

General Information

Phone: 415-831-2700
 Website: www.parks.sfgov.org

Overview

One of the city's finest features, this panhandled swath of urban greenery is home to treasures that can surprise and delight even the most jaded San Franciscan. Each Sunday, John F. Kennedy Drive, which snakes through the heart of the park, is closed to auto traffic, so cyclists, joggers, skaters, and general freaks (remember, this is near the Haight) have the pavement to themselves.

Bigger than New York City's Central Park, Golden Gate Park takes up 1,013 acres and is about 3 miles long and 1/2-mile wide. William Hammond Hall designed the park in 1870 and chose John McLaren to succeed him in 1887. McLaren worked for fifty years to improve the park by adding trees and plants from all over the world to beautify the vast recreational area. McLaren lived at McLaren Lodge (35), built in 1896, until he died at age 96 in 1943. The park boasts more than fifty ways to spend your day, from archery and lawn bowling (28) to horticultural museums (34) and barbecue pits (12).

Practicalities

Bordered by Lincoln Avenue to the south, Fulton Avenue to the north, Stanyan Street to the east, and the Great Highway to the west, the park is most easily accessed from 19th Avenue. Since parking is often difficult and meters have invaded whatever parking areas remain, public transportation is the best way to go. For bus, streetcar, and cable car service to Golden Gate Park, take the Muni 5, 7, 16AX, 16BX, 18, 21, 28, 28L, 29, 33, 44, 66, 71, and 71L. The free Golden Gate Shuttle picks up passengers at 15-

minute intervals at 15 locations throughout the park on summer weekends and holidays only.

Attractions

The Dutch Windmill (1) is one of two originally constructed to irrigate the park. The California Academy of Sciences (23) is a library, research laboratory, planetarium, aquarium, and natural history museum all in one building. The M.H. de Young Memorial Museum (21) is currently being rebuilt and will reopen in 2005. A unique feature of the Golden Gate Park is its number of bodies of water: nine lakes and a pond. Also, not every recreational park can boast a Buffalo Paddock (5), created in 1892.

Nature

The Conservatory of Flowers (34) houses huge palm trees, exotic orchids, and water lilies from around the world. The Garden of Shakespeare's Flowers (24) honors the plants and flowers mentioned in the Bard's poems and plays. The Strybing Arboretum (18) entices the senses with more than 6,000 plant species and is located near the Japanese Tea Garden (19), which features Asian foliage. In the middle of Stow Lake (15) is an island called Strawberry Hill (16), which is connected to the "mainland" by two bridges.

Architecture & Sculpture

The Japanese Tea Garden (19) features a very meditative teahouse, native Japanese and Chinese plants, and beautiful sculptures and bridges. The Conservatory of Flowers (34) is a great piece of Victorian architecture. For park information, go to the aforementioned McLaren Lodge (35), one of the oldest Mission style buildings in San Francisco. The two-story Beach Chalet (2) houses some of the best murals in the city.

Open Spaces

Take your pooch along to one of the two dog runs (11, 37) to capture the feel of days when pre-domesticated dogs hunted in packs. The Children's Playground (30) and the Carousel (29) are sure to keep the kids occupied. If you're the type of person to "bring-your-own" food, then head to the barbecue pits (12) or picnic area (13) when your tummy starts growling.

Performance

In September, the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival presents Shakespeare in the Park, where free performances are held every weekend behind the Conservatory of Flowers (34). There's also the "Now and Zen Festival," a series of musical performances that usually takes place in late September at Sharon Meadows.

Sports

The San Francisco 49ers played in Kezar Stadium (32) from 1946 to 1970. Now it's used for high school football, among other things. An archery field lies just north of the public nine-hole golf course (4). The Fly Casting Pools (10) draw aspiring and expert fishermen alike. Soccer enthusiasts have their choice of two fields on which to practice and play (3, 8). Not to be left out, handball players have their choice of indoor or outdoor amusement (26). The San Francisco Lawn Bowling Club offers free lessons on the Bowling Greens (28). Twenty-one tennis courts are located at the eastern end of the park (33). Reservations for tennis are required for weekends and holidays. Playing fields and times must be reserved for most team sports. Call 415-831-5510 (for soccer, football, baseball, and softball) for pricing and available times.

Landmarks of Golden Gate Park

1. Dutch Windmill
2. Beach Chalet
3. Soccer Fields
4. Golf Clubhouse
5. Buffalo Paddock
6. Model Yacht Club
7. Spreckles Lake
8. Soccer & Polo Fields
9. Anglers Lodge
10. Fly Casting Pools
11. Dog Run
12. Barbecue Pits
13. Picnic Area
14. Boathouse / Boat Rentals
15. Stow Lake
16. Strawberry Hill
17. Playground
18. Strybing Arboretum
19. Japanese Tea Garden
21. M.H. de Young Memorial Museum
22. Music Concourse
23. California Academy of Sciences
24. Shakespeare Garden
25. Baseball Field
26. Handball Courts
27. AIDS Memorial Grove
28. Bowling Greens
29. Carousel
30. Children's Playground
31. Sharon Art Studio
32. Kezar Stadium
33. Tennis Courts
34. Conservatory of Flowers
35. McLaren Lodge
36. Horseshoe Pits
37. Dog Run

The Park Police Station is located by Kezar Drive and Waller Street.

