



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



# Highway 116 West Sonoma Farm Food Tour

**Jenner, Sebastopol, Sonoma, 4 Days**

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** You've got to get to Sebastopol before noon to catch this country town's small but mighty farmer's market in full swing, and it's absolutely worth it. Local cheesemakers offer tastings, olive oil producers hand out slices of freshly baked local bread dipped in their latest batch. It's impossible to decide whose heirloom eggplants and tomatoes to buy, and if you get inspired enough, you'll end up, like I always do, going home with starter plants for your own kitchen garden. Fuel up with a stop at Hardcore Espresso (you can't miss it -- it's the tin-roofed shack that looks like a junk dealer, &nbsp;bicycle repair shop, and Grateful Dead parking lot all in one.) &nbsp;I always get the chai; if you ask for spicy, it really&nbsp;is&nbsp;spicy - a rare thing outside of India. I've heard other people swear by the espresso drinks, which come with a big head of foamy milk. Just north of Sebastopol is the tiny town of Graton, which is easy to miss. (Watch for the small sign on the right, then make an immediate left.) I found Graton years ago when a friend moved out there, and now I just have to stop to eat at WillowWood Market, which despite its name isn't a market but a wonderful café and restaurant. The interior of WillowWood is my fantasy kitchen personified; in fact the cucumber green and ochre color scheme is so farmhouse-elegant I once took photos, brought them to a paint store, and asked to have them matched. My only complaint about WillowWood is that they only serve their mouth-watering breakfast menu til 11:30. Since I tend to end up stuck at the Sebastopol Farmer's Market until at least noon, this means I always miss out. Still, I've never forgotten the one occasion I arrived in time to try their French folded eggs, slow-cooked in a double boiler with fontina cheese and fresh herbs. But the smoked trout salad with walnuts, apples and blue cheese, my usual lunch choice, is not-to-be-missed as well. By this point, of course, my mind has moved on to apple-related food, and I'm craving a slice of the incredible fresh Gravenstein apple pie served every year to hordes of pie fanatics at Mom's Apple Pie. A quick stop for a slice in the peaceful new garden gazebo, and -- not to be selfish -- &nbsp;I pick up a whole pie to serve the family later that night. The tart locally pressed cider they sell at the counter also makes a great take-home prize or hostess gift. While enjoying the warm October sun at Mom's, I made one of the new discoveries that makes this area so endlessly enjoyable for me. Just next door is the intriguingly named and can't-miss-it lovely Henweigh Café . The posted menu, which features a collection of eclectic small plates based around ingredients like local figs, prosciutto, and fresh-baked panini bread, was interesting enough to tempt me for a return visit soon.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Sebastopol



### East West Cafe

Organic coffee and Lebanese mezze

## Day 2 - Sebastopol



### Eloise

## Day 3 - Jenner, Sonoma



### River's End

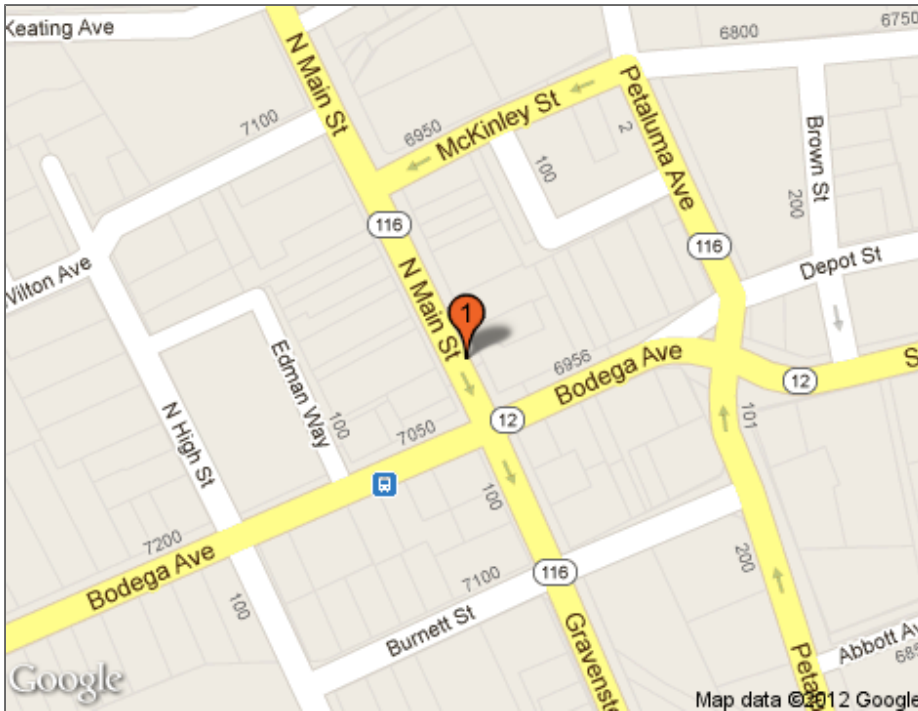
Continental sensibilities, the freshest seafood on the coast, and spectacular sunset views



### Inn at Occidental of Sonoma Wine Country

Incredible views from luxury historic retreat and spa

# Day 1 - Sebastopol



QUICK NOTE

**contact:**

tel: 707- 829 2822

fax: 707- 539 4193

<http://www.eastwestcafesebastopol.com/>

**location:**

128 North Main Street  
Sebastopol CA 95472

## 1 East West Cafe

**DESCRIPTION:** A great breakfast joint, East West Cafe's servings are out of the ordinary, wild rice with potato soup, chicken fajita, lamb loaf, garden salad, et al. The downtown Sebastopol location is apt for wine tourists to catch a quick meal before heading off to wineries. Voted best Mediterranean fare in Sonoma County, the cafe also offers quite a range of organic products. Moreover, the large portions make for a relative bargain. © wcities.com



# Day 2 - Sebastopol



QUICK NOTE

**contact:**  
tel: 707-823-6300

**location:**  
2295 Gravenstein Highway  
South  
Sebastopol CA 95472

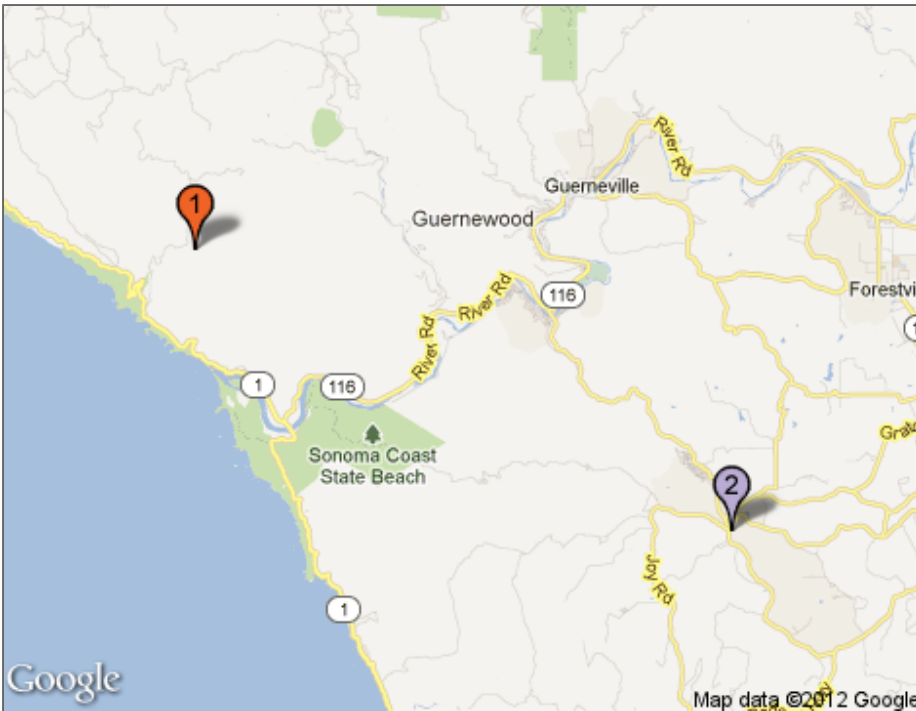
**hours:**  
Dinner: Monday - Thursday:  
5:30pm - 9:30pm; Friday -  
Saturday: 5:30pm - 10:00pm

**1 Eloise**

**DESCRIPTION:** We are a restaurant rooted in the traditions of farmhouse cooking. We aim to present dishes that have been made for hundreds of years and do them justice. Our focus is on southern French cuisine with the occasional trip abroad to Italy, Spain, England and Greece. Our servers are knowledgeable, and our wine list consistent with the food. We hope to give you a memorable experience if you visit Eloise. © OpenTable



# Day 3 - Jenner, Sonoma



## QUICK NOTE

**contact:**  
tel: (707) 865-2484  
www.ilovesunsets.com

**location:**  
11048 Highway 1  
Jenner CA 95450

**hours:**  
Lunch: Friday - Monday:  
12:00pm - 3:30pm; Dinner:  
Friday - Monday: 5:00pm -  
8:30pm

## 1 River's End

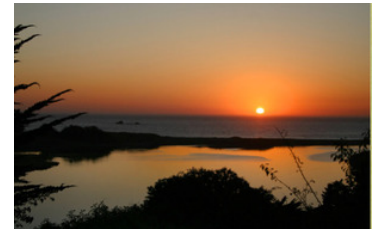
### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

There aren't enough window tables for everyone to have one, so go early and enjoy one of bartender Patrick Keane's artisanal cocktails on the deck until your table of choice is available.

**DESCRIPTION:** Everything about River's End is an unexpected delight, from the friendly, unpretentious atmosphere to the thoughtfully organized menu listing one joyfully inventive dish after another.

Named for its breathtakingly romantic location, River's End overlooks the mouth of the Russian River where the placid waters mix with the crashing waves of the Pacific. Repeat guests know to time dinnertime reservations for the sunset hour, and to come early for handcrafted cocktails or "bubbles and oysters," to be savored while toasting the fiery sky from the riverside deck.

This isn't one of those seaside restaurants where the view trumps the food, however; everything we ate was mysteriously delicious enough to have us dissecting the details of dishes from first to last bite. We ate every crispy leaf of the kicking ahi salad, with its zingy Mandarin orange vinaigrette, and had to take multiple photos of the technicolor beet salad, a rainbow tower of farm-fresh beets layered with mascarpone and goat cheeses. The eclectic entrees feature pan-seared duck and roasted elk in addition to more standard fare, but the star of the



Melanie Haiken

show is the Dungeness crab tasting menu, which showcases the day's catch in a variety of playful combinations. The best restaurants reflect the personalities of their owners; you know instantly upon entering that you couldn't be anywhere else. River's End is such a place; owner Bert Rangel seems to be everywhere, greeting guests personally and conveying his ebullient delight at having landed in this gorgeous location to one and all. River's End is a true family affair; on Sunday nights, Rangel's two young daughters help with hostessing and sauce-tasting duties, and guests couldn't stop smiling at their cheerful enthusiasm.

While dinner at River's End makes the perfect anchor point for a romantic weekend, many people also make the trek up the coast for a sunny lunch or romantic dinner alone. With Goat Rock just one of several spectacular beaches nearby, River's End makes the perfect cap to a day of beachcombing. t © NileGuide

**contact:**

tel: 800-522-6324

<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/california-occidental-theinatoccidentalofsonomawinecountry.html>

**location:**

3657 Church Street  
Occidental CA 95465



## Inn at Occidental of Sonoma Wine Country

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Choose a room with a jacuzzi tub for an in-room spa experience

**DESCRIPTION:** The only AAA 4-Diamond, Mobil 4-Star Inn north of San Francisco. This Elegant Victorian Inn is the best kept secret of the Sonoma Wine Country. An ultimate experience for those who expect nothing less...a secluded place perfect for rejuvenating mind and body...just one hour north of the Golden Gate surrounded by countryside and redwoods of unsurpassed beauty-near the Sonoma coast. Furnished with original art and antiques. Local wineries, enzyme baths and massage, golf, tennis, kayaking, hiking, biking, horsebacking.



more at [BedandBreakfast.com](http://BedandBreakfast.com)

# Sonoma Snapshot

## Local Info

Known to locals as the "real wine country," Sonoma County has fewer tourists and at least as many working farms and wineries as Napa, giving it more the sense of a country getaway. Towns at the southern end of the county, just 45 minutes north of San Francisco are close enough for day trips or weekends, while the northern end of the county maintains a rugged remoteness perfect for getting away from it all. Laid-back and back to nature are the key concepts in Sonoma; with an incredible rock-studded coastline to the west and the Russian River making lazy Z-curves through the valley, there are endless opportunities for hiking, biking, beachcombing, and water sports of all kinds.

Epicurean culture is rooted in the rich soil that has yielded world-class wines and fresh produce for generations. Wine is a way of life in "Slow-noma," birthplace of the California wine industry and home to over 250 wineries. Family-run wineries and intimate tasting rooms abound visitors eager to drink in Sonoma's offerings. Local produce fills the many restaurants, which showcase superb California cuisine in elegant-yet-casual settings. A resort destination for over 100 years, hot springs await, and luxury resorts and spas are prepared to pamper. Sonoma County captures the natural diversity of Northern California with its fertile farmlands, rolling vineyards, redwood reserves and ruggedly beautiful coastline, and features outdoor activities such as golfing, kayaking, hiking and cycling. But even as its tourism grows, Sonoma County retains its small-town approachability and historical charm. An ideal getaway destination, Sonoma gives the perfect taste of Northern California living.

### Sonoma

The city of Sonoma is the historical heart of Sonoma County and serves as a great base from which to explore Sonoma Valley. Sonoma welcomes visitors with its small-town charm and first-class amenities. Despite its recent growth and rediscovery as tourist center, Sonoma remains a laid-back and more affordable alternative to its neighbor Napa. At the city's center lays the leafy and tranquil Sonoma Plaza, a national historical landmark lined with hotels,

restaurants and quaint shops. Sonoma Plaza hosts several festivals every year, including the Valley of the Moon Festival, a Sonoma tradition for over 100 years. Wine tasting rooms and artisan food markets can be found throughout the city, while natural thermal waters can be enjoyed at nearby Boyes Hot Springs, original home to Sonoma's tourist industry.

### Healdsburg

In northern Sonoma County, Healdsburg is a quainter, more upscale version of Sonoma, with every shop, restaurant and service you could need to indulge your "weekend in the country" fantasy. Once the working heart of Sonoma's wine culture, today Healdsburg is packed with acclaimed and luxury bed-and-breakfasts.

Three wine appellations converge near Healdsburg, making the area rife with lauded wineries and that low-key wine-country lifestyle. Nearby Alexander Valley is Sonoma wine country's most densely planted area, famous for its Zinfandels and signature Cabernets. Whether you prefer the elegant Francophile dining experience of Cyrus, the hip, happening feeling of Cafe Zin, or the locavore artisanal indulgence of Barndiva, devoted foodies will find a critically acclaimed restaurant to their taste.

Lodging options include the warm hospitality of Honor Mansion, the romantic indulgence of Hotel Healdsburg, with its resort-like spa and pool, and-- the newest arrival-- the quaint farmstay atmosphere of Healdsburg Modern Cottages, brought to you by the artsy collective that runs Barndiva. For the outdoorsy, hiking and biking options are aplenty, while the nearby Russian River makes a picturesque setting for kayaking and inner-tubing.

### Guerneville

Nestled along the Russian River, Guerneville is a popular day-trip destination for Bay Area families. The town's small beach rents paddle boats, kayaks and inner tubes, and also makes for fun splashing around. Riverside redwood reserves keep the area cool and shaded during the hot summer months. Home to many ex-urbanites, Guerneville is also known for its environmental and gay activism.

### Petaluma

One of Sonoma County's larger cities, Petaluma boasts a picturesque historical downtown of restored 18th-century buildings filled with antique shops and restaurants. Although Petaluma is largely a quiet residential city, it does offer some of the area's best nightlife options. Both housed in historical buildings, McNear's Mystic Theater and the Phoenix Theater attract some of the biggest musical acts the North Bay sees. You can also play pool or karaoke at one of the many bars and pubs.

### Santa Rosa

Sonoma County's biggest city, Santa Rosa is a wealthy community full of bustle and traffic jams. Three shopping districts offer everything from brand-name apparel to local art, while historical residential neighborhoods offer a glimpse into Santa Rosa's small-town past. Reasonably priced rooms can be found in Santa Rosa, in name hotels such as Hilton, Holiday Inn and Best Western. Families enjoy Santa Rosa's many kid-(and adult) friendly activities, from an ice-skating rink to Safari West, a safari-style African wildlife reserve. Comic lovers will have to make a stop at the Charles M. Schulz Museum for all things Peanuts.

### Bodega Bay/Sonoma Coast

The Sonoma Coast showcases some of Northern California's most breathtaking views. Cliffs dramatically descend into the crashing Pacific surf along legendary Highway 1; take in the stunning views on a coastal hike or drive. The largest destination along the Sonoma Coast is Bodega Bay, a working-class fishing town that swells with tourists in the summer months. The town was the location for Alfred Hitchcock's horror film *The Birds*. But with luxury resorts like Bodega Bay Lodge & Spa, you have nothing to be afraid of.

Sonoma County's mild Mediterranean climate makes visiting enjoyable at any time of year. High season begins in April and runs through the summer, when many food, wine and cultural festivals take place. You'll encounter the greatest crowds during Harvest Season, or "Crush," as locals call it. The Sonoma wine country swells during this time, although the crowds are still less than in neighboring Napa County. If you are at all interested in wine and wine production, this is the best time of year to visit. Winter affords great deals

## Sonoma Snapshot continued

and less crowds, though outdoor activities are limited. Weekdays are generally less

busy all times of the year, as Sonoma is a popular weekend destination for San Francisco Bay Area residents.

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