronicle. Great local crowd. Located 9 blocks from Parc55 Hotel.
- Holy Cow – 1535 Folsom St. (between 11th and 12th Sts.) One of San Francisco's most popular nightclubs operating in the heart of SoMa since 1987. Holy Cow's longevity has made it a popular party spot for generations of locals and travelers from all parts of the world. It is essentially a "BARCENTRIC" club, where many patrons come to view and visit with the Cow's great bar staff, as well as mingle with the crowd and dance to familiar tunes. Located 9 blocks from Parc55 Hotel.
- DNA Lounge – 375 11th St. (between Folsom and Harrison Sts.) Live music and DJ House music plays all night. Great local crowd, unpretentious atmosphere. Right around the corner from the Holy Cow. Cover varies. Located 9 blocks from Parc55 Hotel.
- The Cat Club – 1190 Folsom St. at 8th St. One of the best times you'll have at any club, hands-down. Great mix of unpretentious crowds, casual to funky dress code. Cheap cover and drinks. Located 6 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel.
- Tribeca – Roving party at various upscale venues. The spiciest Asian scene for the 25 and up. Check out their website at www.sfribeca.com. Plenty of beautiful people to meet and mingle.
- Abzolut Productions – Another roving party scene at upscale venues, though hotter and younger. Check out www.abzolut.com to see where the latest party will be.
- Harry Denton's Starlight Room – Powell at Sutter streets. Younger group. DJ and band format. Good views. Spilling drinks. Décolletage!!

RESTAURANT GUIDE:

There are approximately 3,300 restaurants in San Francisco serving 776,000 residents, the highest number of restaurants per capita than any other place in the country. A foodie's paradise. As such, I will only attempt to recommend a few that are relatively close to the Parc55 Hotel. Price ranges from cheap (\$) to expensive (\$\$\$\$). My recommendations have all have been tested, tried and true. Splurge if you can and enjoy it while you're here.

Asian Fusion Cuisine –

- Azie – 826 Folsom St. (btwn 4th & 5th Sts.). An innovative melding of Asian flavors with classic French techniques. Swanky place to see and be seen. \$\$\$\$
- E & O Trading Company – 314 Sutter St. (btwn Grant and Stockton Sts.). Great pan-Asian flavors with nightly jazz. Glitzy bar scene as well. \$\$
- Ponzu – 401 Taylor St. (corner of O'Farrell St.). Menu is based on tastes and techniques drawn from Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, and Chinese traditions presented in contemporary California style. \$\$\$
- Asia SF – 210 Ninth St. (corner of Howard St.). A “must” visit while in SF. Food is okay, but there are surprises behind those frosted glass windows. \$\$
- Roy's – 101 2nd St.(at Mission St.). Hawaiian fusion cuisine blends fresh local ingredients with European sauces and bold Asian spices, with a focus on fresh seafood. Daily changing menu. Simply scrumptious. \$\$\$

California –

- First Crush – 101 Cyril Magnin (corner of Ellis St.). It's a restaurant wine bar, and lounge serving progressive American cuisine with European influences paired with a large selection of California wines. A pleasant surprise. \$\$
- Max's Diner – 311 3rd St. (btwn Folsom and Howard Sts.). A bright, busy place to fill up on burgers, sandwiches, shakes, or other American diner treats. \$
- Cheesecake Factory – 251 Geary St. (8th Fl. of the Macy's Bldg.). An eclectic menu, huge portions, and cheesecakes to die for. My all time favorite, though wait times can be long. \$\$
- Postrio – 545 Post St. (btwn Mason and Taylor Sts.). Popular from the day it opened 10 years ago. The food is an eclectic pairing of European techniques and Asian influences. Postrio is a fun place for a celebration or a great place to start an exciting night out on the town with someone special. Believe the hype. \$\$\$\$
- Farrallon – 450 Post St. (btwn Mason and Powell Sts.). Outrageous hi-end seafood restaurant. Food and service are top-notch. Check it out for the décor and leave blown away by the food. \$\$\$\$
- Lori's Diner – 149 Powell St.; also at 336 Mason St. Designed to pay homage to the most American of icons: the Hamburger, French Fries, Coca-Cola, Malts, and Ice Cream Sodas. \$
- Morton's Steakhouse – 400 Post St. (at Powell St.). Famous steakhouse serving up some of the best USDA prime aged beef in San Francisco. Consistently voted one of the best in the City. \$\$\$\$

- Biscuit & Blues – 401 Mason St. Nightly jazz and blues music with okay food. A fun time. \$\$
- SONY Metreon Food Court - 101 4th St., (at corner of Mission St.). Inside the Sony Metreon Center. Located 3 blocks from the Parc55 Hotel. You may as well eat at Jillian's instead. \$\$
- California Pizza Kitchen – 438 Geary St. (btwn Mason and Taylor Sts.). Casual dining for premium pizza. Inventor of the first BBQ Chicken Pizza. \$

Japanese –

- Hana-Zen – 115 Cyril Magnin (btwn Ellis and O'Farrell Sts.). Specializing in yakitori style grilling, though they have sushi dinners as well. Food is average. Plenty of sake. \$\$\$
- Sushi Boat (Bune) – 389 Geary St. (btwn Powell and Mason Sts.). Great sushi for a downtown location. Service is very courteous. A flight of steps down to this cozy little restaurant and you're tucked away from the hubbub of Union Square. \$
- Sanraku – 704 Sutter St. (at Taylor St.). A great restaurant conveniently located near the Red Room if you want to go drinking before or after dinner. Good fresh fish at the sushi bar and cold Japanese beer to go with it. \$\$
- Japan Town Center – 1737 Post (at Fillmore St.). Restaurants located in Japan Town's center plaza: Isobune, Mifune, Benihana, Juban, etc. Can't go wrong with any of these. Take a cab. \$ to \$\$.

Chinese – All in Chinatown. A pleasant 15-minute walk will get you there. Or take a taxi.

- New Asia Restaurant – 772 Pacific Ave.(btwn Stockton and Grant Sts.). Best place for dim sum. Go early though. \$
- R & G Lounge – 631 Kearny St. (btwn Clay and Sacramento Sts.). One of the best in town. However, a lot of the best plates are not listed on the English menu. So ask the waiter for help or better yet, go with a couple of friends who read or speak Chinese. \$\$
- Lichee Garden Restaurant – 1416 Powell St. (between Broadway and Vallejo Sts.). Great authentic home-style Cantonese comfort food. Pretty good dim sum menu as well. \$
- Gold Mountain Restaurant – 644 Broadway (btwn Stockton and Grant Ave.). During lunch time, it's a dim sum free-for-all. Evenings are more subdued. Pretty decent place to check out. \$
- Sun Hong Kong – 559 Broadway (corner of Columbus Ave.). It's cheap, good, and fast service. \$
- Kans – 708 Grant Ave. (at Sacramento St.). Steeped in history, it's one of the first Chinese restaurants to cater to Westerners. It's still in its original location after more than 50 years. The food is very nice, the atmosphere is casual and traditionally elegant. \$
- Far East Café – 631 Grant Ave. (btwn California and Sacramento Sts.). Dim Sum is fair, nothing exotic, but quite tasty. Dinner menu is okay. \$\$

Mexican –

- Chevys Fresh Mex – 201 3rd St. (at Howard St.). Fresh tortilla chips and salsa every hour. Typical Tex-Mex food. \$
- Border Cantina – 1192 Folsom St. (at 8th St.). Mexican restaurant that turns into a club after 10:00pm. A good place to have a tequila shot. \$

Middle Eastern / Indian –

- Shalimar – 532 Jones St. (btwn Geary and O'Farrell Sts.). Great authentic Indian / Middle Eastern flavors. Food comes out fast, and is extremely inexpensive. \$
- Chutney – 511 Jones St. (btwn Geary and O'Farrell Sts.). Right across the street from Shalimar. Same expectations as Shalimar except their restaurant is more contemporary. \$
- Marrakech Moroccan Restaurant – 419 O'Farrell St. (btwn Taylor and Jones Sts.). If you're looking for the exotic, this is the place! Food is great, the atmosphere is exciting, and the entertainment (belly dancers) is exceptional. \$\$
- Naan 'N' Curry – 478 O'Farrell St. (near Jones). The place is loud and the tandoor oven's heat is blasting, but Naan 'N' Curry is a classic example of good, cheap Indian fare. \$

French –

- 5th Floor – 12 Fourth St. (Hotel Palomar). Modern French cuisine featuring the finest ingredients and unique presentation. Plush restaurant epitomizes urban chic with modern French cuisine. \$\$\$\$
- Fleur de Lys – 777 Sutter St. (btwn Jones and Taylor Sts.). One of the consistently best restaurants in San Francisco. Save this one for a very special occasion and expect to shell out the big bucks. Expensive yes, pretentious no. \$\$\$\$
- Bizou – 598 Fourth St. (at Brannan St.). Cozy upscale French bistro with a delightful menu, fine selection of French and California wines, and a friendly staff. \$\$
- Fringale – 570 Fourth St. (at Bryant St.). A popular place for the dining enthusiast, serving delicious French / American cuisine you'll probably rave about days after. \$\$\$
- XYZ – 181 Third St. (in the W Hotel at Howard St.). Food is heavily influenced by French, Asian, and California tastes and sensibilities. This place is also a cool and swanky bar at night. \$\$\$

Thai –

- Ar Roi Thai – 643 Post St. (btwn. Taylor and Jones Sts.). Thai food like it was meant to be made. Authentic home-style cooking. \$\$
- Basil – 1175 Folsom St. (at 7th St.). The open atmosphere and modern setting accent the innovative mixture of Thai and California cuisine offered here. \$\$
- Cha-Am Thai – 701 Folsom St. (btwn. 3rd and 4th Sts.). The food can be a hit or miss sometimes, as well as the service, but overall, pretty good food at reasonable prices. \$\$
- King of Thai Noodle – 420 Geary St. (btwn Mason and Taylor Sts.). Also at 156 Powell St. (near O'Farrell). Great food, cheap and filling. Standard noodle and rice plate dishes. \$
- Koh Samui and the Monkey – 415 Brannan St. (near Third). A distinctive menu, stylized decor and moderate prices are the draw at this new SoMa restaurant; dishes available for less than \$10.

Italian –

- Buca di Beppo – 855 Howard St. (btwn 4th and 5th Sts.). Italian family style dining as only San Francisco can offer. There is always a festive atmosphere at this S.F. original. Not really the best pasta in town. Its high points are festiveness and HUGE portions. Really inexpensive. \$\$
- Lulu's – 816 Folsom St. (btwn 4th and 5th Sts.). A showcase for Provencal cooking featuring a wood-fired oven, rotisserie and grill. \$\$
- Kuleto's – 221 Powell St. (btwn Geary and O'Farrell Sts.). Specializing in contemporary northern Italian cuisine. Food in fair, service is good, atmosphere is friendly. Exhibition cooking will bring out the arsonist in you. Pretty people who like to watch. \$\$
- Pucinni & Pinetti – 129 Ellis St. (corner of Cyril Magnin St.). Hip, comfortable, casual eatery, with a very social bar. Great food, great service, reasonable prices. \$\$

North Beach restaurants: The little Italy section of San Francisco. 20-minute walk or take a taxi.

- Rose Pistola – 532 Columbus St. (at Union St.). Good family style-type dishes. Great outdoor patio seating area to people watch. Excellent atmosphere for that casual but upscale evening. Pure 60's décor. \$\$
- Bocce Café – 478 Green St. (at Grant St.). Enjoy great Italian cuisine in a warm atmosphere at affordable prices. The back patio is really romantic. \$
- Café Sport – 574 Green St. (at Grant St.). Sicilian. Very bizarre. Unbelievable food. Garlic!! Prawns!! Rude service. Perfect! \$
- Calzone's – 430 Columbus Ave. (btwn Vallejo and Green Sts.). Average food. Great patio area for people-watching. \$
- North Beach Restaurant – 1512 Stockton St. (at Columbus St.). A neighborhood anchor for more than 25 years. They really know their Italian food. One of the best meals to be had in North Beach, no one does it better. Pricey though. \$\$\$
- Fior D'Italia – 601 Union St. (at Stockton St.). Oldest Italian restaurant in San Francisco, dating back to the turn of the century. Serves some of the best authentic Italian food in the City. \$\$
- Enrico's Sidewalk Café – 504 Broadway (at Kearny St.). If you're into the fancy San Francisco feeling but not the fancy prices, this is the place. Heated outdoor patio to take in the scene. \$\$
- North Beach Pizza – 1499 Grant Ave. (at Union St.). Very good pizza at reasonable prices. Certainly a step up from Pizza Hut in both taste and quality. Close to the Savoy Tivoli bar. \$
- Michelangelo Caffè – 570 Columbus (at Union St.). Not just another Italian restaurant. Pleasant and casual atmosphere. Serves hearty home-style dishes. Cash only. \$\$
- Golden Spike – 527 Columbus (at Union St.). This place is all-the-way Italian and has great tasting food. Family style at a very reasonable price. \$

After Hours / Late Night –

- Mel’s Drive-In – 801 Mission Street (at 4th Street). Just three blocks away from the Parc55 hotel. The standard bearer of good ol’ fashioned diner food.
- Lori’s Diner – An alternative to Mel’s Drive In. There are three of them within walking distance of the hotel: 336 Mason Street, 500 Sutter Street, and 149 Powell Street, though the Mason Street one is the only one that is open 24 hours. 3 – 6 blocks to any one of them.
- Sparky’s – 242 Church Street (@ Market Street). A greasy spoon, classic 24-hour diner that really comes alive after midnight. It's really ironic but it seems that the only times you'll have to wait in line are 3am on the weekends or for weekend breakfasts. Must drive or take a taxi it to get there, but it’s another one of those “only is SF” things.

Secret Tip # 2: Visit www.sfcityguides.org. They provide free guided walking tours of San Francisco. A great way to see The City more intimately. City Guides volunteers research, develop, organize, and lead free walking tours that focus on the architecture, history, legends, and lore of San Francisco. Walks last from 1-1/2 to 2 hours. Tours are offered in San Francisco’s most famous (or, in some cases, infamous) districts, as well as in some of its more hidden neighborhoods. This service is a hidden treasure.