

# Just like Europe PENSIONES

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SAN FRANCISCO

San Franciscans would feel right at home in Europe because there, just as in their own city, one finds affordable hotels and good food.

Ask for a pensione in Toronto and expect a laugh, but not in San Francisco. Here they are called small hotels or boutique hotels. They run 100 rooms on average and resemble something between a bed and breakfast and a European hotel. The decor makes them attractive, as do the price and location. The better-known hotels are found near the heart of San Francisco's Union Square.

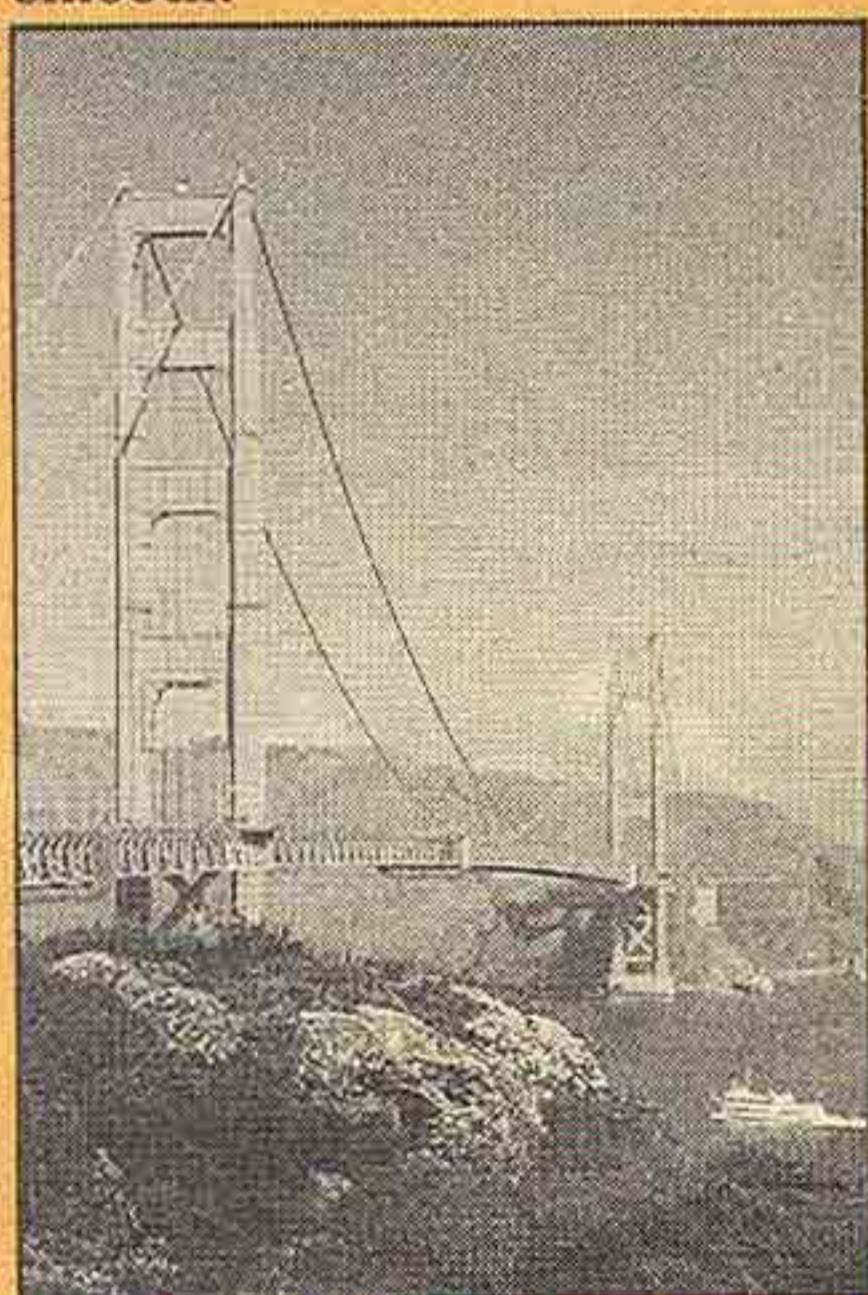
Hotel Juliana is one of the best located because it's just around the corner from Chinatown. Its lobby has all the comforts (if not more) of home. Classical music piped throughout the hotel, a cozy fireplace and free-flowing tea, coffee and wine in the early evening. Next to the drink there's a basketful of apples and a rack of newspapers to relax with in the living room-lobby.

The Monticello Inn offers, for the same price, something more splashy but equally charming. With 91 rooms and 36 suites, the former '30s flop-house was renovated country-colonial in 1987. The rooms are cozy and follow a pastel color scheme. The winding wooden staircase makes you feel like you're in a manor rather than a hotel. The lobby includes a huge fireplace, shelves and shelves of books and a television. For non-smokers there are specially designated floors. There is no sports complex or jacuzzi bath here—just the basics served up with style.

As far as eating goes, you may end up leaving your heart in San Francisco while taking home the calories. The city has more than 4,000 restaurants; variety is not a problem. But if you are there on a once-in-a-lifetime visit, try some-

thing you're sure not to get elsewhere.

When the Corona Bar & Grill talks California-Mexican cuisine, it is not talking tacos or refried beans. The menu offers specialties like duck tamales, roast poussin and Chile Relleno with goat cheese, wild mushrooms and corn coulis. The food is innovative; the margaritas, like the decor, is smooth.



**Golden Gate to good food**

For Italian, it's Kuleto's just off Union Square. From the outside it hardly appears to be the elegant restaurant it is. Inside strings of garlic, sausages and salted cod skins dangle over the bar—a bit southern Italian for a northern Italian restaurant, but the menu is different. Oysters with melted mascarpone (cream cheese) are great appetizers. So is the spinach- and cheese-filled tortellini covered in gorgonzola sauce and served with homemade bread. The waiter brings along saucers of olive oil to dip the bread in the old Tuscan way.

If you want to meet stars or local TV reporters, go to The Palm. This restaurant looks like a turn-of-the-century saloon complete with sawdust on the wooden floors. The walls are covered with caricatures of celebrities who eat there. What makes the place popular are the 10-pound lobsters and 16-ounce, aged filet mignons. The prices are steep.