

PRESIDIO TRUST

FACT SHEET | Presidio Visitor Experience



The Presidio Trust, along with its partners, the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, have guided the Presidio through an ambitious post-to-park transformation. What was once a military base is now open to a diverse public as the world’s largest national park in an urban area, and home to a vibrant community of more than 3,400 residents and more than 200 businesses. The Presidio offers opportunities for the local community and visitors from around the world to connect with the rich and varied history of the site and its abundant nature and wildlife, and recreational open space.

Fast Facts

- The Presidio was established as a national park site in 1994 and is managed by the Presidio Trust in partnership with the National Park Service and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
- The park spans 1,491 acres and includes 991 acres of open space
- The Presidio features 24-miles of hiking, 25 miles of biking trails, and eight scenic overlooks
- Of the 870 structures in the Presidio, 470 are on the National Registry of Historic Places — more than two-thirds of which have been fully or partially rehabilitated for public use
- Maps for self-guided nature and art walks can be found on our website
- The Presidio’s Rob Hill Campground — the only overnight campground in the city — welcomes nearly 16,000 campers annually

- The Presidio has a free public shuttle system, PresidiGo, that connects with major transit hubs and also offers service around the park
- The Presidio Golf Course is a nationally recognized 18-hole course with a driving range, practice area and full-service restaurant
- The Presidio Trust is a federal executive agency created to preserve and protect the Presidio. It must earn its own revenue as it does not receive annual federal appropriations like other national parks.
- The Presidio Trust funds Presidio operations and capital projects in large part from revenue earned from leasing its 800 buildings, its hospitality, and venues operations
- A new attraction, the Presidio Tunnel Tops with 14 new acres of park amenities, was opened to the public in July, 2022.

WHAT TO DO AND SEE

Art & Entertainment

- **The Presidio Theatre:** Managed by the non-profit Presidio Theatre and opened in September 2019, the 600-seat performing arts theatre, was remade from an historic Army movie theatre built in 1939. It features state-of-the-art technical equipment, a pavilion and courtyard for events, large rehearsal space and other amenities.
- **William Penn Mott, Jr. Presidio Visitor Center:** Opened in 2017, the Presidio Visitor Center is the "front door" to the park experience. It offers friendly staff and volunteers, engaging exhibits, maps, videos, and all the information visitors need to plan to plan an amazing day in the park. 210 Lincoln Blvd., open 7 days a week, 10 am – 5 pm, tel. 415-561-4323.
- **Presidio Officers' Club:** San Francisco's most historic building is a special event center and a cultural destination. Its several museum galleries are open to the public on Saturdays, 11 am to 4 pm.
- **Art of Andy Goldsworthy:** The Presidio is home to the largest collection of British artist Andy Goldsworthy's public works in North America. Inspired by the Presidio's interplay of built environment and wild open spaces, Goldsworthy created four installations in the park between 2008 and 2014. *Spire*, *Wood Line*, *Tree Fall*, and *Earth Wall* can be visited individually or explored together via a three-mile hike.
- **Walt Disney Family Museum:** This nonprofit museum celebrates the life and work of the pioneering animator and filmmaker. Inside a rehabilitated Montgomery Street barrack, built in 1895, visitors are taken on a journey through Disney's fascinating life. The permanent galleries offer deep insight into his creative risks, failures, and triumphs thanks to personal artifacts, including the first-known drawing of Mickey Mouse.
- **Main Parade Lawn:** The former Army training site is now an expansive, inviting lawn in the heart of the Presidio, between Montgomery, Lincoln, Graham, and Sheridan Streets. Framed by rows of historic buildings and boasting magnificent San Francisco Bay views, the Main Parade is the perfect space for picnics and lawn games and is now reservable for special events.
- **Arion Press:** One of the last remaining fine-press printers in the U.S., Arion Press creates hand-made, limited-edition books using traditional letterpress and binding techniques, using lead type from their own foundry. The gallery is open to the public on weekdays. Tours are held weekly and require a reservation. Call (415) 668-2548.

- **China Brotsky Art Gallery:** The China Brotsky Gallery is located in a windowed corridor within the Thoreau Center for Sustainability, a 12-building complex that provides affordable work spaces for non-profits. Open to visitors on weekdays, the free exhibitions are dedicated to environmentally themed work.

History

- **Heritage Gallery:** Located in the Presidio Officers' Club, the 4,000-square-foot Heritage Gallery features interpretive exhibits that walk visitors through the Presidio's role in shaping California and serving the nation. It is open on Saturdays, free of charge.
- **Archaeology dig sites & lab:** The Trust manages 30 archaeological areas within the Presidio that date from Native Ohlone settlements through the occupation of the Army. Excavation around the original *El Presidio de San Francisco* fort has revealed artifacts and features dating to the Spanish, Mexican, and American occupations of the area. The dig at Pershing Square is open for viewing from April – October, annually.
- **San Francisco National Cemetery:** Occupying 30 hillside acres in the Presidio, this was the first national cemetery on the west coast. Approximately 30,000 Americans are interned here, including Civil War generals, Medal of Honor recipients, Buffalo Soldiers, and a Union spy.
- **Pet Cemetery:** An "unofficial" cemetery honoring the companions who faithfully served the military families who lived in the Presidio. The cemetery is open for public visits.
- **Battery Bluff:** This six-acre spot along the Presidio Promenade trail near San Francisco National Cemetery blends history, nature, and incredible views of the Golden Gate Bridge. It was recently built on top of the western set of Presidio Parkway tunnels. Sporting picnic tables, benches, and restored gun batteries.
- **Fort Point National Historic Site:** A military and architectural gem, Fort Point defended the San Francisco Bay following California's Gold Rush through World War II and became a National Historic Site in 1970. It is open to visitors Thursday through Monday, 10 am – 5 pm. Admission and programs are free, and there is a park store nearby.
- **World War II Memorial:** Also known as the West Coast Memorial to the Missing, it was built in the late 1950s to honor those who lost their lives in the Pacific during World War II.
- **El Polín Spring:** This natural spring feeds the Presidio's largest watershed, and was used by native Ohlone, Spanish and Mexican colonial families, and the U.S. Army. Restoration brought the stream back above ground and restored native plant communities. Today El Polín Spring is haven for birds (and birdwatchers), offers a free picnic site, and is used as an "outdoor classroom," where archaeological evidence of the site's past is still being uncovered.
- **Museum of the Society of California Pioneers:** Housed in one of the historic Montgomery Street barracks, the museum showcases the collection of the Society, which was founded in 1850. Rotating exhibits document the founding and early history of California.
- **MIS Historic Learning Center:** This site was the original home of the Fourth Army Intelligence School, which secretly trained Japanese American soldiers as military linguists during World War II. It now houses an interactive learning center that pays tribute to these soldiers and the Japanese American experience. Open Saturday and Sunday, noon to 5 pm. \$10 entrance fee, under 12 free.

Kids & Families

- **Self-guided family fun:** Stop into the Visitor Center to get some ideas on how to discover the park, whether it's checking out the "Discovery Back-Pack", downloading our Adventure Guide, or a map like the Tennessee Hollow Watershed walk, or a Bird's of Mountain Lake guide, or Geo-caching.

- **Outpost Nature Play Area and Field Station:** The new Presidio Tunnel Tops sports a 2-acre nature playground for kids, and a Field Station with drop-in science activities. The area includes building and art centers and outdoor classrooms (Closed Monday and Tuesday)
- **Playgrounds and open space:** Presidio Wall and Mountain Lake Playground are other popular playgrounds in the park. The wide expanses for grass at Main Parade Lawn and Crissy Field are popular spots for outdoor games.
- **Indoor recreation:** The Presidio's public-serving tenants offer visitors a wide range of indoor sports and learning opportunities. Businesses offering kid-focused programming include the Walt Disney Family Museum, Greater Farallones Marine Sanctuary Visitor Center, House of Air, Movement (formerly Planet Granite), It's Yoga Kids, La Petite Baleen, Presidio Bowling Center, and the Presidio YMCA.
- **Bike rentals:** Sports Basement provides traditional and e-bike rentals for families to cruise the popular waterfront, or venture on around to Fisherman's Wharf. The Bay Wheels bike shares also operate in the park, with stations at the Transit Center and by the Marina gate.

Nature, Recreation & Wellness

- **Trails and overlooks:** With 24 miles of routes and eight overlooks and vistas, there are twelve multiuse trails at varying levels of difficulty. Visit Presidio.gov or the printed Presidio Visitor Guide for a trail map.
- **Tennessee Hollow Watershed:** With the completion of **Quartermaster Reach** marsh, it's possible to experience an entire watershed—from Inspiration Point to the marsh and the bay—in an afternoon hike. El Polín Spring, is where you can view archeological finds, learn about San Francisco's first inhabitants. This was San Francisco's first suburb, and Lover's Lane the first trail connecting the Presidio to Mission Dolores—starts here. Highlights: Ecology Trail, Presidio Wall Playground, Andy Goldsworthy's Wood Line and Spire, Lover's Lane.
- **Mountain Lake:** Mountain Lake is one of the few remaining natural lakes in San Francisco, and one that the Trust has invested in restoring, and re-introducing native plant and animal species. The area is noteworthy because Captain Juan Bautista de Anza and his scouting party camped here in 1776 when they arrived to establish a Spanish fort at the Golden Gate. Highlights: Juan Bautista Anza trail, Lobos Creek Valley Overlook, playground, tennis courts, and basketball court.
- **Crissy Field:** When the post became a national park, the restoration of Crissy Field, led by the National Park Service and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, was the first major transformation. Today, nature lovers flock to Crissy Marsh, a birdwatching hot spot. Locals and visitors alike run, stroll, and cycle along the Bay Trail to the iconic Golden Gate Bridge. And the former airplane hangars and warehouses are home to recreational uses from a rock climbing gym to a trampoline house.
- **Picnic Areas:** Picnic throughout the Presidio and take in vistas of the Golden Gate. There are five picnic areas with benches, tables, grills, and restrooms: Baker Beach, Crissy Field, El Polín Spring, East Beach, and Immigrant Point. The grassy Main Parade Lawn is also a great place to gather and play, and the new Presidio Tunnel Tops sports many picnic benches and grassy meadows. Reserve a table with a BBQ grill at Picnic Place, on recreation.gov.
- **Beaches:** Baker Beach and Marshall's Beach in the western Presidio and the northern waterfront of Crissy Field are some of San Francisco's most beautiful coastal areas.
- **Golf:** Presidio Golf Course is renowned for its spectacular forest setting and challenging play. Once restricted to military officers and private club members, today the 18-hole course is open to the public, along with a driving range, full-service restaurant, and a pro shop.

- **Birdwatching:** The Presidio is a haven for birds due to its diverse habitats from a tidal marsh to a cypress forest, and its position along the Pacific flyway. Approximately 300 species of birds have been sighted in the Presidio, and more than 60 are known to breed here. Popular birdwatching locations include El Polín Spring and the Crissy Field marsh.
- **Indoor recreation:** Presidio tenants offer visitors a wide range of indoor activities including House of Air (trampoline park), Movement (climbing gym), Presidio Bowling Center, Presidio YMCA, and A Body of Work (yoga). There are several fitness centers offering Pilates, circuit training and traditional athletic facilities.
- **Wellness:** A former munitions warehouse was transformed into SenSpa, a tranquil day spa offering massage, body treatments and facials. Drop-in group yoga classes are available at A Body of Work studio, Baptiste Yoga, and the Movement climbing gym. Crossfit 7x7 is newly open at 933 Mason St.

Overnight stays

- **Lodge at the Presidio:** Opened in June of 2018, the Lodge is the closest hotel in San Francisco to the Golden Gate Bridge. Its historic 42-rooms sport views of the Bay, the Golden Gate Bridge or the forest, and is a modern take on a national park lodge.
- **Inn at the Presidio:** The historic Georgian Revival-style Inn at the Presidio offers 22 spacious accommodations in the rehabilitated Pershing Hall, once home to U.S. Army bachelor officers. The neighboring Victorian-style Funston House offers an additional 4 guest rooms and can be rented as a whole.
- **Rob Hill Campground:** Situated on a bluff above Baker Beach, Presidio's overnight camping facility, Rob Hill Campground, is open from April to October. Sites can be reserved for groups of up to 30 people, visit recreation.gov.

Retail & Dining

- **Colibri Mexican Bistro:** Newly opened in the Presidio Officers' Club, the restaurant specializes in craft cocktails and authentic dishes from Central Mexico. Open daily for lunch and dinner.
- **Presidio Café:** Located at the Presidio Golf Course, Presidio Cafe offers a seasonal menu, full bar, and golf course views. Breakfast and lunch are served Monday to Friday, and a brunch menu on Saturday and Sunday; a limited bar menu is offered late afternoons.
- **Golf Course General Store:** A snack bar at the crossroads of holes 5, 11, and 16 of the Presidio Golf Course offers hot dogs, packaged snacks, beer and other beverages. During warmer months, fresh-grilled sausages, burgers, and tri-tip are on the menu. Open to all.
- **Warming Hut:** At the west end of Crissy Field, the Warming Hut offers snacks, sandwiches, and drinks, as well as a wide selection of park gear and eco-friendly merchandise.
- **Equator Coffees at the Roundhouse Café:** Offering counter service in the iconic art-deco circular building at the southern end of the Golden Gate Bridge. The menu includes coffee and espresso drinks, pastry, salad, soup, and sandwiches, and some of the most spectacular views in the world.
- **Golden Gate Bridge Pavilion:** The first on-site center dedicated to telling the stories of the Golden Gate Bridge, the Pavilion welcomes visitors, provides orientation and information services, houses exhibits, and offers high-quality commemorative and interpretive merchandise.
- **Presidio Social Club:** Located just inside the Lombard Gate in historic barracks, the Presidio Social Club features a classic Northern California vibe, attentive service, and a seasonal menu of San Francisco staples and artfully crafted cocktails. Open Thursday-Sunday for lunch and dinner.

- **Sessions at the Presidio:** Offering craft beer and new American dishes, this gastropub is conveniently located just inside the pedestrian gate at Chestnut Street, in the Letterman Digital Arts Center. Open daily for lunch and dinner.
- **Presidio Bowl:** The walk-up bar and grill inside Presidio Bowl, and a new outdoor patio with heat lamps, offers burgers, sandwiches, salads, wings, curly fries, corn dogs and other pub favorites. The full bar offers 45 types of beer, ciders and seltzers and 19 wines. Open daily.
- **Walt Disney Family Museum Gift Shop:** The museum gift shop offers a selection of books and collectibles that celebrate Walt Disney and the Disney artists who pioneered the film, television, and Disney Parks. Museum admission not required. Open Thursdays through Sundays.
- **Starbucks:** Located in the Letterman Digital Arts Center, this scenic Starbucks features floor-to-ceiling windows, comfy chairs, and free Wi-Fi. The outdoor patio overlooks a landscaped 17-acre meadow designed by the late award-winning landscape architect Lawrence Halprin.
- **Sports Basement:** A favorite of families and sports enthusiasts, Sports Basement offers everything needed for indoor and outdoor sporting activities. They also rent equipment for skiing, biking and camping, as well as traditional and e-bicycles.
- **Roaring Mouse:** Situated along Crissy Field's popular bike path, this shop sells and repairs all types of bikes for kids and adults.

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