

San Francisco's Angel Island



VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS

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

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Tour Summary

Angel Island State Park is the largest island in the bay, known as the “Jewel of the San Francisco Bay.” This grassy, woodland-covered mountain island is an adventure lover’s delight, filled with multi-use trails and historic buildings. Ferries arrive daily, or visitors may take their own boat. Once here, tour the historic Immigration Station, decommissioned army forts, the Ayala Cove, or climb to the summit of Mount Caroline Livermore. Overnight camping is permitted. Docent-led nature hikes and historic tours are available. Tram tours circle the island for those unable to walk far. Come over and visit Angel Island!

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Faces of Angel Island





Nearly every visitor to Angel Island State Park takes one of several public ferries to arrive on the island. The shortest trip is from the Marin County town of Tiburon, where the ride is only 10 minutes from dock to dock. All aboard!



Nearly dead center of the San Francisco Bay is majestic Angel Island, offering spectacular views of the city skyline, the east bay, and the Marin Headlands, including Mount Tamalpais.



Angel Island is said to offer the best panoramic views in the bay area, including this view out to the Pacific Ocean past the Golden Gate Bridge. On this tour we'll go around the island, and to the top, to show

you some of the best places for viewing the
incredible sights.



Directly across the Raccoon Strait from the town of Tiburon is Ayala Cove, where we will start our tour of the island. The cove is the main ferry port and has a gift shop, bike and Segway rentals, a restaurant and bar, and plenty of picnic tables for the multitude of day-trippers.



Also in Ayala Cove is a State Park Visitor Center featuring interpretive displays, a bas-relief map, and excellent exhibits explaining the long history of the island.



The first effort to turn the island into a public park was in 1947, after the federal government declared it surplus property. Small parcels of land were acquired, but the real change came in 1962 when the Nike missile base on the south side of the island was deactivated and the Army moved out for good. In December of that year the

entire island was turned over to the State of California for park purposes, with the exception of 2 Coast Guard stations.



A vast network of hiking trails was established around the island, along with the renovation of many old Army roads that were converted into multi-use trails and roads.



In October 2008, a massive wildfire consumed nearly 50% of Angel Island. In this photo taken 6 months later, vegetation had returned to the burned-out areas rather quickly. Even the scorched trees show

some signs of recovery. We'll discuss the fire in the third chapter, when we ascend to the top of the island.



As our docent guide explains, the summit was renamed Mount Caroline Livermore in 1958, in honor of the dedicated Marin County conservationist who led the

campaign to create Angel Island State
Park.



The island is alive with history: 3,000 years ago the Coastal Miwok Indians fished and hunted here. Later it was the first anchorage for Spanish explorer Juan Manuel de Ayala, who named the island. After that it became an expansive U.S. Army post, and a processing station for new immigrants arriving on the west coast.



Angel Island is also known for its pristine sandy coastline. People with their own boats can sail right up to the shore, and picnic on several beaches. We'll explore the

many recreational uses of Angel Island in the following chapters.



In the final chapter we will take a look at the newly-remodeled Immigration Station on Angel Island. While often called the Ellis Island of the West, this was in fact quite different. Today, most visitors find the station a quiet refuge for reflection.

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