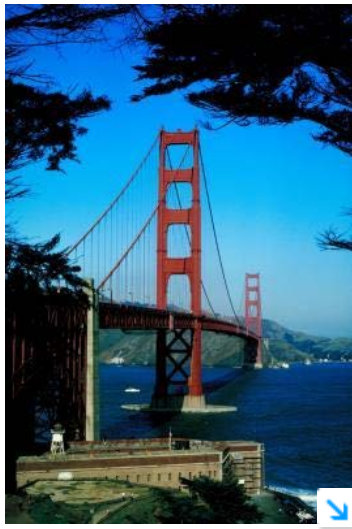


Short Train Trips From the San Francisco Bay Area

TRAVEL TIPS by Demand Media

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Short trips by train from San Francisco are an easy way to see the Bay Area.

Visiting San Francisco without a car is by far the best way to explore the city without worrying about parking. Beyond the city, it's easy and practical to visit other parts of the Bay Area by train using BART, Caltrain, Amtrak and the vintage Napa Valley Wine Train. Bicycle rental, car rental, buses, free shuttles and car sharing services are available at many train stations to continue your trip.

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Getting There with BART

Serving downtown San Francisco and several residential areas, Bay Area Rapid Transit system covers destinations to the south and east. BART connects to San Francisco International Airport, Oakland International Airport, the cities of the East Bay in Alameda County and Contra Costa County. With five routes to 44 stations, visitors can enjoy Oakland's Jack London Square for dining and a flea market, Berkeley for the university atmosphere and botanical gardens or Pleasanton for winery tours and tastings. While service is frequent, it does not run 24 hours, so check schedules for the first and last trains on the 40-year-old system, which is the nation's fifth-busiest rapid transit system.

Caltrain is the Way to San Jose

Caltrain, a commuter rail service, connects San Francisco with San Jose and beyond. The tracks running parallel to Route 101 extend south along the 78 miles to Gilroy. Along the route, Caltrain makes stops at all the major Silicon Valley towns through the Peninsula and South Bay. From the Caltrain terminal at King Street and 4th Street, near San Francisco's AT&T Park, frequent departures on local and express trains are handy for outlet

shopping in Gilroy or for museums, hockey games and concerts in San Jose. Palo Alto is the stop for Stanford University and the Stanford Shopping Mall, which are served by the free Marguerite shuttle bus service.

Amtrak Along the Pacific Coast

Buses from seven downtown San Francisco locations deliver passengers to the Amtrak terminal in Emeryville, near Oakland. Capital Corridor covers the route to Monterey and Carmel in less than two hours. Cannery Row, Old Fisherman's Wharf and Monterey Bay Aquarium are among the attractions located beside picturesque Monterey Bay. Nearby, the village of Carmel-by-the-Sea is a pedestrian shopper's delight. A main street sprinkled with dozens of art galleries leads to an exceptionally pretty, white sandy beach.

Wine Country Meets Vintage Rail

Lunch and dinner tours on the Napa Valley Wine Train provide a meal served on a restored historic passenger train. Drink in views of the famous vineyards while sipping wine with a white linen service meal. Enjoy views seen through the train's antique, domed windows or choose an open-air rail car to soak up the sun. It's a three-hour roundtrip to and from the train station in Napa, which is reached via ferry from San Francisco, connecting at Vallejo, or via BART, connecting at North Concord/Martinez. Napa is 45 miles from San Francisco's Ferry Building, so the famous wine country makes for a full day out.

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