



San Francisco Downtown and Union Square Gay Hotels Guide

The best gay-friendly hotels in downtown San Francisco

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Most [San Francisco](#) hotels are located downtown. This is especially true of the major business-oriented chains and also a fairly huge selection of more intimate boutique properties that range from budget-oriented to ritzy. The majority of the city's notable downtown lodgings are within a few blocks of either Union Square or Nob Hill, but for the purposes of this online guide, we're including pretty much any lodging options on or north of Turk Street and Market Street (see the [SoMa Hotels Guide](#) for recommendations south of Market), east of Van Ness Avenue, and north and east to the bay (that includes some more far-flung areas like Fishermans Wharf and Russian Hill, but most of the recommendations in this guide are right downtown).

There's a lot to be said for staying downtown - it's the heart of the city's upscale retail district, and also where you'll find many of San Francisco's top attractions. Many of the area's hotels, especially skyscrapers and those atop Nob Hill, have stunning views of the skyline and surrounding San Francisco Bay. The neighborhood is well-served by public transit, and it's also easy to hail cabs in this part of town. The drawback, particularly for LGBT visitors and really anybody wanting to be close to the city's hottest indie dining and retail districts, is that cool neighborhoods like the Mission, Castro, Hayes Valley, Noe Valley, NoPa (North of the Panhandle), and others aren't especially close by. You can walk to Hayes Valley, the outer reaches of SoMa, and even the Mission in anywhere from about 30 to 45 minutes, and all of these areas are pretty well served by [MUNI and buses](#), but if you're hitting the [gay bars in the Castro](#) and coming home late at night, you'll probably want to take a taxi back downtown, and that'll run you \$15 or \$20. If being in the heart of the Castro or some other more diverting neighborhood matters to you, check out the [San Francisco Castro, Mission & Hayes Valley Gay Hotels Guide](#), and also the [San Francisco SoMa Gay Hotels Guide](#), which has some listings fairly close both to downtown and the fun and hip area of lower or outer SoMa, close to the Mission, which has a bunch of cool gay bars and hipster-flavored cafes and restaurants.

Westin St. Francis on Union Square

It weathered the 1906 earthquake and the 1920s Fatty Arbuckle scandal, and an assassination attempt on Gerald Ford, and it's hosted such dignitaries and celebs as Charlie Chaplin, Teddy Roosevelt, Cary Grant, Queen Elizabeth II, Salvador Dali, and Barack Obama. The [Westin St. Francis](#) (335 Powell St., 415-397-7000) also overlooks one of the most famous city blocks in the country, Union Square. Built in 1904, the original wing of the hotel rises 13 stories and comprises three stately wings; in 1971, the 32-story Pacific Tower was added to the hotel's west side. Between these two buildings, guests can choose from among 1,195 rooms and suites. If you're keen on history, book a room in the original Landmark Building, whose accommodations come in a wide range of configurations and styles and retain many original details, such as elaborate moldings and high ceilings. This wing is undergoing a major renovation in 2016 that will add some modern touches, but you can expect these rooms to keep their classic aesthetic. In the Pacific Tower, huge bay windows offer stunning downtown skyline views, especially from upper floors, and rooms tend to be a bit larger but also more uniform - a plus or a minus, depending on what you're looking for. Note that atop the tower, the Imperial Floor is home to one of the most stunning event and wedding spaces in the city - it's hosted many LGBT ceremonies. The Westin guest amenities include the below-ground, 4,600-square-foot St. Francis Renewal Spa and its 24/7 workout facility plus several notable dining venues, including a casual coffeebar and cafe Caruso's (check out the delicious and colorful macarons); the venerable Clock Bar, a favorite spot to meet friends, enjoy cocktails, and nosh tasty bar snacks; the elegant Oak Room, long a top destination for power breakfasts and lunches and classic American dinner fare; and the San Francisco outpost of Michael Mina's swank eatery, [Bourbon Steak](#).