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Established by Gold Rush seekers and a haven for hippies in the 1960s, San Francisco has always been aspirational and a bit rebellious. Its grand architecture, stunning natural beauty and tech economy make it feel both old and new-classic but constantly changing. Travelers come to visit landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge (seeing the bridge's vermillion towers poking out of the misty fog is a sight to behold) and sample the city's ever-evolving culinary scene.

The city's popularity as a tourist destination has brought a diverse array of hotels to the dense metropolis, from quirky boutique inns to luxurious skyscrapers near the Embarcadero. Our choices for the best hotels in San Francisco include a bed and breakfast channeling the English countryside and a swank hotel for techies and start-up CEOs.

• Trendiest Hotel: San Francisco Proper Hotel

• Grandest Dame: Fairmont San Francisco

• Best Redesign: St. Regis San Francisco

• Most Exclusive: The Battery

• Best B&B: The White Swan Inn

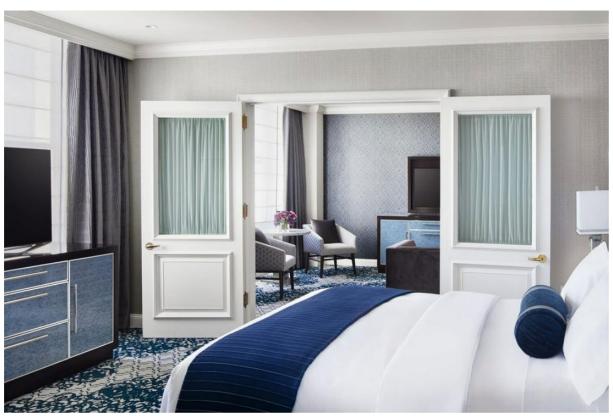
• Best Luxury Amenities: The Ritz-Carlton San Francisco

• Best Staycation: Inn at the Presidio

• Best Near The Embarcadero: Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco at

• Best New Hotel: Beacon Grand

For Over-The-Top Luxury: Ritz Carlton San Francisco



The Ritz Carlton, San Francisco RON STARR

Who Will Love It: Bon vivants who want to pamper themselves in a prime location

All-Star Amenities: Spacious guest rooms; spectacular city and bay views; 400-thread-count sheets

What Not To Miss: Rare wines in JCB Tasting Lounge; shopping for perfume at the Krigler boutique

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A glass of Grand Cru white Burgundy and caviar in a velvet lounge? A fragrance fit for a first lady? If you can dream it up, it's probably offered by attentive staff at the palatial Ritz-Carlton San Francisco. The 1909 Neoclassical building on Nob Hill looks like the most regal of courthouses, but the interiors are sleek and sexy with garnet furnishings, mirrored surfaces and marble fireplaces. The 336-rooms—many with views of the Coit Tower, Transamerica Pyramid and Alcatraz Island—are done up in shades of steely blue, silver and grey with roman shades and modern furniture. In collaboration with legendary Burgundian winemaker Jean-Charles Boisset, the JCB tasting lounge is the place to go for a Regiis Ova caviar pairing to complement a glass of champagne while reveling in the backdrop of velvet curtains, gold frames and a crystal chandelier.

Instagrammers will be happy to know there's an excellent photo op outside; The historic cable car stops on the steep hillside just outside the hotel's doorstep with the cityscape unfolding behind.