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## Day Trippin'

By Fran Miller



Off The Grid's 'Picnic at the Presidio' takes place every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Presidio's Main Parade Ground. Photos Fran Miller

what sort of Eden they'd wandered. Building 563, for instance, a 1903 enlisted men's barracks just inside the Lombard Gate, is now home to Presidio Social Club, a popular restaurant known for its friendly hospitality. Where double-tiered soldier bunks used to stand, a room-length marble bar is now the focal point of the retro-chic eatery whose motto is "All the comforts of a club without the dues." PSC serves American comfort food with a twist and is open daily for brunch, lunch and dinner.

Other newly opened Presidio restaurants include Arguello, serving Mexican cuisine in an indoor/outdoor setting adjacent to the gorgeous Presidio Officer's Club, and The Commissary located in the former mess hall of the Montgomery Street Barracks, built in 1895. The Commissary highlights locally sourced ingredients in its Spanish-influenced California dishes. Award-winning chef Traci Des Jardins oversees both restaurants.

Sunday afternoons feature 'Off the Grid, Picnic at the Presidio,' where, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., local food trucks encircle the vast Main Parade Ground lawn, creating a colorful festival of family and friends enjoying the beautiful bay views, DJ music, artisan foods, and lawn games. The Main Parade Ground is also the site of 'Off the Grid Twilight at the Presidio' from 5 to 9 p.m. every Thursday evening. Take a blanket and your down jacket, reserve a cabana and fire pit, and enjoy live music, food and drink. (reserve@offthegridsf.com.)

Visit the Walt Disney Family Museum, open every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in two restored barracks adjacent to the parade grounds. The museum illuminates Disney's fascinating life and tells his story through innovative, interactive galleries. Throw down a few strikes at the 12-lane Presidio Bowling Center, or simply explore the Presidio by foot and pause for a break at one of the eight scenic overlooks. The park offers a dozen major routes connecting all of its corners.

If one day is not enough, consider a stay at the park's only hotel - the Inn at the Presidio. Melding history with modern amenities, the Inn at the Presidio gratifies a variety of interests. History buffs appreciate the location's colorful past and the artifact-filled 1903 Georgian Revival-style building. Luxury seekers enjoy the beautiful furnishings and linens. And gourmands relish the complimentary wine, appetizers, and European-style breakfast buffet.

If mention of the Presidio brings to mind images of dilapidated bunkers and deserted barracks, you likely haven't seen the reincarnation of the former military grounds. The U.S. Army Post that operated from 1846 to 1994, encompassing 2.3 square miles of some of the most beautiful real estate in the nation, has been transformed into a recreational oasis overseen by the Presidio Trust, a federal agency preserving the area as a natural, cultural, scenic and recreational resource. And what a tremendous job they have done.

Surrounded by groves of fragrant eucalyptus on one side, panoramic Bay and Golden Gate Bridge views on the other, and soothing San Francisco coastline fog, the Presidio is now home to miles of walking and jogging paths, beaches, a lake, playgrounds, museums, gourmet restaurants and a five-star inn.

The military barracks and officer's quarters still stand, but are now home to modern luxuries that would leave previous tenants wondering into

Located in what was once the social and administrative heart of the Presidio, the 26-room inn opened three years ago in historic Pershing Hall. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Inn features spacious, high-ceilinged, comfortably posh suites with gas fireplaces. Large, double-hung windows allow guests to enjoy the area's refreshing eucalyptus scented bay breezes. Two long verandas - on the first and second levels - run the length of the building and feature shaker-style rockers. A large fire pit is the focal point of the back patio. Throw blankets for warding off an evening chill are tucked into baskets in the welcoming lobby.

The Inn's Funston House, a separate Victorian style home just down the street offers four more rooms and is popular with large families and wedding parties. Guests can reserve individual quarters, or the entire house, which features a separate living and dining room with informally plush Restoration Hardware-style furnishings.

Cable cars, steep hills and distinctive districts such as North Beach, Chinatown, and Fisherman's Wharf typify San Francisco's image, but the Presidio is closing-in as a 'must-see' destination. Head over for the day or for the night, and see why the area is no longer your great-grandparents' Presidio.



The Inn at the Presidio, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, features 26 casually luxe rooms in its 1903 Georgian Revival-style building.

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