



# Vacation MOM™

## Adventures in the San Francisco Bay Area

by *Donnita Bassinger*

Everyone loves a weekend away and luckily for us, San Francisco and the Bay Area are only a 90-minute flight from here, and offers so much to see and do for families.

### Get around the city

The many ways to get around without using a car can be a highlight of a stay in San Francisco for kids. The city claims to have the best public transportation on the west coast and I would have to agree. Start with a BART subway trip from either airport into the city. Everyone knows about the cable cars but did you know that San Francisco's Municipal Railway has



assembled one of the most diverse collections of vintage streetcars, trolleys and trams in transit service anywhere? A narrated open-top double-decker bus tour is fun and educational. Kids think sitting up top is pretty exciting. If you have older kids (age 12+) renting a Segway is loads of fun—once you figure out how to drive the two-wheeled vehicles.

Continue your transportation adventure in San Francisco Bay. There are ferries, sailboats, catamarans, amphibious vehicles and kayak tours available to show you the wonders of the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge. A highlight for most is a visit to Alcatraz Island. Tours require advance reservations and are very popular. Have your kids keep track of how many different modes of transportation they ride during your trip and document each with a photo.

### Venture out

There's a world of adventure outside the city. A rental car and a GPS is all you need. At the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge is the Bay Area Discovery Museum—a fun place for families to spend a few hours. There are two theme parks within 45 miles of the city, Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo and California's Great America in Santa Clara. For high adventure, go to Sonoma Canopy Tours located in the Redwoods of Sonoma County about 64 miles out of the city. Ages 10 and up can experience 2 ½ hours of thrills in a gorgeous setting as you zip-line through the redwoods on this amazing course. I was happy to see that no expense was spared when building the course and safety was a top priority. Of

course I screamed like a little girl every time I stepped off of a platform, which are high in the trees and sometimes sway. This is a great bonding experience for a family as you each overcome your fears.

### Go San Francisco Card

Consider a Go San Francisco Card for access to over 50 museums, theme parks, wineries and tours. A three-day card is \$86 for adults and \$63 for kids. I recently used a card for about eight activities in two days, several I would have never done otherwise.

I have been to the San Francisco Bay area many times and taken my children to see all the sights. But I must tell you that the biggest highlight for them is chasing pigeons on the waterfront! Plan a trip now and create some lasting memories of your own favorite adventures.

*Donnita Bassinger is mom to three children and lives in Eugene with her husband where she is active in Cub Scouts, the school PTO and local charities. Donnita has been a travel agent for 27 years and always loves visiting the Bay Area. She is the owner of VIP Vacations, Inc and would be happy to chat with you about travel at 541-688-7473. Find more great information from the Vacation MOM on the MOM Blog.*

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