

Nob Hill, Russian Hill & Fillmore

NOB HILL | RUSSIAN HILL | JAPANTOWN | PACIFIC HEIGHTS

Neighborhood Top Five

1 Stepping off the Powell-Hyde cable car atop twisty **Lombard Street** (p131) and thrilling to spectacular hilltop vistas, before descending the hill's famous switchbacks.

2 Marveling at afternoon fog blowing through the Golden Gate, from atop

George Sterling Park (p132) – a lovely spot for a picnic.

3 Soaking naked in silence in communal Japanese baths at **Kabuki Springs & Spa** (p145), a cozy hideaway on a cold, foggy day.

4 Exploring hidden stairway walks (p133) – through

gardens, past mansions and up impossibly high hills – to see the city unfurl at your feet.

5 Shopping for Japanime and kooky ephemera at the vintage-'60s **Japan Center** (p143), then slurping on a bowl of hot noodles.



For more detail of this area see Map p315 and p316 →

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Cable cars serve Russian and Nob Hills, but the Powell St lines have notoriously long waits at their terminuses. Alternatively take the California St line, which rarely has queues. Ride west from the foot of Market St to Van Ness Ave, then walk to Pacific Heights and Japantown. Instead of taking busy California St west of Van Ness, walk along pretty Sacramento St (one block north of California), detouring through Lafayette Park.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Acquerello (p138)
- ➔ Swan Oyster Depot (p137)
- ➔ State Bird Provisions (p140)
- ➔ Cocotte (p138)
- ➔ Leopold's (p138)

For reviews, see p137 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Tonga Room (p140)
- ➔ Amélie (p141)
- ➔ Hi-Lo Club (p140)
- ➔ 1300 on Fillmore (p141)
- ➔ Social Study (p141)

For reviews, see p140 ➔

Best Places for Live Music

- ➔ Boom Boom Room (p142)
- ➔ Fillmore Auditorium (p141)
- ➔ Sheba Piano Lounge (p142)

For reviews, see p141 ➔

Explore the Hills & Japantown

Tackle Japantown and Pacific Heights together – they're adjacent, connected via Fillmore St. Start at Geary Blvd and Fillmore St, wander east through Japantown, then go north on Fillmore to window-shop spiffy boutiques. Continue uphill till the street becomes residential, around Jackson St, then walk west to Alta Plaza Park for knockout hilltop city-view picnics – there's a fantastic playground, too. Russian and Nob Hills are likewise adjacent, but their ultra-steep gradients render them harder to explore on foot if you're out of shape. Fortunately they're accessible via cable car. Nob Hill stands between downtown and Chinatown; Russian Hill abuts Fisherman's Wharf and North Beach. Consider exploring the hills with these other neighborhoods. Polk St is the happening shopping and nightlife strip near Russian Hill; Fillmore St, in Pacific Heights, is swankier by day, quieter by night.

Local Life

➔ **Music** Several live-music venues lie near Geary and Fillmore Sts – the famous Fillmore Auditorium, plus a couple of intimate jazz clubs.

➔ **Cinema** Locals come to Japantown for dinner and a movie at Sundance Kabuki Cinema, which serves food and wine in its main theater.

➔ **Shopping** Most visitors only see the inside of the mall at Japan Center but there's also shopping *outside* the mall, along Post St, from Webster St to Laguna St.

➔ **Canines** Dog lovers flock to Alta Plaza Park for a pug parade – awww! – on the first Sunday of the month, 1pm to 4pm.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Bus** The 1, 2, 3 and 38 connect Downtown with Japantown and Pacific Heights; the 22 connects Japantown and Pacific Heights with the Marina and the Mission. Buses 10 and 12 link Downtown with Russian and Nob Hills; the 10 continues to Pacific Heights. The 27 connects Mission, SoMa and Downtown to Nob Hill. Buses 41 and 45 connect downtown to Russian Hill and Cow Hollow.

➔ **Cable car** The Powell-Hyde cable car serves Russian and Nob Hills; the Powell-Mason line serves Nob Hill; and the California line runs between downtown, Nob Hill and the easternmost edge of Pacific Heights.

➔ **Parking** Street parking is difficult but possible. Find garages at Japan Center on Fillmore St (between Geary and Post Sts) and Post St (between Webster and Buchanan Sts).