

VISIT THE
USA



TRAVEL USA

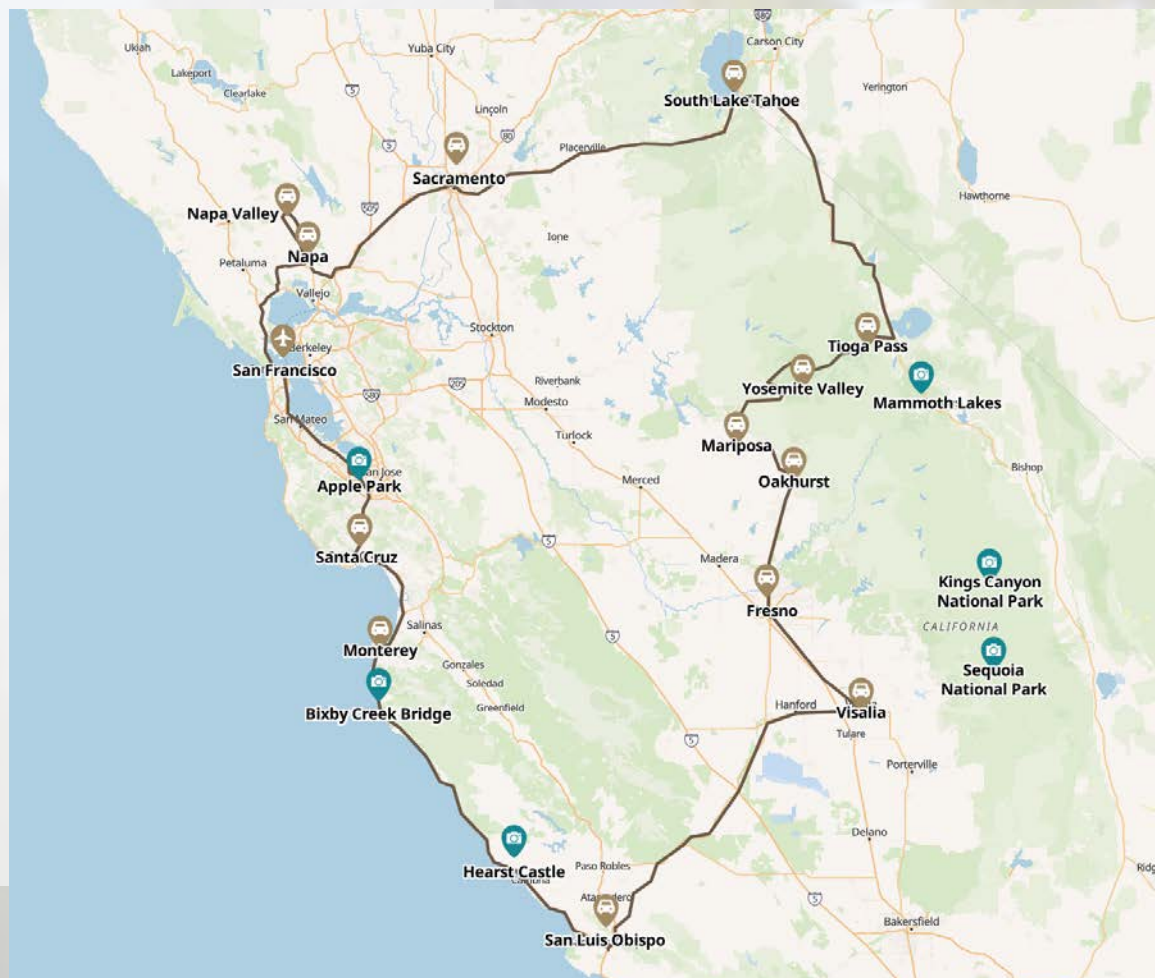


Northern California

17 days / 16 nights from NZ \$5,975

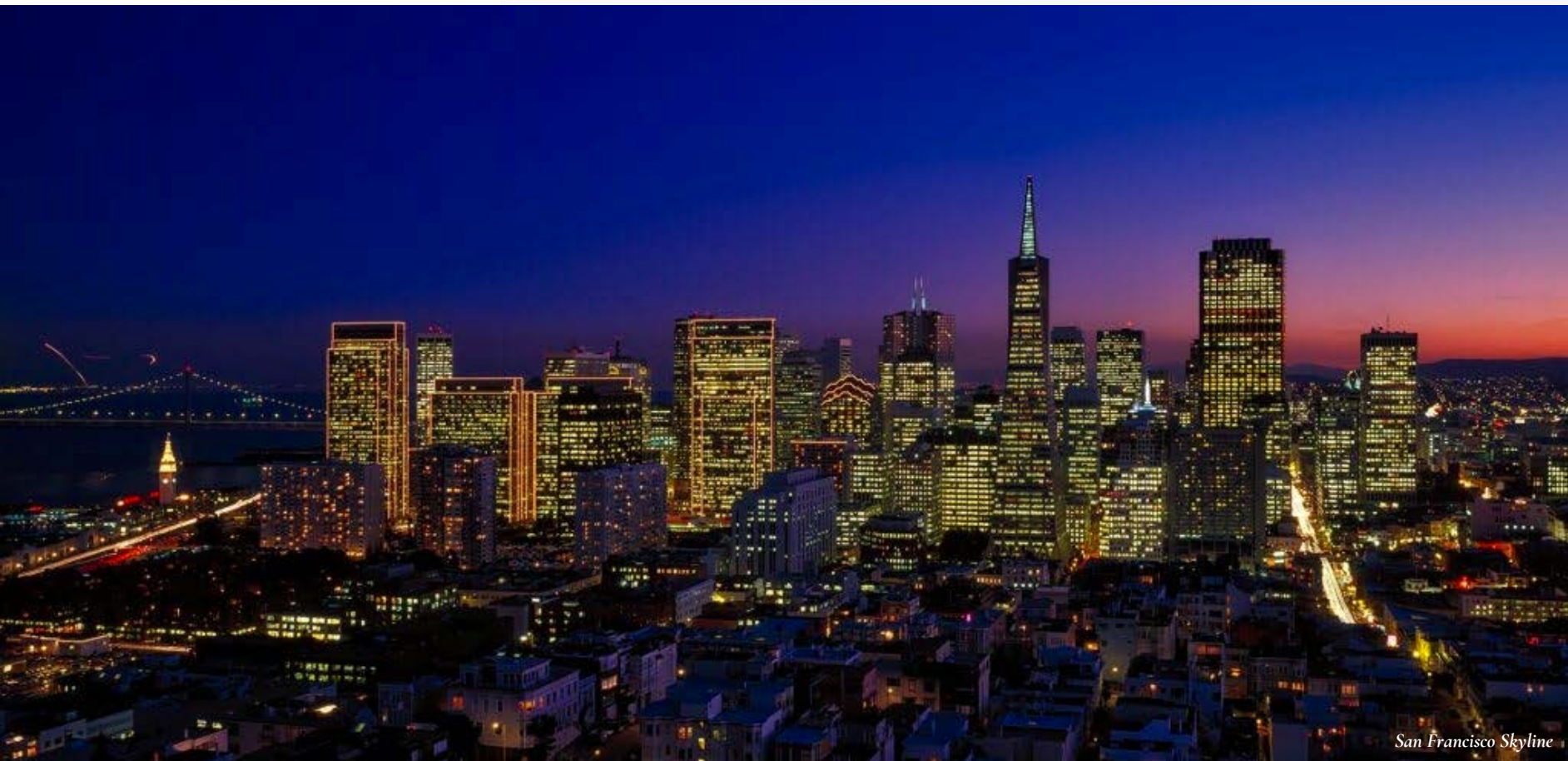
Explore Northern California

Embark on the ultimate Northern California adventure with our 17-day self-drive itinerary. Your journey begins with three nights in San Francisco, where you can explore iconic landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge, ride the historic cable cars and visit Alcatraz Island. Travel down the scenic coast to Monterey and San Luis Obispo before venturing into the heart of nature on the Majestic Mountain Loop. Discover the awe-inspiring beauty of Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks, with towering trees, deep canyons, and majestic waterfalls. Your journey continues onward to the pristine shores of South Lake Tahoe and historic Sacramento. Finally, indulge in the world-renowned wine country of Napa Valley, sampling wines and enjoying picturesque vineyards, before returning to San Francisco for one final night. Customise your itinerary to create the adventure of a lifetime!



OpenFreeMap © OpenMapTiles Data from OpenStreetMap

San Francisco / Alcatraz Island / Monterey / San Luis Obispo / Majestic Mountain Loop / Sequoia National Park / Kings Canyon / Yosemite National Park / South Lake Tahoe / Sacramento / Napa Valley



Day 1: Welcome to San Francisco

Upon arriving in San Francisco, you'll be transferred to the Handlery Union Square Hotel. After settling in, take the time to familiarise yourself with the vibrant area around Union Square. You might also enjoy a leisurely 15-minute walk to nearby Chinatown, where you can check out lively markets and authentic eateries. Afterward, return to Union Square and head to the **Powell Street Cable Car Turnaround** at Powell and Market for the quintessential 'Welcome to San Francisco' experience. Ride the iconic Powell-Hyde line, taking in the sights as you make your way to Fisherman's Wharf where you'll be greeted by stunning views of the Bay, including the infamous Alcatraz Island and have the chance to visit Pier 39, home to the famous sea lions. As evening approaches either return to Union Square or continue exploring the Wharf before enjoying dinner at one of the many local restaurants, wrapping up an exciting first day in the city.

Overnight: San Francisco - Handlery Union Square Hotel or similar

Day 2: Explore San Francisco

Today, travel on the Hop-On, Hop-Off Big Bus, a fantastic way to explore San Francisco at your own pace. The route features 16 stops, including Union Square and Alamo Square, where you can walk to see the iconic Painted Ladies. Visit Golden Gate Park to explore the California Academy of Sciences and the de Young Museum. From there, head to North Vista Point and the Palace of Fine Arts for stunning views of the Golden Gate Bridge. Be sure to check out Lombard Street and Fisherman's Wharf, where you can visit the Aquarium of the Bay and the USS Pampanito submarine. With buses running every 15 minutes, you have complete freedom to hop on and off at any of the stops, allowing you to take in the city and choose your favourite areas to explore.

Overnight: San Francisco - Handlery Union Square Hotel or similar

Day 3: Alcatraz & Bay Cruise Adventure

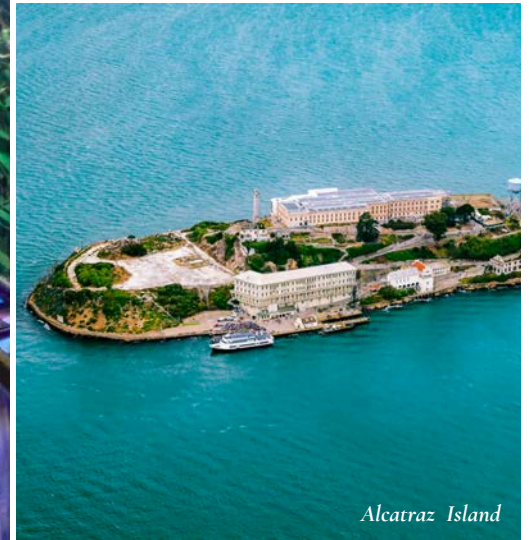
Today experience an unforgettable combination of a visit to the Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary and a scenic cruise of San Francisco Bay. Your adventure begins with a ferry ride to Alcatraz Island, where you'll explore the haunting history of the infamous prison. Dive into the stories of notorious inmates, including Al Capone and George "Machine Gun" Kelly, and enjoy the flexibility to spend as much time as you like on the island before returning. After your Alcatraz tour, embark on a 1-hour narrated San Francisco Bay Cruise at your leisure, with multiple departure times throughout the day. Experience stunning views of iconic landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf, and the Bay Bridge, all while gliding past the famous sea lions at Pier 39 and the captivating city skyline.

**Pre booking Alcatraz Island Tour is required.*

Overnight: San Francisco - Handlery Union Square Hotel or similar



Aquarium of the Bay



Alcatraz Island



Golden Gate Bridge

Day 4: San Francisco to Monterey (192 km)

After breakfast, pick up your rental car and drive south to Monterey. We recommend a stop at Apple Park, the stunning corporate headquarters of Apple Inc., known for its futuristic design and lush green spaces, with a Visitors Centre open for the public. Continue your journey to Santa Cruz where you will join the Pacific Coast Highway for a breathtaking drive along the coastline. This stretch of road offers stunning ocean views, so take your time to soak in the scenery as you make your way to Monterey. Arrive in Monterey by early afternoon and check into your hotel. Head straight to the renowned **Monterey Bay Aquarium** to marvel at diverse marine life and interactive exhibits. Afterward, take a leisurely stroll along **Cannery Row**, filled with shops and restaurants, before enjoying a seafood dinner overlooking the ocean.

Overnight: Monterey - Monterey Plaza Hotel or similar



Day 5: Monterey to San Luis Obispo (228 km)

Continue along the stunning Pacific Coast Highway as you embark on the picturesque drive from Monterey to San Luis Obispo. As you leave Monterey, make a stop in Carmel-by-the-Sea, a charming village known for its art galleries, boutique shops, and fairy-tale cottages. Enjoy a leisurely stroll through its scenic streets before continuing south. Next, take in the dramatic cliffs of Big Sur and stop at the iconic **Bixby Creek Bridge** for breathtaking views and photo opportunities. This bridge is a highlight of the coast and offers stunning vistas of the surrounding landscape. Consider stopping off at **Hearst Castle** before continuing on to San Luis Obispo, known for its relaxed atmosphere and lively downtown.

** Travel USA will update you on any potential road closures during the Trip Planning process.*

Overnight: San Luis Obispo - Apple Farm or similar





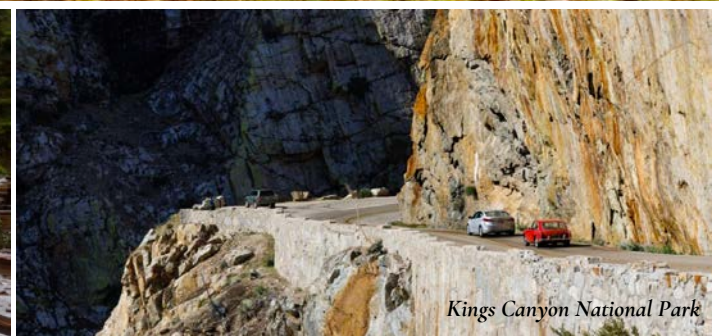
Sequoia National Park Tunnel Log



Moro Rock



General Sherman Tree



Kings Canyon National Park

Day 6: San Luis Obispo to Visalia / Sequoia National Park (217 km)

Start your day with breakfast in San Luis Obispo before setting off toward Visalia, the gateway to **Sequoia National Park**. The drive will take you through scenic landscapes and rolling hills as you head east. Upon arrival in Visalia, check into your hotel and prepare for your visit to the national park. Spend the afternoon exploring Sequoia National Park, home to the largest tree in the world by volume, the famous **General Sherman Tree**. Enjoy a scenic drive through the park, stopping at various points of interest like **Tunnel Log** and **Moro Rock** for breathtaking views. Return to Visalia and experiencing the flavours of the region at one of the local restaurants.

Overnight: Visalia – The Darling Hotel or similar

Day 7: Visalia to Oakhurst via Kings Canyon National Park (252 km)

Leave Visalia in the morning and head to **Kings Canyon National Park**, often regarded as one of the most beautiful and less-visited parks in California. Kings Canyon features towering cliffs, deep valleys, and lush meadows that create a stunning landscape. As you drive through the park, take time to stop at scenic overlooks like Junction View and Grizzly Falls and be sure to visit the **General Grant Tree**, the second-largest tree in the world by volume. After exploring the wonders of Kings Canyon, continue your drive to Oakhurst, conveniently located near the southern entrance of Yosemite National Park. Check into your hotel and enjoy a quiet evening, perhaps dining at a local restaurant to sample some delicious regional cuisine.

Overnight: Oakhurst - Yosemite Southgate Hotel & Suites or similar

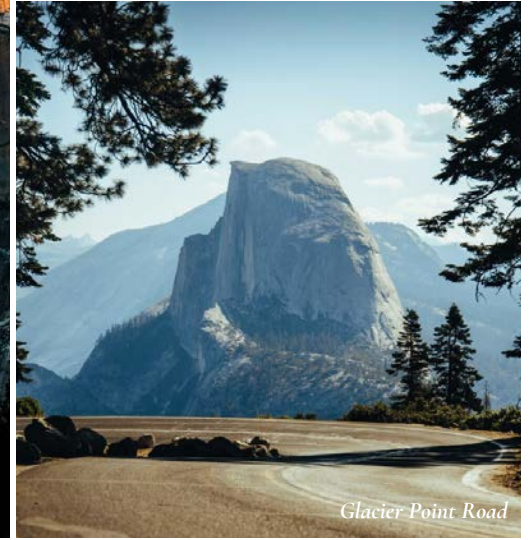
Day 8: Oakhurst to Yosemite Valley (85 km)

Begin your Yosemite experience by entering the park through the southern entrance. Your first stop is **Mariposa Grove**, home to some of the largest and oldest giant sequoias in the world. Take a leisurely hike through the grove, marvelling at these ancient giants that have stood for thousands of years. Next, head to **Wawona Tunnel**. When you emerge from the tunnel, you'll be greeted by a breathtaking view of **Yosemite Valley** that captures the essence of the park. Continue your journey to **Glacier Point**, where you can enjoy more panoramic views of **Half Dome**, **Yosemite Valley**, and the majestic **High Sierra** peaks. Spend the rest of your day exploring **Tunnel View** - another fantastic overlook that offers a different perspective of the valley - with **Bridalveil Fall** where cascading waters create a stunning scene, and **El Capitan** in it's unforgettable grandeur. Finally, return to your base in **El Portal**, an ideal location for your Yosemite adventure, allowing for easy access to all the park's natural wonders.

Overnight: El Portal - Yosemite View Lodge or similar



Half Dome



Glacier Point Road



Tunnel View



Vernal Falls

Day 9: Explore Yosemite Valley

Start your day by travelling to Yosemite Falls, one of the tallest waterfalls in North America. Take a short hike to the base for an up-close experience or a more challenging hike to the top for a stunning view of the valley. Then head to El Capitan Meadow to admire the iconic granite monolith that draws rock climbers from around the globe. This afternoon, consider hiking to Mirror Lake for its serene reflections or take a stroll along the Merced River, surrounded by towering cliffs of Cathedral Rocks. Conclude your day with a visit to the Ansel Adams Gallery, where you can appreciate stunning photographs of Yosemite and its magnificent landscapes before returning to your El Portal base.

Overnight: El Portal - Yosemite View Lodge or similar



Cathedral Rocks & Merced River



Yosemite Falls



Taft Point

Day 10: Hiking Yosemite: Choose Your Adventure

For the ultimate Yosemite experience, consider stepping out on one of the park's iconic hikes today. The first option is the **Mist Trail**, a stunning route leading to Vernal and Nevada Falls, where you'll enjoy breathtaking views and the refreshing mist from the cascading water. Alternatively, you can choose the **Sentinel Dome** hike, which offers a shorter trek with rewarding 360 panoramic views of the valley and surrounding peaks. Both trails allow for an extension to **Taft Point**, a path that features dramatic cliffs and stunning views of Yosemite Valley, making it perfect for those seeking a bit more adventure. Whichever trail you choose, you will quickly see why Yosemite is often celebrated as one of the world's most magnificent natural landscapes

Overnight: El Portal - Yosemite View Lodge or similar



Mist Trail

Day 11: Yosemite National Park to South Lake Tahoe (301 km)

Depart El Portal this morning and take the scenic drive to South Lake Tahoe, a journey that showcases California's stunning landscapes. In summer, you can traverse **Tioga Pass**, which offers breathtaking views and access to pristine alpine lakes. The drive takes you through **Tuolumne Meadows**, where you can stop to explore the serene surroundings. As you continue, enjoy the picturesque vistas of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Depending on the season, please be aware that Tioga Pass may close in winter due to snow, so plan your trip accordingly for optimal access to this stunning route. This afternoon, arrive in the stunning alpine lake region of South Lake Tahoe, known for its crystal-clear waters and the dramatic backdrop of its surrounding rugged mountain peaks.

Overnight: South Lake Tahoe - Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge & Spa or similar



Eagle Falls Lake Tahoe



Lake Tahoe

Day 12: Explore South Lake Tahoe

Today, immerse yourself in the outdoor activities that South Lake Tahoe is famous for. In the morning hike one of the many trails in the area, such as the **Eagle Falls Trail** or the more challenging **Mount Tallac Trail**. In the afternoon, enjoy water activities such as kayaking, paddle boarding, or even parasailing! For those interested in a more relaxed pace, consider a scenic cruise aboard the iconic **MS Dixie II** paddle wheeler, gliding through the crystal-clear waters of **Emerald Bay**, a visit to a local beach or take a leisurely drive around the lake to enjoy the picturesque views. In the evening, dine at a lakeside restaurant and watch the sunset over the water.

Overnight: South Lake Tahoe - Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge & Spa or similar



Day 13: South Lake Tahoe to Sacramento (166 km)

This morning explore the charming shops of Heavenly Village before taking a scenic ride on the Heavenly Mountain Gondola, offering one last breathtaking view of Lake Tahoe. At the summit check out the Mountain Coaster or experience the thrill of the Hot Shot Zip Line, soaring above the treetops. Afterward drive to Sacramento, California's capital. Check into your hotel and start your exploration with a visit to the California State Capitol Building. Next, head to the historic Old Sacramento district, where you can walk along cobblestone streets and visit unique shops, museums, and restaurants. And don't miss the California State Railroad Museum, one of the largest and most comprehensive railroad museums in North America.

Overnight: Sacramento - Hyatt Regency or similar



Day 14: Sacramento to Napa Valley (96 km)

Depart Sacramento and enjoy a scenic drive through vineyards and rolling hills to Napa Valley, one of the world's premier wine regions. Check into the charming Napa River Inn, located along the picturesque riverfront. Spend some time exploring Downtown Napa, visiting the Oxbow Public Market for artisan foods and local crafts, strolling along the Napa River to discover nearby art galleries or make a reservation to visit the various Napa Valley Wine Caves and tasting rooms. This afternoon, head to Sonoma Valley, just a short 30-minute drive away. Visit Sonoma Plaza, where you can browse local shops and tasting rooms. Take your time to soak in the scenic beauty of the valley, with its lush landscapes and charming architecture before returning to Napa for a memorable dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Napa - Napa River Inn or similar



Napa Valley Wine Cave Tasting



Napa Wine at Dinner



Yountville



Napa Valley



Boutique Shops



Ferrari-Carano Vineyard

Day 15: Explore Napa Valley

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at one of the market's cafes before heading out to explore nearby wineries. Consider visiting Stag's Leap Wine Cellars for a taste of award-winning Cabernet Sauvignon, or check out Domaine Carneros, famous for its sparkling wines and stunning views. In the afternoon, drive to Healdsburg, a charming town known for its vibrant culinary scene and boutique wineries. Stroll through the picturesque Plaza, where you can explore unique shops and art galleries. Enjoy a wine tasting at one of Healdsburg's acclaimed wineries, like Ferrari-Carano or Jordan Vineyard & Winery. Conclude your day with a delightful dinner at a local restaurant, savouring farm-to-table cuisine that highlights the region's fresh ingredients. Alternatively, if you prefer not to drive, talk to Travel USA about the various Napa Valley Wine Train experiences that are available which offer a range of scenic train journeys through vineyards while indulging in gourmet dining and local wines.

Overnight: Napa – Napa River Inn or similar



Domaine Carneros



Napa Valley Wine Train

Day 16: Napa Valley to San Francisco (82 km)

Start your morning in Napa with breakfast at one of the charming riverfront cafés. Afterward, set off for San Francisco, making a stop at **Muir Woods National Monument** to marvel at the towering redwoods and enjoy a peaceful stroll among these ancient giants. Next, visit the picturesque town of **Sausalito**, where you can wander through waterfront shops and take in stunning views of the San Francisco skyline. After soaking in the scenic beauty, continue your journey to San Francisco, where you'll drop off your rental car and check into your hotel in **Fisherman's Wharf** for your final night. Tonight, enjoy dinner by the bay, soaking in the vibrant atmosphere and fresh seafood offerings. Wrap up the day at one of San Francisco's rooftop bars with sweeping views of the city skyline such as Cityscape Lounge.

Overnight: San Francisco – Hotel Zephyr or similar



Fisherman's Wharf

Day 17: Departure from San Francisco

On your final day enjoy a leisurely breakfast and consider fitting in some last-minute shopping at Union Square or Fillmore Street or sightseeing at attractions you may have overlooked. Stroll around Fisherman's Wharf, where you can indulge in fresh seafood and visit quirky shops. Enjoy another ride on the iconic cable car, experiencing the city's charming hills one more time or take a peaceful walk through Golden Gate Park to enjoy its beautiful gardens and serene lakes. And don't miss the opportunity to visit Crissy Field, the ideal place to take in some breathtaking views of the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge. In the afternoon, you'll be transferred to the airport for your flight home or onward to your next adventure.



San Francisco Cable Car

What's Included?

- Return airport transfers in San Francisco
- 3 nights at the Handlery Union Square Hotel, San Francisco
- San Francisco Go City Pass - 2 day all-inclusive pass providing access to 30+ attractions, tours and activities
- Alcatraz Island Tour with San Francisco Bay Cruise
- 13 day Alamo rental car in a full-size vehicle
- Overnight stays in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Visalia, Oakhurst and Sacramento
- 3 nights at the Yosemite View Lodge, El Portal
- 2 nights at the Tahoe Lakeshore Lodge & Spa, South Lake Tahoe
- 2 nights at the Napa River Inn, Napa
- 1 night at the Hotel Zephyr, San Francisco Fisherman's Wharf
- Travel USA personalised trip planning assistance

This is a suggested itinerary based on our recommendations. There are no fixed departure dates or schedules so you can customise the itinerary to suit your personal preferences and needs. Contact us with your proposed dates and we will create a personalised travel package just for you.

Pricing:

All of our pricing is based on dynamic rates meaning we will provide you with the best available rate of the day at the time of booking. Our suggested itinerary has been created using fully refundable rates. Final pricing will depend on factors like month of travel, how early you book, availability and whether you choose non refundable or fully refundable rates.

NZ\$ pricing for our 17 day / 16 night package

- From \$5,975 - \$6,999 pp depending on the month of travel

Terms & Conditions apply - [CLICK HERE](#) or go to www.travelusa.co.nz for more details.