

P

Paddling: Kayaks

Some people think about sea kayaking and get scared off, fearing they'll be strapped into a skirt and forced to do ocean rolls like a human seal, thereby inviting a great white to cruise by and munch them. While that is possible, it's really not what paddling the Bay is all about. It's more like leisurely, meditative exercise—and a fun way to explore the water and wildlife.

California Canoe & Kayak: Runs beginner courses to tide-rips workshops to kayak surfing clinics all over, from the Oakland Estuary to Half Moon Bay. *On-site rentals in Oakland are \$15 per hour for a single, \$25 for a double. Take-away rentals are \$50 for the first day, \$25 for the second day, and \$15 for each additional day.* 409 Water St., Jack London Square, Oakland, (510) 893-7833, www.calkayak.com

Pier 23 Café

On any warm, sunny San Francisco day, take your place in line at this go-to happy hour and weekend brunch place—then exit out the back to the patio, where live jazz, funk, or rock 'n' roll never fails to get people going. The stiff drinks help, too. *Pier 23 is on the Embarcadero near Battery Street in San Francisco; (415) 362-5125*

Q-R

Quinn's Lighthouse Restaurant & Pub

Situated in a historic landmark lighthouse built in 1890, Quinn's is a little funky, and a great place to sit by the water and enjoy a beer—they've got a choice of 60. The lightly fried fish and chips are worth a try. **On the Oakland Estuary, the Upper Deck Pub's 80-seat outdoor deck overlooks the marina.** 1951 Embarcadero, Oakland, (510) 536-2050, www.quinnslighthouse.com

The Ramp

Not only does this slightly rundown eatery make the perfect spot for enjoying the most perfect Bloody Marys with a Denver omelet, but it hosts a kickin' Saturday afternoon salsa party on the sprawling patio that attracts some pretty impressive dancers from all over the Bay Area, who are fun to watch even if you don't have the moves. 855 China Basin, San Francisco, (415) 621-2378

S

Sailing

For those moments when you find yourself staring at the Bay, dotted with billowing white sails, on a cloudless blue-sky day, and you say aloud to no one in particular, "All I ask is a tall ship and a star to sail her by ..."

J World Performance Sailing School and Sailing Club: With a cool name like J World, it's gotta be good. *The basic five-day keelboat lesson (the standard handling and seamanship class for sailboats) costs \$995.* 1070 Marina Village Pkwy., Ste. 203, Alameda, (800) 910-1101, www.jworldsf.com

OCSC: This Berkeley-based school has been teaching wannabe sailors for 27 years. *The basic keelboat class runs \$890 for nonmembers.* 1 Spinnaker Way, Berkeley, (800) 223-2984, www.ocscsailing.com

Tradewinds Sailing School and Club: Tradewinds has more than 40 years of experience making sailing easy and enjoyable to learn. In addition to a professional training program, it offers several specialty classes, including a women-with-women program that allows women to take classes from female instructors and to go on social sails with other women. *Classes from \$495.* 1230 Brickyard Cove Rd., Ste. 100, Point Richmond, (510) 232-7999, www.tradewindssailing.com

San Francisco Bay Natural Wildlife Refuge Center

Thirty thousand acres of open Bay, salt ponds, marshes, and mudflats; millions of birds from 280 species in migratory flight; and resident endangered species such as the salt marsh harvest mouse, make this protected area amid urban sprawl a one-stop shop for outdoorsy types to canoe, hike, fish off the pier, and water fowl-hunt (from mid-October to mid-January) to their heart's content. *The visitor center is off Highway 84 in Fremont. (510) 792-0222, www.fws.gov/desfba*

