

Tour #5: Alcatraz

This tour requires advance planning. Because of the popularity of Alcatraz, it's best not to wait until the last moment to secure a tour of The Rock – particularly on weekends in the height of tourist season.



Although Alcatraz is part of the Golden Gate Recreation Area (the National Parks Service), the only access to Alcatraz is through Alcatraz Cruises, an affiliate of Hornblower Cruises: www.alcatrazcruises.com.

Alcatraz Cruises offers three different tours. Count on your visit lasting a minimum of 2 ½ - 3 hours and plan accordingly. The Alcatraz Cruises' website describes each of the tours as well as lists the prices of each. The website also provides important information you will need to plan for your experience.



*Be sure to take the Cellhouse audio tour. The price is automatically included in the tour ticket. You can opt out **when you arrive at the island** and receive a partial refund on your tour – however, you will miss a great audio tour.*

There is limited parking near the Cruise Line's dock which is located between Piers 31 and 33 on the Embarcadero southeast of Fisherman's Wharf. What parking there is could be expensive – particularly if you are planning to spend 3 hours – or longer, on your tour(s).

Rather than driving and trying to find parking, consider taking MUNI's historic F-Line which runs along the Embarcadero from Fisherman's Wharf to the Ferry Building and then down Market to Castro. The F-Line has a stop in front of Pier 33 – adjacent to Alcatraz Cruises' docks.

Finally, the starting point for this tour is in the route of Tour #4 (Telegraph Hill and Back to Fisherman's Wharf). You can start Tour 4, take it as far as the starting point of this tour, visit Alcatraz, and then return to and complete Tour #4. It can take 50 - 55 minutes to reach this point on Tour #4, so if



you decide to combine the two tours, be sure to start the Telegraph Hill tour at least 60 minutes prior to your Alcatraz tour departure! NOTE: If you are planning to go inside and up Coit Tower at the start of Tour #4, be sure to add a minimum of another 30 minutes to Tour #4.

Link to the Google Map for this tour: [Tour #5 - Alcatraz](#)

On the tour boat

In *Significant Others*, Michael's friend, Charlie Rubin, finally succeeded in cajoling Michael to accompany him on a tour of Alcatraz. Much to Charlie's amusement, the name of their tour boat was the *Harbor Princess*.

A strawberry blond man "with long, pale lashes and the eyes the color of bleached denim," caught Charlie's eye. Charlie was positive the young beauty was cruising Michael. (*Significant Others/Back to Barbary Lane*, p. 312)



When Michael and Charlie took their tour of Alcatraz, Hornblower Cruises docked at Pier 41 at Fisherman's Wharf. After they disembarked from the boat at Pier 41 at the end of their visit to The Rock, Michael and Charlie took the Powell-Hyde cable car home. Michael got off at Union and walked back to Barbary Lane (see *Tour #1: In the Beginning... (Aquatic Park and Russian Hill)*).

Cell Block D (Segregation):

Michael's and Charlie's tour of the cell house eventually arrived in Cell Block D – Isolation. (Several of the cells on the ground floor are isolation cells.) Michael was about to go into Cell 11 to experience the dark when Charlie redirected Michael to Cell 12. The handsome man Michael saw earlier on the boat was entering that cell with several school girls. After everyone in the cell experienced the dark, the door was re-opened. As Michael and the young man exited, the young man caught up to Michael, extended his hand saying, "I'm Thack." Michael shook his hand. "I'm Michael." (*Significant Others/Back to Barbary Lane*, p. 314)



By the way, Cell 11 – 14 are all reported to be haunted – Cell 14 is the most haunted.

Updated: 13 July 2016