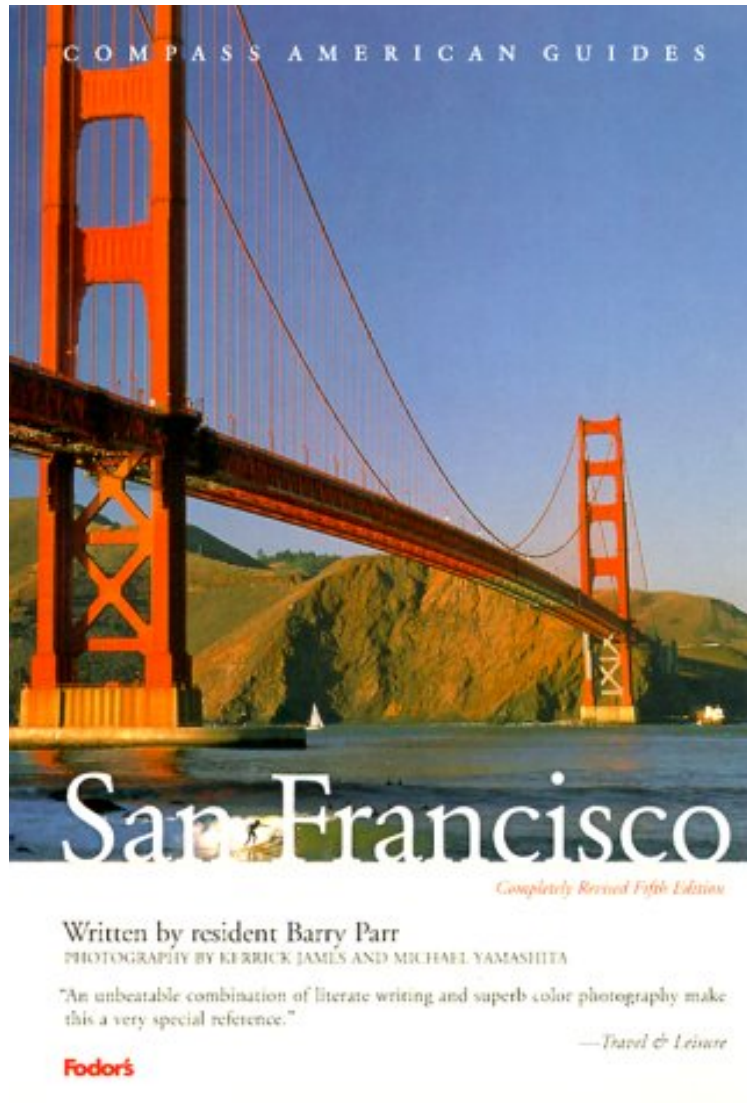


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Compass American Guides: San Francisco, 5th Edition (Full-color Travel Guide)

Barry Parr

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Barry Parr : Compass American Guides: San Francisco, 5th Edition (Full-color Travel Guide) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Compass American Guides: San Francisco, 5th Edition (Full-color Travel Guide):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great Way To Prepare For San Francisco By Esteban EssI came across this guide thanks to a neighbor who we asked for advice planning our trip to San Francisco. They showed us this book and said that they used it all the time when they lived there. We have been reading it and it has proven a big help

in selecting our itinerary and our hotels, restaurants and coffee shops and walking and hiking paths. We feel like we are getting advice from someone who lives in the City. The edition we borrowed is 1999 and is 4th edition. The one on is 5th edition but still old. So, it will be a great guide and it has photos that capture the spirit of the City. We'll still buy a newer guide as well. We noticed that this compass guide was published under auspices of Frommer so we'll check out their latest 2008 guidebook as well. But, this Compass edition goes into our library.

"An unbeatable combination of literate writing and superb color photography make this a very special reference." -- Travel and Leisure
Created by local writers and photographers, Compass American Guides are the ultimate insider's guides, providing in-depth coverage of the history, culture, and character of America's most spectacular destinations. Covering everything there is to see and do as well as choice lodging and dining, these gorgeous full-color guides are perfect for new and longtime residents as well as vacationers who want a deep understanding of the region they're visiting. Spectacular images by two of America's leading photographers. Lively text with historical insights and interesting anecdotes. Literary extracts by famous San Franciscans, from Mark Twain to Allen Ginsberg. Knowledgeable reviews of San Francisco's acclaimed restaurants, from neighborhood bistros to temples of haute California cuisine. Illustrated guide to the city's hotels, from the grand and historic to the newest chic offerings. Day trips to the Wine Country, with maps to the wineries. Detailed maps to every section of the city.

From the Inside Flap "An unbeatable combination of literate writing and superb color photography make this a very special reference." -- Travel and Leisure
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INTRODUCTION Like many great cities, San Francisco was built on a harbor. And like many hardscrabble, tin-pot, boom-and-bust towns scattered throughout the Wild West, she was also slapped down in a rush on barren hills; worse yet, on hills stranded at the tip of a long, foggy peninsula. To these two accidents of history San Francisco owes both her prosperity and her character. It's hard to conceive of a worse place to build a serious city. Maybe not quite as ridiculous as Venice, sinking in the sea, or Timbuktu, stranded by a roving river in the sandy wastes. But those are has-beens, museum pieces forsaken by the type of supercharged entrepreneurs who built them. San Francisco, for better or worse, still plays the role of a dynamic, world-class city. Still, as thoughtful San Franciscans admit, maybe the comparison to Venice is not all that far off. The wharfs and factories have long declined, and tourism has become San Francisco's biggest growth industry. That's a hard lump to take for a city that was once the undisputed Queen of the West. From her Gold Rush birth to the rise of other regional capitals at the turn of the century, San Francisco set the standards of American civilization west of the Mississippi. Culturally and economically, she stood at the center of a vast sphere of influence reaching east to the Rockies, north to Alaska, and south and west to however far American ambitions might be carried by its traders and soldiers of fortune. From Tombstone to the Klondike, when frontier capitalists sought to sink a mine or corner a market, they bankrolled it in San Francisco. Along the Yukon, when miners craved news of the outside world, they'd part with gold for a Frisco paper. When the Modocs went to war and almost won, it was San Francisco who received the summons for help, and later, the beaten warriors themselves, ferried in chains to Alcatraz. From San Francisco sailed the fleets that seized the Philippines, and likewise, rolled the whiskey and oysters that kept times flush in Virginia City. And in return, whole mountains of silver ore and gold from a thousand godforsaken sagebrush towns were mined, crushed, refined, and shipped, as a matter of course, to San Francisco. Good or bad, those times have passed. Much of what she was, she is no longer. But to her credit, San Francisco has weathered the loss of stature gracefully. Even now her citizens lay plans to recapture a starring role in the coming Pacific Rim century. Say what you will about the wealth and influence of upstart Los Angeles (and most Northern Californians can contrive a few choice epithets), San Francisco remains a city of extraordinary presence. Small she may be, but she can part a path through throngs of larger cities with the cast of her eye alone. In her time, she has drunk champagne from a slipper and gone barefoot, dined on both the gristle and the tenderloin, embraced the noblest ideals of humankind, and packed more redefining mornings, tragedy, laughter, and waywardness than many a town three or four times her age. "There are just three big cities in the United States that are story cities," observed the novelist Frank Norris. "New York, of course, New Orleans, and best of the lot, San Francisco." And what great stories they are. Just look at the company she's kept -- bohemians, frontiersmen, merchants, poets, prostitutes, big spenders, bridge builders, lovers, lunatics, bankers, sailors, bums, rascals... Ask any one of them, "What is San Francisco like?" and each would describe a place unlike any other. To the ancient Olhones, she was

a cold, foggy shore on the fringe of paradise. To the conquistadores, grinding northward with cross and sword, she was the dire end of banishment, a wilderness of salvageable souls. To enterprising Yankees, San Francisco will always be the instant city, miraculously begat on barren hills by hordes from every nation: the city of tents and mud, of gold and Comstock silver, alternately burning and rising, each time more stately, to the Grand Finale of 1906 when, from utter destruction, she triumphed phoenix-like from the ashes. This is the city of nabobs in gilded mansions, of cable cars and grand hotels, of gamblers and dance hall girls and the big, bad, Barbary Coast; of Mark Twain swapping jokes at the Exchange Saloon, of six-shooters and sawdust-covered floors; of Clark Gable grinning, cigar in teeth, and Jeanette MacDonald belting out her song as the city burns around her. And then there is the real city of rusty plumbing and moldy closets; the working stiff, the unions, the firetrap slums, the shipyards, the great strikes and greater civil engineering projects, the steel bridges, the WPA murals in Coit Tower. This is the city of the Mooney trial, greasy-spoon lunch counters, crowded steam vents, and Salvation Army bands playing street corners South of Market. For every mother's son and daughter, San Francisco is a gathering of immigrants, each with their separate festivals and foods, and each sampling freely from their neighbors -- Chinatown, Russian Richmond, Little Italy, Hunters Point, Little Osaka, and the Mexican, German, Irish, and Samoan settlements of the sprawling Mission District. It's a feast of exotic smells and flavors, of cappuccino in small cafes, sourdough French bread, local wine, Dungeness crab, fortune cookies, chop suey, pasta, cioppino, and Joe's Special. Where else can you dine on Ukrainian golubtzy to the sound of foghorns, or pick the remnants of Mongolian lamb from your teeth to the accompaniment of an Oktoberfest accordion band?