

# USA Trip Information Kit:

## San Francisco & Silicon Valley



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# United States of America:

## A Brief History of the United States of America

There is an enduring debate among historians and civilians regarding when U.S. land was first inhabited. While some text books date the “discovery” of the U.S. in 1492, when Christopher Columbus arrived, Native American tribes are suspected to have been living on the land for thousands of years previous to Columbus’ arrival. The exact number of people and tribes that lived on U.S. territory before European arrival is difficult to determine, but the estimated amount of native inhabitants today is thought to be at least 50 million, if not double. The indigenous tribes were killed off by foreign plagues such as smallpox, influenza, bubonic plague, and pneumonic plagues as the Europeans multiplied and brought slaves from Africa.

The first European settlements in the U.S. were located along the eastern coast of the country. By the 1770s there were 13 British colonies established. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were established in the late 1770s. The first U.S. president, George Washington, was also elected at this time. Over the next century, the population continued to grow and spread throughout the vast countryside. Immigrants started arriving from countries all over the world as they were pushed from their homes by war, economic instability, disease, and famine. In 1848, gold was discovered in California, triggering a mass migration to the west. Up until this time, slavery was still common and used heavily in the southern states on cotton and other agricultural plantations. Slavery was finally abolished in 1868. The first U.S. Stock Exchange crash happened in 1929, causing what became known as The Great Depression. After over a hundred years of segregation of white and non-white citizens, even after the abolishment of slavery, it wasn’t until 1954 that segregation in public schools was found unconstitutional, thanks to the efforts of the Civil Rights Movement.

In more recent history, important events known throughout the world have been the beginning of the U.S.-Iraq war in 1991, the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City and DC in 2001, as well as the election of Barack Obama as the first black president in 2008.

## U.S. Demographics:

**Capital city:** Washington D.C.

**Population:** 318.8 million (Estimated as of July 2014)

**Population growth rate:** .77% (2014 estimated)

**Net migration rate:** 2.45 migrants per 1,000 people (2014 est.)

**Major cities:** New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Philadelphia, Washington D.C.

**Life expectancy at birth:** 77 years for men; 82 years for women (World Health Organization 2012)

**Ethnic makeup of population:** Caucasian - 77.7%; Latino or Hispanic - 17.1%; African American - 13.2% (2013 Census)

**Religion:** Protestant - 51.3%, Roman Catholic - 23.9%, Mormon - 1.7%, other Christian - 1.6%, Jewish - 1.7%, Buddhist - 0.7%, Muslim - 0.6%, other or unspecified - 2.5%, unaffiliated - 12.1%, none - 4% (2007 est.)

**Literacy:** 99% (definition: age 15 and over and can read and write; UN Human Development Report 2013)

# San Francisco, California



## Introduction:

San Francisco is known for its unique bohemian culture and social-political liberalism and activism. Cable cars cruise the city streets among a vibrant arts scene. Surrounded by the Bay, the city is just a short drive from national wildlife refuges and recreation areas. The infamous Napa Valley wine country is also found just one hour away. Among the recreation and culture lies a city ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the world in top producing cities (Forbes). Furthermore, due to the city's location (located between Tokyo and London), San Francisco is a natural center for global business.

**Population:** Within city limits: 837,442 (2013); Surrounding area: 7.44 million (2013)

**Popular industries:** Top industries in San Francisco include tourism, technology, and financial services. One of the top divisions of the area's high-tech industry is medical science and related products, such as pharmaceutical products, medical electronics, and genetic engineering. Furthermore, the Bay Area port system is extensively developed. Between the main port in Oakland and eight other

smaller ports that are located in the area, the Bay sees almost 30% of U.S. West coast trade.

**Climate:** San Francisco has a temperate climate, and the temperature rarely hits extremes. The normal range is between 40-90° F. The summer months are foggy, causing the air to feel cooler than expected. In winter, rain and fog are common. Temperatures in winter are known to stay around 40-50° F. For visiting travelers, wearing layers is suggested during all times of the year. In addition, rain gear is recommended during winter.

**Public transportation:** San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area have a variety of public transportation options. In the city, there is an extensive cable car and streetcar system. The cable cars are very unique and do not operate anywhere else in the world as they do in San Francisco. Buses and trolley buses are prevalent. For travel between other Bay Area cities, locals use the Bay Area Rapid Transit (commonly known as the BART). Ferries are also used to cross the bay. For more information about specific schedules and fares, visit <http://www.bart.gov/> & <http://sfmta.com/getting-around/transit>.

## **Brief history of San Francisco:**

Before European settlers “discovered” the San Francisco Bay, the Yelamu native tribe inhabited the now funky, trend-setting, and diverse California city. Originally part of Spanish territory, the city fell into the hands of Mexican rule after Mexico gained its independence from Spain. In 1846, the official U.S. flag was raised in city and it became a U.S. territory. During the California Gold Rush era, San Francisco’s population rapidly grew to about 25,000 inhabitants. A few years later, mining for silver in Nevada and the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad brought thousands of laborers to the area, many of whom were Chinese—the origin of the city’s historic and ever-popular China Town. In April of 1906, a level 7.8 earthquake hit San Francisco, which caused extensive fires, forcing the city to be completely rebuilt. The “new and improved” San Francisco area grew in the 1930s, prompting the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge and other bay bridges. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor during World-War II, anti-Japanese sentiments became popular and the city’s Japanese residents were forced into internment camps outside (inland) of the city. The missing Japanese population was quickly replaced by African-Americans arriving to California from southern states, looking for work in the war-supporting industries. Since the Second World War, the always diverse San Francisco began to be known for its “hippie” culture, becoming a center for liberal politics and activism. In the 1980’s, important national causes such as reducing chronic homelessness and stopping the AIDS epidemic were a focus of San Francisco locals. Around the turn of the century (1999-2000) as internet technology became popular, entrepreneurs and technology specialists arrived in the area, inducing growth and rising real-estate prices. The city has continued to grow, making San Francisco the commercial,

financial, and cultural hub of northern California.

## **Restaurant Recommendations and Attractions:**

### Top attractions:

- Golden Gate Bridge
- Golden Gate Park
- Pier 39
- Lombard Street
- Alcatraz Island
- The Cable Car Museum
- The Presidio
- Chinatown

### Shopping areas:

- Union Square
- Westfield San Francisco Centre (Downtown)
- Embarcadero Centre
- Fillmore Street
- Valencia Street

### Top restaurants:

- *Tadich Grill* – Fresh fish & classic cocktails
- *Yank Sing* – Classic Dim Sum
- *Gary Danko* – Elegant American cuisine
- *Sotto Mare* – Italian pasta & seafood
- *Hog Island Oyster Company* – Fresh shellfish and craft beer
- *Tony’s Pizza Napoletana* – Rumored to be the best pizza in the Italian neighborhood of North Beach
- *Foreign Cinema* – California Mediterranean fusion & brunch
- *Epic Steak* – Waterfront views & steakhouse cuisine
- *Tacolicious* – Fresh, authentic tacos including healthy & gluten free options
- *Humphry Slocombe* – Unique ice cream, locations all around the city.

# Silicon Valley, California



## Introduction:

Silicon Valley is home to many of the world's largest technology corporations and start-ups and is a leading hub for technology innovation and development. Today it accounts for one-third of all venture capital investment in the United States. Geographically, Silicon Valley stretches out in all directions around Stanford University and is mostly located within Santa Clara County. There are approximately 30 different cities located within Silicon Valley, such as San Jose, Palo Alto, and Mountain View, with the total population of the Valley between 3.5 and 4 million people. In 1999, a study determined that more than one third of professionals working and living in the valley are immigrants. Furthermore, many of top firms were run by Chinese and Indians.

**Population:** 2.92 Million (2014)

**Climate:** As opposed to San Francisco, Silicon Valley weather is categorized as "Sub-tropical" or "Mediterranean." In general, the days are sunny and there is not as strong of a rainy season as in the Bay Area. A typical

winter day in Silicon Valley is between 50-60°F. In the summer it is common for the temperature to reach 80-85°F. While there is less rain and fog in Silicon Valley than in San Francisco, layers are still recommended in the winter.

**Public transportation:** The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority runs bus and light rail services in Silicon Valley, with multiple light rail lines and frequent buses throughout the area. A commuter train, known as Caltrain, runs along the peninsula to the Santa Clara Valley. For more information, visit [www.caltrain.com](http://www.caltrain.com).

**Popular industries:** Silicon Valley is a high-tech industry and innovation hub. Some of the top companies that are located here include HP, Apple, Intel, Cisco, Oracle, and Google.

### **Brief history of Silicon Valley:**

The development of Silicon Valley has been greatly attributed to the greater Stanford University community. In the 1940s and 1950s, Stanford's Engineering school dean encouraged faculty and graduates to begin their own companies, creating some of the first Silicon Valley High-tech firms, such as Hewlett-Packard. One of the most famous products first created in the valley were the microprocessor and the microcomputer.

From the 1970s and 1980s onward, the rise of Silicon Valley was also bolstered by the development of appropriate legal infrastructure to support the rapid formation, funding and expansion of high-tech companies, as well as the emergence of the venture capital industry.

In more recent years, Silicon Valley has been most famous for innovations in software and internet services. It is also considered to have been the center of the dot-com bubble, which lasted from the mid-1990s until April 2000. Even after the dot-com crash, Silicon Valley has maintained its status as one of the top research and development centers in the world.

Today about 25,000 people are employed in Silicon Valley working in the Information Technology industry. In addition, industry employment now exceeds pre-recession levels.

### **Restaurant Recommendations and Attractions:**

#### Top attractions:

- Computer History Museum, Mountain View
- Tech Museum, San Jose
- Winchester Mystery House, San Jose
- Japanese Friendship Garden, San Jose
- Stanford University, Palo Alto

#### Shopping areas:

- Santana Row, San Jose
- Valley Fair Mall, Santa Clara
- Great Mall of Milpitas (Outlet Mall), Milpitas
- Stanford Shopping Center, Palo Alto

#### Top restaurants:

- *La Casita Chilanga* – Mexican food in a simple atmosphere, Redwood City
- *Ramen House Ryowa* – Traditional ramen, Mountain View
- *Alexander's Steakhouse* – Famous steakhouse, Cupertino
- *Amber India* – Indian fare with a modern twist, Los Altos, San Jose

# Trip Preparation

Preparation is essential to ensure a great experience. Please read the following tips and make sure that you pack appropriately to avoid problems later on.

## Dress Codes

The daily dress code is listed on the itinerary for each day. The dress code will depend on the daily activity. In general, visits to companies will require business casual dress. Please follow these guidelines:

### Business formal

Tie and jacket for men; suit, slacks or skirt and blouse for women.

### Business casual

Khakis and button down shirts for men; slacks or skirt and blouse for women.

### Casual

Jeans and athletic shoes may be worn.

### Outdoor

Athletic or outdoor pants suggested.  
Athletic shoes, hiking boots, or sport sandals.

## General Packing Tips

- Clearly identify your luggage inside and out with your name and hotel and home address
- Place a strap around your suitcase to secure it in case the lock breaks, and to identify it easily at baggage claim
- Check your airline regulations for weight, size and number of bags
- In your carry-on, keep a change of clothes, toiletries (no liquids), valuables, important documents (passports, visas, arrival instructions) and medication
- We suggest you carry on a coat
- Consider bringing an extra empty suitcase or bag to carry souvenirs and purchased items

## Items to bring

- 3 photocopies of your passport information page (the page with the photo). Also leave a copy at home.
- Photocopy of your visa stamp (if applicable)
- Photocopy of your prescription medications
- Photocopy of your medical insurance card
- Leave a copy of phone numbers with someone at home to cancel credit cards in case of theft
- Camera
- Travel umbrella
- Sunglasses and hat
- Sunblock
- Day pack (for short trips; this could double as your carry-on)

## Clothing

- Check itinerary for daily dress recommendations
- Clothing appropriate for indicated climate
- A fleece or in-between weather jacket
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Workout clothes (if applicable)

## Toiletries

- Prescription drugs for the duration of your time abroad
- Extra eyeglasses (if applicable)
- Extra contact lenses (if applicable)
- Pack only as many toiletry items as you will use. Small sample sizes are preferable. Remember that the hotels will provide soap, shampoo and other items. You may not carry these in your carry-on bag, please store them in your checked luggage to avoid confiscation at customs.

# Useful Information

These tips will ensure that you know what to expect when you arrive in the U.S.

## Transportation

You will be provided with transportation from your hotel to all scheduled meetings and venues. For transportation not included in the schedule, we suggest a car service such as Uber or Lyft.

## Currency and Banking

Foreign cash is generally not accepted in the United States. The best way generally to obtain U.S. dollars is via a bank ATM, which can be found in various locations, and are open 24/7. Money can be exchanged at banks or exchange houses.

## Credit cards

Credit cards are generally the preferred form of payment in the United States, and are accepted in most hotels, restaurants and major shops. The most commonly accepted cards are Visa, Master Card, Discover, and American Express. Exchange rates for credit cards are convenient.

It is important to notify your bank that you will be traveling to the United States because some banks have to ensure that your card is activated for transactions abroad.

## Mobile Telephones

If you carry an unlocked GSM phone, you can either purchase a prepaid sim card in the United States, or use roaming from your country of origin. Sim cards with phone minute and/or data packages can be found in most major retailers, such as AT&T and T-Mobile.

## Electronics

The United States uses 110V electricity. Most travel appliances like laptop computers have an auto volt (110V-240V) transformer that will adapt to local electricity current. If you require an electric voltage transformer, let us know and we help you obtain one.

## Electric Plugs

The United States uses type A&B electric plugs (two flat pins, sometimes with a third round pin for earth connection).

## Water

Water supply in big cities is potable and safe to drink. It is not uncommon for travelers to get an upset stomach for a few days while their bodies get accustomed to the local bacteria, although this is harmless and goes away on its own.

## Goods and Services Tax

Sales tax in the United States varies from city to city, but is generally an average of 7-8%. This is typically added at checkout, and this tax cannot be recuperated upon leaving the country.

## Tipping

It is usual and expected to tip at restaurants and bars in the United States. The standard rate is 15-20% and this is generally not included in the bill unless otherwise stated (such as when you dine with a party of 8 or larger). It is customary to tip taxi drivers, bell boys, and other professionals in the service industry.

Gratuities for group meals that are listed in the itinerary and for bus drivers, travel hosts and tour guides have been included as part of The Austral Group service.

## Calling Home

The cheapest way to call abroad is to use Skype or FaceTime. You may also use an international calling card, which can be purchased at most convenience stores.

## Medical Care

In case of an emergency, it is best to call 911 for ambulance services. There are also numerous urgent care clinics in most major urban centers that are excellent alternatives for non-emergency care.

# Emergency procedures in the United States

## Medical

- Inform of any medical conditions or allergies
- Seek help from those around you
- Get someone to call the program manager, host, or professor
- Minor emergency: check with insurance provider first
- Major emergency: seek immediate medical attention

## Robbery

- Stay calm
- Let people know
- Call program manager, host, or professor
- Go to police or call 911
- If necessary, return to hotel

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

