



Tales Told From The Road

Travel The World With Dick Jordan

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San Francisco: On The Waterfront

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The [San Fran Waterfront](#) app (\$2.99 on iTunes) isn't about the famous [1954 Marlon Brando film](#). You can't use it to find ex-prize fighters or union bosses in The-City-by-The-Bay. But it's going to be a big hit among both out-of-town visitors and San Francisco Bay Area "locals" like myself, including one who wrote this iTunes review:

"As a long-time SF resident, I've walked or biked along the waterfront thousands of times, but I've never gotten used to its astonishing beauty and diversity. And this wonderful app has captured the essence of the city's amazing waterfront. All the major attractions are here, as they should be – but so are the lesser-known treasures...even a few I myself did not know about."

Bay Area travel writers [Suzanne Rodriguez](#) (who also writes [The Culinary Gadabout](#) blog) and [Laurie McAndish King](#) (publisher of [Travel Writers News](#)) created more than 220 entries and assembled over 2,000 photos for this app by iPhone/iPad guidebook publisher [Sutro Media](#). [\(Click here for my review of two other Sutro Media apps, Oklahoma City: In & Around and San Francisco Travel Photo Guide\).](#)

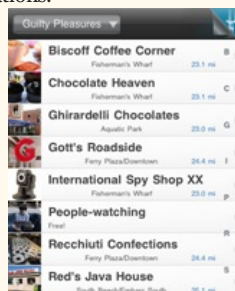
The *San Fran Waterfront* app is available for the iPhone (which I used for testing it) as well as the iPod Touch and iPad (neither of which I own).

Attractive Attractions

When I think of the waterfront of "[Baghdad-by-the Bay](#)," it's Fisherman's Wharf, the Embarcadero, and the Ferry Building that come to mind. While this new app covers these places under "Classic SF," it includes even more interesting and unusual locations.

If you go to the "Arts/Entertainment" section of the app you'll find the Car Hood Amphitheater ("65 mid-sized sedan car hoods later..."), the Raygun Gothic Rocket ("It's out of this world"), and the BATS Improv Theater ("Whacky people; madcap antics").

When I looked under "Guilty Pleasures," I found the well-known Ghirardelli Chocolates, but also the Secret Agent Escape themed tour ("Because someone has to hand off the microchip") and a potential

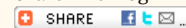


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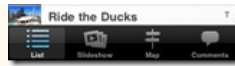
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post-tour stop, the International Spy Shop (“Jealous of James Bond?”), both of which had previously been a secret to me. “Locavore” includes a number of restaurants, but also shops like Cowgirl Creamery, Far West Fungi, Hog Island Oysters, and McEvoy Ranch where you can buy locally-produced foods.



Other categories include “Hidden Gems,” “Historic,” “Kid-Friendly,” “Maritime,” “Museums,” “Nature & Parks,” “Nightlife,” “Shopping,” and “Sports,” all of which are pretty self-explanatory. After picking a category, you can sort the entries by “Name,” “Cost,” or “Neighborhood.”

One of the favorite “Hidden Gems” of app author Laurie McAndish King is the Yoda Fountain in the San Francisco Presidio. (“Size matters not. Hard to locate it is. There is no try. Find. Near Building B. May the Force be with you”).

Sleeps & Eats



San Fran Waterfront isn't a guidebook covering the entire city of San Francisco, so it only lists lodgings and restaurants along the waterfront. However, each entry has at least one photo, a Google map of the location, a description of the place, and other information including phone numbers (click to dial from your iPhone) and Website [links](#).

Restaurants include some very casual spots such as Amici's East Coast Pizzeria and the Eagle Cafe, as well as upscale eateries like Boulevard and Slanted Door. Only six hotels are listed and some entries are quite brief, so you might want to use a more comprehensive print or electronic guidebook when searching for a

place to bunk down for the night.

Getting Around Town

The app's “Tours & Transport” section lists many modes of transportation available to take you around and past the San Francisco waterfront: Tour boats operated by the Blue & Gold and Red & White fleets, rented bicycles, two-wheeled Segway tours, kayaks, and walking tours among them. There's also the self-guided “Quirk-O-Rama Tour” (“Because you aren't in Kansas anymore”).

The app's authors have included information on cable cars, ferry travel, parking, and taxis. In the future, look for information on the “Muni” trolley “F” line that runs along the waterfront to be included in a free update.

If you have turned on your iPhone's “Location Services” the app provides the distance from your current location to the place you want to go to. Although clicking on the Google map associated with that place traces the route to follow by walking or driving, turn-by-turn directions are not provided. (Note: Sutro Media is in the process of revising the mapping functions in its apps; in the meantime, you can use the Google's Mobile iPhone app to help you get between any two places by walking, driving, or transit.)



The *San Fran Waterfront* app has a very nifty transportation feature: It estimates the taxi fare and clicking on “Call for Taxi” will get a cab to pick you up to take you where you want to go. (Unfortunately, although your iPhone knows your position, it cannot transmit it to the cab company).

Mapping It

Tapping on the “Map” icon at the bottom of the app's screen brings up a Google map displaying all of the places within that category. You can switch the view from a standard street map to a satellite view, zoom in and out, and move around the map using your fingers, just like with other iPhone apps. Unlike other iPhone mapping applications, you cannot show your current position on this map. However, tapping on one of the places shown on the map takes you to the entry for that place. From there you can use the associated Google map to find the distance and routing to

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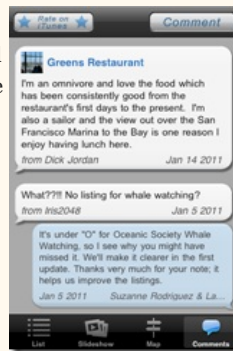
While you can view the photos (10-12 on average) on the page for any specific place covered by *San Fran Waterfront*, touching the “Slideshow” icon at the bottom of the screen lets you view all of the photos for any category. (Set the category selection to “All” to see every one of the 2,000+ photos stored in the app).

Tapping on a photo pauses the slideshow and displays the category and location at the top of the screen; touching the location name takes you to the page for that place. Tapping on the photo credit at the bottom left corner of the photo will take you to a [Flickr Photostream](#) with details about the photo, if available.

What You And Others Think

San Fran Waterfront includes comments by those who have visited places listed in the app. Add your “two cents worth” by clicking on the “comment” to the left of “share” and “favorite” at the bottom of the page for that place.

Clicking at the bottom of the app’s Home screen lets you read comments on all places mentioned in the app or add your own overall comment on the app itself. From that screen you can also tap into the iTunes Website, read the user reviews and ratings, and write your own review and app rating.



Leaving Your Heart On The Waterfront

Walk anywhere along San Francisco’s waterfront and you are likely to see throngs of tourists and “locals” alike. The *San Fran Waterfront* app is an inexpensive, cleverly crafted, and highly portable way to plan a bridge-to-bridge promenade along one of America’s most scenic stretches of shoreline.

(Dick Jordan has hiked, biked, and boated his way around San Francisco Bay since 1971. He played a minor role in saving the ocean-going steam tug Hercules – pictured above – from the scrapyards; you will find the vessel in the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park fleet tied up at the Hyde Street Pier, and his photo of it in the San Fran Waterfront app.)

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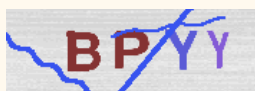
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