

# San Francisco National Recreation Areas



**VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS**

Maps Show You Where... We Show You Why!

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# Tour Summary

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area is one of the most visited National Parks in the United States, hosting over 13 million visitors per year. It is also one of the largest urban parks in the world with a size almost 3 times that of the consolidated city and county of San Francisco, where much of the developed park resides. This tour through the GGNRA will include units within the city of San Francisco: the historic Presidio, Maritime Museum and Fort Mason, along with the wilderness regions of Lands End, Ocean Beach, and Fort Funston.

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# The Beaches of San Francisco





Perhaps the best way to begin this tour is to visit the beaches of San Francisco, all of which are included in the units of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The GGNRA is a completely urban park which attracts tourists and local residents to a myriad of outdoor recreational opportunities. Let's head to the coast and explore the beaches first.



Starting in the north, the Aquatic Park is the renowned home of the 19th-century athletic groups, the Dolphin Club and the South End Rowing Club. Founded in 1877 and 1873, respectively, the Aquatic Park next to Fort Mason is one of the oldest exercise beaches in the United States.



We'll continue due west into the Presidio along the Promenade Trail. After becoming part of the GGNRA, much of Crissy Field in the Presidio was restored to its former condition as a wetland. The Golden Gate Bridge as seen from Crissy Field is one of the most famous images in the bay area.



The beach at the east end of Crissy Field remains popular with windsurfers and kiteboarders alike. The summer winds which build in the early afternoon make for exceptional "sailing."





Surfers find the break directly under the Golden Gate Bridge one of the most challenging in the state. One wrong turn or a bad wipeout can toss the novice surfer painfully onto the rocks. From Fort Point, we will turn the corner onto the Coastal Trail and begin hiking south.



Baker Beach in the Presidio is one of the most famous beaches in North America. Not only does it offer stunning views of the Golden Gate, but it is the second oldest clothing-optional beach in the U.S., and the birthplace of the annual Burning Man Festival, now located in the desert of Nevada.



Sporting activities are common on Baker Beach, including volleyball, touch football, fishing, Frisbee throwing, kite flying and skim-boarding.



It is also a great place to meet friends, have a picnic, play music for each other, and enjoy a social aspect of being outdoors at a beautiful location!



Like much of the bay area, Baker Beach can be a windy place. Hard-core beachgoers put up a wind block so they can enjoy an afternoon game of chess.



Maybe because Baker Beach was the birthplace of Burning Man, or maybe because the location continues to attract eccentric people, but a tradition of silly art

projects persists on the far north end of the beach.



Certainly the young skim-boarders are not deterred by the weird art or nudity. They come to Baker Beach to get their ride on!





Crashing waves, beautiful scenery, and good friends are reasons enough to go for a stroll on any of the GGNRA beaches.



China Beach is nestled between dramatic cliffs near Lands End. Since Gold Rush times this beach was used as a campsite by Chinese fishermen who worked in and around the San Francisco Bay.



Around the corner of the spectacular Lands End cliffs is the beginning of Ocean Beach on the western extremity of the city. The cliffs are filled with tidepools and sea caves, best explored during low tide. Now we will

make our way due south. This is the same direction we'll take during the full tour.



Ocean Beach is the only legal place to build a beach fire in the GGNRA. There are pre-built fire platforms, but people must bring their own wood and burn their fires responsibly.



Sometimes huge groups of people show up for parties on the beach.



The flat stretch of land facing Ocean Beach rises up to more dramatic cliffs at Fort Funston. This lonely section of park in southwestern San Francisco is a little-known unit of the GGNRA, with many hidden surprises.



Fort Funston preserves the largest acreage of sand dunes remaining in San Francisco. Much of the western half of the city was once covered in dunes, but only a small fraction of this wild land remains.

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