About the SF Buried History Tour
You can experience this tour from anywhere, but we recommend visiting each tour stop in person. The tour of San Francisco’s downtown and waterfront has 12 stops over a distance of 5.3 kilometers (3.3 miles). You can visit them in any order.

To get walking or bicycling directions for a stop, click on the tour stop name or location on the map. As you move through the city, please stay alert to your surroundings, and always keep your own safety in mind. Use particular caution when traveling after dark, across busy streets, or in unfamiliar neighborhoods. To get started, visit buriedhistory.exploratorium.edu

Augmented Reality in Buried History
In addition to the audio tour, we’ve created three augmented reality experiences for you to discover. Using your smartphone or tablet, you’ll be able to view three-dimensional renderings of landscapes and artifacts, such as the excavated hull of the Gold Rush ship Niantic. To get started, follow the instructions on the other side of this brochure.

Explore Buried History Exhibits
The Fisher Bay Observatory (Gallery 6) is the Exploratorium’s home for learning about the history and the local landscape of downtown San Francisco. This glass-walled gallery helps you observe the urban and natural landscape and discover its history. Cases of Gold Rush artifacts, interactive exhibits, and a browsable collection of historic maps and atlases will deepen your understanding of San Francisco’s dramatic and ongoing change since the 1800s.

Above: The Fisher Bay Observatory offers views of Telegraph Hill and the downtown skyline, plus interactive exhibits about the city’s history.
Right: Gregg Castro, a Rumsen-Ramaytush Ohlone and T’rowt’raahl Salinan, is one of the Indigenous voices in San Francisco’s Buried History.

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San Francisco’s Buried History
Self-Guided Audio Tour
What’s beneath your feet? Discover sailing ships from the Gold Rush, underground creeks and sand dunes, sacred Indigenous shellmounds, and rock formations shaped over millions of years. This online audio walking tour delves beneath the streets and sidewalks to reveal downtown San Francisco’s Gold Rush history, natural history, and the continuous presence of Indigenous peoples.

Start here: buriedhistory.exploratorium.edu

Above: San Francisco in 1851, looking east toward Yerba Buena Island. Numerous abandoned ships are anchored just offshore.
Left: This walking tour takes you to 12 stops along the pre–Gold Rush shoreline.
San Francisco's Buried History

Self-Guided Audio Tour

Explore Augmented Reality Images

San Francisco’s Buried History has three augmented reality (AR) images. These are floating 3-D images—an excavated ship, an Ohlone rattle, and the city’s terrain in 1852—that you can zoom in on and rotate.

To check them out, go to buriedhistory.exploratorium.edu, then navigate to one of these tour stops: Niantic, Yerba Buena Cove, or Yelamu Shellmound.