San Francisco Weather

San Francisco’s weather is as changeable as the seas, literally. Surrounded on all sides (save one) by ocean and bay, San Francisco’s weather is also one of the hardest to forecast and changes drastically from neighborhood to neighborhood. Over four seasons, not one of which corresponds to its climatic expectations, San Francisco’s weather can be difficult for visitors to predict, save that Fog City delivers majestic skies, trademark plumes of white fog and brilliant sunsets. In general, the following is what to expect from San Francisco’s seasons.

San Francisco Summer: June-August

San Francisco summers have scant in common with summers elsewhere. Marked by billowing white fog, the majestic product of sea spray, wind and Central Valley heat, San Francisco summers are characteristically overcast and cool, while the marine layer usually burns off by the afternoon. By late August, however, the fog thins and produces the iconic white finger of white pouring through the Golden Gate Bridge, rolling over Treasure Island and splaying against the Berkeley and Oakland hills, missing much of San Francisco altogether.

Peer-to-Peer Advice

After surveying and interviewing previous summer interns, Career Advancement staff combined a number of their suggestions, thoughts, and pieces of advice in order to make this San Francisco City Survival Guide a useful tool for you as you plan your summer adventure. Career Advancement hopes this guide will make your life a little less stressful when trying to find housing, figure out the transportation system, and begin your summer in San Francisco. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions of your own, please contact Career Advancement.

Connect with Alumni

Also, while you’re in the city, you will have the opportunity to connect with another great resource: University of Chicago alumni in San Francisco. Whether you’re interested in working in San Francisco after graduation, or you wish to find out more about certain career paths, networking with alumni might end up being one of the most beneficial things you can do during your summer. Before you go, research alumni who are currently working in San Francisco on the online alumni directory on the Career Advancement website.
San Francisco Housing
In the past, students who have held summer internships in San Francisco have found housing through a variety of ways: suggestions from their employer, connections through friends, student housing organizations, or websites such as craigslist.org. The type of housing you’re looking for, your budget, and your connections in San Francisco are all factors that should help determine where you begin your housing search. The earlier you begin looking, the more options you will have and the easier it will be to choose exactly where you want to live for the summer. In the end, it is best to find housing that is near your job location with easy access to public transportation. This should be a priority when looking for housing; it will make your commute to and from work much easier and it will save you a lot of time and money.

San Francisco Housing Descriptions
• Flat: an entire floor of an older building with a private entrance
• Apartment: several units on the same floor with a common entrance
• Studio: three-room unit consisting of a combined living room and bedroom, a kitchen and a bathroom
• Jr. One-Bedroom: studio apartment with a sleeping alcove
• Efficiency Apartment: smaller than a studio; kitchen is usually very small or part of the living area
• In-Law: apartment unit added to and separate from a single family home

Here is a list of steps you should take when looking for housing:
1. Ask your employer about housing options. Your employer might provide you with housing, have suggestions for where to live, or give you the contact information of other interns who will be also on a housing search so that you can room together or get advice from each other.
2. Exhaust all your connections in the city. Most apartments will be expensive and you may end up spending a good amount of your summer income paying for rent. If you can find a friend or relative who is willing to put you up for the summer, economically, this could be your best option.
3. Location is everything. It is vital that your housing situation is near your work and/or near transportation that will get you to work quickly. Also, a past intern noted, “make sure you know the route to and from your location”
4. Decide what is important to you. Whether you love trying new restaurants, shopping, or visiting museums and other cultural institutions, try to find a place that will give you the most time to explore your favorite things.

Student Housing Organizations
Student Housing Organizations are corporations that own large residential buildings and rent out rooms to students. Sometimes the buildings are set up like dormitories with single rooms and collective bathrooms, and other times the rooms are more like studio or one-bedroom apartments. It is important to look and apply for housing as soon as possible. There are both pros and cons to living in Student Housing, just as there are positives and negatives to living in a dorm.

Pros
• Assurance in your living conditions: security, reliable maintenance, amenities
• Opportunity to meet other students living in the same building
• Often much more affordable than finding a private apartment: prices range from $1,500 - $2,800 for the entire summer

Cons
• There is a possibility you’ll be matched with a roommate
• There are rules and regulations in most of these places that you’ll have to abide by

Apartment Listing and Locator Services
Apartment listing services, also known as prepaid rental listing services, sell lists of available rental units in San Francisco. In recent years, craigslist and the internet have changed the way many of those services do business in San Francisco. Most now offer free listings with the option of paying for more exclusive listings or more individual help in finding an unit. Some locater services charge a percentage of your first month’s rent. A typical percentage amount is 75-100%. Locator services that charge a commission state that they offer clients more assistance in actually finding an apartment than do listing agencies. You will want compare services, and then decide which agency if any will serve your needs.

San Francisco Student and Summer Housing Options
• San Francisco Homestay
  www.sfhomestay.com/what_is_homestay.html

• Short-Term Housing Residence Clubs Residence Clubs are private rooming houses where students from many schools stay. Rates usually include two meals per day and housekeeping service. Rates may vary according to room size, whether private or shared, and the type of bath.
Rates are usually for a weekly basis and can range from about $200.00 - $1000.00 per week. Reservations should be made in advance. Residence clubs are typically hotels licensed to operate in the State of California.

- The Ansonia 711 Post Street; 415-673-2670
- The Cornell 715 Bush Street; 415-421-3154
- The Harcourt 1105 Larkin Street; 415-673-7720
- The Kenmore 1570 Sutter Street; 415-776-5815
- Mary Elizabeth Inn 1040 Bush Street; 415-673-6768 (for women only)
- The Monroe 1870 Sacramento Street; 415-474-6200
- San Francisco Residence Club 851 California; 415-421-2220
- San Francisco Youth Hostels 425 Divisadero; 415-863-1444
- San Francisco Youth Hostels 425 Divisadero; 415-863-1444

**Housing Search Tools**

There are a variety of web-based resources (some free and some fee-based) that provide housing vacancies. Keep in mind that those associated with universities might restrict their listings to their students.

- [https://spirit2.usfca.edu/reslife/rent.htm](https://spirit2.usfca.edu/reslife/rent.htm) USF Rental Listings
- [http://www.housing.berkeley.edu/housing/](http://www.housing.berkeley.edu/housing/)
- [www.housing.ucsf.edu](http://www.housing.ucsf.edu) UCSF Rental Listings
- [www.sfsu.edu/~housing/offcampus.html](http://www.sfsu.edu/~housing/offcampus.html) SFSU Rental Listings
- [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)
- [www.housingmaps.com](http://www.housingmaps.com)
- [www.sf4rent.com](http://www.sf4rent.com)
- [www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com)
- [www.sfgate.com SF Chronicle Newspaper Listings](http://www.sfgate.com)
- [www.sfreenter.com](http://www.sfreenter.com)
- [www.roommates.com](http://www.roommates.com)
- [www.sfhomestay.com International Visitor Home Stay](http://www.sfhomestay.com)
- [Bay Area Rental Guide](http://www.rentalguide.com/) is published biweekly and distributed at most supermarkets and where most newspapers are sold.
- [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)](http://www.spcasf.org) The “Open Door Program” offers a list of pet friendly apartments. Some local realtors also offer apartment listings on their websites for free. However you may need to register or pay a fee to schedule a viewing of their properties.
- [Trinity Properties 333 Bay Street 415-433-3333; www.trinitymanagement.com](http://www.trinitymanagement.com)

**Other Resources**

- Apartment Listing Service Website ([http://spirit.usfca.edu/reslife/rent.htm](http://spirit.usfca.edu/reslife/rent.htm))
- University of San Francisco’s Roommate Networking Website ([http://spirit.usfca.edu/reslife/roommate.htm](http://spirit.usfca.edu/reslife/roommate.htm))

**Private Housing - Apartments**

If you plan on using craigslist.com and would prefer a private apartment, past Metcalf interns have suggested some specific neighborhoods that are safe and often have affordable housing options that are listed below. Before you start your apartment search, try to exhaust all networking opportunities and connections in San Francisco. You may find that a friend or relative will let you stay with them for a reduced price. Also, your employer may have a list of resources or a list of interns you can contact who will also be looking for housing.

**Applying for a Rental Unit**

Most landlords will ask you to complete a rental application form, which is not the same as a rental agreement. The rental application is similar to an employment or credit application. The application will typically ask for the following information:

- Names, addresses, and telephone number
- Current and past landlords, current and past
- Social Security and driver’s license numbers
- Bank account and credit card numbers and addresses
- Financial information regarding your ability to pay the rent (eg monthly income)
- Names of people who will be living in the unit

A landlord may ask about information that reflects on your ability to pay the rent; however, combined federal, state and local laws prevent landlords from discriminating against classes of people on arbitrary bases (e.g., race, gender, age, family status). Questions or concerns about discrimination should be directed to the State of California Department of Housing Department.

**Neighborhoods of San Francisco**

San Francisco is quite small, yet its hilly terrain and patchwork demographic profile gives it more distinctly defined neighborhoods than a city five times its size. As a result, the sights, sounds and flavors of this community—and even its climate—can change within a single block.
**Richmond/Sunset**

Row after row of rental units predominates in these two neighborhoods separated by Golden Gate Park and extending west to the Pacific Ocean. Rolling fog often covers this flat, residential district. Two-story homes partitioned into apartments and flats are common in the Richmond, which runs the avenues north of the park. The Sunset runs south of the park and is similar to the Richmond, except with more hills. The atmosphere is suburban and community oriented with excellent proximity to Golden Gate Park.

**Cole Valley/Haight** is located below Golden Gate Park’s Panhandle. Most rentals in the area consist of large Victorians, many of which have been restored. Some of the more upscale rentals are located in nearby Cole Valley and Ashbury Heights. The Lower Haight has recently experienced a renaissance and is a haven for the young arts crowd. The atmosphere is laid back and casual with a 1960s countercultural vibe.

**Twin Peaks/Diamond Heights** is located at the upper end of Market Street, the highest point in the city. You will find a residential area with modern buildings and condominiums clinging to steep and often foggy and windy hills. Diamond Heights is located southwest of Twin Peaks, offering a similar residential neighborhood. Diamond Heights has a convenient shopping center. Parking is fairly easy in both neighborhoods, and many buildings offer garages and carports. This area can be one of the coldest and foggiest areas of the city at times.

**Western Addition** is the area east of Masonic, south of Geary Boulevard, and north of Haight Street. This part of the city is generally more affordable than many of the more upscale neighborhoods.

**Civic Center** is most closely associated with City Hall, Louise M Davies Symphony Hall, and the War Memorial Opera House. The area centers around Van Ness Avenue, Market Street and City Hall and includes a variety of rental housing. The atmosphere is lively during the day but quieter at night.

**Tenderloin** is located between the Civic Center and the Financial District, is one of the most affordable districts in San Francisco. However, many students do not live there because of safety and security concerns. Renters here need to be “city-smart” in order to live comfortably and safely in this area.

**Castro** is located at the upper end of Market Street, “the Castro” is home to the city’s gay and lesbian community as well as many young single people. A variety of restored Victorian and modern housing dwellings fill the neighborhood and surround the busy Castro Street shopping and night life district. The atmosphere is vibrant, youthful and fun.

**Noe Valley** is located in the valley on the east side of Twin Peaks and south of the Castro. Noe Valley is a highly sought-after area to live. The community atmosphere and renovated Victorians attract families, young professionals, and students. Turnover tends to be lower here than in other districts. Noe Valley is also known for the popular 24th Street shopping district.

**Mission** is home to the Hispanic, Latino, Filipino and Vietnamese communities of San Francisco, the Mission district is often sunny when the rest of the city is shrouded in fog. Located south of Highway 101 and Market Street, the Mission is one of San Francisco’s oldest neighborhoods. Local attractions include spicy taquerias, painted wall murals, Mexican bakeries, colorful variety stores, the original Levi Strauss factory, and the historic Mission Dolores. Rental prices tend to be on the lower-to-moderate end of the scale, relative to San Francisco prices. The atmosphere is dynamic with lots of people around day or night.

**South of Market (SOMA)**, a neighborhood in transition, is located south of the Financial District and Market Street. Though rents are often more affordable than other parts of the city, the area is under tremendous growth and redevelopment, a factor which will likely mean higher rents in the future. Many modern apartment complexes line the area immediately south of the Financial District; however, rents tend to be on the high end of the scale. The atmosphere is a blend of the new professional and industrial change.

**Potrero Hill** is located in the southeastern corner of the city. Potrero Hill is filled with families and singles living in restored Victorians, stucco homes, adobe-style houses, and modern apartment complexes. This area often has the sunniest weather and the best views of the San Francisco skyline and the East Bay.
Pacific Heights and Presidio is perched above the Marina and the Presidio, this majestic area incorporates Laurel Heights and Presidio heights, which fronts the former Presidio Army Base. Since the early 1900s, the mansions of Pacific Heights have offered spectacular Bay views and lush landscapes to many of the city's most influential residents. Detailed Victorian apartments and luxury modern apartments are also available, usually at the upper end of the rent scale. Alta Plaza and Lafayette Park offer great views, tennis, and grassy retreats. Fillmore Street is the area's shopping district, along with upper Sacramento Street. Rental prices are more expensive here.

Cow Hollow/Marina occupies the northern tip of the city. The Marina district is generally a quiet, clean neighborhood. The Marina is a popular address among young professionals and lifelong residents. Rental prices are on the upper end of the scale, and apartments are available in charming older buildings or in modern facilities. Nearby Chestnut Street is a popular shopping and dining area as well as “hang out” spot. The Marina green is also nearby and is an ideal place for jogging, biking, or sunbathing along the waterfront. South of the Marina and across busy Lombard Street is Cow Hollow. The Union Street shopping area is the central hub of Cow Hollow, with classic Victorians that have been transformed into trendy restaurants, chic boutiques, and upscale coffeehouses.

Nob Hill, along with most of the luxurious hotels in San Francisco, has many of the city’s most elegant apartment buildings. Downtown, North Beach, Fisherman’s Wharf, and Chinatown are all within walking distance. Not surprisingly, rental prices tend to be higher here compared to the average San Francisco rent price. The atmosphere is trendy, touristy and colorful.

Russian Hill, a primarily residential area, is known for its wonderful Bay views and gardened cul-de-sacs. Russian Hill is considered prime property, and the rents will reflect this economic fact. Nearby Polk Gulch incorporates two miles of boutiques, restaurants, nightspots, and coffeehouses.

Telegraph Hill consists of maze-like streets that offer views of the East Bay, Fisherman’s Wharf, Downtown and even Twin Peaks. Chinatown and North Beach are located at the foot of the hill. At the top of Filbert Street is the famed Coit Tower. Rents are expensive, and parking is rather limited in this neighborhood.

North Beach, awning-lined streets partition this historically Italian neighborhood, centered on Columbus Avenue between Broadway and Lombard streets. Rental units run the gamut here, from old apartment buildings to single-family homes and renovated flats. Nestled between Chinatown and Fisherman’s Wharf, North Beach is known for Italian cafes, coffee-houses, saloons, trendy boutiques, Washington Square Park, and Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral. The atmosphere is European and community oriented.

South Beach/China Basin, one of the city’s most popular residential areas for young professionals, arose from a virtual wasteland at the southern end of the Embarcadero and the western edge of SoMa. Apartment complexes and boat marinas squeeze together between the foot of the Oakland Bay Bridge and the San Francisco Giants’ waterfront baseball stadium, AT&T Park. Warehouses and factories have either been converted into stylish lofts or are being razed in a swath of development extending down Third Street to the Mission Bay development.

San Francisco Public Transportation

Commuting by Public Transportation

MUNI (The San Francisco Municipal Railway) operates San Francisco’s buses, subways, streetcars, and the historic cable cars. Wheel chair access varies per route, but all Metro (underground) stations are fully accessible. You can call MUNI for route information at 415-673-6864 or visit their website to view system maps at www.sfmuni.com.

BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) rail lines link San Francisco with the Easy Bay and Colma. In San Francisco, trains run under Market Street with stops at the Embarcadero, Montgomery Street, Powell Street and the Civic Center stations. Trains run from 4:00 AM - Midnight Monday through Friday and 6 AM to midnight on Saturdays, and 8:00 AM to midnight on Sundays. For more information, call BART at 415-989-2278; www.bart.gov.

AC Transit buses connect San Francisco with East Bay Cities in Alameda and west Contra Costa counties including Oakland on Berkeley. In San Francisco, AC Transit buses depart daily from Transbay Terminal located at First and Mission Streets. For more information, call AC Transit at 510-817-1717; www.actransit.org.
Caltrain provides rail service daily between San Francisco and San Jose. Trains are scheduled to accommodate commute travel. Fares vary with distance traveled. For more detailed information, call 800-660-4287; www.caltrain.com.

Golden Gate Bus Transit serves San Francisco and North Bay communities, including, Sausalito, Mill Valley and points as far north as Santa Rosa. For fares and schedules, call Golden Gate Transit at 415-455-2000; www.goldengatetransit.org.

Golden Gate Ferry Service provides daily service between the San Francisco Ferry Building and terminals in Larkspur and Saulsilito. Ferries are wheelchair accessible. For more information, Golden Gate Transit at 415-455-2000; www.goldengateferry.org.

Bay Area Transit Information Project maintains a web page outlining all of the above public transportation options with links to each site at www.511.org.

San Francisco Safety
After living in the city of Chicago, you should be well-versed in safety precautions for urban environments. However, here are some basic tips you should be reminded of before your internship in San Francisco. One past intern noted, “Be sensible, but don’t worry. San Francisco is way safer to walk around than Hyde Park, and always has things open. Also, it’s summer, so you get lots more daylight.” Despite these intern’s optimism, make sure you always use common sense and read the following tips for a quick refresher since you’ll be moving to an unknown environment.

When Walking:
• Always remember that there is safety in numbers.
• Walk with friends, or take populated routes when going places.
• Be especially careful when walking at night.
• Plan your route in advance, walk with a purpose, and be alert at all times, especially when talking on a cell phone or using headphones.
• Avoid deserted areas such as parks, alleys, and vacant lots.
• If you think you’re being followed, cross the street, change direction, or go to a public place.
• If you need to use a public restroom, try a Barnes & Nobles or a Starbuck’s Coffee.
• Never display large amounts of cash or flaunt jewelry or cameras in public.
• If you need to organize your wallet, duck into a store.
• Don’t keep your wallet in the back pocket of your pants or backpack, and be aware of your wallet or purse in commotions. Pickpockets often use helpers to create disturbances nearby.
• Use caution when using ATMs and don’t carry too much cash around with you. Most places accept credit cards and there are ATMs everywhere. Just make sure you choose one that is in a busy, well-lighted area.

When Using Public Transportation:
On The SF Transit Website’s there are customer safety instructions with a variety of safety information for all of the public transportation options. They discuss precautions to take while riding public transportation and various emergency and evacuations instructions.
• Avoid empty subway cars. Ride with many people or in the conductor’s car (usually the middle car of the train).
• In crowded subways, keep your wallet in your front pocket, and keep your purse closed and held in front of you or tightly to the side.