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## VISIT SAN FRANCISCO'S INESCAPABLE ATTRACTION – ALCATRAZ

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### **New features and additional trips make this summer the time to go**

San Francisco – This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alcatraz Island serving as a prison and with a new cruise that explores more of the bay, a new audio tour on the island and newly open sections of the cellhouse – it is the perfect time to visit.

Beginning Monday, May 12 there will be fourteen daily departures to Alcatraz Island. Thursday through Sunday there will be two night tour departures. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at [www.alcatrazcruises.com](http://www.alcatrazcruises.com) or by calling 415-981-ROCK (7625). Advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended as the island capacity is limited and frequently sells out April through September. Tickets can be purchased in person at Alcatraz Landing located at Pier 33 on the Embarcadero.

Beginning June 14<sup>th</sup>, visitors to Alcatraz Island will have the option of booking an Alcatraz & Angel Island Tour. This exciting ticket option will first take visitors to Alcatraz, where they will have the full Alcatraz experience, then go on to Angel Island State Park where visitors will take a motorized tram tour of the island. Angel Island State Park often referred to as the Ellis Island of the West, was the disembarkation point for emigrants to the United States on the West Coast. Now, as a California State Park, Angel Island is full of hiking trails, campgrounds and other outdoor activities. The Alcatraz & Angel Island Tour tickets and schedules are available at [www.alcatrazcruises.com](http://www.alcatrazcruises.com).

Alcatraz day tour tickets include transportation to and from the island, the new cell house audio tour, orientation film and any scheduled special programs. Highlights of the audio tour include narration from former prisoners and correctional officers, accounts of escape attempts and tours through the prison mess hall, library, main cell block, and solitary confinement.

Night tours are a special way to explore Alcatraz with a live narrated cruise around the island, a personally led tour from the dock to the cell house and special thematic tours only offered in the evening. Alcatraz is an extraordinary site from which to view the sun setting under the Golden Gate Bridge.

During the busy summer months, it is not uncommon Alcatraz tours to be sold out. Beginning June 14<sup>th</sup>, Alcatraz Cruises will offer the Guardians of the Gate Bay Cruise. This is the best way to see more of the bay and get as close to “The Rock” as possible without docking. This 90 minute bay cruise is fully narrated and showcases the “Guardians of the Gate” and other historic landmarks around the San Francisco Bay. While cruising around Alcatraz, you will learn the stories of life on “the rock” from the inmates, guards and families who actually lived and worked on the island.

From Pier 33 on the Embarcadero, Alcatraz Landing is convenient to all the attractions San Francisco has to offer. PIER 39, Fisherman's Wharf and Ghirardelli Square are located a few easy blocks to the north, the San Francisco Ferry Building is a short walk to the south, and the steps to the famous Coit Tower are located just three blocks away.

Much of Alcatraz is steep and hilly, so be prepared for walking long distances uphill. The distance from the dock to the prison at the top of the island is about 1/4 mile (.4 km) and the elevation change is 130 feet (40 meters). This is equivalent to climbing a thirteen story building. Visitors unable to make the climb up Alcatraz's steep road can take advantage of SEAT— Sustainable Easy Access Transport—an electric shuttle that runs once an hour from the dock to the prison building, and once an hour from the front of the prison back to the dock. Boarding is available on a first come, first served basis.

Alcatraz Landing is easily accessible by many forms of transportation. There are nine public parking lots located within a five block radius. Public transportation options include the famous San Francisco Cable Cars (closest stop is Hyde Street) and the F Line Street Car (closest stop is Embarcadero at Bay). For public transit information please visit [www.sfmuni.com](http://www.sfmuni.com).

As you disembark on to the dock you stand below the original civil war era soldiers' barracks. Along the walk from the dock to the cellhouse you pass through the original line of defense which includes cannons, stores of ammunition and a dry moat. The "Parade Ground," home to the officers' residences, contains some of the gardens that have existed for decades.

Alcatraz is also home to numerous seabirds, many of which use the island as their seasonal breeding and nesting ground. From February through September parts of the island are closed to protect the sensitive habitat for the birds. Alcatraz Cruises is committed to protecting natural resources and educating the public on how they can join this commitment as well. Through our Respect Our Planet ([www.respectourplanet.com](http://www.respectourplanet.com)) management system, information is shared about what the company is doing today, what they plan to do in the future and what visitors can do at home to protect the environment. Vessels in the Alcatraz Cruises fleet are equipped with the most fuel efficient, low emission engines available. Many food items we serve in the Café at Alcatraz Landing and on board are organic, and when possible, locally and sustainably grown. Careful attention is paid to using recycled materials whenever possible, from tickets and brochures, to signage and building supplies.

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Alcatraz Cruises, a business unit of Hornblower Cruises & Events, is the official National Park Service concessioner of transportation services to Alcatraz Island. Alcatraz Cruises, working together with the National Park Service, provides the highest level of customer service to the visitors of Alcatraz Island. For more information visit [www.alcatrazcruises.com](http://www.alcatrazcruises.com).