

San Francisco Chinatown Tour



VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS

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Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Tour Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Tips](#)

[Chapter 1 - Grant Avenue](#)

[Chapter 2 - Historic Portsmouth Square](#)

[Chapter 3 - Eating Throughout Chinatown](#)

[Chapter 4 - Chinatown Alleyways](#)

[Chapter 5 - Places of Worship](#)

[Maps](#)

[Author Biography](#)

[Publisher](#)

Tour Summary

The 24 square blocks of San Francisco's dynamic Chinatown teem with activity 365 days a year. Beloved Grant Avenue, with its red lanterns and bright facades, brims with woks, kites, and kitschy souvenirs galore. Locals shop at Stockton Street's bargain-priced open-air markets, or relax and gossip at monument-filled Portsmouth Square. Enticing smells waft through the air: dim sum dumplings, mooncakes from traditional bakeries, and fortune cookies from a back-alley "factory." Vying for space on the packed thoroughfares and quiet alleyways are old-fashioned apothecaries, incense-filled temples, historic churches, one-seat barbershops, family benevolent associations, serene teahouses, fresh fruit stalls, and worlds more.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

Introduction



The vibrant 24 square blocks of San Francisco's Chinatown are a bright burst of color and culture.



Tourist-beloved Grant Avenue is a feast for the eyes, decked out in red lanterns, banners, colorful facades, pagoda-style rooftops, dragon-entwined lampposts, and signs with Chinese characters.



Grant Avenue and its environs brim with keepsake and specialty shops, offering everything from woks, kites, and ethnic instruments to satin slippers, bamboo backscratchers, and cable-car magnets.



On parallel Stockton Street, a cacophony of Cantonese chattering and honking car horns rises from traffic-jammed intersections and equally congested sidewalks.



Stockton Street is where locals shop for dinner at bargain-priced food stalls, which sell fresh fruit, exotic vegetables, Chinese seasonings, live seafood, and more.



In dusty, old-world apothecaries on Washington Street, herbalists mix up ancient natural remedies, measuring ingredients with hand scales and tallying up totals on an abacus.



Pungent scents of steamed dumplings, dried fish, and roasted meats mingle in the air. Their source is a cluster of dim sum joints, open-air markets, bakeries, and ethnic restaurants.



Portsmouth Square is an outdoor living room for the Chinese community, where friends gather to gossip and play cards among historic monuments.



For a little peace and quiet, escape the frenzied thoroughfares by stepping into one of many serene teahouses.



Or wander into the narrow, shaded alleyways that have had cameos in novels and feature films.



There you could find a tiny traditional temple, fresh fortune cookies hot off the press, or an erhu-playing barber.



This dynamic neighborhood is both the largest Chinatown in the United States and the heartbeat of the San Francisco Bay Area's Chinese community. More than that, exploring it is a whole lot of fun!

[Back to Table of Contents](#)