

UNION SQUARE

San Francisco - unlike many decentralized cities - has a magnetic core. Its downtown retail district attracts shoppers from all over Northern California and the world. Start your walk at the **Visitor Information Center [1]** on the lower level of Hallidie Plaza, Powell and Market Streets. (Shopper's

note: The San Francisco Shopping Centre, a nine-story, \$140 million vertical mall packed with 99 distinctive shops and restaurants is just across Market Street). Follow the cable cars up Powell three blocks to the city's hub, **Union Square [2]**, so-named on the eve of the Civil War (1860) when it was the site of a series of pro-Union demonstrations. Prior to the Gold Rush of 1849, this well-manicured plaza was a sandy hillock; a considerable stream coursed down a deep ravine where you stand. Framing the Square and fanning out around it are famous fashion houses and internationally known trade names. It's clear why this is among the top four shopping areas in the nation in sales volume. Union Square shoppers also have easy access to entertainment tickets; there's a TIX Bay Area booth on the Powell Street side of the square. Stop for half-price, day-of-show tickets (cash sales only) and full-price, advance sale seats (credit cards accepted) to theater, dance and music events throughout the Bay Area. In addition, art shows (all artists present) sponsored by the Artists' Guild of San Francisco are held periodically in the Square. Walk right (east) on

Geary one block. Cross Geary at Stockton and cut diagonally through Union Square, noting the striking Victory monument to Admiral George Dewey (Manila Bay, 1898) at its center. President McKinley broke ground for the monument in 1901 and President Theodore Roosevelt dedicated it in 1903. The monument and the venerable **Westin St. Francis [3]** on the west withstood the 1906 earthquake,

though the hotel was extensively rebuilt. During the four-day fire that followed, the Square was a crowded campsite. Walk right (east) on Post one block to Stockton. Turn left (north) and stroll up Stockton, pausing in mid-block at the Grand Hyatt San Francisco plaza to study the district's most endearing artwork. **Sculptor Ruth Asawa's San Francisco fountain [4]** captures the City's ebullient spirit in 41 wrap-around bronze friezes. Continue to the end of the block and walk right (east) on Sutter to the **Hallidie Building [5]** at 130-150. This

sparkling 1917 landmark by architect Willis Polk is revered as "the world's first glass curtain-walled structure." Opposite is the charming **Crocker Galleria [6]**. This three-level, glass-canopied retail complex is complemented by a pair of public roof gardens affording a splendid view of Polk's masterpiece. Exit the Galleria on Post and walk right (west) for two-and-a-half blocks. At Stockton bear left (south) for a half block and turn left (east) to **Maiden Lane [7]**. This genteel, sycamore-lined vein full of upscale shops and art galleries began life as Morton Street, the Barbary Coast's most lurid red light district. Now it's the site of periodic outdoor fine arts shows that resemble a European sidewalk fete. Maiden Lane runs for two blocks to Kearny. You may, however, be lured north at Grant Avenue. The **ornamental Chinatown Gateway [8]** two blocks to your left is Chinatown's front door.

Distance: 17 blocks

