



San Francisco Relocation Guide



Contents

Moving to San Francisco 03

- \\ General Information
 - \\ Why San Francisco?
-

Working in San Francisco 06

- \\ Work culture
 - \\ Visas and permits
-

Living in San Francisco 12

- \\ Cost of living
- \\ Finding a home
- \\ Once you arrive
- \\ Healthcare
- \\ Schools
- \\ Moving pets over
- \\ Settling in
- \\ Getting around
- \\ Things to see
- \\ Culture shocks
- \\ Holidays

Moving to San Francisco



San Francisco is a city unlike any other. It's home to the iconic Golden Gate Bridge, is considered one of America's greenest cities and has been named best city in the world on multiple occasions. While each of these are impressive, they aren't the only things that this remarkable city has to offer.

While it might sound cliché, San Francisco truly is a city that has something for everyone, whether you're a nature enthusiast looking for stunning hiking trails, a foodie wanting to enjoy world-class culinary experiences or a museum lover keen to soak up art and culture.

Nicknamed the Golden City, San Francisco has a smart, cultured and open-minded vibe, cool weather and a unique blend of both old and new. On one hand, it's technologically minded, with the famous Silicon Valley calling the city home, as well as being recognised for its forward-thinking sustainability efforts. But on the other hand, it also acknowledges its roots with its traditional cable cars, colourful Victorian architecture and countless attractions to help maintain important historic sites.

With so much to enjoy, it's hardly surprising that San Francisco has become a popular destination choice for expats in search of new career opportunities and a greater quality of life. Believe it or not, more than a third of the city's population were born outside of the US, making it highly accepting of expats.

→ **So, if you're considering moving to San Francisco but need help making your final decision, we've created this handy guide which includes everything you need to know before you go.**

Things to know about San Francisco:

Population 

922,650 (2022)

Boroughs 

San Francisco is made up of five distinct boroughs which are home to the city's 36 official neighbourhoods\\

Central/Downtown, Richmond, Sunset, Upper Market and Bernal Heights.

Time zone 

Winter: PST (8 hours behind the UK)

Summer: DST (9 hours behind the UK)

Currency 

US dollar

Why San Francisco?



Aside from its fantastic array of attractions, technological innovations and historical landmarks, there are many other reasons why the Golden City could be the perfect new home for you and your family.

If you're concerned about finding work in this diverse and prosperous city, you'll be pleased to know that San Francisco's unemployment rates were as low as 2.6% in 2022.

Studies have also found that the average annual salary for a San Fran worker is \$72,813 (£60,070), but this can vary greatly depending on the industry and your level of expertise.

The San Francisco Bay Area, which is home to Silicon Valley, has helped the city secure its title of technology capital of the United States. Some of the biggest tech employers in the area are household names like Apple, PayPal and Dropbox, which has created a thriving jobs market for the tech industry, but for industries like property and construction too.

Did you know that San Francisco's Bay Area has added more than 100 people on average to its population every day for the past 20 years? With local jurisdictions addressing a lack of housing in certain areas and large-scale projects continuing to be put forward post-covid, there are plenty of opportunities to be had for those working within the property and construction industry moving forward. Not only that, but San Francisco has also been named as the second highest-paying metropolitan area for construction workers, as demand for homes and property continues to increase.

Work culture in San Francisco



San Francisco's laid back, bohemian character has had a major impact on many of its organisations and their style of working. \\

Some of the biggest organisations within the city have a strong focus on their team's wellbeing and happiness, with incentives like happy hour, casual Fridays and in-house yoga becoming the norm in recent times. In fact, San Fran has previously earned the top spot in studies for cities that offer the best work life balance.

However, it's important to note that while workplace happiness is a priority for many organisations in the city, studies have also found that San Fran employees work extremely hard and for an average of 44 hours per week. It's also known for having the fifth longest average commute for a metropolitan area nationwide, clocking in at 34.1 minutes.

But don't let this put you off. While working hard is expected, you'll also be encouraged to enjoy work outside of the office too. It's commonplace for workers in San Fran to kickstart their day with an early morning activity, such as surfing, yoga or running. After work activities might include post-work drinks, catching a concert or going for dinner with your team.



If you're interested in what potential job opportunities are currently available in San Francisco, you can get in touch with a member of our team. They will be able to help you kickstart your job search and find you a role that is specifically tailored to your skills, experience and career goals.

Visas and Permits



If the idea of relocating to San Francisco sounds intriguing so far, visas and permits should be the next thing on your to-do list. There are several visa options to apply for, but it's important to remember that many employment-based US visas require you to be sponsored by a US employer who have offered you a job before moving here.

Firstly, there's the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) which enables UK residents to stay in the US visa-free for 90 days. While this visa doesn't allow you to work during this time, it will enable you to attend interviews, go to careers fairs and attend industry networking events. Plus, it will also give you the opportunity to get a feel for the city and its work culture to see if it's a good fit for you and your family.

Another option is to apply for an immigrant visa. These employment-based visas typically last for two-years before they require renewal. However, they can be renewed continuously, so long as you meet the visa's requirements. Once you've found a licensed company to work for and sponsor you, they will file a visa petition on your behalf with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

There are three work-based immigrant visa options available, from highest to lowest priority:



**E1 First Preference \\
People of "extraordinary ability".**



**E2 Second Preference \\
Professionals with advanced degrees and 5+ years of experience.**



**E3 Third Preference \\
Professionals with 2+ years of training/experience or unskilled workers whose skills are in short supply.**

Alternatively, there's also a non-immigrant visa which can be ideal if you aren't planning on working and living in San Francisco permanently.

The most popular visa options within the category are:



H1-B Visa (Skilled Worker) \\

For professionals performing services in a prearranged professional job for a US employer, who have a bachelor's degree or higher.

→ Visa lasts for 3 years but can be extended.



H2-B Visa (Skilled and Unskilled Workers) \\

For people going to the States to perform seasonal work or fill a temporary labour shortage.

→ Visa lasts between 1-3 years.



L-1 Visa (Intra-Company Transferee) \\

For managers and executives with specialist knowledge moving to the US within the same company.

→ Visa lasts between 5-7 years.

To find out more information on employment-based immigrant and non-immigrant visa process, you can visit the [USCIS website](#).

The last option you might want to consider is the Permanent Residence Card (PRC), more commonly known as 'The Green Card'. As the name suggests, this permit will allow you to permanently live and work within the United States, without having to renew your visa every few years. However, many people don't manage to get approval for a PRC until they have spent several years working in the US on a temporary visa.

There's no denying that the visa process can be a lot to get your head around. **Thankfully, you don't have to tackle it alone. Our consultants are on hand to help guide you through the process and answer any questions you may have.**



You can find out more about the Permanent Residence Card process by visiting the [USCIS website](#).

Cost of Living



San Francisco is considered one of the wealthiest cities and most expensive places to live in the United States. Recent studies have found that San Francisco's cost of living is approximately 6.4% more expensive than it is in London and is 38% higher than the state average. It's also home to the third-highest number of billionaires in the US.

Thanks to its booming tech and tourist industries and close proximity to Silicon Valley, a high cost of living should be expected. But the payoff is that you'll get to live and work in one of the most exuberant and forward-thinking cities on the planet. So it's wise to assess your finances carefully before making the relocation leap.

To give you an idea of how much you could be spending per month while living in San Francisco, here's a list of some everyday essentials and their current approximate prices:



Utilities



For a 915-square-foot-apartment, you can expect to pay around **\$256.76 (£212.81)** per month for gas, electricity, water and garbage pickup. In addition to this, you'll also be looking to pay roughly **\$68.19 (£56.52)** for a basic internet package. Some landlords will cover certain utilities, such as water and garbage pickup, while others will expect the renter to pay all of their utilities, based on their usage.

Groceries



San Fran residents pay on average around **\$360 (£298.51)** per month on groceries, but this will vary depending on the size of your household, how much you eat and where you choose to shop. Generally, a gallon of milk is around **\$5.55 (£4.60)**, a loaf of bread is around **\$4.82 (£4.00)**, and a dozen eggs is around **\$4.95 (£4.10)**.





Eating out

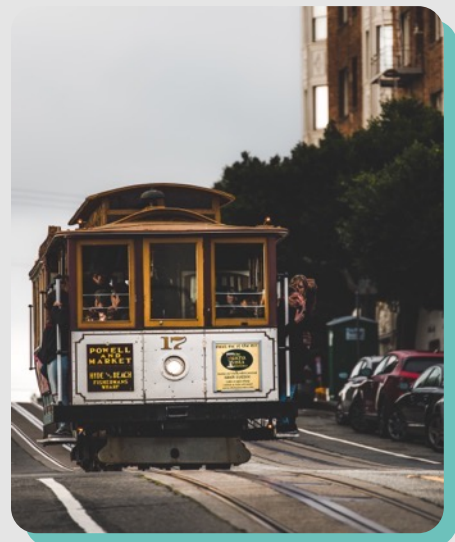


With thousands of restaurants serving a wide range of cuisines, you're spoilt for choice when it comes to eating out in San Francisco. Their prices vary greatly and can range from **\$18 (£14.93)** for an inexpensive meal to **\$40 (£33.17)** for a full-service meal for one. But again, it all depends on your appetite and where you choose to visit.

Transport



A litre of gasoline will cost you on average **\$1.56 (£1.29)**, whereas a single ticket on the local Muni Bus and Rail costs around **\$2.25 (£1.87)**. There's also the option of taxis, which start at approximately **\$4.15 (£3.44)** and then have an additional charge of **\$0.65 (£0.54)** for every one-fifth of a mile.



Finding a home



Once you've secured a job in San Francisco, you now have the exciting task of deciding where you're going to live. With so many diverse and charming neighbourhoods to choose from, it can be challenging to know exactly where to start looking, particularly if you've never been to San Francisco before.

To help you get started on your search for a new home, we've compiled this list of great places in San Fran for either families or single professionals to give you some much-needed inspiration.

Families



Bernal Heights



Nicknamed “Maternal Heights” by the locals, Bernal Heights has earned a reputation for being one of the most family-oriented neighbourhoods in the city. It’s perfect for those wanting to live in walking distance of child-friendly restaurants, multiple playgrounds, independent galleries and lively farmer’s markets. It won’t take long for you and your family to fall in love with this colourful and vibrant slice of San Fran.



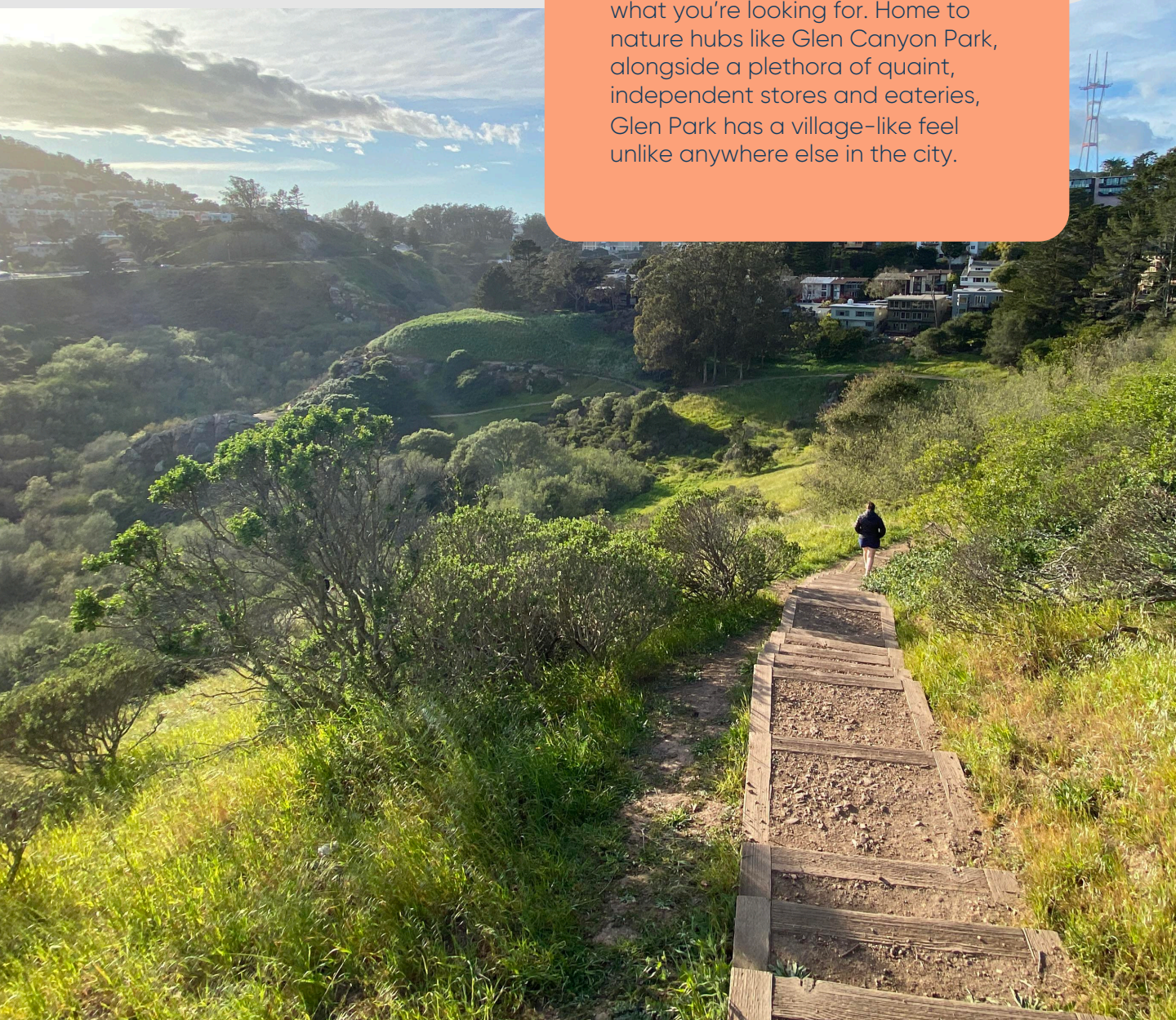
Families



Glen Park



If your family craves some peace and tranquillity that's away from the main hustle and bustle of the city, Glen Park might be exactly what you're looking for. Home to nature hubs like Glen Canyon Park, alongside a plethora of quaint, independent stores and eateries, Glen Park has a village-like feel unlike anywhere else in the city.



Families



Noe Valley



Located in central San Francisco, Noe Valley is a neighbourhood with a strong community-feel and has been described as being a small town in a big city. Thanks to its central location, it's still close to all the action while also being a peaceful haven for families. With a weekly farmer's market, recreation areas and unique boutiques to explore, there's fun to be had by the whole family.



Families



Outer Sunset



With a beachside charm, countless parks, zoos and playgrounds and an artsy atmosphere, Outer Sunset is another top choice for young families moving to San Francisco. This peaceful neighbourhood sits along the city's western shoreline, making it popular with surfers and is also in close proximity to the stunning Golden Gate Park. It's also home to 10 of the top-ranking schools in the city.



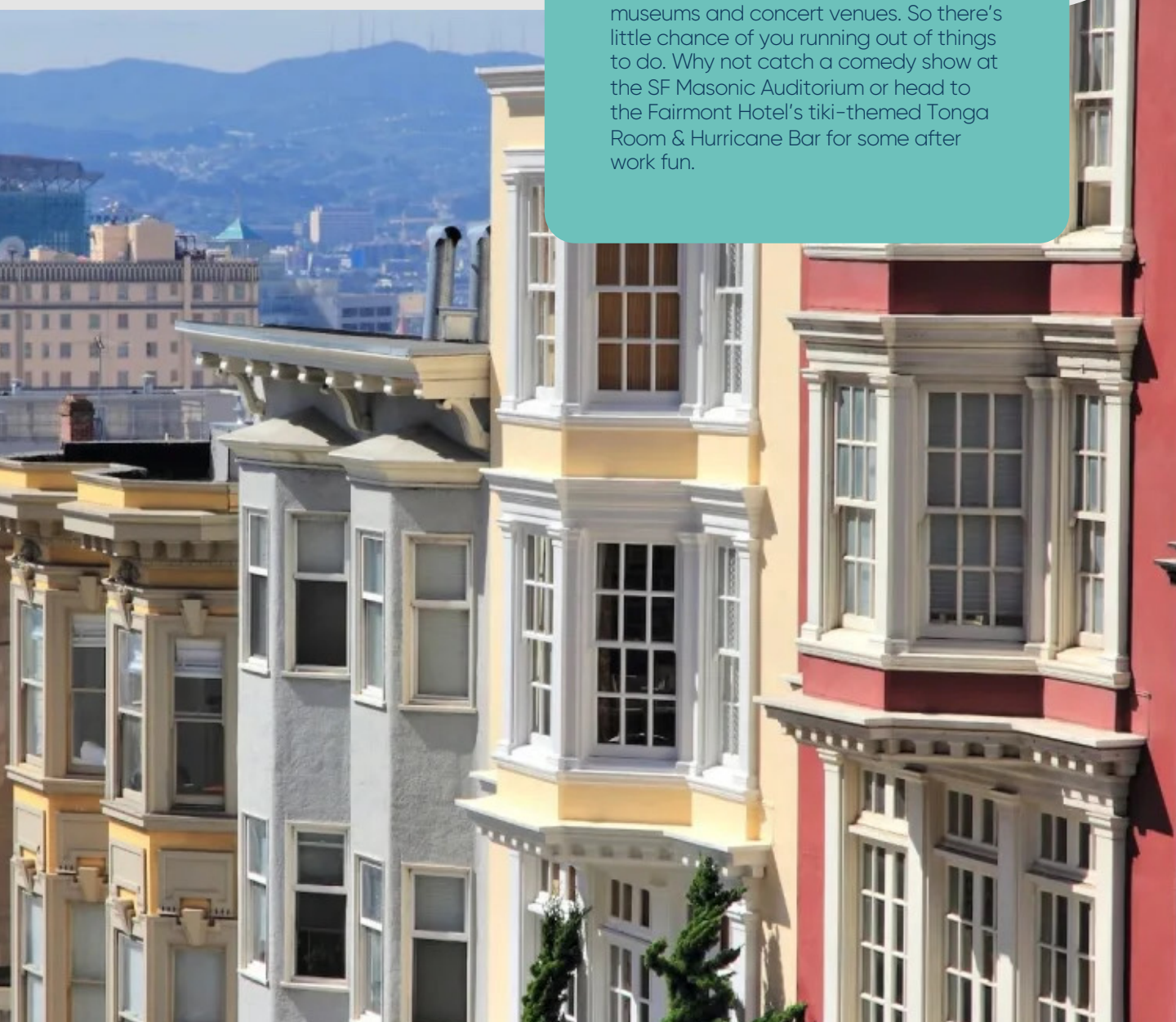
Singles



Nob Hill



One of the most well-known neighbourhoods in San Francisco is Nob Hill, located near Downtown. Not only is it easy to get around, but it is also home to a number of restaurants, bars, shops, museums and concert venues. So there's little chance of you running out of things to do. Why not catch a comedy show at the SF Masonic Auditorium or head to the Fairmont Hotel's tiki-themed Tonga Room & Hurricane Bar for some after work fun.



Singles



Mission District



If you're looking for a neighbourhood with great food, a lively nightlife and beautiful nature spots, the Mission District could be right up your street. Some of the city's best restaurants such as La Torta Gorda are located here, as well as numerous clubs and attractions like the Roxie cinema and Urban Putt Golf. Need a break from the city? Mission Dolores Park is the perfect spot to relax and recharge after a long week.



Singles



SoMa



With its eclectic nightlife, thriving art scene and array of restaurants, it's easy to see why so many singles are attracted to living in SoMa. You'll find a real sense of fun and community here, as well as easy access to the best attractions that San Fran has to offer, including The Golden Gate Bridge and Fisherman's Wharf. Head to the Deli Board for a great lunchtime spot or unwind by watching a show at the popular Brick & Mortar Music Hall.



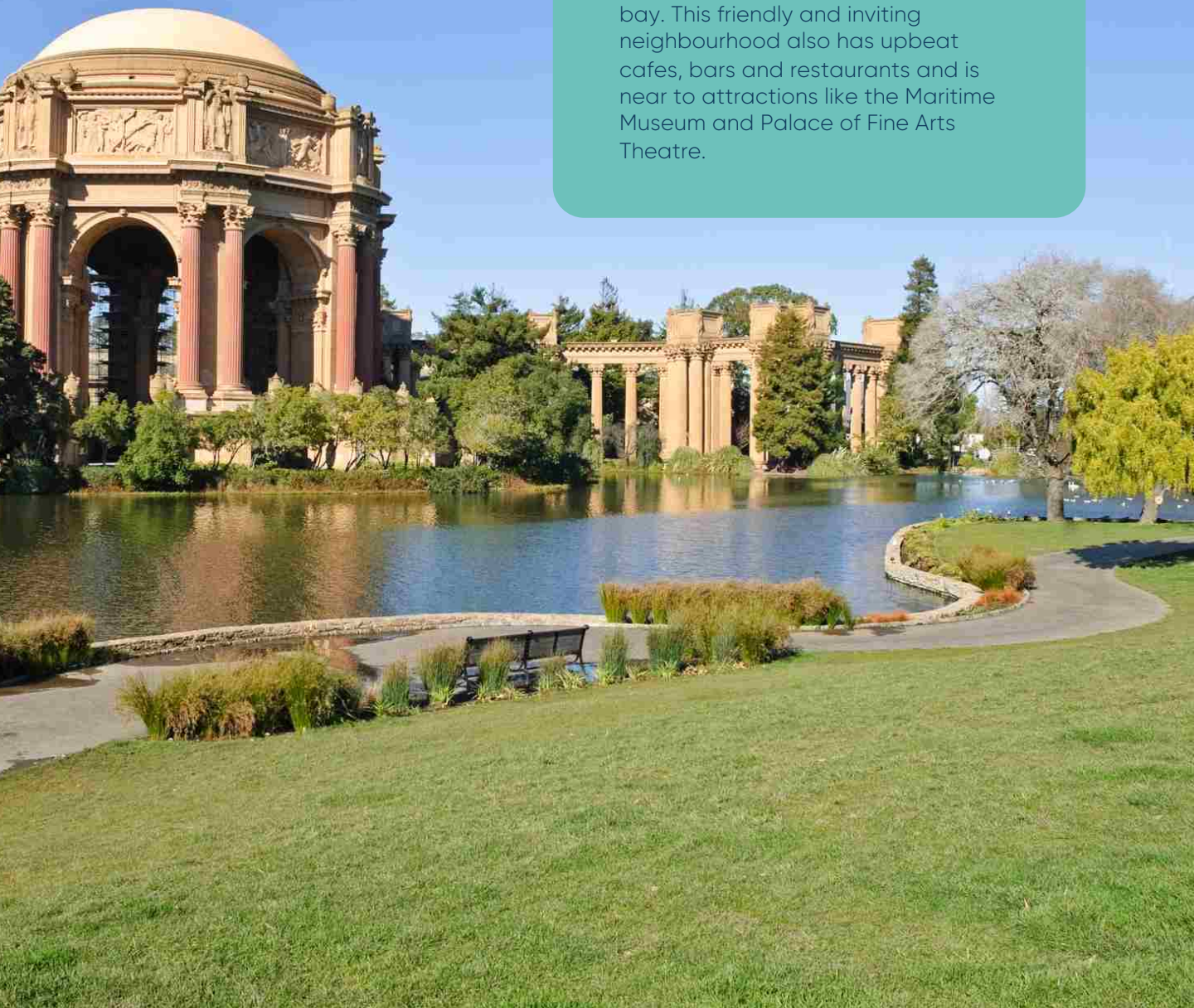
Singles



Marina District



Want to have a more active lifestyle? Look no further than the Marina District. Its home to multiple parks like the Marina Green where you can go walking or cycling, or you can get involved in water sports at the nearby bay. This friendly and inviting neighbourhood also has upbeat cafes, bars and restaurants and is near to attractions like the Maritime Museum and Palace of Fine Arts Theatre.



Renting



For many professionals who relocate to San Francisco, renting can be a highly viable option. San Francisco is considered a renter friendly city, with around 62% of its households being renter-occupied. Renting can also be ideal for expats who want to get a feel for the city and its hundreds of differing neighbourhoods before making a more long-term commitment.

So, if you think renting could be a suitable option for your relocation to San Fran, here's some important things you might want to consider before you start your search.

Unsurprisingly rent prices vary drastically depending on which neighbourhood in San Francisco you choose to move to.

For instance, rental prices in Presidio, which is considered one of the most expensive areas within the city, average at around **\$4,944 (£4112) per month**. In contrast, a rental property in Tenderloin will average at **\$2,681 (£2230) per month**.

It's also crucial to consider the size of the home you're looking for, as this too can have a significant impact on the cost of your rent each month. Typically, a one-bedroom property can come to around \$2,995 (£2491), a two-bedroom \$4,012 (£3337) and you could pay up to \$6,293 (£5234) for a four-bedroom property. But again, these figures will vary drastically depending on which area of the city they are located.

If these prices seem expensive, there is also the option of apartment sharing or moving further out of the city and commuting to work each day, which can help to bring rent prices down. You can find out more about apartment sharing on sites like [SpareRoom](#) or [Roomster](#).

US landlords and property management companies will ask for a security deposit before you can move into a rental property.

Typically, landlords will require the equivalent of two months' rent for deposits on unfurnished apartments and up to three months' rent for deposits on furnished apartments.

Before signing on the dotted line and parting with a deposit, you need to find out exactly what is included in your rent and utilities such as heating, water, electricity and internet. Maintenance and repair fees should also be covered so don't forget to ask about this too.

It's also crucial that you know what kind of agreement you're signing up to, especially if this is your first time renting a property. Generally, there are two options: monthly or fixed term.

As the name suggests, monthly term is a short-term tenancy that usually lasts around 30 days and renews automatically because it doesn't have an end date. Fixed term agreements, on the other hand, involve renting a property for a set amount of time, usually between six months to a year. Unlike rental agreements, fixed term contracts will not automatically renew.



Now you know a little bit more about the rental market in San Francisco, why not start your search by visiting sites like [ForRent](#) and [Apartments.com](#).

Buying



While there certainly are benefits to renting, if you're planning to stay in San Francisco for the long haul and you're financially able to, buying your own home could be a more suitable option for you and your family. Before you start hunting for your dream new home, there are some vital things you'll need to think about first.

San Fran is notorious for being one of the most expensive places in the state to buy a home.

Recent research found that the average house price in the city has reached around **\$1.2m (£1,056,233)** over the past few years, due to the city's close links with the booming Silicon Valley. But again, this average price will vary depending on the area you choose to move to and the type of property you're interested in.

With this in mind, getting your finances in order and determining a budget should be your first port of call. The last thing you want is to guess what you can afford only to be disappointed later. Also, don't forget that the exchange rate between pounds and dollars is constantly changing, so bear this in mind when you're putting your offers on a property.

Buying a property can be complicated enough, let alone when you're buying one on the other side of the world.

So, it might be beneficial to seek out the help of some professionals who can help you tackle the different housing laws, property inspections, currency converting and viewing properties while you're still in the UK. This is another expense you will need to cater for when determining your budget.

The success of your home purchase will be largely dependent on the realtor (the US version of an estate agent) you choose to work with. Not only do they need to be reliable and understand your requirements, but they also need to be registered as a member of the National Association of Realtors (NAR) or the San Francisco Association of Realtors and have a wealth of local knowledge. If you can find a realtor that has previous experience of working with expats, that will be even more beneficial to you.

Once you have your realtor, they should be able to put you into contact with local lawyers, financial advisors and anyone else who can help to make your house purchase go as smoothly as possible. It's also worthwhile to plan a trip to see potential properties you're interested in before your relocation date. That way you can get a much better feel for the property, the local neighbourhood and its community.



Why not start your search for available properties in San Francisco by visiting [Realtor](#) or [Zillow](#).

Once you
arrive



You've made it to San Francisco, **now what?**

Well, before you settle down into your new life, there are some formalities you'll need to take care of. One of the most important things to do when you arrive is to establish your residency in your new state of California. This will allow you to get your driver's license, register any vehicles you may have and enable you to pay tax.

Thankfully, this is a relatively easy process. Anything that demonstrates that you intend on staying in San Francisco will establish residency, such as:

- \\ **Renting/buying a house or apartment.**
- \\ **Being employed within the city.**
- \\ **Being registered to vote.**
- \\ **Having a business in the city.**

Here are some other important things you'll need to get sorted once you arrive in San Fran:

- \\ **Get health insurance.**
- \\ **Sort out your finances, such as loans, bank accounts, pensions, and taxes.**
- \\ **Enrol your child into a school.**
- \\ **Get a license for your pets and find a local veterinarian.**
- \\ **Set up your utilities.**
- \\ **Register your car.**
- \\ **Get your driver's license.**
- \\ **Register to vote.**
- \\ **Update your address with the USPS.**
- \\ **Get car insurance policy, if needed.**
- \\ **Set up your social security (you can do this when you apply for your visa).**

Healthcare



It's no secret that the healthcare system in the US is very different to the UK.



\\

In America, healthcare is not considered to be a universal right as it is in the UK, and they don't have an NHS equivalent there. Instead, the industry is fully privatised, which means that all medical facilities are run by independent companies and medical help comes at a cost.

Many Americans sign up for private health insurance via an insurance provider or their employer. By paying them a contribution each month, they can reduce their medical costs should they get into an accident or become ill. Estimates suggest that the average American spends around 5% of their gross income on medical expenses.

It's important that you do your research into healthcare insurance providers and the types of medical cover that are available for you and your family as expats before you arrive. Most expats tend to go for an Individual Private Medical Insurance policy, otherwise known as an IPMI, because it offers global health coverage and is tailored to suit each person's medical needs. This can be particularly beneficial if you or a member of your family requires ongoing treatment for an existing medical concern.

Don't forget to ask your new employer if they offer any form of healthcare contributions too. Generally, companies with 50+ employees must offer ACA-compliant health insurance to their employees who work over 30 hours per week. However, if this doesn't apply to you, you will have to find your own health insurance.

Schools



If you're relocating to the Golden City with your children, getting them enrolled into a school will naturally be a top priority.



In San Francisco, any students who are legal residents are entitled to free public education. Like many cities around the world, school eligibility for public schools is generally determined by which zone your home is located. This could mean that schools are a big factor in which area you decide to relocate to.

Once you've decided which public school you would like your child to go to, you'll need to get in touch with the school to find out their registration dates and process of enrolment. To enrol your child, you typically need to provide a birth certificate or passport, immunisation records, proof of residency and their latest school reports. But this can vary depending on the school so it's always best to check beforehand.

Alternatively, there's also the option of private schools. There are 114 private schools in San Francisco, so you won't be short on options. However, it can be an expensive option with the average cost of private school tuition reaching **\$24,820 (£20,513) per child per year**. You'll also have to add on the additional cost of uniforms, textbooks and extra-curricular activities. Generally, private schools can offer perks such as a higher standard of education, better facilities and more one-on-one attention, plus you often won't be limited by catchment areas.

Again, if you choose to go down the private school route, it's crucial that you get in touch with the school as soon as you can to find out their enrolment process and registration dates. They may also have scholarships available that you can take advantage of.

The education system in the US has a slightly different format to the UK:

Elementary school



Kindergarten to
5th grade -
ages 5-10

Middle school



6th to 8th
grade - ages
11-13

High school



9th to 12th grade -
ages 14-18



To help you get to grips with what school your child should attend once you've relocated to San Francisco, you can visit sites like [SFUSD](#) or [Great Schools](#).

Moving pets over



Naturally, you won't want to leave your beloved pets behind when you relocate to San Fran. After all, they are part of the family too. Thankfully, thousands of people move to the Golden City with their pets each year so it's certainly possible. But there are some things you need to know first.

If you're renting, you might need to double check the conditions of your lease as some places won't allow pets at all. If they do allow pets, is there enough space for them?



Some property management companies might also ask for a one-time pet fee that is generally around \$200 (£162).

Another thing to consider is going to look after your pet while you're at work. You might have to factor in the cost of a dog walker or sitter, plus getting your pet registered at a new vet surgery and pet insurance.

More importantly, it's crucial to think about how your pet will be during the transportation phase. There are multiple ways your pet can travel to San Fran from the UK. The first option is to have them accompany you on the plane, either in-cabin or as baggage or cargo, but this can vary depending on the airline you are travelling with. Another option is to enlist the help of a [pet travel company](#) who can arrange the transportation of your pet for you.

According to the US Embassy, cats and dogs do not require a permit or rabies vaccination to enter the US. They will, however, need to have a health certificate from their vet that states that they are fit and healthy to travel. It can also be wise to contact your airline and the [CDC](#) to clarify just what documents you need to provide and how to register your pet once you've landed in San Francisco.

For more tips and advice on travelling on a plane with your pet, you can visit the [RSPCA](#) website.

Settling in





Feeling at home in San Francisco will come easy the more you get out and integrate with your new community.

That being said, we know it can be daunting to just go out and meet people, especially if you don't know where to start.

If you're eager to build a social network once you've moved to San Fran, here's a variety of ways you can get started:

Join Expat groups \ \

Joining an expat group is a simple way of meeting fellow people from the UK. Not only will you have a shared life experience of moving to another country, but the people you meet can also offer invaluable tips and advice because they've already done it all before. Expat Facebook groups and websites like [InterNations](#) or [Meetup](#) will give you the chance to chat with other expats and find out about local events you can attend in your area.

Children \ \

Schools are a fantastic place to make friends with other parents. There's always plenty of events such as bake sales, school plays, and sports games to attend which can provide plenty of opportunities for you to introduce yourself.

Start a new hobby \ \

Whether it's joining the gym, learning a new language or getting creative at a pottery class, starting a new hobby and attending regular classes will automatically connect you with like-minded people with similar interests.

Ask for help at work \ \

Let your new colleagues know that you're new in town and ask for advice on the best places to grab lunch or go for a drink. They will undoubtedly share their favourites and may even offer to show you around. Work parties can also be a great way to get to know people in a less-formal setting.

Getting around



How to get a driving license



If you're planning on driving when you get to San Francisco, you'll be pleased to know that you can use your UK driving license for up to 90 days. However, during this time you'll have to apply for a US licence which will involve an application, theory test and practical test.

To get this process started with the [DMV in California](#), you'll need to have your visa, proof of residence and identity and you'll have to pay a fee. Once complete, you'll be given a temporary license which you can use for 45 days or until your permanent license arrives in the post at your home address.

San Francisco sees some of the heaviest traffic in the US, which is important to note before getting behind the wheel. The Bay Area in particular has the 7th worst traffic in the nation and San Fran drivers can spend up to 97 hours on average in traffic per year, according to recent studies. So expect delays and the possibility of having to use alternative routes to get to where you're going, especially during rush hour.

There's also parking to contend with. You need to look out for three things: signs for parking time limits, signs for street cleaning schedules and the colour of the curbs. Time limited parking zones allow you to park your car for a set amount of time, usually for a maximum of 72 hours. You're also not allowed to park your car before street cleaning has occurred, thankfully the [schedules](#) are shared in every parking zone and can be found online.

The coloured curbs in San Francisco also indicate different things:



- \\ **Red curbs** are no parking zones and are often found near bus stops and fire stations.
- \\ **White curbs** are five-minute parking zones and are used for picking up and dropping off passengers, typically near schools, hospitals and restaurants.
- \\ **Green curbs** are 10-minute parking zones, typically near to ATMs.
- \\ **Yellow curbs** are parking areas reserved for commercial vehicles only.
- \\ **Blue curbs** are areas reserved for people with disabilities and they do not have any time restrictions.

Aside from driving on the opposite side of the road, San Francisco also has some other driving rules. When parking, your car should always be in the same direction as the flow of traffic and when on an uphill slope, your vehicles front tyres should be angled towards the curb. This is so, if your brakes fail, your vehicle won't roll into the road.

With on and off-street parking, there are plenty of places to park your vehicle within the city. However, while there is free parking available in certain areas, these spaces go quickly and parking rates can get quite pricey. Street parking rates can vary from **\$1-\$7 (£0.83-£5.78) per hour**, Parking garages can charge anywhere between **\$20- \$40 (£16.51-£33.02)**, but this varies depending on which neighbourhood you're in.



It can be useful to download a handy [parking map](#) to help you get more familiar with the city, which can be a life saver when you're new in town.

Public transport



Don't worry if you're not a driver, there are still plenty of ways to get around thanks to the countless public transport options that are available throughout the city.

One of the most iconic public transport options in San Fran is the Cable Cars, which cost around **\$8 (£6.62) per person** to ride, which you can pay for in person or in advance from the [MuniMobile](#) app.

Another popular option which is used by the locals is the BART (otherwise known as the Bay Area Rapid Transit) which is a train system that runs throughout the city and beyond. While ticket prices vary depending on the distance travelled, a one-way trip from the airport to Downtown San Francisco can cost as around **\$9.65 (£7.98)**. You can also catch a ride from the San Francisco Muni buses which travel to all corners of the city. For a monthly Muni pass, you can expect to pay between **\$81-\$98 (£67-£81)**.

Alternatively, there's also the option of grabbing a taxi. The cost of your journey will be dependent on factors such as traffic conditions and distance, but generally taxis will charge a base fare of around **\$4.15 (£3.43)** and then an additional **\$0.65 (£0.54)** for every 1/5 mile after that.

Top attractions



If you've never been to San Francisco before, here is a list of our favourite attractions that you absolutely must visit to fully immerse yourself into this incredible city:



Golden Gate Bridge \ \

One of the most recognisable landmarks in San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge is an absolute must-see, whether you walk, drive or cycle over it. The iconic red- orange suspension bridge is a mile long, connects San Francisco with Marin County to the north and is considered the most photographed spot in the city.



Alcatraz Island \ \

Home to the infamous Alcatraz penitentiary, Alcatraz Island is an attraction unlike any other. While many come for the guided tour about the prison and its famous inmates, like Al Capone, the island is also home to over 5,000 nesting seabirds, making it a great spot for bird watchers too.



Fisherman's Wharf \ \

With countless shops, restaurants and attractions like Musée Mécanique and the USS Pampanito, it's not hard to see why Fisherman's Wharf is one of the most popular tourist destinations in San Francisco. It's a fantastic spot to take a relaxing stroll and really take in the city and its delights.



Chinatown \ \

While you might have been to other Chinatowns in other cities, it's unlikely they compare to Chinatown in San Francisco. It's the largest Chinatown outside of Asia and is the oldest of its kind in North America. Its streets are filled with traditional pharmacies, tea houses and temples, as well as incredible restaurants serving the finest Chinese cuisines.



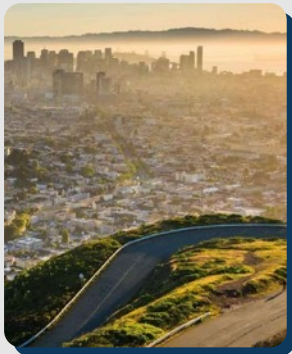
The Palace of Fine Arts \\

The Palace of Fine Arts is the last remaining structure from the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition and has become another one of San Francisco most recognisable landmarks, thanks to its pink columns. As well as architectural design, you'll also find a beautiful park and lagoon where you can get a bit of peace of quiet from the bustling city.



San Francisco Museum of Modern Art \\

While San Francisco is home to a multitude of museums, one of its most popular is the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). With 170,000sqft of exhibition space to explore, you can spend an afternoon soaking in all forms of 20th century art, as well as innovative and interesting exhibitions that change regularly.



Twin Peaks \\

If you don't mind driving and want incredible views of San Francisco and its bay, Twin Peaks is a must. These two uninhabited hills are more than 900 feet high and can be easily reached by car. You can park up, soak up the sensational views and hike across the north and south peaks.



Union Square \\

Love to shop? Union Square is the place to be. From high end department stores and discount boutiques to top restaurants and cafes, this bustling square, located near to the city's theatre district, is a shopper's paradise. It's the ideal place to spend your well-earned money after a long week at work.

Culture shocks



When moving to the US, there are a few general things that are specific to American culture that you might not be used to:

Tipping



Tipping 15-20% of your total bill in bars, restaurants, and taxis is customary and expected in America, so make sure you don't forget to do so.

Jaywalking



Crossing the road wherever you want is illegal in the US, and you can end up with a fine of up to \$250 if caught by the police.

Sales Tax



While the price tag of an item may say one thing, these prices don't generally include tax, like they would in the UK. So don't be shocked if the price of an item is higher once you take it to the checkout.

Health Surcharge



An additional health surcharge is added to restaurant bills in San Francisco to cover the healthcare of restaurant workers. This surcharge can range from 4% to 10% of the final bill, depending on where you choose to dine.

Holidays \ \



Americans mostly acknowledge the same holidays that we have in the UK, like New Year's and Christmas Day. Though, there are some American specific holidays you should be aware of, such as:



Independence Day

The Fourth of July is a federal holiday that commemorates the US declaring its independence from the UK. It's associated with fireworks and parades.



Thanksgiving

The 4th Thursday of November is a family holiday, with origins as a harvest festival. It's usually celebrated with a feast of turkey, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie.



Martin Luther King Jr. Day

The third Monday of January is a federal holiday to commemorate the life and work of Dr. King, who was a prominent leader in the American civil rights movement.



Memorial Day

The last Monday in May is a federal holiday, dedicated to remembering military personnel who have lost their lives whilst serving in the United States Armed Forces.