

Angel Island State Park



Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks 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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Discover the many states of California.™

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. Trails and roads crisscross the island, providing easy access to historic sites and breathtaking views of San Francisco, Marin County and the Golden Gate Bridge.



Angel Island is a grass- and woodland-covered island in San Francisco Bay. Angel Island affords breathtaking vistas 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, visitors can enjoy the view from the island's historic sites and facilities.

CULTURAL HISTORY

Early Inhabitants

Coast Miwok began visiting the island about 2,000 years ago. These indigenous people 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 isle *Isla de Los Angeles* (Angel Island).

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, including troops 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. East Garrison at Quarry Point evolved from a detention camp for soldiers returning from the Spanish-American war to a service-discharge depot.

During World War I, East Garrison served as a recruitment and replacement depot and a discharge point for returning troops. Angel Island was an embarkation site for World War II soldiers headed toward the Pacific war zone and a processing facility for prisoners of war.

When troops returned, 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 in 1954, during the Cold War, to build a Nike missile site. By 1962 the system had become obsolete, and the Army decommissioned the base and left the island. Most of the island was turned over to California State Parks in 1963.

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. Better medical examinations at the ports of embarkation and improved medical practices eventually made lengthy quarantines unnecessary; in 1946 the U.S. Public Health Service abandoned the Quarantine Station at Angel Island.

The U.S. Immigration Station

From 1910 to 1940, the United States Immigration Station (USIS), nicknamed



U.S. Immigration Station

“the Guardian of the Western Gate,” processed nearly a million immigrants from more than 80 countries. Immigration staff ensured that new arrivals were healthy and self-sufficient. European immigrants and first-class passengers faced only an inspection aboard ship and were detained infrequently.

Chinese persons were specifically excluded from immigrating to the U.S. by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Most of the 175,000 Chinese who arrived at Angel Island were detained for a few weeks—some were detained up to ninety days and a few for almost two years—while their applications were considered. Many detainees expressed their anxiety and despair by writing and carving on the wooden barracks walls. Some Chinese wrote poignant poems, still legible today. Due to appeals, most immigrants were eventually granted entry to America.

A 1940 fire destroyed the administration building, closing the Immigration Station. The first restoration phase of this National Historic Landmark has been completed as a tribute to immigrants from around the world.



Civil War reenactment at Camp Reynolds

NATURAL HISTORY

Ten thousand years ago, this island was part of the mainland. Angel Island was created by rising oceans at the end of an ice age.

Plant Life

In the 1800s, cattle grazing and wood harvesting eliminated much of the native oak woodland and coastal brush habitats covering Angel 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 cover the island in spring.

Animal Life

Deer and raccoons, both excellent swimmers, are the only large land mammals on the island. Harbor seals and California sea lions often sun on the rocks. Birds include scrub jays, hummingbirds, flickers, hawks and owls. Near the coves, visitors may find egrets, grebes, blue herons and brown pelicans.

GETTING TO THE ISLAND

Angel Island is reachable year-round by public ferries. For information, visit www.parks.ca.gov/angelisland.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

For camping and group picnic reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit www.parks.ca.gov.

Picnicking

The island's scenic picnic areas have tables, running water and barbecues.



Flicker

Camping

The park's four environmental camping areas have water and pit toilets nearby. The East Bay Sites are generally protected from wind. The more exposed Ridge Sites offer views of the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco. The Sunrise Sites can be reserved individually or combined as a group camp for up to 24 people. The Kayak Camp on the west side—near a small beach—also accommodates groups up to 20. Kayak campers must secure their boats from high tides. Campers must carry their equipment up to two miles and bring camp stoves or charcoal, as no wood fires are allowed on the island.

Boating

Boat slips are available first-come, first-served from 8 a.m. until sunset. Overnight mooring buoys are available first-come, first-served. A fee is charged for both day-use and overnight mooring, with a seven-night limit. All boaters must tie fore and aft due to swift currents.

Tours

Tours of historic buildings and sites are available. Guided nature hikes can be scheduled upon request, and tram tours are available seasonally. Call (415) 435-5537 or email tours.angelisland@parks.ca.gov for information and scheduling.

Hiking and Bicycling

Hikers have 13 miles of trails and roadways, while cyclists have access to nine miles. Foot trails and Mount Livermore are closed to cyclists.

The speed limit is 15 mph. Cyclists under age 18 must wear helmets. Watch for vehicles on roadways. Bicycles can be rented seasonally from the Angel Island Company on the island.

For more activity information, visit www.angelisland.com or call (415) 435-3392.



Golden Gate Bridge view

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

A number of facilities, several restrooms, one campsite and the tram tour are accessible. Visitors are encouraged to call the park in advance or visit the website at <http://access.parks.ca.gov> for more information about accessible features.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- State law protects all park natural and cultural resources—wildlife, rocks, plants and structures. Do not disturb them.
- Only service animals are allowed on Angel Island.
- Stay on designated trails to avoid ticks and poison oak.
- Do not feed raccoons or other wildlife.
- Roller skates, roller blades, scooters and skateboards are not allowed anywhere on the island.
- Wood fires are not permitted.
- Wind and weather conditions can change rapidly in all seasons. Dress in layers.

Angel Island State Park



This park receives support in part through two nonprofit associations: the Angel Island Conservancy (www.angelisland.org) and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (www.aiisf.org).



Legend

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

- Accessible Feature
- Environmental Camping
- Overlook
- Picnic Area
- Boat Docks 8 a.m. to sunset; mooring buoys
- Group Picnic Area
- Park Building
- Restrooms
- Drinking Water
- Information
- Park Office