



# A SELF- GUIDED TRAIL OF ALCATRAZ

## Alcatraz Self-Guided Trail



From August 11, 1934 to March 21, 1963, Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary housed over 1,550 of the toughest inmates in the United States. This self-guided tour of Alcatraz follows the same pathways traveled by many of these inmates.

Alcatraz offered no rehabilitation for its inmates. Men were sent to this prison because they could not be handled within other penitentiaries. Inmates were given the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention. Recreation, a job, visitation, and reading materials were granted as a reward for good behavior. Poor behavior was punished by restriction of these privileges and, eventually, isolation. During Alcatraz' 29 years as a federal prison, living conditions for the inmates continually changed. The first six years were the strictest. Later years saw many improvements for the men who served time here. Your walk today will give you a short introduction to life on the "Rock."

### #1. MUSEUM

The museum is divided into three rooms. Room 1 describes the discovery of the Island and the Native American Occupation. Room 2 illustrates the military post and military prison periods. Room 3 concentrates on the federal prison era; this is the era which will be emphasized on this walk.

### #2. CHINA ALLEY

The children of the correctional officers referred to this corridor as "China Town." Built in 1866, it was used by the army to house ammunition. Despite its mysterious appearance, prison officials used this area only for storage space.

### #18. RUBBLE

The rubble (to the right) was once correctional officers' housing. During the federal prison years, between fifty and sixty families were living in multi-unit buildings on this Island. This provided an immediate response time in the event of trouble in the cellhouse. These buildings were demolished by the federal government in 1971.

### #19 LIGHTHOUSE

Alcatraz was the site of the first U.S. lighthouse built on the Pacific Coast. The original lighthouse, built in 1854, had to be removed and was replaced by this one in 1909.

The Federal Penitentiary on Alcatraz closed its doors on March 21, 1963. Since that date the Island has gone through many changes. However, Alcatraz will always be remembered for the 29 years it served as a maximum security prison for the worst felons in the United States.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior

