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# California

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ROAD TRIPS

11

## UNFORGETTABLE DRIVES

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dream  
big





DISTANCE: 144 MILES • STARTS: OAKLAND

# Bay Area Culinary Tour

*Taste your way from Oakland to the heart of wine country*

**T**his tour begins in the Bay Area, moves north through the farmlands of Marin County, and hits hot spots in Sonoma County and Napa Valley, with good bites and slurps at every turn.

Start in **Oakland** at the Ordinaire Wine Shop & Wine Bar to sample a dizzying selection of Sonoma's organic wines and cheeses. Then cross the Bay Bridge to **San Francisco**, where The Presidio has 1,500 acres of waterfront parklands with museums, hiking trails, and the Inn at the Presidio, with its daily wine-and-cheese reception for guests. Eat at the Presidio Social Club and sip from its robust regional wine list.

Drive the famed Highway 101 across the Golden Gate Bridge into the farmlands of **Marin** and **Sonoma**. When you see cows, it means you're in California cheese country. Pass **Novato** and skip onto side roads for samples and a picnic at the Marin French Cheese Co., founded in 1865. Continue north to **Petaluma** and order a pint at

HenHouse Brewing Company before continuing east to grab an irresistible ham biscuit at Lou's Luncheonette in **Sonoma**.

In **Yountville**, stock up on Nutter Butters and OhOs at Thomas Keller's Bouchon Bakery, secure artisanal provisions of all sorts at Oakville Grocery, and then order your burger of choice at the iconic Gott's Roadside in **St. Helena**.

Head north to Francis Ford Coppola Winery in **Geyserville**, where you can choose from a variety of regular or reserve tastings, take a dip in the outdoor pool on a hot summer day, or even go on a vineyard scavenger hunt around the picturesque hilltop grounds. If you still have room for a meal, try the excellent on-site Italian restaurant, then check out an exhibit on the director's films and play a round of backgammon or bocce surrounded by landscaped lawns.

Relax overnight at the nearby Geyserville Inn, where bright, airy rooms overlook the vineyards and forested hills of Sonoma. With tasting rooms in



## WORTH A DETOUR

**Creative break:** Visit the museums, gardens, and venues in Berkeley's cultural heart—the Downtown Arts District.

**Shuck oysters:** Buy a bucket of the famous local product to shuck at the Tomales Bay Oyster Company.

**Open-air shopping:** Check out Sebastopol's The Barlow, a

marketplace with cool breweries, unique shops, and galleries.

### AREA OF DETAIL





DISTANCE: 119 MILES • STARTS: LAKE TAHOE

## Lake Tahoe to Gold Country

*Discover alpine fun and underground wonders*

**T**wo hundred feet below the surface in California Gold Country, the auditorium-sized chambers of Black Chasm Cavern hold a rare treasure trove of glittering crystals, spiky stalactites, and North America's largest display of twisting, curling, glass-like helictite formations. This natural wonder is literally a hidden gem, a worthwhile conclusion to a road trip of discovery from Lake Tahoe through the hills and valleys of central California.

Starting at an elevation of 6,200 feet on the shores of **South Lake Tahoe**, explore the inlets and beaches by boat or kayak, then soar upward in a gondola at Heavenly to zip-line and climb at its Epic Discovery Park (summer only). Make your base the convenient Hotel Becket, gobble up fish tacos and local ales lakeside at Riva Grill, then hit the road, taking Highway 50 winding westward through the Sierra Nevada.

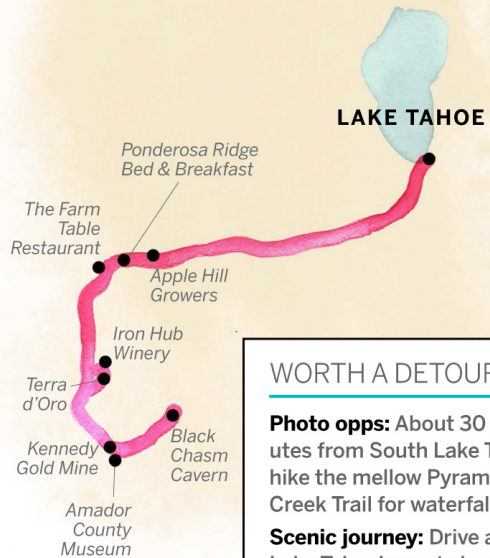
Sample the fresh bounty of California's farm-to-fork heartland at some of the 50 family-run farms and wineries of Apple Hill Growers near **Placerville** (check in advance for seasonal openings). Nearby, stay at the homey Ponderosa Ridge A Bed & Breakfast, overlooking a three-acre orchard. See the creative uses for all this produce at The Farm Table Restaurant (try the homemade sausages or turkey-pumpkin panini). Get dessert at the Hangman's Tree Ice Cream Saloon next door, underneath an outlaw hanging from the façade of the historic structure.

Across the rolling hills of Highway 49 about 30 minutes south, the emerging wine country of **Amador County** has 45 wineries as if yet escaping the tourist crowds of Napa. Sample wines in the scenic tasting room of the 50-year-old Terra d'Oro Winery in **Plymouth**, then stop by the Iron Hub Winery to fuel your trip onward with wine and soup pairings.

Dive into 19th-century Gold Rush history along Highway 49 at Kennedy Gold Mine and the Amador County Museum near **Jackson**. But even the gleam of gold can't compare to nature's million-year-old rock sculptures revealed in tours through Black Chasm Cavern in the hills above **Volcano** off of Highway 88. This National Natural Landmark includes trails, picnic areas, a sluice-gold-panning activity, and even a monolith-filled Zen Garden. But the real treasure worth the trip is what lies hidden below at your final destination.



Black Chasm Cavern



### WORTH A DETOUR

**Photo opps:** About 30 minutes from South Lake Tahoe, hike the mellow Pyramid Creek Trail for waterfall views.

**Scenic journey:** Drive along Lake Tahoe's west shore for stunning views of Emerald Bay, then visit historic towns like Tahoe City and Truckee.

**Quilt hunt:** Travel through Placerville farmlands to find



colorful quilt designs painted on the sides of old barns.