

Angel Island

State Park



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



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Angel Island State Park

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*Angel Island played
a major role in the
settlement of the West
and as an immigration
station. Today, trails
and roads crisscross
the land, providing easy
access to many historic
sites and breathtaking
views of San Francisco,
Marin County and the
Golden Gate Bridge.*



Angel Island is a grass- and woodland-covered mountain island with spectacular views of Marin County, San Francisco and the Golden Gate. Coast Miwok once inhabited the island, and for nearly 100 years—from the Civil War to the Cold War—the federal government used its strategic location for military bases, a quarantine station and an immigration station. Today, trails and roads provide access to the many historic sites, facilities and breathtaking views.

CULTURAL HISTORY

Early Inhabitants

Coast Miwok began visiting the island about 2,000 years ago. The Miwok established camps and used the island primarily as a fishing and hunting site.

In 1775 Lt. Juan Manuel de Ayala, a Spanish navigator, sailed the *San Carlos* into San Francisco Bay and anchored in what is now Ayala Cove. With his pilot, José de Cañizares, he developed one of the first maps of San Francisco Bay. They christened the island *Isla de Los Angeles*.

The Army on Angel Island

In 1863, during the Civil War, the U.S. Army established Camp Reynolds on Angel Island to protect San Francisco Bay. The island later became a garrison for infantry companies, as well as infantry serving in campaigns against American Indians in the West.

The Army designated the entire island “Fort McDowell,” and renamed Camp Reynolds the West Garrison in 1900. New facilities at Quarry Point, called East Garrison, evolved from a detention camp for soldiers returning



School children watching a living history demonstration

from the Spanish-American war to a discharge depot. During World War I, East Garrison served as a recruitment and replacement depot and a discharge point for troops returning from the war. Angel Island was an embarkation site for troops headed toward the Pacific war zone during World War II and a processing facility for prisoners of war. When troops returned from the war, a 60-foot sign with the illuminated words “Welcome Home, Well Done” greeted them from the island. In July 1946 the Army abandoned the island, declaring it surplus property.

The Army returned during the Cold War to build a Nike missile battery. By 1962 the system had become obsolete, and the Army decommissioned the base and left the island.

The Immigration Station

Angel Island's immigration facilities opened in 1910. Most Immigration Station detainees were from China. Chinese were specifically targeted for exclusion from immigration to the United States by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

From 1910 to 1940, this was the entry point for approximately 175,000 Chinese immigrants. Most were detained on Angel Island from two weeks to six months, until their applications were approved. Many were denied entry. By contrast, European immigrants and first class passengers usually faced only an inspection on board the ship and were never detained on Angel Island.

Some Chinese detainees expressed their anxiety and despair in poetry carved on the wooden walls of the detention center. Many of these poems are still legible today. A fire in 1940 destroyed the administration building and hastened the station's abandonment.

The Quarantine Station

In 1891 a Quarantine Station was opened at Ayala Cove (then known as Hospital Cove), where ships from foreign ports could be fumigated and immigrants suspected of carrying diseases could be kept in isolation. As better medical examinations at the ports of embarkation and improved medical practices made lengthy quarantines unnecessary, the U.S. Public Health Service abandoned the Quarantine Station and moved to San Francisco.

NATURAL HISTORY

Ten thousand years ago, the island was connected to the mainland. Angel Island was created by the rise of the oceans at the end of the ice age.

Plant Life

In the 1800s cattle grazing and wood harvesting eliminated most of the oak woodland and coastal brush habitat covering the island. The U.S. Army and the Immigration Service

planted many non-native trees such as eucalyptus and Monterey pine. Since the creation of the state park in 1963, oak, bay, madrone and other native trees and shrubs are reclaiming their habitats. Wildflowers populate the island in spring.

Animal Life

Deer and raccoons, both excellent swimmers, are the only large mammals living on the island. You can often see harbor seals and California sea lions sunning on the rocks. Birds include scrub jays, hummingbirds, flickers, hawks and owls. Gulls, ducks, egrets, grebes, blue herons and brown pelicans are often found around the coves.

GETTING TO THE ISLAND

Angel Island is accessible year round by public ferries. For information contact: Angel Island-Tiburon Ferry (415) 435-2131, www.angelislandferry.com
Blue and Gold Fleet (415) 773-1188, www.blueandgoldfleet.com.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Picnic areas have tables, running water and barbecues. To reserve group picnic areas, call (800)444-7275 or visit www.reserveamerica.com.

Camping

Camping in the environmental campsites at Angel Island State Park is a unique experience. The park has four camping areas and



View of Marin Headlands from Angel Island

one accessible campsite. The East Bay Sites are generally protected from the wind. The Ridge Sites are more exposed and windy but offer views of San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge. In a third area, the Sunrise Sites can be reserved individually or combined to make a group camp for up to 24 people. The Kayak Camp on the west side of the island—located near a small beach, which makes it ideal for those traveling by kayak—may also be used as

a group camp for up to 20 people. Kayak campers must secure their boats from high tides. All sites have water and a pit toilet nearby. Campers must be prepared to carry their equipment up to two miles, and bring camp stoves or charcoal as no wood fires are allowed on the island. Campsites are open all year.

For reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit www.reserveamerica.com.

Boating

Boat slips are available first-come, first-served from 8:00 a.m. until sunset. Overnight mooring buoys are available first-come, first-served for up to seven nights. There is a fee for day use and overnight mooring. Due to swift currents, boaters are required to tie fore and aft.



Flicker

Tours

Tours of historic buildings and sites are available. Docent-led nature hikes can be scheduled upon request. For information and scheduling, contact (415) 435-3522. Tram tours are available seasonally. Call (415) 897-0715 or visit www.angelisland.com.

Hiking and Bicycling

There are 13 miles of trails and roadways for hiking. Bikers have access to nine miles of roadways. Foot trails and Mount Livermore are closed to cyclists. The speed limit is 15 mph, and cyclists age 17 and under are required to wear helmets. Bicycles can be rented in season from the Cove Café. Call (415) 897-0715 or visit www.angelisland.com for information.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

A number of facilities, several restrooms, and the tram tour are accessible. Because of the hilly terrain and ongoing improvements, visitors are encouraged to call in advance for more information about accessible features, or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Stay on designated trails to avoid poison oak and ticks.
- Do not feed the raccoons or other wildlife.
- Dogs, roller skates, roller blades, skateboards and scooters are not allowed anywhere on the island.
- Wood fires are not permitted.
- State law protects all natural and cultural resources, including wildlife, rocks, plants and structures.

Angel Island State Park



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Map by Eureka Cartography, Berkeley, CA

0 400 Feet
0 100 Meters



Legend

- Park Land
- Park Land (No Entry After Sunset)
- US Coast Guard (off limits)
- Paved road
- Unpaved road
- Trail (No Bicycles)

- Accessible Feature
- Boat Docks 8:00 am to sunset; mooring buoys
- Drinking Water
- Environmental Camping
- Group Picnic Area
- Locked Gate
- Park Building
- Park Office
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- Telephone

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact: Angel Island Association
P. O. Box 866 • Tiburon, CA 94920
www.angelisland.org