

Today's Almost Dirty Dozen – How to speak, behave and act like a native San Franciscan

Each region of the country has its customs, dialect(s), and do's and don'ts. Here are some ideas on how to be unfazed by those customs, etc., unique to the San Francisco bay area.

Excerpted from **the Unofficial Guide to San Francisco**:

You may feel the pressure to polish up on beatnik literature, pull out those old bell-bottoms, or read the latest version of Windows in order to fit in San Francisco.

Home to artists, performers, intellectuals and folks of every describable (and sometimes indescribable) sexual bent, the City and the surrounding areas is where most of America's new personal, technical and social trends materialize.

If it's important to you not to look like a visitor on holiday, disguise the camera and adhere to the following advice.

1. **Don't go to Fisherman's Wharf** and if you do, be in the know about the guy who stands behind handheld branches scaring unsuspecting tourists! It's a hoot [Ed: *uhh, some form of slang expression, probably from the Midwest.*] to watch.



2. **If you do the Wharf, don't wear shorts and a T-shirt**; freezing, underdressed tourists huddling for warmth at the wharf is an enduring San Francisco cliché.



3. **Don't call cable cars "trolleys."** Here's a San Francisco trolley -- vintage, restored and in revenue service; you can see them on the Market Street F-line.



4. **Don't pronounce Ghirardelli with a soft "g";** the square's name is pronounced "GEAR-ar-delly."



5. **Never utter the two-syllable "Frisco."** We are not responsible for what could happen should you get caught saying this. Another red-light is "SanFran." Herb Caen, a noted and revered San Francisco Chronicle columnist, used "Baghdad by the Bay" to refer to his beloved home city. Probably no longer appropriate since we liberated the original



6. **Wear a sweater when it's 75° outside** 'cause chances are the temp will drop in the next hour, or the next block.



7. **Don't talk about stock options.** It's like rubbing salt into an open wound in this town!



8. **Rice-A-Roni** originated on Madison Avenue. Don't order it at Grubstake.



Carl Nolte, a San Francisco native (we think) and a veteran, award-winning reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle for almost 50 years, authored an essay entitled "Talk Like a Native." Although the source is undated, it was probably written during the 1970's. To see this extended discussion of San Franciscan speech, customs, dialects and behavior, go to:

<http://www.si1969.com/native.doc>

Brought to you as a kinky public service from the folks who are bringing you Leather Leadership Conference 12.

Special thanks to JimH from the South Bay for his wonderful contributions.



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