

TECH TOURISM: SILICON VALLEY AS AN ATTRACTION



A selfie in front of the Facebook headquarters or Google's sculptures is the aim of more and more travelers visiting San Francisco, and specifically the Silicon Valley. Thanks to a number of unusual attractions, like the home of Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple Inc., tech tourism is growing in popularity in the area.

Facebook's 'thumbs-up' sign outside of the social network's offices in Menlo Park draws the attention of hundreds of tech tourists every day. Not only Americans, but also Canadians, Brazilians, Indians, or even Japanese visitors. Many of them say - we use Facebook every day, why not to visit the company?

Technically speaking, the visitors are not allowed to go inside the corporations' HQs, but generally the companies allow limited public access or souvenir shops. However, exploring the Google's sculpture garden in Mountain View, taking pictures and shooting videos around various tech giants is exciting enough for a growing crowd of tech tourists.

Most of them come with their families or friends with a number of places they researched online - the do-it-yourself kind of a tour. However, there are several companies that offer customized tours focusing on tech tourism highlights including such sites as The Tech Museum in San Jose, the Stanford campus, or a quick trip to Palo Alto, where tech celebrities like Marc Zuckerberg live.

Besides Facebook and Google's super-sized representations of their operating system's mascots, the visitors explore the grounds of Oracle, HP, Tesla, PayPal, Intel, IBM, eBay, Yahoo, and Apple. Other tech tourism spots include the Intel Museum, the Computer History Museum, and NASA Ames Research Center.

Enthusiastic visitors also come to explore the garage formerly belonging to David Packard to see where HP started. The place, nicknamed the 'Birthplace of Silicon Valley' was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. Steve Jobs' garage on Crist Drive in Los Altos is the Apple's birthplace and is also on the list of the top sights.

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