




Fact Sheet

Overview of San Francisco

Research Office
Legislative Council Secretariat

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Geography	
Land area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Francisco, officially the City and County of San Francisco, is located on the West Coast of the United States ("US") with a total land area of 121 sq km. The city occupies the tip of a peninsular halfway up the coast of northern California, bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the San Francisco Bay to the north and east.
 <p>Source: World Guide.</p>	
Demographics	
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Francisco is the fourth most populous city of California, after Los Angeles, San Diego and San Jose, with an estimated population of 852 470 in 2014. The ethnic composition of San Francisco's population was: 53.8% White, 34.9% Asian, 5.8% Black or African American, 4.2% from two or more races, and 1.3% others.
History	
Early history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Francisco was founded in June 1776, when colonists from Spain built a military outpost, known as <i>Presidio of San Francisco</i>, at the Golden Gate. In 1821, the Spanish colony of Mexico attained independence and California became part of the Republic of Mexico. Between 1846 and 1848, Mexico entered into war with its neighbour, the US. By the end of the war, Mexico lost nearly half of its territory in the north and California became part of the US territory after the conclusion of the <i>Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo</i> in 1848.

History (cont'd)	
The California Gold Rush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1848, the discovery of gold in California led to the sudden growth and importance of San Francisco. A flood of treasure seekers into San Francisco boosted the city's population from 1 000 in 1848 to 25 000 by December 1849. • Capitalizing on the wealth generated by the Gold Rush, a group of businessmen founded the Wells Fargo Bank in 1852 and the Bank of California in 1864. This set the stage for the establishment of San Francisco as the centre of the banking industry on the West Coast.
The Great 1906 Earthquake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boom years came to an abrupt end on 18 April 1906 when an earthquake measured 8.25 on the Richter scale and subsequent fire struck San Francisco and northern California. Much of San Francisco was destroyed, but the city was quickly rebuilt from ashes. The San Francisco city flag depicts a phoenix rising commemorating this achievement.
Second World War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Second World War made a significant impact on San Francisco, as it served as the port of embarkation for troops leaving for the Pacific Ocean theater.⁽¹⁾ Great shipyards were built around the bay area, and some half million people came to work in the area's war-related industries.
Dot.com bubble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the late 1990s, San Francisco became the centre of a new "gold rush", home to many dot-com companies which invigorated the San Francisco economy. Start-up companies mushroomed in the city and provided ample job opportunities. When the bubble burst in 2001, many of these companies folded and their employees were laid off.
Recent development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The San Francisco economy recovered from the dot-com crash in the mid-2000s, thanks to the Web 2.0⁽²⁾ boom that saw the creation of many new Internet and software start-up companies in the city. Recently, there has been a rapid expansion of biotech, life sciences and digital media companies which choose to locate in the Mission Bay and South of Market districts of San Francisco.

Notes: (1) The Pacific Ocean theater, during the Second World War, was a major theater of the war between the Allies and Japan. In warfare, a theater is an area or place in which important military events occur or are progressing.

(2) Web 2.0 is defined as the second stage of development of the Internet, characterized especially by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content and the growth of social media.

Economy	
Economic structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like many US cities, San Francisco once had a significant manufacturing sector employing nearly 60 000 workers in 1969, but much of the production left for lower-cost locations elsewhere by the 1980s. • At present, San Francisco is dominated by a diversified services economy, with employment spread across a wide range of sectors. In 2014, the services sector accounted for about 95.8% labour force, of which 27.7% were employed in professional business services; 14.7% in leisure and hospitality; 14.6% in government services; 14.2% in education and health care; and 11.7% in trade, transportation and utilities. • San Francisco is also one of the best cities in the US with gourmet cuisine ranging from fine dining to street food. With more than 4 000 restaurants and some 300 food trucks, San Francisco holds Eat Drink SF (an annual food, wine and spirits festival) and Street Food Festival (an annual celebration of food and drink) showcasing its different culinary arts and gourmet food.
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legacy of the California Gold Rush turned San Francisco into the principal banking centre of the West Coast in the early 20th century. San Francisco is also a popular tourist destination,⁽³⁾ known for its cool summer, eclectic mix of architecture and landmarks including the Golden Gate Bridge, cable cars and its Chinatown district. • Since the 1990s, the San Francisco economy has diversified away from finance and tourism towards high technology, biotechnology, and medical research. San Francisco became an epicentre of Internet start-up companies during the dot-com bubble of the 1990s and the subsequent social media boom of the late 2000s. Reflecting the above development, technology jobs accounted for just 1% of the San Francisco economy in 1990, increasing to 4% in 2010 and an estimated 8% by the end of 2013.

Note: (3) San Francisco attracted the fifth highest number of foreign tourists among all cities in the US in 2014. During the year, more than 18 million visitors arrived in San Francisco and spent a total of US\$10.7 billion (HK\$83.0 billion).

Government structure	
Government leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Francisco is the only consolidated city-county⁽⁴⁾ in the state of California. Hence, the Mayor is the head of the Executive Branch of the San Francisco city and county governments. • There have been 42 individuals sworn into the mayoral office.⁽⁵⁾ The 42nd Mayor, Gavin Newsom, resigned to become the Lieutenant Governor of California on 10 January 2011. Democratic Edwin Lee, was appointed unanimously by the Board of Supervisors (San Francisco's legislature) as Interim Mayor on the following day to fill the remaining term of former Mayor. • On 8 November 2011, Edwin Lee was elected to his own term as the 43rd Mayor of San Francisco. He is the first Asian-American Mayor in San Francisco history. On 3 November 2015, he was re-elected to a second term after winning the mayoral election by a wide margin of 40.3 percentage points over the closest of his rivals.
Executive Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Branch is led by the Mayor, who acts as the chief executive officer and the official representative of San Francisco. The Mayor has the responsibilities of administering and overseeing all city departments, coordinating inter-government activities, and preparing and submitting the city budget at the end of each fiscal year. He or she also has the power to either approve or veto bills passed by the Board of Supervisors. • The Mayor serves a four-year term and is limited to two successive terms. There is no limit on the non-successive terms that a person may serve. Mayoral election is run under a ranked-choice voting system which allows voters to rank up to three candidates, in order of preference, when marking their ballots.⁽⁶⁾

Notes: (4) In the field of local government in the US, a consolidated city-county is a city and county that have been merged into one unified jurisdiction to better serve a large population.

(5) Charles James Brenham, who served as Mayor during the 1850s, is the only person who had served two non-consecutive terms.

(6) With ranked-choice voting, if a candidate receives a majority of the first-choice votes cast, that candidate will be elected. However, if no candidate receives a majority of the first-choice votes cast, an elimination process will begin. The candidate received the fewest first-choice votes will be eliminated. Each vote cast for that candidate will be transferred to the voter's next-ranked choice among the remaining candidates. This elimination process will continue until one candidate receives a majority and is deemed the winner.

Government structure (cont'd)	
Legislative Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board of Supervisors is an elected body of 11 Members that serves as the Legislative Branch of San Francisco, responsible for passing ordinances, resolutions and budgets. The 11 Members are elected to no more than two consecutive four-year terms under the ranked-choice voting system. Each Supervisor is elected from their home district to represent one of the 11 city districts. The Board self-selects a President who would succeed the Mayor in case of the latter's absence.
Judicial Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In California, the superior courts are the lowest level of state courts holding general jurisdiction on civil and criminal matters. As mandated by the <i>Constitution of California</i>, each of the 58 counties in California has a superior court. Above superior courts are the six California Courts of Appeal headquartered in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, Fresno, and San Jose. Each Court of Appeal has appellate jurisdiction over the superior courts within their districts. The Supreme Court of California sits at the apex of the state's court system. It may review decisions of the Courts of Appeal. San Francisco is home to the Supreme Court of California.
Ties with Hong Kong	
Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hong Kong was California's fifth largest export destination in the first three quarters of 2015. About US\$6.7 billion (HK\$52.0 billion) worth of goods were exported from California to Hong Kong during the period, with the major export items ranging from computer and electronic goods (42.7%) to agricultural products (7.7%).
Economic and Trade Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in San Francisco looks after Hong Kong's economic, commercial and public relations interests on the West Coast.
Cultural exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The "Hong Kong Cinema" film festival has been a significant platform to showcase and promote Hong Kong films in San Francisco since 2010. Other events hosted in San Francisco to promote culture of Hong Kong include annual Spring Receptions and San Francisco International Dragon Boat Festival.

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