

24 HOURS IN...

Regularly voted one of the most livable cities in the United States, San Francisco has it all, from museums to parks, chic cafes to a dynamic cocktail culture, and as the mercury rises, the city makes for the perfect gateway to the US.

9AM For a hotel with sophistication and a great location, head for the Kensington on Union Square. Located close to the city's famed cable car lines, as well as luxury shopping, the Yerba Buena Convention Centre and San Francisco's commercial and arts hubs, the 92-room boutique hotel combines a classic sense of luxury with contemporary amenities and makes for a great base for exploring the rest of the city. 450 Post Street, Union Square, Tel: +1 415 788 6400, www.kensingtonparkhotel.com

10AM Head to the Golden Gate park to take in a sense of the city as it wakes in one of the world's largest urban greenbelts. The 411-hectare park is home to gardens, sports grounds and two major museums; the California Academy of Sciences opened in 2008 and features an aquarium, planetarium, a natural history section and scientific research facilities, as well as an expansive roof which is home to 1.7 million native plants. Alternatively, the de Young Museum opened in 2005 and features a world-class collection of American art from the 17th to 21st centuries and a 43-metre high observation deck. www.parks.sfgov.org

12NOON From the park you can take the new 74X CultureBus from the Academy of Science to downtown, with stops at cultural institutions along the way, including the San Francisco Museum

of Modern Art, Union Square, the Civic Centre, Chinatown and the Asian Art Museum. Fares are US\$7 per person with buses running from 10am-5pm. www.sfculturebus.org

1.30PM Jump in a cab and head down to The Embarcadero on Pier 5 and lunch at newly-opened *Lafitte*, where Chef Russell Jackson creates elegant, modern cuisine using the freshest ingredients he can find on any one day. Look out for his macaroni and cheese with shaved truffles and "Elvis Sandwich" with bacon and foie gras matched with peanut butter and home-made jam. Pier 5, The Embarcadero, Tel: +1 415 839 2134, www.lafittesf.com

3PM If you've had your fill and need to walk off Jackson's indulgences, head to the city's best walking track, the Golden Gate Bridge. Take a 20 minute cab ride to the bridge's base and walk its almost 3km length along a specially designated pedestrian walk. The bridge was created to connect two sides of a natural basin famed for the power of its current, and has become a US icon. If you'd rather sit back and admire the bridge from a different perspective, Adventure Cat offer catamaran yacht cruises around the famous prison island of Alcatraz and beneath the Golden Gate. www.adventurecat.com

4PM Take a ferry over to Alcatraz for a guided tour through one



24 Hours in SAN FRANCISCO

(Clockwise from top) San Francisco's iconic bridge emerges from the city's famed fog banks; bustling Chinatown; the city's trams are a great way to get around; the entrance to the Kensington Park Hotel; indulgence at Lafitte.

Spanish speaking world. 1817 Market Street, Tel: +1 415 874 9951, www.piscosf.com

8PM

Dinner time so head to *Spruce*, which serves up contemporary American cuisine in intimate, earthy surrounds. Sit up at the bar and have one of Andrew Green's innovative cocktails – perhaps the *Country Cobbler* with vanilla-infused Evan Williams Bourbon, no-cino, pear, lemon juice and molasses - while you wait for your table, then order from a menu created by chef and owner Mark Sullivan. The dinner menu boasts the likes of Osetra caviar with potato blini; and harvest squash ravioli with a brown butter nage for starters, followed by honey lacquered duck breast with cinnamon spiced foie gras and pineapple quince; and rabbit in three preparations, with Chantenay carrots and French lentils, matched with a wine list of over 1,300 labels. 3640 Sacramento Street, Tel: +1 415 931 5100, www.sprucesf.com

10PM

If you still have energy, you might want to finish the night off at one of San Francisco's many lively jazz venues, including the *Rasselas Jazz Club*. Hosting both established and up-and-coming acts, expect plenty of great live jazz and blues, as well as a spot of Latin groove – this is California after all – into the early hours. 1534 Fillmore Street, Tel: +1 415 346 8696, www.rasselasjazzclub.com

of the world's most famous jails. Once home to some of America's most notorious criminals, including Al 'Scarface' Capone and Robert 'Birdman' Stroud, take the city's first hybrid propulsion ferry over to *The Rock*, and explore this former Civil War era fort and federal penitentiary with a 45 minute audio tour presented by guards who worked on the island, before a showing of a Discovery Channel presentation on the prison and the island's eventual rehabilitation as a bird sanctuary. Tours from US\$2 per person, www.alcatrazcruises.com

6PM

Time for a pre-dinner drink. Head to *Pisco*, a pan-Latin lounge bar that's said to have the best pisco sours in the country. The 26ft walnut bar serves up a variety of spicy, tantalizing concoctions, as well as a menu of contemporary tapas dishes from across the

