



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Ian L

Napas Top 7 Secret Travel Gems

Napa Valley, 2 Days

Table of contents:

- Guide Description 2
- Itinerary Overview 3
- Daily Itineraries 4
- Napa Valley Snapshot 8

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Everyone has a favorite winery in Napa. But not everyone knows where to get the best ice cream in town (organic, too!) or the location of an amazing hand-built playground for kids that will keep them happy for hours. Here, my top 7 hidden travel gems in Napa. The kinds of places we tell our friends about, but hope the tourists never discover.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Napa Valley



Playground Fantastico

This over-the-top playground will bring out the kid in anyone



Bistro Sabor

Lively Salsa Saturdays, savory Latin American fare



Three Twins Ice Cream

Delicious organic ice cream

Day 2 - Napa Valley



Ceja Vineyards Wine Tasting Salon, Lounge and Art Gallery

Part gallery, tasting room, and family salon



Balloons Above the Valley

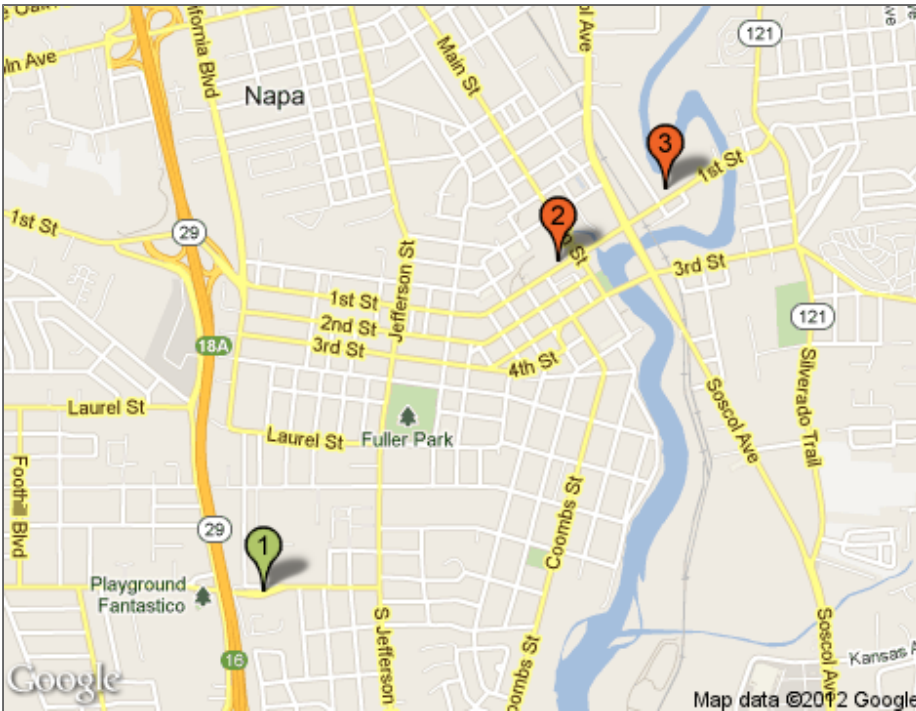
Napa Valley ballooning, local pilots, garden
Champagne brunch



di Rosa Preserve (The)

Stroll among sculptures by 20th-century art stars

Day 1 - Napa Valley



QUICK NOTE

contact:
<http://www.playgroundfantastico.com/>

location:
2400 Old Sonoma Road
Napa CA 94559

1 Playground Fantastico

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Go early or late in the day when it's not so hot.

DESCRIPTION: One of those awe-inspiring projects built entirely with community energy and support, Playground Fantastico is unbelievably fun and cool. From the minute you spot the shiny rocket-shaped towers designed by architect Matt Eisenberg, you can see this is no ordinary park. There are stone geysers, castles, swinging ramps, and sculptures that give off strange sounds. Everything was designed with kid and community input and it's all whimsical and fun. The only issue is shade -- it gets hot in Napa in the summertime and the lot feels a little bare. The community is trying to address this with a fundraising effort to plant shade trees.

© NileGuide



editor

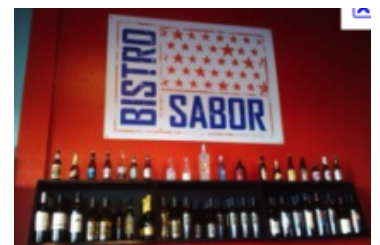
contact:
tel: (707) 252-0555
fax: +1 707 252 0556
<http://www.bistrosabor.com/>

location:
1126 First Street
Napa CA 94559

hours:

2 Bistro Sabor

DESCRIPTION: This hip, lighthearted bistro is the brainchild of Ariel Ceja, and it's a perfect incarnation of what the younger generation of Cejas wants to bring to Napa. One of the founding families of the Napa wine industry and one of the only Latino families who ended up founding and owning their own vineyard, the Cejas are deeply involved in all aspects of downtown Napa's recent resurrection. "Thank god someplace



editor

Tue-Thur 11:30am-midnight;
Fri-Sat 11:30am-2am.

in Napa is now open til 2 a.m. for us nightowls!" someone recently posted on their Twitter page, and the sentiment is echoed all over town. (Downtown Napa hasn't exactly been known for its nightlife.) And now, with Saturdays featuring a live band playing salsa, meringue, cumbia, and more, Bistro Sabor is becoming a beacon for those who want to cut up a little when the tasting rooms close. But fun isn't the only reason to go; the food's fantastic, too. Sort of a savory romp through Latin American street food, Bistro Sabor serves up favorites with a twist. Not to be missed are the light and lime-y salmon ceviche tostadas, but come on Thursdays and you can have homey, filling pozole as well. Top off whatever you choose with an almond flan or a chocolate and cinnamon tart. And best of all, few dishes top \$10 in price, so there's no excuse to skip dessert.

© NileGuide

contact:

tel: (707) 257-8946

<http://threetwinsicecream.com/>

location:

610 1st Street
Napa CA 94559

3 Three Twins Ice Cream

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Be prepared for long lines on hot weekend days, but it's worth it.

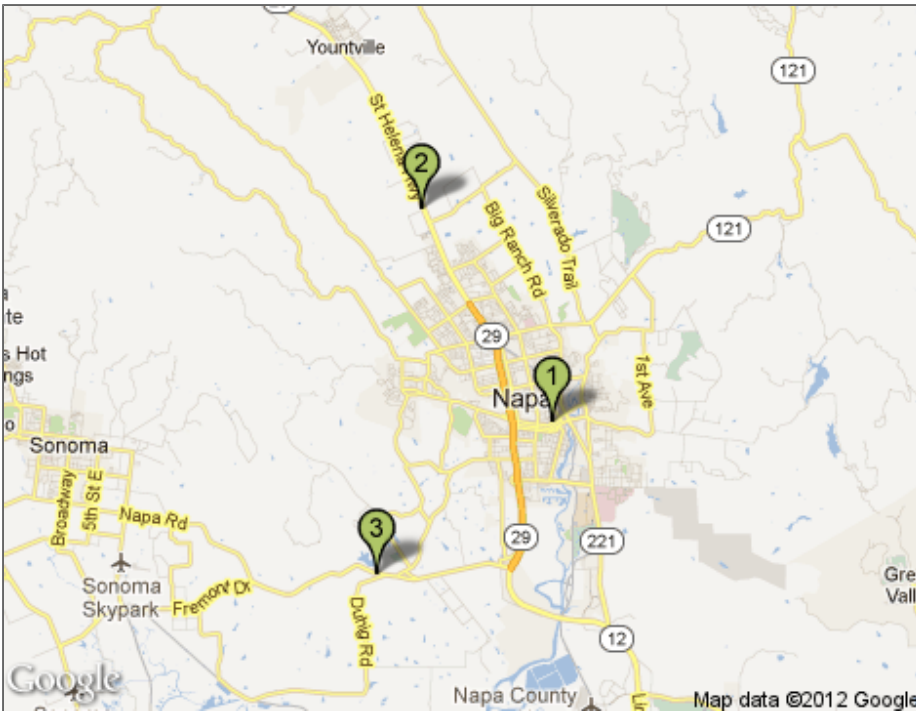
DESCRIPTION: Considered the best organic ice cream in the country by some chefs, Three Twins has made a name for itself among ice cream aficionados with its incredibly creamy, certified organic scoops. There's a flavor for everyone--from Cookie Jar (vanilla with three types of cookies) to Mint Confetti to Strawberry Je Ne Sais Quoi (with a splash of balsamic vinegar), and of course the flavors change with the seasons. Perennial favorites include Chocolate Project (chocolate ice cream with fleck of dark chocolate, cocoa nibs, chocolate cookies and chocolate chips) and Madagascar Vanilla.

© NileGuide



Three Twins Ice Cream

Day 2 - Napa Valley



QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: (707) 255-3954
<http://www.cejavineyards.com>
/

location:
1248 First Street
Napa CA 94559

1 Ceja Vineyards Wine Tasting Salon, Lounge and Art Gallery

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Don't let food samples go by without tasting.

DESCRIPTION: A little bit gallery, a little bit pouring room, a little bit family salon, Ceja Vineyards' new "tasting salon" in downtown Napa is just a lot of fun. A lively, "let us show you a good time" atmosphere prevails, courtesy of the good humored Ceja family members themselves. The Cejas are, like many of the Latino families in Napa, among the founding generation of the valley's winemaking industry. Proud of their Latin American heritage, the Cejas bring a bit of fiesta to liven up the pouring process. A block away is Ariel Ceja's Bistro Sabor, offering a great "small plates" menu consisting of specialties from all over Latin America. (Don't miss the salmon ceviche tostadas or the churros.)

© NileGuide



editor

contact:
tel: +1 707 253 2222
fax: +1 707 258 8889
<http://www.balloonrides.com>

location:
5091 Solano Avenue
Napa CA 94558

2 Balloons Above the Valley

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Check weather conditions before you book as balloons can't take off in high winds.

DESCRIPTION: A hot air balloon ride over the Napa Valley is an unforgettable way to commemorate your visit...and the Facebook photos will certainly be memorable! A typical



adventure includes an hour-long balloon ride followed by a garden Champagne brunch, but several packages are available. The pilots are well-informed locals who tell you all about the history and culture of the Napa Valley while you soar above it. Launches begin at sunrise. Enjoy incredible aerial views of Napa vineyards. Wind conditions are a factor; if it's too windy balloons can't take off, but that's fairly rare.

© NileGuide

contact:

tel: +1 707 226 5991

<http://www.dirosapreserve.org/index.html>

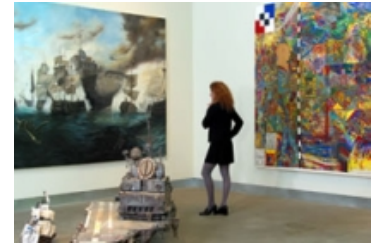
location:

5200 Carneros Highway 121
Napa CA 94559

3 di Rosa Preserve (The)

DESCRIPTION: Give yourself a couple of hours to immerse yourself in modern art, indoors and out, at the Di Rosa preserve. Created and curated by San Francisco art aficionados Rene and Veronica Di Rosa, the 217-acre preserve today showcases 2,200 works of art by more than 900 contemporary artists, most from northern California. Indoor galleries are well lit and organized, but the most fun is to be had wandering the trails through the meadows, where works of art pop out of you in surprising places. The art gallery and lawn area are available for rental for weddings and other special events.

© NileGuide



Napa Valley Snapshot

Local Info

Napa Valley attracts some 5 million visitors each year, and for good reason. Located 50 miles north of San Francisco, Napa Valley is one of the world's premier wine-growing regions, home to picturesque small towns filled with foodie-fave restaurants, wellness spas, award-winning golf courses, artisan-oriented shops, and beautiful open spaces offering hiking adventures and ridgetop views...What's not to love?

Napa

The city of Napa is the largest of Napa Valley's communities, yet downtown Napa retains the feel of a quiet country town. While quite a few mansions and large estates rest back against the hill, Napa tends to be a friendly, down-to-earth town with a refreshingly unpretentious personality. In every season, the farms and wineries dotting the valley make a glorious setting for bike rides and country drives.

Napa's history as the center of the valley's Italian heritage is reflected in a variety of top-quality Italian restaurants. The valley's Hispanic population leaves its culinary mark as well; no drive down Soscol is complete without a quick bite to eat at one of the town's famous beloved taco trucks. The Carneros area on Napa's south side, prized by aficionados for its Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays, now features a slew of hip new inns and restaurants. And the revitalized riverfront area is a mecca for hopping bars and lively galleries.

The commercial center, known as the "Old Town" district, bustles with retail stores and boutique wine shops like Bounty Hunter Rare Wine and Provisions. "Old Town" provides casual dining options like ZuZu, a popular tapas restaurant with tons of local color, literally: most of the artwork featured is from Napa Valley artists.

Yountville

Yountville is far closer to the popular Falcon Crest image of Napa Valley, retaining as it does the quaint charm a small, country town. Less populous and more gentrified than the city of Napa, there are also a lot of grapes growing here. You may see the vineyards first, strangely enough, as a bright, metallic twinkle: growers use reflective foil to scare away grape-eating birds. Yountville, however is perhaps

most famous for first-class dining: French Laundry, Bistro Jeanty, Bouchon, and Ad Hoc are clustered right here. Nationally famed, these establishments are happily embraced by San Franciscans as an integral part of the Bay Area restaurant culture, but clearly, they and Yountville stand on their own (and standing is indeed what you will do if you don't make a reservation weeks in advance). In 2007, the inaugural year of the Michelin Guide to San Francisco, Bay Area & Wine Country, several Yountville restaurants were awarded Michelin Stars.

Oakville

By this point, one has entered the heart of Napa Valley: Wine production. Robert Mondavi, one of the titans of California wine, is headquartered in Oakville. Other, smaller wineries can be seen on both sides of the valley, though the premium cellars seem to be on the west side. While tiny Oakville has a post office, it's really an unincorporated part of Napa County, best known for the Oakville Grocery, a legendary roadside delicatessen stocked with a mind-boggling array of gourmet delights from France, Italy, and their own kitchens. As with other spots throughout the valley, one is likely to be greeted in the early spring by a waving sea of yellow under sparse vineyards: growers often plant mustard underneath grapevines.

Rutherford

Microscopic Rutherford is home to Beaulieu Vineyards, Rutherford Grove, Rutherford Hill, and St. Supery Vineyards & Winery. Take in Napa's landscape with a chilled bottle of sparkling wine in Mumm's outdoor terrace. Francis Ford Coppola's Niebaum-Coppola Estate, generally mobbed with tourists, features memorabilia from his career in cinema. Rutherford is also a fine place to eat: Restaurant at Auberge du Soleil and La Toque are two exceptional Napa Valley restaurants.

St. Helena

With its rows of historic stone and beam storefronts and perfectly restored Victorians, downtown St. Helena looks much it did in the early 1900s. Off the main street, cottage gardens are tucked between elegant bed and breakfasts in historic mansions, while elegant boutique

hotels surround fountain-bedecked quiet courtyards. The Silverado Museum hosts an exhibit of Robert Louis Stevenson ephemera. Fans of ghost story writer and misanthrope Ambrose Bierce will want to stay at the Ambrose Bierce House, now a bed and breakfast. St. Helena is also home to the Beringer Vineyards, a popular tasting destination.

The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone is hidden in the vineyards of St. Helena. The CIA is a master's level training center for working, certified chefs. It's situated in the former home of the Christian Brothers winery, an awe-striking, three-story, 101-year-old building that housed generations of winemaking friars. Take a look at some of the history exhibits inside, and don't miss Brother Timothy's 1800-piece corkscrew collection. The CIA gives cooking demonstrations in their fully equipped teaching theater. Then enjoy the sights at the outdoor terrace of Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant.

Calistoga

Calistoga is famous for the hot springs that bubble out of the geyser-studded northern end of the valley, and the mineral-infused mud that Europeans traditionally believed had healthful properties. Mud baths, along with mineral baths, saunas, hot steam treatments, whirlpools, and herbal body wraps, have all been an attraction of the area ever since San Francisco entrepreneur Sam Brannan first promoted the benefits of the area's hot springs in the mid-19th century. Dr. Wilkinson's Hot Springs Resort, Lavender Hill Spa, and Indian Springs Hotel & Spa are good spots to enjoy relaxing spa treatments.

To get a feeling for the thermal springs without getting in one, go two miles out of town on Tubbs Lane and catch Old Faithful Geyser of California. The geyser spouts boiling water 60 feet into the air every half-hour or so.

Calistoga is an engaging, health-conscious, bustling little town in every way. The Calistoga Inn Restaurant & Brewery or Wappo Bar & Bistro are all great places to replenish yourself after the ardors of a rub, steam, or scalding soak.

© NileGuide