

North Beach & Chinatown

NORTH BEACH | CHINATOWN

Neighborhood Top Five

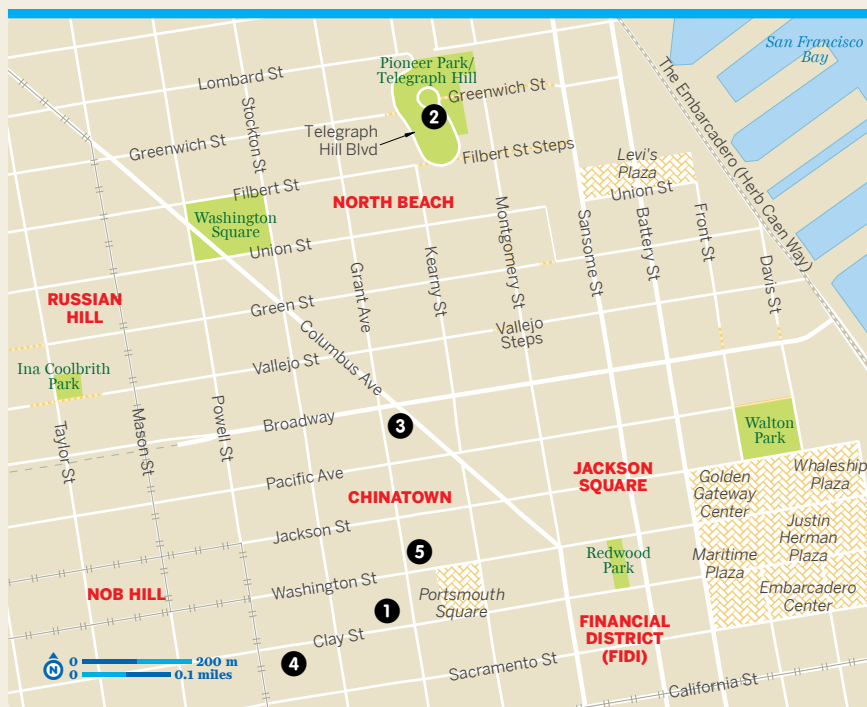
1 Chinatown alleyways
(Map p308; btwn Grant Ave, Stockton St, California St & Broadway; ☑1, 30, 45, 🏠Powell-Hyde, Powell-Mason, California) Hearing mah-jongg tiles, temple gongs and Chinese orchestras as you wander the backstreets.

2 Coit Tower (p114)
Climbing Filbert Street Steps past heckling parrots and fragrant gardens to this panoramic, mural-lined tower.

3 City Lights Books
(p115) Reflecting in the Poet's Chair and celebrating free speech.

4 Chinese Historical Society of America (p116)
Time traveling through the old Chinatown at this museum, housed in the historic Julia Morgan-designed Chinatown YWCA.

5 Li Po (p124) Picking up where Jack Kerouac left off at a historic Beat hangout.



For more detail of this area see Map p308 ➔

Explore: North Beach & Chinatown

From downtown, enter Dragon's Gate (p118) onto Chinatown's main tourist drag, Grant Ave. It's hard to believe this pagoda-topped, souvenir-shopping strip was once notorious brothel-lined Dupont St – at least until you see the fascinating displays at the Chinese Historical Society of America (p116). Duck into Chinatown's historic alleyways to glimpse a neighborhood that's survived against daunting odds, then detour for dim sum at City View (p120). Cross into North Beach via Jack Kerouac Alley (p115) and City Lights (p115), birthplace of Beat literature. Fuel up with espresso at Caffe Trieste (p124) for your North Beach Beat walking tour and hike the garden-lined Filbert Street Steps (p115) to giddy panoramas and daring murals at Coit Tower (p114). Descend for a bar crawl and a hot slice at Golden Boy (p118) or a proper feast at Mister Jiu's (p121).

Local Life

- ➔ **Hangouts** Join regular crowds of poets at Caffe Trieste (p124), martial-arts masters at Washington Square (p116) and skaters at Old St Mary's Square (p117).
- ➔ **Foodie discoveries** Even been-there, tried-that San Franciscans find new taste sensations at Z & Y (p121), Mister Jiu's (p121) and China Live (p120).
- ➔ **Local celebrity sightings** Keep an eye out for Sean Penn at Tosca Cafe (p120), Francis Ford Coppola at Columbus Tower (p115), Tom Waits and Carlos Santana at 101 Music (p126) and Countess Lola Montez reincarnated at Drag Me Along Tours (p127).
- ➔ **Five-buck bargains** Fly a butterfly kite from Chinatown Kite Shop (p127), carbo-load at Liguria Bakery (p118) and catch a show at Doc's Lab (p125).

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Bus** Key routes passing through Chinatown and North Beach are 1, 10, 12, 30, 39, 41 and 45.
- ➔ **Cable car** From downtown or Fisherman's Wharf, take the Powell-Mason or the Powell-Hyde line through Chinatown and North Beach. The California St cable car passes through the southern end of Chinatown.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Wild hawks and parrots circle above North Beach as though looking for a parking spot. The weekend parking situation is so dire that locals avoid North Beach and Chinatown – forgetting there's public parking underneath Portsmouth Sq and at Good Luck Parking Garage, where spots are stenciled with fortune-cookie wisdom: 'You have found the love of your life. Stop looking.'

Best for Artistic Inspiration

- ➔ City Lights Books (p115)
- ➔ Coit Tower (p114)
- ➔ Chinese Culture Center (p116)
- ➔ Bob Kaufman Alley (p116)
- ➔ Jack Kerouac Alley (p115)

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Molinari (p118)
- ➔ Liguria Bakery (p118)
- ➔ Mister Jiu's (p121)
- ➔ Tosca Cafe (p120)
- ➔ Z & Y (p121)

For reviews, see p118 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Specs (p121)
- ➔ Comstock Saloon (p121)
- ➔ Li Po (p124)
- ➔ Vesuvio (p124)
- ➔ Devil's Acre (p124)

For reviews, see p121 ➔