

Traveling with Jewish Taste[®] San Francisco: Fills the Soul and Stomach

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



San Francisco, and its environs, offer so much to do and see that one really needs months to take it all in. (We lived there for an entire year.) But, if you only have a limited amount of time, the following stops are a must to get a taste not only of the area, but of its Jewish charms.

The Contemporary Jewish Museum, located in the historic Jessie Street Pacific Gas & Electric Power Substation, has been redesigned by internationally renowned architect Daniel Libeskind, whose expansive design does not simply house a programmatic vision but it enables and inspires it.

The Museum's exhibition program includes contemporary art and historical objects, film and music, lectures, literary readings, and other live performance.

It also partners with national and international cultural institutions to present exhibitions that focus on education and outreach to the broader community.

If you happen to be in town during the summer, don't miss the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, the first and largest of its kind in the world.

Its programs include the annual three-week summer Festival, screening in four Bay Area venues, and brings together filmmakers and audiences to enjoy Jewish cinema. The Festival also offers year-round screenings and events throughout the Bay Area, often in collaboration with partner organizations, and youth and adult education programs.

San Francisco, even with all its famous hills, is a great walking town, but at some point you must grab a cable car to go from downtown north to Fisherman's Wharf, or east-west on California Street to the Embarcadero, on the waterfront. The run over the hills on one of these icons is breathtaking, and makes riders quite religious as they pray that the cable grips work.

To find out how these mechanical wonders work, make sure to hop off your cable car on either the Powell-Mason or Powell-Hyde line, at Washington and Mason Streets on Nob Hill. There you will find the Cable Car Museum, housed in the actual powerhouse and car barn.

Inside is a collection of historic cable cars, photographs, and mechanical displays dating from 1873. The sight of the huge spools of cable running underground to control the cars is truly amazing.

And, of course, one can't visit San Francisco without a trip to Golden Gate Park. Covering over 1,000 acres, the Park has over one million trees, nine lakes (with boat rentals), fly casting pools, and a lily pond within its borders. It also has small glens in which one can play "Frisbee," have a picnic, or listen to a concert.

Stern Grove has served as the venue for presentations as varied as the San Francisco Ballet and Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations.

My favorite place in the Park is the Conservatory of Flowers, situated in the oldest wood and glass Victorian-style conservatory in the United States. It is a veritable rainforest, filled with over 1,500 species of plants. The warm, humid air and heady fragrance of exotic flowers in the hushed crystal palace surround the visitor with a tropical atmosphere.

The de Young Museum of Art, also in the Park, is filled with collections of American art from the 17th through the 20th centuries, and art of the native Americas, Africa, and the Pacific. This cultural pearl suffered severe damage in the earthquake of 1989, and in 2005 it re-opened in a new facility that blends art, architecture, and the surrounding natural landscape.

I love Japanese tea gardens, and the one in Golden Gate Park is a beauty, complete with a tea house at which you can enjoy your choice of tea and a bowl of fortune cookies, sesame cookies, and spicy Asian rice snacks.

One can hardly think about Northern California without thinking of wine. While many wineries offer tours, only one winery in the Napa Valley, Hagefen Cellars, makes kosher wine.

This award-winning winery and a participant in the "Jewish Vintners Wine Trail," Hagefen's delicious and premium wines are first and foremost Napa Valley wines that are also kosher, with the winery noting that it is for those "whose experience with kosher wines has been limited to Mogen David or other sweet East Coast wines."

Tours are available daily. For information, contact via info@hagafen.com.

San Francisco is known far and wide for its wonderful food. Whether in haute cuisine restaurants or friendly neighborhood diners, it is difficult to get a bad meal in this town. And, of course, the California wine that accompanies your meal is

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On cable cars, 'riders become quite religious, praying that cable grips work'



Hagefen Cellars, on the "Jewish Vintners Wine Trail"

Joe's Special

One of San Francisco's signature dishes, "Joe's Special" boasts several stories as to its origins.

Some insist that it was invented as a variation on the Italian frittata, while others maintain that it was created by 1920s-era dance band musicians. Still others say that the gold miners of the mid-1800s developed it. Whatever the true origin, and whether you eat it for brunch or supper, it is delicious.

To make this a truly special meal, be sure to serve it with another San Francisco trademark, sourdough toast.

While most recipes call for the beef to be browned in oil, I have tried to make it healthier by using cooking spray.



Ingredients:

Cooking spray	1/4 teaspoon of ground nutmeg
2 lb. lean ground beef	1/4 teaspoon of dry oregano
2 medium onions, finely chopped	1/4 teaspoon of pepper
2 garlic cloves, finely minced	1 10-ounce package of frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced	6 eggs, lightly beaten
1-1/4 teaspoons of salt	

To Prepare:

- Heat large frying pan, coated heavily with cooking spray, over medium high heat.
- Crumble in beef and cook, stirring often, until browned. Drain excess fat.
- Add onions, garlic, and mushrooms; reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, about 7-8 minutes.
- Stir in salt, nutmeg, pepper, oregano, and spinach; cook for about 5 more minutes.
- Add eggs. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring constantly, just until eggs are softly set.

Makes 6 servings



A recent feature at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, "Acne" tells the "coming-of-age" story of recent bar mitzvah, Rafa Bregman