

# Understand San Francisco

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You're right on time for SF's latest thing, be it tech boom, buzzworthy show, sanctuary movement or pioneering green initiative.

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Through booms and busts, San Francisco has made historic strides in free speech and civil rights – and invented the means to tweet and Instagram about it.

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San Francisco has more writers than any other US city, filling community-backed bookstores with poetry, 'zines, novels and (ahem) guidebooks.

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Graffiti, street photography and deliberate computer malfunctions overflow from galleries into San Francisco streets.

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From Journey to Janis, the Grateful Dead to Dave Brubeck, San Francisco's eclectic playlist keeps you guessing as to what's next.

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Color schemes that would make Queen Victoria blush, copper camouflage, wildflower-covered roofs: San Francisco's skyline is defined by its quirks.

# San Francisco Today

**Congratulations: you're right on time for SF's latest tech boom, art show, green initiative, water-saving idea and (fair warning) marriage proposal. SF has its ups and downs, but as anyone who's clung on to the side of a cable car will tell you, this town gives you one hell of a ride.**

## Best on Film

**Milk** (2008) Sean Penn won an Oscar for his portrayal of America's first openly gay elected official.

**Tales of the City** (1993) Laura Linney unravels a mystery in SF's swinging '70s disco scene.

**Harold & Maude** (1971) The Conservatory of Flowers and Sutro Baths make metaphorically apt backdrops for May–December romance.

**Chan Is Missing** (1982) When Chan disappears, two cabbies realize they don't know Chan, Chinatown or themselves.

## Best in Print

**Howl and Other Poems** (Allen Ginsberg; 1956) Mind-altering, law-changing words defined a generation of 'angel-headed hipsters.'

**Time and Materials** (Robert Hass; 2007) Every Pulitzer Prize-winning syllable is as essential as a rivet in the Golden Gate Bridge.

**On the Road** (Jack Kerouac; 1957) Banged out in a San Francisco attic, Kerouac's travelogue set postwar America free.

**Slouching Towards Bethlehem** (Joan Didion; 1968) Scorching truth burns through San Francisco fog during the Summer of Love.

## Green City by the Bay

According to the North American Green Cities Index, San Francisco is the greenest of them all. Practices that are standard-setting elsewhere were pioneered here, including LEED-certified green hotels, organic cocktail bars, sustainable dining from tacos to tasting menus, and dozens of car-parking spaces that have been converted into public green oases. San Francisco mandates citywide composting and bans plastic bags – part of its initiative to become a zero-waste city by 2020.

## Sanctuary City

San Francisco was the first city worldwide to declare itself a 'Sanctuary City.' In the 1980s, Central American refugees escaping civil war settled in San Francisco but were unable to obtain official refugee status. To ensure these new San Franciscans were afforded some legal protection, a 1989 'City of Refuge' ordinance prohibited SF police from detaining people based on immigration status alone. The city strengthened its Sanctuary status in 2013, with an ordinance prohibiting police cooperation with federal immigration agents – provoking criticism from Donald Trump, especially after an undocumented immigrant released from San Francisco police custody was charged with murder.

Immigration controversies are not new to San Francisco. The city upheld the racially based federal Asian Exclusion Act and Executive Order 9066 mandating internment of Japanese American citizens – even as San Franciscans mounted historic legal defenses against them. Mindful of the long arc of local and national history, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors reaffirmed San Francisco's Sanctuary City status in 2016.

Trump responded with a January 25, 2017, executive order threatening Sanctuary Cities with withdrawal of federal funds – including a projected loss to San Francisco of \$1.3 billion in funding for roads, homeless shelters and other safety-net programs. San Francisco promptly filed a lawsuit against the order – and, in February, a bill declaring all of California a 'Sanctuary State'