

If we in the Congress do not act, the majestic area where sea and bay and land meet in a glorious symphony of nature will be doomed.

—US Rep. Phillip Burton, 1972

For city dwellers, it's not always easy to experience national parks without traveling long distances. A new idea emerged in the early 1970s: Why not bring parks to the people? In 1972 Congress added two urban expanses to the National Park System: Golden Gate National Recreation Area in the San Francisco Bay area and its eastern counterpart Gateway National Recreation Area in New York and New Jersey.

At nearly 81,000 acres, Golden Gate National Recreation Area is the nation's largest national park unit in an urban setting. It extends well north and south of San Francisco (see map at right). Along with other public lands and waters in the region, it is recognized by the United Nations as Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve. Offshore, Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries protect ocean habitat and many threatened and endangered species, while allowing for compatible

human uses. The national recreation area's role as the Bay Area's backyard continues to evolve in ways its early proponents never imagined. Renewable energy powers public buildings and transportation. People of all abilities use accessible trails and other facilities, engaging in activities that promote health and wellness. Volunteers do everything from conducting tours to helping restore native habitat.

Come here for the natural cathedral of coast redwoods at Muir Woods or to experience for yourself the harsh conditions on Alcatraz Island. But don't overlook the out-of-the-way places to savor the scents of bay laurel and sage, cool morning fog, waves crashing on the headlands, or a tapestry of native spring wildflowers. Golden Gate National Recreation Area invites you to enjoy, explore, and find your own way to experience the parks at the Golden Gate.



Muir Beach; below left: osprey with prey
Alcatraz
Native plant nursery
Tennessee Valley; above: view from Marin Headlands toward city

- GOLDEN GATE BY THE NUMBERS**
- 81,000 acres of parklands
 - 36,000 park volunteers
 - 29,000 yearly raptor sightings
 - 10,000 years of history
 - 758 historic structures
 - 140 miles of trails
 - 78 shipwrecks
 - 35 threatened or endangered species
 - 12 sand beaches
 - 3 lighthouses
 - 1 Golden Gate
 - Countless things to discover



Experience Your Parks



Park volunteers contribute to just about every aspect of your experience at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVANCY / TEDDIE ARAUJO

WHERE TO BEGIN

Golden Gate National Recreation Area includes Alcatraz, Fort Point National Historic Site, Muir Woods National Monument, and dozens more natural and historic places (see maps on both sides of this brochure).

There are visitor information centers at Alcatraz, Fort Point National Historic Site, Golden Gate Bridge Pavilion, Land's End, Marin Headlands, Muir Woods National Monument, Pacifica, and Presidio.

Information and schedules are available on site or at www.nps.gov/goga. For a calendar of events and interactive trip planning map, go to www.parksconservancy.org.

Alcatraz Reservations highly recommended: 415-981-ROCK (415-981-7625) or www.alcatrazcruises.com. Ferries leave from Pier 33 (see map at right). Be advised that America the Beautiful Pass does not cover ferry ride.

Left: Crissy Field, Alcatraz in background.

NPS / KIMBLE WRENCH

Muir Woods National Monument Limited parking! To spend more time among the coast redwoods and less time in your car, visit early in the day. On summer weekends, take the Muir Woods Shuttle: www.marintransit.org/routes/66.

Getting Around MUNI buses (www.sfmta.com) serve most park sites in the city and the Marin Headlands. MUNI lines connect to other systems in the Bay Area

(www.bart.gov), Marin County (goldengate.org); East Bay (www.actransit.org); and Peninsula (www.caltrain.com and www.smtcd.com)

HIGHLIGHTS FOR TWO HOURS OR LESS

- Spot whales at Muir Beach Overlook during their winter migration (December–February).
- Tour the Cold War-era Nike Missile Site in the Marin Headlands.
- Scan the sky for migratory birds of prey (raptors) soaring above Marin Headlands on Hawk Hill (in fall).
- Touch the historic 16-inch gun at Battery Townsley in Marin Headlands.
- Watch the sun set over the ocean at Cliff House.

- Take a cell phone tour of Fort Baker, an Endicott-period army post from the early 1900s.
- Play with interactive exhibits at the Golden Gate Bridge plaza.
- Walk around restored wetlands at Crissy Field.
- Learn about two centuries of Presidio military life on a ranger-guided tour.
- Discover what makes Fort Point noteworthy and collect an NPS Civil War trading card.

- Explore the ruins of Sutro Baths and nearby Sutro Heights Gardens.
- Enjoy spectacular views of the Golden Gate at one of the many overlooks.
- Walk the Esplanade at Ocean Beach.
- Take a history walking tour of Fort Mason.
- Take a wildflower walk at Fort Funston (in spring).
- Look for red-legged frogs in ponds at Mori Point.



Above: Miles of roads and trails—ideal for hiking and biking—traverse the Marin Headlands.

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVANCY / MICHAEL VONBORA

IF YOU HAVE A HALF DAY OR MORE



- Hike from the ocean to the top of Montara Mountain (2,000 feet) at Rancho Corral de Tierra.
- Find the Bay Discovery Site where Spanish explorer Gaspar de Portola first saw San Francisco Bay in 1769.
- Join in the Junior Ranger program at Alcatraz. Reserve tickets ahead!
- Bicycle along the waterfront from San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park across the Golden Gate Bridge to Battery

- Spencer—and panoramic views of the city.
- Catch fish at Fort Point, Baker Beach, or Ocean Beach.
- Camp at Kirby Cove, with a panoramic view of the Golden Gate.
- Take the rocky trail out to the Point Bonita Lighthouse (limited hours).
- Spot wrens, jays, spotted owls, and other wild creatures among the coast redwoods at Muir Woods National Monument.

- Hike, bike, or ride a horse to the ocean on the Tennessee Valley Trail.
- Spend the day at Stinson Beach, the park's only life-guarded beach.

Left: Muir Woods boardwalk. Below: Mission blue butterfly (actual size), an endangered species native to the Bay Area.

MUIR WOODS—NPS / ALISON TAGGART-BARONE; BUTTERFLY—NPS / KIMBLE WRENCH

MORE THINGS TO KNOW

For a Safe Visit Federal laws protect all natural and cultural features in the park. Please enjoy things in their natural habitat and leave them undisturbed. • Dogs are allowed in most areas of the park; check the park website for area-specific regulations. Clean up waste. • Be prepared and dress in layers. Weather is unpredictable. • For a full list of regulations, including firearms information, check the park website.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For additional information ask a ranger, check at a visitor center, visit the park website, or call 415-561-4958.

Camping The park has four campgrounds, tents only. Bicentennial, Hawk Hill, and Haypress are small

with limited services. Call 415-331-1540 for information. Kirby Cove accommodates larger groups; reserve ahead at www.recreation.gov. Rob Hill in the Presidio must be reserved through the Presidio Trust at www.presidio.gov.

Volunteers In Parks Golden Gate National Recreation Area has one of the largest and most diverse Volunteers In Parks (VIP) communities in the nation. Call the VIP Hotline, 415-561-4755, or visit www.nps.gov/goga/supportyourpark.

Park Partners The park works closely with Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and dozens of other park partners to enhance the experiences of visitors and build community support. For a full list of park partners, visit www.nps.gov/goga/playyourvisit/ partners.

More Information Golden Gate National Recreation Area is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks visit www.nps.gov.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area
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415-561-4700
www.nps.gov/goga

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media.

Emergencies call 911

Right: Fort Point National Historic Site

NPS / ALISON TAGGART-BARONE

