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FIVE MUST-SEES IN SAN FRANCISCO THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

San Francisco loves the holidays so much that it can’t limit itself to a single giant Christmas tree. There are actually dozens: Macy’s soaring 80-foot-plus tree in Union Square, an officially nondenominational tree at City Hall, and another majestic tree at PIER 39. But once you’ve wished for peace on Earth and goodwill to all, there’s still plenty to do besides sip an eggnog latte at the nearest third-wave coffee shop. Between major art shows, musical events and big performances, winter is brimming with culture.
A Pip of a PPIE
San Francisco is still celebrating the centennial of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) and the de Young Museum marks this grand exposition which covered 76 city blocks with “Jewel City: Art from San Francisco’s Panama-Pacific International Exposition” through Jan. 10, 2016. At the heart of the PPIE was one of the most ambitious art exhibitions ever presented in the U.S., encompassing more than 11,000 works. To mark this anniversary, “Jewel City” reassembles more than 200 works by major American and European artists, most of which were on display at this defining event. Purchase tickets.

Westfield San Francisco Centre
From Nov. 19-Dec. 31 Westfield San Francisco Centre’s iconic dome will come to life each night with “Nutcracker Under the Dome,” a one-of-a-kind animated 3D show. The San Francisco Ballet’s “Nutcracker” is the inspiration for this extraordinary visual experience crafted by local technology innovators, Obscura Digital. A lively cast of holiday characters including sugar plum fairies and toy soldiers comes to life under the dome. The six-minute show crescendos as more toys join the brigade and the entirety of the 102-foot dome becomes one gigantic holiday music machine. Show times are 5 p.m. until closing.

Odysseo Opens Nov. 19 at AT&T Park
“Odysseo,” the latest production of the internationally known entertainment company Cavalia, opens Nov. 19 under the White Big Top at AT&T Park. The $30 million extravaganza is the world’s largest touring company and features 75 magnificent horses and 45 riders, acrobats, dancers and musicians. Equestrian arts and high tech theatrical effects unfold under the largest touring tent on Earth.
Illuminate SF Festival of Light
Light art will illuminate block after block of San Francisco’s corrugated surface Nov. 26-Jan. 1 for the Illuminate SF Festival of Light. The third annual light fantastic includes 27 dramatic, eco-friendly light art installations — 11 more than in 2014 and three times the number of the inaugural celebration in 2013 — accessible by public transit and admission-free. A two-month celebration during the longest nights of the year, it features free light art tours, nighttime neighborhood walks, artist talks and participatory experiences. Many of San Francisco’s intimate neighborhoods will also light up shopping districts, streets and galleries, and host participatory holiday activities. On Jan. 30, 2016, The Bay Lights will shine again, this time forever, as a gift to the people of California thanks to the generosity of private donors and Illuminate the Arts.
SHN Musical Romps


WHY SAN FRANCISCO IS AWESOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Ride the historic cable car across the city’s winter wonderland.

Photo credit: Nader Khoury.
We may not have snow, but you’ll find just about every other holiday staple in San Francisco. The City by the Bay offers all the familiar holiday fare, as well as some performances, events and activities that are unique to San Francisco.

**Conservatory of Flowers New Garden Railway**
Take a trip back in time Nov. 12-April 10 at the Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. The all-new garden railway display celebrates the centennial of the PPIE. Model trains wend their way through the festive fairgrounds, zipping along tracks past hundreds of dwarf plants, water features and reproductions of the Tower of Jewels, Palace of Fine Arts and more.

**The Forty Part Motet**
A masterwork by acclaimed media artist Janet Cardiff, “The Forty Part Motet” is an immersive and moving sound installation making its California debut at the Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture’s newest space, Gallery 308. The exhibition, co-sponsored by the Fort Mason Center and SFMOMA, will be on display from Nov. 14 to Jan. 18.

**Macy’s Holiday Windows and Union Square Tree Lighting**
One of Union Square’s flagship retailers gets into the holiday spirit early with its holiday window unveiling at 5 p.m. on Nov. 20. Press your nose to the glass to admire the creative decorations as well as the adorable (and adoptable!) puppies and kittens from the San Francisco SPCA. Come back the following week for the Union Square tree lighting. Featuring recording artist Jordin Sparks, this year’s 26th annual event starts at 6 p.m. on Nov. 27.
Beach Blanket Babylon
Undoubtedly, the world’s largest Christmas hat is found at “Beach Blanket Babylon’s” seasonal extravaganza. The long-running North Beach revue that combines topical humor, madcap sketches and enormous headpieces plays up commercial excesses with a wink and a nod (as well as some tap-dancing Douglas firs). Performances start Nov. 18 and run through the end of December, with special performances on New Year’s Eve that are legendarily outlandish.

PIER 39
One of the most popular spots in the city will host two tree lighting events on Nov. 21 and 22, both at 6 p.m. Welcome the holiday season with magic, merriment and a special visit from some Disneyland celebrities. Enjoy the shops and attractions of PIER 39 with the gorgeously decorated 60-foot tree adding some additional sparkle to the San Francisco skyline.
The Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party
Take a trip back in time to gaslit, 19th-century London for The Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party at the Cow Palace (weekends, Nov. 21–Dec. 20). Roasted chestnuts, carolers and Father Christmas himself harken back to the era’s bygone innocence (although the Victorian component can get a little saucy). In a venue stuffed full of gifts and seven stages’ worth of live entertainment, this is no abridged version of a Dickens classic.

California Academy of Sciences
Starting Nov. 25, visitors to the California Academy of Sciences can experience “’Tis the Season for Science,” the museum’s annual holiday exhibit that explores the science behind winter’s most famous phenomena. Meet a pair of live reindeer, brave an indoor snowstorm, compete in quiz shows and enjoy live performances—all under one roof in Golden Gate Park.

The Golden Girls: The Christmas Episodes
What better way to say “Thank you for being a friend” this holiday season than “The Golden Girls: The Christmas Episodes,” an annual pageant in which four of San Francisco’s biggest drag queens play Dorothy, Blanche, Rose and Sophia for 12 performances (Dec. 3-20). They take a few liberties with the scripts, but it all serves to make Christmas in Miami even merrier. Best of all, you can line up to have your picture taken with them after the show — a great head start on your Christmas card for next year.
Dance-Along Nutcracker
One of San Francisco’s most endearing holiday events, the Dance-Along Nutcracker at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Dec. 12-13, invites everyone to join in a fun-filled, zany dance-along concert. The theme this year is a blending of Tchaikovsky’s classic fairytale with an adaptation of the story of Oz — “The Nutcracker of Oz,” of course!

Avenue Q
In what has become a local tradition, New Conservatory Theater Center will present the Tony-winning Best Musical “Avenue Q,” Dec. 4-Jan. 17. Don’t let the puppeteers and fuzzy characters fool you; this is not a trip to “Sesame Street.” Leaving no topic untouched, the characters in this bawdy, brilliant show learn to navigate young adulthood in New York City with song, dance, laughs and heart. While you’re in the neighborhood, take a stroll through nearby Hayes Valley.
**A Christmas Story, The Musical**
Visit the SHN Orpheum Theatre for the rollicking stage adaptation of a latter-day holiday classic, “A Christmas Story, The Musical.” Your favorite movie moments—even the frozen flagpole—come alive in this witty and festive musical that will delight both children and grown-ups. This is a strictly limited run, Dec. 9-13, so buy your tickets soon.

**Chanticleer Christmas**
If you can’t see the Mormon Tabernacle Choir or get to Carnegie Hall, let Chanticleer come to you. The famed all-male vocal ensemble is bringing “A Chanticleer Christmas,” its take on Renaissance music studded with traditional carols and Gregorian chants, to seven major churches across the Bay Area, Dec. 10-23. The acoustics alone are warm enough to chase away any winter chill.

**The Velveteen Rabbit**
The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts presents ODC/Dance’s production of “The Velveteen Rabbit” from Nov. 27 to Dec. 13. This Bay Area tradition is a story of friendship and love told through music and dance, with festive costumes, madcap characters and plenty of holiday cheer.

**The Nutcracker**
Fun fact: Tchaikovsky’s “The Nutcracker” made its American premiere at the San Francisco Ballet on Christmas Eve, 1944, and it’s been an annual hit ever since. Packing 29 performances into 15 days, Dec. 16-31, the dancers introduce thousands of young minds to the athleticism and grace of ballet. Just don’t let the Mouse King’s army follow you to the Land of Sweets.
Foster Farms Bowl
Watch football powerhouses collide when the best of the Big Ten and Pac-12 conferences take the field at Levi’s Stadium on Dec. 26. Teams have not been selected yet, but it will surely be a great match-up. Tickets are already on sale, and there will be a number of fun events in San Francisco leading up to the big game.

FOUR NEIGHBORHOODS (AND AN OUTLET) PERFECT FOR HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Union Square is a great place to start your holiday shopping.
The sophistication of contemporary San Francisco shines most brightly in the city’s food scene, but shopping is a close second. Whether you’re looking for a special gift or secretly splurging on yourself, the city is home to a number of shopper-friendly neighborhoods and commercial districts brimming with high-end boutiques, trend-conscious local shops, quirky vintage stores and everything in between.

**Union Square**

Ringed by hotels and theaters, and with the Powell Street cable car running up its western flank, Union Square is as much a shopping Mecca as a public plaza. Prominent department stores such as Macy’s and Neiman Marcus command outsized attention, but savvy newcomers such as Cuyana and Uniqlo have given the retail-rich neighborhood a fresh gloss. Premier luxury boutiques (Prada, Burberry and Dior) and shopping experiences like St. John Knits, Paul Smith, Gump’s and Shreve & Co., keep Union Square on top of most San Francisco shoppers’ nice list. Shreve & Co. which bills itself as a “destination 160 years in the making,” has moved to a temporary location at 117 Post St. while their new store is under construction.

Just two blocks from Union Square, Westfield San Francisco Centre offers San Francisco’s ultimate style collection, the West Coast flagship Bloomingdale’s, the second largest Nordstrom in the United States, 200 shops and restaurants, as well as San Francisco’s largest day spa, Burke Williams. Men’s fashion has a new destination with Club Monaco Men’s recent debut and Michael Kors Men’s store coming this season. The new Bespoke — a trifecta of co-working, events and technology demo spaces — curates endless possibilities for retail-tech experiences. Westfield’s iconic dome comes to life every evening with a spectacu-
lar 3D light show that showcases one of San Francisco’s most beloved traditions: the San Francisco Ballet’s “Nutcracker” beginning Nov. 19 through the holidays. On Stockton Street between Geary and Ellis, the Winter Walk will return Nov. 27-Jan. 1. Caroling, food trucks and product demos will fill this open plaza in the heart of Union Square.

PIER 39
Yes, PIER 39 is San Francisco’s top visitor attraction. And, yes, the sea lions are very popular. PIER 39 also offers more than 60 specialty shops throughout two levels. So maybe while the kids explore Aquarium of the Bay or take a boat ride on the Blue & Gold Fleet, you can pick up a jersey at the NFL store or find wooden puzzles and games at Solve It!, one of PIER 39’s newest tenants. There’s a shop just for left-handers and if you have a thing for boots (sizes infant to adults) and Stetsons, check out the racks at Wilder West: Urban Western Outfitters. Something a little edgier? Club Tattoo, the world’s hottest tattoo and body piercing studio is located at the end of PIER 39.
Mission District
In the Mission District, thriving Valencia Street’s retail origins are visible in its thrift shops and specialized bookstores. More recent arrivals to the corridor include uber-hip boutiques (Voyager Shop), artisan goods from local and international designers (Little Paper Planes), terrariums and taxidermy (Paxton Gate) and Japanese denim (Self Edge). Plucky hold-out Aquarius Records; the gift-filled Italian deli Lucca Ravioli; an audiophile’s paradise, Dijital Fix; Heliotrope, with its customized aromatherapy blends and lifestyle emporium Harrington Galleries are all among the best in their respective categories citywide.

Cow Hollow
While it might be confusing to some visitors, Union Street is nowhere near Union Square. This strip of the Marina District is home to lavish health-and-beauty emporiums such as the Lash Lab. Complementary offerings include specialists in juice cleanses, pilates and yoga apparel. Other neighborhood gems include jewelers David Clay, Jest Jewels and La Bijouterie; Moulin Pooch, possibly San Francisco’s fanciest pet shop; stationers Union Street Papery, and Images of the North, which offers one of the most extensive collections of Inuit art.

San Francisco Premium Outlets
With the addition of 185,000 square feet, San Francisco Premium Outlets is now the largest outdoor outlet center in California. Located in Livermore, 42 miles east of San Francisco, there are 170 stores including the addition of 10 new luxury and brand-name retailers: Gucci, Versace, Tod’s, Ted Baker, Bally, CH Carolina Herrera, Roger Viver, All Saints, Sarar and A/X Armani Exchange. Tri-Valley Rapid buses connect to the Pleasanton/Dublin BART station.
GREAT DRINKS FOR A CHILLY DAY

Given San Francisco’s unpredictable climate, it’s good to know of a few places where you can stop in and warm your bones. Try some of these tasty treats this winter while you’re exploring the city.
Irish Coffee
Riders on the city’s famous cable cars have long stopped for an Irish Coffee at the Buena Vista Café. The first in America to serve it (according to the historical plaque), their method of aging and frothing the cream so that it floats dates back to 1952. It’s not far from PIER 39, so it’s a great place to warm up before or after festivities like the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony.

Hot Buttered Rum
Smuggler’s Cove in Hayes Valley is a unique place: it’s devoted entirely to rum. And with 400 varieties in stock, there is no better place for a hot buttered rum than this internationally recognized, Caribbean-inspired bar. Be sure to get there early and to have your whole party present. With a maximum occupancy of 49, Smuggler’s Cove is a tiny treasure that can only accommodate so many swashbucklers at once.

Hot Toddy
A hot toddy is an uncomplicated drink that can be had almost anywhere; but if you want the genuine article, head to Elixir in the Mission. A staple of any neighborhood bar crawl, this neo-Victorian saloon serves more than 330 different whiskeys, meaning your basic hot toddy can take on any additional taste from vanilla notes to a serious peaty flavor.

Afternoon Tea
Perhaps the most stylish way to warm up on the waterfront is afternoon tea at The Slanted Door. The James Beard Award-winning restaurant in the famous Ferry Building serves afternoon tea every day (2:30-4:30 p.m.), offering herbal blends and oolongs, black Hong Kong milk tea and Thousand Days red jasmine. An afternoon dining menu also gives you a chance to sample some of chef Charles Phan’s legendary dishes.
European Hot Chocolate
If you’re looking for something a bit more indulgent, head to the nearby Boulette’s Larder for their European hot chocolate. It’s thick, fortifying and served straight out of a copper kettle. Boulette’s Larder also boasts a recently refurbished bar and is now open for dinner five nights a week.
Mexican Hot Chocolate
But since this is San Francisco, Mexican hot chocolate must not be overlooked. No taquería has the bragging rights to authenticity that La Oaxaqueña has. Until the city put a stop to it, they used to serve grasshopper tacos! The cinnamon-y Mexican hot chocolate here is a genuine treat. Made with ground almonds, it’s even better with a pinch of guajillo chili powder for that addictive burn.

Loose Leaf Tea
Samovar has three tea houses in San Francisco: one at Yerba Buena Gardens, one in the Mission and one in the Castro. Each serves up a selection of organic, single origin and direct import teas. The Castro and Yerba Buena Gardens locations also feature full menus, offering a selection of items that pair exceptionally well with the tea in stock.

Coffee
San Francisco’s premier temple to caffeine remains the flagship Sightglass Coffee in SOMA. Beautiful and barn-like, this café-roastery is a temple to the mighty bean that powers all the movers and shakers in one of San Francisco’s busiest neighborhoods. With crops coming from all over the world, Sightglass offers a global experience for your taste buds.
You know the song, but do you know how to find all the items from “The Twelve Days of Christmas” in San Francisco? Some are harder to find than others, but we’ve laid it all out here for you. Why not attempt a Christmas scavenger hunt while you’re here? See if you can you cross all of these off your list in one visit.
A Partridge in A Pear Tree
San Francisco’s Union Square may not have a pear tree, but it’s got something better: their Christmas tree, right in the heart of the shopping district and in close proximity to some of the city’s most extravagant window displays. The big, beautiful Christmas tree shares pride of place in Union Square with the handsome mahogany Bill Graham Menorah erected every year to celebrate Chanukah and honor Jewish tradition.

Two Turtle Doves
Feeling lovey dovey? Indulge yourself and your special someone with the stylish surroundings, romantic music and exceptional cuisine of Bix. Located in the Jackson Square neighborhood mere blocks from the waterfront, Bix is a genuine San Francisco icon and continues to be one of the most exclusive spots in town.

Three French Hens
Why stop at French Hens? Head to the San Francisco Zoo & Gardens and see birds and other creatures from all over the world. African ducks, Chilean flamingos, Eurasian owls and plenty more species can be found there. On select nights from Dec. 4 to Jan. 3, you can enjoy Zoo Lights, a magical display of twinkling holiday cheer complete with hot apple cider and cocoa.

Four Calling Birds
Switch out birdsongs for classic carols and see American Conservatory Theater’s annual production of Charles Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol,” a highlight of every holiday season (Dec. 4-27). Performed in A.C.T.’s beautifully ornate, century-old structure in the heart of the theater district, the spirit of the holidays is sure to be on display inside and outside the theater.
**Five Golden Rings**
Rings of gold, platinum and diamonds, not to mention gem-encrusted bracelets, necklaces, watches and other jewelry of fine design and high quality are the stock in trade of Shreve & Company, which has served San Franciscans and welcomed visitors since 1854.

**Six Geese-a-Laying**
Chickens fill in for geese at the bountiful breakfast table at Palm House, a Caribbean-seasoned favorite in the Marina neighborhood. Don’t miss their flavorful interpretation of Huevos Rancheros. You could also journey out to the Cliff House, with its dramatic views of the Pacific Ocean, and enjoy their legendary Sunday brunch.
Seven Swans-a-Swimming
The resident swans at the Palace of Fine Arts have been a beloved fixture for years. The neo-classical, open-sided Palace — the lone surviving building of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition — is flanked by a man-made lagoon where swans gather and glide across the water. A popular spot for photo opportunities and just plain relaxing, the Palace is a must-see for first-time visitors. Be sure to stop inside to see what’s being showcased at the new Innovation Hangar.

Eight Maids-a-Milking
And where did that fresh milk go? Why, into milk chocolate, of course. Specifically, Ghirardelli Chocolate poured over fresh-made ice cream sundaes at the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company shop in Ghirardelli Square. This restored red brick historical landmark, once a chocolate factory, has defined the northern waterfront for years. Browse through dozens of shops, selling more than just candy, and enjoy the views of the Bay.

Nine Ladies Dancing
Every little girl’s heart will be delighted by the ballroom dancing and message of hope in “Cinderella” (Dec. 5-20) performed by the African-American Shakespeare Company. Stay after the show for photos with the royal couple.

Ten Lords-a-Leaping
Defending NBA champions Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and the rest of the Warriors squad will be playing for another title at Oracle Arena in the East Bay. See them in action against the Utah Jazz on Dec. 23 and against their key rivals, LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers, on Dec. 25.
Eleven Pipers Piping
There are pipes and an assortment of other instruments in the San Francisco Symphony, one of the most acclaimed orchestras in the nation. Visit Davies Symphony Hall from Dec. 17 to Dec. 19 for their performances of Handel’s legendary “Messiah,” a holiday standard and one of the most famous pieces of classical music ever composed.

Twelve Drummers Drumming
Expect plenty of percussion in the stands of Levi’s Stadium on Dec. 26 when the Big Ten and Pac-12 conferences clash in the Foster Farms Bowl. Teams have not yet been selected, but between these two powerhouses of college football, it’s almost a guarantee that the game will be an exciting one.

THINGS TO DO ON CHRISTMAS DAY

December is a beautiful time to visit San Francisco—just don’t expect to see snow on the ground. No matter how cold California natives might find the weather, Dec. 25 in San Francisco is guaranteed to be warmer than at least 38 other states. And it’s bound to be considerably less crowded than the slushy sidewalks of Manhattan. All this means that there are plenty of reasons to be out and about in San Francisco on Christmas Day.
Ice Skate in Downtown San Francisco
All three downtown San Francisco ice skating rinks (Yerba Buena Gardens, the Embarcadero Center and Union Square) are open for you to show off your triple axels on Christmas Day, the latter two until late in the evening. The Union Square rink is particularly jolly, as the commercial bustle will have ceased but the adjacent holiday tree remains lit.

San Francisco Zoo & Gardens
The Reindeer Romp at the San Francisco Zoo & Gardens runs from Nov. 21 to Jan. 3, and stays open Christmas Day. Those reindeer don’t even take the day off! Considering the zoo is across the street from the Pacific Ocean, it’s hard not to take a bonus trip to the beach in late December, especially with a cup of hot chocolate from the Lemur Café.

San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum
The Botanical Gardens are Golden Gate Park’s most manicured jewel.
Although San Francisco residents never pay an entrance fee, the gates are flung open to everyone on Christmas Day. Roam through 55 acres of native plants, succulents, magnolias, a grove of redwoods, the Ancient Plant Garden, and the rest of the 8,000 species on display, some of which might even be in bloom (especially the Mesoamerican Cloud Forest). If you’re lucky, the weather will be temperate enough for a picnic.

**Contemporary Jewish Museum**
The Contemporary Jewish Museum is open on Christmas. Better yet, it’s a Community Free Day, so all the galleries are open (which means advance registration is highly recommended). Art-making, musical performances and a nosh from Wise Sons Delicatessen round out a wonderful holiday afternoon inside Daniel Libeskind’s post-modern cube.

**Kung Pao Kosher Comedy**
Kung Pao Kosher Comedy brings together the Jewish comedic heritage with the venerable tradition of eating Chinese food on Christmas. Comic Lisa Geduldig began performing at the 370-seat New Asia Restaurant in Chinatown in 1993, and the tradition has grown every year since. This year’s performances happen Dec. 24-26.

**Brunch at the Palace Hotel**
The freshly renovated Palace Hotel turns into a holiday wonderland each year, with a giant gingerbread house and tea with Santa every Saturday in December. Spoil yourself at one of six brunch seatings on Christmas Day, in either the Grand Ballroom or the fabulous 19th century Garden Court. An upscale buffet as opposed to a standard meal (think crepes and a carving station), its Yuletide grandeur befits both the occasion and the surroundings.
If beer bucket specials and packed dance floors aren’t your speed, San Francisco offers a number of ways to ring in the New Year with sophistication. Check out these events, activities and venues if you’re looking to welcome the New Year in style.
Hyatt Regency San Francisco
Directly across the Embarcadero, with towering views of the waterfront, is the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. For years, the hotel has been renowned for hosting one of the biggest and best New Year’s Eve parties in town. The “Champagne Resolutions” party is back again, starting at 9 p.m. on Dec. 31. Held in the hotel’s vast atrium lobby, celebrants dance, drink and dine as the clock ticks to midnight.

The Fairmont San Francisco
The historic Fairmont features two elegant options for New Year’s Eve. The Fairmont San Francisco New Year’s Eve Gala starts at 6 p.m. with appetizers, followed by dinner and a performance by Noah Griffin and The Cole Porter Society. Drinks, dessert and dancing will follow and continue past midnight. There’s also the Laurel Court New Year’s Eve Dinner, featuring a live jazz trio and decadent four-course meal.

InterContinental Mark Hopkins San Francisco
The InterContinental is home to Top of the Mark, one of San Francisco’s most venerated restaurants. You’ll be hard pressed to find more class on New Year’s Eve. Formal wear is required for this Nob Hill celebration, which includes cocktails, a five-course dinner and dancing with live entertainment.

Spa Vitale
Looking to quietly recuperate after partying through the night? Make an appointment at Spa Vitale, located in the Hotel Vitale. The rooftop garden views of San Francisco Bay are the perfect complement to a relaxing suite of services they provide to ease your body, mind and spirit.
Starlight Room
High above Union Square, The Starlight Room has been a San Francisco staple for decades. Its classic cocktail menu, upscale décor and stunning 360-degree views of the city make it a top contender for the hottest New Year’s spot in San Francisco. Located in the Sir Francis Drake Hotel, the Starlight Room also offers its legendary “Sunday’s A Drag” brunch, featuring some of the city’s most notable drag performers.

Whether on Nob Hill or the Embarcadero, San Francisco offers plenty of great viewpoints for its New Year’s fireworks display.

The Interval
With recreations of historic cocktails, always-evolving artwork and mechanical displays from a clock designed to last 10,000 years, there’s no place quite like The Interval, located at Building A of the Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture. Created by the Long Now Foundation, The Interval is a bar, café, museum and gallery that focuses on the concept of time, making it perfectly appropriate for the end of the year.
Hornblower Cruises & Events
Hornblower is offering two excursions on the Bay for New Year’s Eve. The Belle of the Ball New Year’s Eve Dinner Cruise is a four-hour adventure with a bountiful buffet dinner, premium cocktails and live music. The San Francisco Premier New Year’s Eve Cruise features a four-course seated dinner, live entertainment and a top shelf open bar. Both cruises give riders an unprecedented view of the midnight fireworks that will mark the beginning of 2016.

Jardiniere
If you’re planning to enjoy a lavish final meal of the year, there is no shortage of choices throughout the city — but be sure to make reservations well in advance if you want a seat at one of the city’s top eateries. The gourmet destination restaurant Jardiniere is a prime choice for dining or imbibing, and it’s an especially good place to herald an occasion like the start of a new year. Located in lively Hayes Valley, Jardiniere has been a neighborhood institution for almost two decades.

La Folie
Perfect for any elegant occasion is French staple La Folie located on Russian Hill. Opened by husband and wife Roland and Jamie Passot in 1988, it’s one of a handful of restaurants in San Francisco to have earned a star from the renowned Michelin Guide.

Ame
Another award-winning meal awaits you at Ame, located in the St. Regis Hotel. Run by the culinary team of Hiro Sone and Lissa Doumani (also of Napa Valley’s Terra), the ever-changing menu blends European and Japanese influences in creative ways.
SFJAZZ Center

Maceo Parker, the bandleader and frequent collaborator of funk’s founding fathers, returns for another slate of performances from Dec. 31 to Jan. 4. The “Funky New Year’s Eve Party” will feature complimentary sparkling wine and a balloon drop at midnight; but the truth is, there’s never a bad night to check out the SFJAZZ Center, the nation’s first purpose-built, stand-alone building for jazz concerts and education.
Asian Art Museum
Ring in 2016 in a big way by taking a swing at the Asian Art Museum’s 2,100-pound 16th-century Japanese temple bell. According to tradition, striking the bell will purge you of bad memories, regrets and sadness from the past year. The event lasts all day, but it is a first come, first served policy. Stick around until the stroke of midnight, when the bell will be struck 108 times, as tradition states, to start humankind off on the right path for the new year.

San Francisco Symphony
Guests at Davies Symphony Hall have heard everything from Beethoven to Broadway, but this New Year’s Eve they’ll hear something unexpected: the musical and comic stylings of Seth MacFarlane, the Academy and Grammy Award nominated actor, producer, director, singer and songwriter best known for creating TV’s “Family Guy.”

Feinstein’s at the Nikko
The self-described “Ambassador of the American Songbook,” Michael Feinstein will return to the intimate venue that bears his name for two special performances on New Year’s Eve. Sample from the excellent menu while enjoying renditions of classics and standards inside one of San Francisco’s most luxurious hotels.
The holidays are music to the ears of San Franciscans, figuratively and literally. You can enjoy all kinds of performances this time of year, from chorales to comedy. Treat your ears to any of these exciting holiday performances.

**San Francisco Opera**
A world-renowned company, San Francisco Opera is a must-see for all serious opera fans. Their current season features a variety of productions, both familiar and shockingly new. See classics like “The Magic Flute” through Nov. 20, “The Barber of Seville,” Nov. 25-Dec. 9, and the

San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus
The San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus will perform a holiday show with new pieces by composers Ernie Lioji, Lawrence Rush and Laura Karpman. It’s guaranteed to be uproarious and tongue-in-cheek, but also sweet and sentimental. Performances at the Nourse Theater take place Dec. 11-12.

How to Succeed in Business
Even in the era of IPOs and tech titans, this satire of big business still rings true. “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” is the inaugural show for Bay Area Musicals (BAM!), Nov. 27-Dec. 19, at the Marines’ Memorial Theatre. Follow the rise of J. Pierrepont Finch who consults his handbook on everything from the office party to dealing with backstabbing co-workers and office romance as he climbs the corporate ladder from window washer to the C-suite.

Holiday Sing-Along at the Presidio
Gather around the piano on Dec. 17 at the Presidio Officers’ Club to share music and holiday cheer. Performers from 42nd Street Moon will sing seasonal favorites and festive drinks from Arguello restaurant will be available for purchase.
Grace Cathedral
One of San Francisco’s most beautiful landmarks, Grace Cathedral will be hosting a number of concerts this holiday season, starting with “A Brass and Organ Christmas” on Dec. 8. Performances of “A Cathedral Christmas” will be held on Dec. 13 and Dec. 19, and “Sing You A Merry Christmas” will be held on Dec. 19 and Dec. 21.

San Francisco Symphony
Get into the Christmas spirit with the famous San Francisco Symphony. The acclaimed orchestra is offering over a month’s worth of holiday musical experiences. Highlights include “A Classic Christmas,” in which they’ll perform selections from carols and other traditional favorites, Dec. 9-10, and a one-night only concert with one of Broadway’s greatest leading men, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Dec. 16.
SFJAZZ
The home of jazz in San Francisco brings a variety of performers to the city for the holidays. Drummer Matt Wilson starts on Dec. 6 with “Matt Wilson’s Christmas Tree-O,” followed by violinist Mark O’Connor on Dec. 16 and The Blind Boys of Alabama’s holiday gospel show on Dec. 17. SFJAZZ is also presenting a Winter Solstice Concert on Dec. 17 and the SFJAZZ debut of The Klezmatics on Dec. 20 for some traditional Chanukah tunes.

A TASTE OF THE HOLIDAYS IN SAN FRANCISCO
Save plenty of room for Dungeness crab on your holiday visit.
Forget turkeys and hams. Starting in November and lasting into the New Year, San Francisco is packed with a plethora of holiday treats — from fresh Dungeness crab to gingerbread houses. Here are a few ways you can get a taste of the holidays in San Francisco.

**Crab Season**
Crab season runs from November through April, during which time fishing boats pull fresh catches from the Pacific and deliver them to Fisherman’s Wharf. In San Francisco, crab refers to the tender, slightly sweet Dungeness crab, served steamed and traditionally paired with sourdough French bread and white wine. Enjoy the bounty at longtime favorites such as the Franciscan Crab Restaurant, which serves crab with a garlicky, buttery sauce, or Crab House at Pier 39, where the delicious crustacean is served on a hot skillet. Family-owned and operated for more than 50 years, Scoma’s is known for its ample Crab Louis salad. For a different approach, Chinese restaurant R&G Lounge whips up excellent salt and pepper crab. At the Sunset district Vietnamese eatery Thanh Long, you can savor crab roasted in garlic sauce or drunken crab prepared in sake or wine.

**Chocolate**
You can combine two holiday treats — chocolate and holiday lights — on Gourmet Walks Holiday Lights and Chocolate Tours. The downtown walk, which has seven stops (each with its own chocolate tasting), runs Fridays and Saturdays (and some weekdays) from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. during the month of December. See the lights of Union Square, Embarcadero Center, the Palace Hotel and Westfield San Francisco Centre while sipping hot chocolate and nibbling a peppermint truffle.
Teddy Bear Tea
Check out the “Teddy Bear Tea” at The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco on Nob Hill if you’re out with the kids and need to rest tired feet. This charming holiday show stars an entertaining elf and his animated helper and boasts a giant teddy bear. Every child gets a photo with the giant teddy. Shows are at 1 p.m. Nov. 27-29, Dec. 5-6, 12-13, and 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Dec. 17 and 19-24. And it’s for a good cause; a portion of the proceeds goes to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, benefitting children with life-threatening medical conditions.

Gingerbread Houses
Fairmont San Francisco atop Nob Hill showcases an enormous holiday-time gingerbread house made with thousands of ginger bricks baked by the hotel, adorned with icing and candy and displayed in the Fairmont’s splendid main lobby. The life-sized gingerbread house is just for looking, but when it premieres Nov. 28, complimentary hot chocolate
and cookies will be served. The Fairmont’s annual “Gingerbread Holiday Tea” continues through Dec. 30 in the Laurel Court Restaurant & Bar, just off the lobby. The Open House on Nov. 28 welcomes the public to experience the Fairmont’s world-renowned holiday décor, while for the remainder of the season reservations will be required in order to best experience the festivities.

**Chinese Food**

If you like Chinese food and you like to laugh, don’t miss “Kung Pao Kosher Comedy,” a popular annual event held Dec. 24-26 in Chinatown, where diners savor a Chinese restaurant meal — the host restaurant may change from time to time — while Jewish comedians serve up jokes and stories. The event was started in 1993 by San Francisco comedian Lisa Geduldig to give the Jewish community something to do on Christmas. It’s expanded since then to dish out entertainment to a diverse audience. Food and fun are the common denominators. If you want the food without the laughs, we have plenty of options, neighborhood by neighborhood, whether it’s phở or dim sum.

**Mochi Cakes and Ice Cream**

“Omachitsuki Mochi Pounding” at the Asian Art Museum on Jan. 10 lends an international flavor to holiday celebrations. Mochi pounding is the rigorous, by-hand process used to make tempting, sweet mochi rice cakes. The Kagami Kai group helps kick off the Japanese New Year at this handsome museum in the Civic Center with music, dance and festive costumes, along with freshly made mochi cakes. To celebrate its 50th birthday, the Asian Art Museum has also partnered with Humphry Slocombe to create a unique ice cream flavor: Adzuki Almond Cookie. The delectable treat will be exclusive to the museum’s Café Asia.
WHAT’S COMING TO SAN FRANCISCO IN 2016

The end of the holiday season doesn’t mean an end to excitement in San Francisco. The year 2016 is shaping up to be a historic one for the city, with once-in-a-lifetime events and returning annual favorites.
The Bay Lights
Jan. 30, 2016
One of San Francisco’s most beloved art installations becomes a permanent fixture in the new year. The Bay Lights, Leo Villareal’s monumental light sculpture comprised of 25,000 LED lights, will add shine and sparkle to the western span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge from dawn to dusk, year-round.

Super Bowl 50
Feb. 7, 2016
It’s the end of the NFL season and the most-watched sporting event in the nation. On Feb. 7, 2016, Levi’s Stadium will host Super Bowl 50. The game itself will be in Santa Clara, but all the action and celebration will be in San Francisco starting Jan. 30, 2016. From Super Bowl City at Justin Herman Plaza to the NFL Experience at Moscone Center, San Francisco will be the center of Super Bowl activity.

Oscar de la Renta Retrospective
March 12-May 30, 2016
Wearable works of art created by one of the most celebrated designers, Oscar de la Renta, will be on display at the de Young Museum in this exhibit. Featuring more than 100 outfits, the collection is curated by noted Vogue editor (and one of the late de la Renta’s friends) André Leon Talley.

San Francisco Giants
April 7, 2016
It’s an even-numbered year; could another World Series title be in store for San Francisco’s beloved Giants? Find out when the season gets started with the home opener at AT&T Park against the dreaded Dodgers.
The New SFMOMA
May 14, 2016
One of the most acclaimed museums in the United States will welcome visitors back this spring. The expanded, 235,000 square foot building includes seven levels of diverse art experiences, indoor and outdoor galleries, and nearly 15,000 square feet of free, art-filled public space.

Bay to Breakers
May 15, 2016
What was once a goofy local footrace has grown into a major international competition. In the Bay to Breakers race, runners traverse the city from the Financial District to Ocean Beach, passing through a number of San Francisco’s many neighborhoods. Floats may be forbidden, but you’re bound to still find some creative costumes on the route.
Emperors’ Treasures: Chinese Art from the National Palace Museum, Taipei
June 17–Sept. 18, 2016
Feast your eyes on a rare presentation of more than 150 imperial artworks, many of which are making their U.S. debut, from the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Thirty extremely rare masterpieces, some created by the emperors themselves will be on view who reigned from the early 12th through early 20 centuries. The exhibition will feature paintings, calligraphy, bronze vessels, ceramics, lacquerware, jades, textiles, enamelware and documents. See them all at the Asian Art Museum.

San Francisco Pride
June 25–26, 2016
The annual celebration of LGBT pride will focus on economic and racial equality this year, as the community and its allies gather to commemorate the successes of the past and the struggles of the present. Expect a variety of events tailored to all types, from parades to panel discussions to parties.

Eat Drink SF
Aug. 18-21, 2016
San Francisco’s annual celebration of everything edible will be back at the Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture next summer. Expect a who’s who of Bay Area chefs, cocktail creators and brewmasters showing off their greatest achievements, discussing the latest trends, and offering more than enough samples to share.
PARTNERS AND OFFERS

*Save up to 30% when you book now.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY
Support local stores and restaurants by pledging to shop at small businesses on Nov. 28. Visit the Small Business Saturday® website for more information and a list of participating businesses. www.shopsmall.com

SAVE 20% THROUGH FEB. 29
Save 20% now through Feb. 29, 2016 with Saver Fares, available on select routes. Visit Amtrak.com/SaverFares. Check out special deals and promotions by visiting amtrak.com/deals-california, or try a vacation package through Amtrak Vacations, with trips originating from cities such as Los Angeles, Denver, or Chicago.