

Fun on Ferries: Bike across the Bay



From San Francisco to Marin County,
ferries cut the distance for you



Ride One (under 5 miles):

Short Trips to Discover San Francisco's Embarcadero

A renovated Downtown Ferry Building and Farmer's Market, SBC (baseball) Park, the Muni F-line, new housing, and public art such as the Claes Oldenburg giant Cupid's Span sculpture, make the San Francisco waterfront an attractive destination for visitors.

South Bound

Arriving at the docks next to the Ferry Building with your bike, you can pedal south as far as Kelly's Mission Rock or the Ramp Restaurant at the foot of Portrero Hill (corner of Illinois and Mariposa Streets), where you can choose from an extensive, affordable menu and specialty cocktails served waterside. Enjoy views of the City's last shipyard where workers repair big ships—even cruise ships.

North Bound

Or, ride north along the Embarcadero for an enjoyable day exploring the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's newly restored wetlands and beach along Crissy Field and the landmark Golden Gate Bridge.

Be sure to stop at the Crissy Field Center to learn about the native plants and wildlife. At the far end of Crissy Field's beaches, you'll find the Warming Hut, an opportune spot to buy a cup of tea to accompany you while you sit at one of the outdoor picnic tables or the cement amphitheater which offers front row seating to the best show in town: the Pacific Ocean. The Warming Hut's book and gift shop is also a fun place to browse.

Eating Along the Way

Start or end your trip at San Francisco's Farmer's Market at the Ferry Building, where you can pick up breakfast and/or a picnic lunch from market vendors surrounding the building any Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday. Gourmet delis and restaurants located inside the building give visitors more options any day of the week. (Check out <http://www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com>)

Ride Two (10 miles): San Francisco to Sausalito—ride the ferry back

From the freshly caught seafood sold along Fisherman's Wharf to San Francisco's signature art deco designed Golden Gate Bridge, biking along the northern waterfront is bound to please. En route to the bridge, you'll pass the Maritime Museum that harbors model boats and fun trivia on San Francisco's maritime history and Ghiradelli Square, home to world famous chocolate and unique tourist shops.

Starting from the Downtown Ferry Building, follow the Embarcadero north, hugging the shoreline across touristy Fisherman's Wharf and beside the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's Fort Mason, with facilities ranging from theater and art venues to a youth hostel. It's flanked by a grassy hill on one side and a boat marina on the other. Riding along Marina Blvd toward the bridge, enter a landscape littered with joggers, dog walkers and volleyball players enjoying the Marina Green. Roll through the Presidio's Crissy Field, featuring picnic areas, a tidal marsh, herons and other exotic birds. Above Fort Point, follow the pathway marked for the bridge. The views here are among the City's best: the Golden Gate Bridge is a backdrop to sailboats, sailboarding, sunbathers and native plants.

After passing the parking lot on the Marin County side, pedal up a steep but short hill, cross the entrance to the freeway and pass through a tunnel. Be sure to enjoy the breathtaking views of the Bay as you next careen down a long, gently winding hill. This is your entranceway into a Mediterranean village, otherwise known as downtown Sausalito (<http://www.sausalito.org>). The ferry terminal is well marked for your return. (Sausalito to San Francisco: \$5.60; special youth and family rates and schedules at: <http://goldengateferry.org/schedules/index.html>)

Continuing to Tiburon

If you continue to Tiburon, you will pass through Sausalito's picture post-card downtown, replete with culturally diverse restaurants, shops, boat harbors and houseboats, and hit the flat Bay Trail across a peaceful saltwater marsh on a shared use path. You will roll by leisure walkers, other bikers, marsh birds and the occasional wooden bridge.

At the end of the trail, turn right to go into historic downtown Tiburon and the ferry terminal. Stroll through the Ark Row for wine tasting, art, book or clothes shopping; choose among tequilas to accompany your guacamole at Guaymas; or dig into a plate of fish and chips at Sam's, also along the water. East of the downtown ferry landing, the Donohue Building houses the Tiburon Railroad-Ferry Depot Museum, open at select times. Other points of historic interest include the 1886 China Cabin, the restored and preserved first-class accommodation social saloon that was hauled behind a boat and beached in Belvedere Cove and Old St. Hilary's, one of the few surviving Carpenter Gothic chapels from 1888. If you have extra time, you can even take a ferry that makes side trips to Angel and/or Alcatraz Islands before returning to San Francisco. (Tiburon ferry fare \$7.25, schedules at <http://www.blueandgoldfleet.com/schedules.htm>)

Ride Three (15 miles): San Francisco to Larkspur to Samuel P. Taylor Park

Looking to get away to a wooded countryside set among steep rolling hills? The road to Marin County's Samuel P. Taylor Park is half the fun when it carries you through the sleepy biker town of Fairfax. Join other cyclists and watch colorful biker jerseys whiz by while enjoying a carbohydrate-loading brunch at one of the many outdoor cafes featuring weekend specials before continuing on to the park. Or, just make Fairfax's tree-lined residential town square your destination! Be sure to check out the downtown bike shop for bells and whistles, suntan lotion, and other fun things.

Catch a Golden Gate Ferry bound for Larkspur from the back of the San Francisco Ferry Terminal. Once on the ferry, you can stash your bike and sit back and relax for a scenic ride across the water, complete with views of bridges, birds, and islands.

From the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, take the path left parallel to Sir Francis Drake and under the freeway. Follow straight when it turns into South Elsie and again becomes a riverside pathway at Bon Air Rd. Cross to the west side of Corte Madera Creek at the wooden bridge, and continue onto a narrowing pathway. Turn left on Lagunitas Rd.

On-road: Turn right on Shady Lane, right on Bolinas, left on San Anselmo Ave, following the bike route out to Fairfax, and even further out Sir Francis Drake to Lagunitas and Samuel P. Taylor Park with its 8 miles of flat beautiful rail-trail winding along Papermill Creek. (Caution: must take care in sharing the road as it narrows going into the park.)

Return the way you came. Be sure not to miss the last ferry back! (One-way cost from San Francisco: \$5.60; special youth and family rates and schedules at: <http://www.goldengateferry.org/schedules/index.html>)