



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, bicycle repair shop, and Grateful Dead parking lot all in one.) I always get the chai; if you ask for spicy, it really is 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 -- 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:

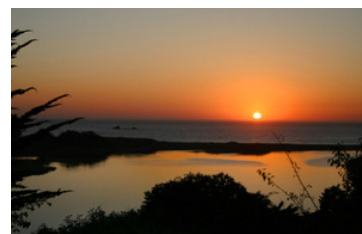
There aren't enough window tables for everyone to have one, so go early and enjoy one of bartender Patrick Keane's artisanal cocktails on the deck until your table of choice is available.

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 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



Melanie Haiken

contact:

tel: 800-522-6324

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

location:

3657 Church Street
Occidental CA 95465

2 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

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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History

The birthplace of the California wine industry, Sonoma County has a history of isolation and discovery, of booming highs and quiet lulls. Originally home to indigenous tribes, Sonoma was discovered by Europeans, with Spanish missionaries establishing a mission in 1824; later, it played a central role in California's accession into the United States. The area sank into obscurity and neglect until the discovery of natural hot springs transformed it into a resort destination in the 1890s. Again, Sonoma fell from the limelight, growing quietly and steadily in the shadow of nearby Napa. Today, Sonoma is once again being rediscovered, emerging as a laid-back alternative to Napa's crowds and high prices.

Sonoma shares an early history similar to much of California, with indigenous tribes and Spanish missionaries. Sonoma was known as "Valley of the Moon" to the Miwoks, Pomo, Wintun and other indigenous tribes who called the area home for 12,000 years before the arrival of Europeans. "Noma" is, in fact, thought to be a Mayakmah word for town. The first Europeans to establish a presence were Russian fur traders, in the early 19th century; they also left behind their linguistic mark—the Russian River bears their name. Spanish explorers and missionaries brought about the most dramatic change to early Sonoma County. Franciscan padres established the Sonoma Mission in 1824, the northernmost link in a chain of 21 California missions; these padres also planted the area's first grape vineyards. Mission life was harsh and within 50 years, indigenous tribes all but vanished.

Sonoma's prominence grew in 1834, when Sonoma Mission was completely secularized by the newly independent Mexican government. General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo transformed the Mission into a bustling Mexican pueblo, setting a street grid and building Sonoma Plaza, a national historical landmark which still serves as the center of Sonoma. By the

1840s, a steady encroachment of American settlers began to challenge Mexican power, and in 1846, Mexican rule ended with the legendary Bear Flag Revolt. The ensuing independent Bear Flag Republic only lasted a month before paving the way for California's accession to the United States.

Sonoma saw fall into neglect and isolation during the Gold Rush, as wealth poured down to San Francisco. Natural thermal baths discovered at Boyes Hot Springs created a rush of tourists in the 1890s, as Sonoma evolved into a resort retreat. Sonoma County's wine industry continued growing quietly, surviving both a root disease epidemic and Prohibition. Following World War II, Sonoma was rediscovered and again outsiders poured in. The population swelled, but urban development was kept in check. As neighboring Napa County's wine industry and tourism boomed, Sonoma continued producing top-quality wines with a fraction of the fuss. This sheltering from the limelight, along with well-managed growth, has allowed Sonoma County to retain the rustic, small-town roots and pastoral beauty that charms visitors. Today, Sonoma County and its wine country have turned into a top Northern California getaway destination.

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Hotel Insights

Time to relax and rejuvenate. Since its turn-of-the-century heyday as a hot springs retreat, Sonoma hotels have offered peaceful oases for vacationers wanting to get away from it all. Sonoma lodging options vary from tucked-away cottages to Victorian bed-and-breakfasts to luxury hotels, with many offering on-site spas and pampering services. Many hotels and inns are housed in historic buildings and blend a rustic country charm with modern renovations and new amenities.

Sonoma Valley is home to luxury resorts, as well as quaint bed-and-breakfasts and even a few budget options. For those seeking some spoiling, the beautifully landscaped and historic MacArthur Place offers a cozy county atmosphere with four-star amenities. The Lodge at Sonoma – Renaissance Resort & Spa provides similar luxury in a more contemporary setting. Sonoma's many bed-and-breakfasts combine intimacy with location. Just steps from the Sonoma Plaza, the elegant Cottage Inn & Spa offers

a restful oasis, while lush gardens surround The Victorian Garden Inn, housed in a 1870s Greek Revival farmhouse. For value in the center of town, the Inn at Sonoma and Best Western Sonoma Valley Inn stand as excellent budget-friendly choices that don't sacrifice quality or service. Sonoma's surrounding towns offer even greater intimacy. Literally amid vineyards, resort The Kenwood Inn & Spa exudes old-world charm in the heart of the Sonoma wine country. Romance abounds at the creekside cottages of The Glen Ellen Inn, equipped with fireplaces and Jacuzzi tubs built for two. A Glen Ellen bed-and-breakfast, The Beltane Ranch is housed in a historic ranch house with a view of vineyards.

To the North, the Russian River area is filled with tucked-away bed-and-breakfasts. Healdsburg hosts the romantic and restful Raford House Bed and Breakfast Inn, and the gem Honor Mansion, an ideal getaway where service shines. You'll feel like family at Forestville's Farmhouse Inn, which also features a top-rated romantic restaurant. Guerneville has the several value options, including the West Sonoma Inn and Sonoma Orchid Inn. For a little more pampering, head to luxurious Hotel Healdsburg; for more bang for your buck, Best Western Dry Creek Inn makes a great option.

Along the coast, Bodega Bay Lodge & Spa offers a luxury hideaway with stunning ocean views. To the North, Sea Ranch and the encompassing Gualala provide seaside value at The Surf Motel and Seacliff on the Bluff, as well as bed-and-breakfasts like Whale Watch Inn by the Sea, which boasts a private secluded beach.

Sonoma's largest cities, Santa Rosa and Petaluma, make for more affordable stays, mostly at big-name chain hotels like Hilton, Quality Inn and Best Western. The plus is that you're among all the conveniences of a city but only a short drive from the wine country. But with all the intimate and unique Sonoma lodging options, stays here are not recommended.

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Restaurants Insights

Sonoma County's long culinary tradition is yours for the tasting. From award-winning bakeries to chef-owned restaurants with

Sonoma Snapshot continued

extensive wine lists, Sonoma restaurants deliver the ultimate California dining experience. California cuisine reigns supreme, along with Italian, French and various fusions. Most of Sonoma's restaurants use locally grown produce, compliments of Sonoma County's mild Mediterranean climate and fertile soil, while many feature the gourmet breads, artisan cheeses and olive oils for which the area is known. Four restaurants in Sonoma County have received coveted Michelin Guide stars, while six are included in the San Francisco Chronicle's Top 100 Restaurants. You'll encounter a plethora of dining options, with attire at Sonoma restaurants a comfortable vacation casual.

You could do just fine not leaving the city of Sonoma at all. Café Le Haye serves perfectly prepared contemporary California cuisine in a casual, if cramped, setting. Della Santina's authentic Italian fare is beloved by locals, while the ever-popular The Girl and the Fig serves French Bistro cuisine on the Sonoma Plaza. Family-friendly Breakaway Café has traditional American dishes and features a kid's menu. Those seeking a more unusual culinary experience should head to La Salette for Portuguese food. Top take-out lunches can be found at the Sonoma Cheese Factory and the newer Basque Boulangerie.

Northern Sonoma County offers a handful of first-class restaurants. Sonoma County's most critically acclaimed restaurant is Healdsburg's Cyrus, which showcases exquisite cross-cultural California cuisine chef Douglas Keane describes as "contemporary luxury." Another California choice, Madrona Manor's surrounding garden provides much of the produce for its excellent dishes, to which wines are expertly paired. Forestville's romantic Farmhouse Inn and Restaurant makes a perfect evening for couples.

Santa Rosa boasts several good eateries, while Petaluma affords low-key and reasonably priced dining. Pizza-lovers will appreciate the thin crusts at Santa Rosa's Rosso Pizzeria & Wine Bar, while the happening Willi's Wine Bar features an eclectic California menu. Flavor Bistro is popular for breakfast and brunch. Locals love Old Chicago Pizza in Petaluma, as well as the Italian offerings at Cucina Paradiso; for bargain Mexican, head to Taqueria Mi Pueblo.

Bodega Bay's limited dining options include seafood at restaurants such as Lucas Wharf and Spud Point Crab Company. Terrapin Creek Café & Restaurants serves comfort food with warm service, while the restaurant at Bodega Bay Lodge & Spa provides the area's best fine-dining experience.

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Nightlife Insights

Most visitors come to Sonoma in search of rest and rejuvenation. Suffice to say, the nightlife scene isn't exactly hopping, but fun activities are out there. Live entertainment can be found at a variety of historic venues in Sonoma County. Sonoma's Sebastiani offers a truly unique experience with its eclectic blend of cinema and live entertainment. Petaluma's McNear's Mystic Theater is often cited as the North Bay's premiere music venue, while the all-ages Phoenix Theater showcases edgier rock and hip-hop acts. To the North, Geyserville's River Rock Casino features live acts as well as 24-hour gaming.

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Things to Do Insights

It's not just about the wineries. From jazz festivals to balloon rides, hot springs soaks to African safaris (yes), Sonoma County offers the ultimate Northern California getaway. Rent kayaks along the Russian River, hike through Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve, cycle through Sonoma Valley. Gaze at stunning coastal views and dine at four-star restaurants. Browse farmers markets and quaint boutiques. Get cultured at art museums, galleries and film festivals. Golf at one of the luxury courses, explore the historic mission and barracks, or simply unwind at one of Sonoma County's many spas. And, yes, visit the wineries too.

Wine is a way of life in Sonoma County. Thirteen AVAs produce a wide range of varietals, from Russian River Pinots to Alexander Valley Cabs to Los Carneros Chards and Champagnes. More than 250 wineries and dozens of tasting rooms offer a wide range of wine-tasting experiences, from intimate cellars to large vineyard tours. Larger Sonoma wineries include Ravenswood Winery, Dry Creek Vineyards

and Kenwood Vineyards, while eco-friendly Benziger Family Vineyards is the first biodynamic Sonoma winery. Wineries such as sustainable Kunde Estate offer fascinating tours of wine caves, which make for perfect aging conditions. Kenwood is home to two winery co-op tasting rooms, Family Winery and Tasting Room, which offer more obscure wines at reasonable prices. Get further off the beaten path at Sonoma's smaller wineries, such as family-owned Unti Vineyards and Quivira Vineyards. Wine tours companies include the highly regarded Beau Wine Tours and stylish Vintage Wine Tours of Sonoma.

Foodies delight in Sonoma's long culinary tradition. Aside from top-notch restaurants, Sonoma teems with markets like The Olive Press, Vella Cheese Company and North Bay Made. Almost every town and hamlet hosts a seasonal or year-around farmers market. Ramekins Sonoma Valley Culinary School offers quality hands-on and demonstration cooking classes. Sweeties will want to make a bee line for Glen Ellen's Wine County Chocolates, which includes a chocolate tasting room.

Arts and cultural events flourish in Sonoma. Local and national artists are featured at Sonoma Valley Museum of Art, while Peanuts fans find heaven in Santa Rosa's the Charles M. Schulz Museum. Popular local artists such as Michael Holland and Beverly Provost maintain galleries and studios that bear their names. Sonoma County hosts several festivals throughout the year, most featuring wine and food tasting. Music and art fans appreciate Sonoma Jazz+ and Sonoma International Film Festival, while foodies feast on all things olive at the Sonoma Valley Olive Festival. History lovers experience Sonoma County's hometown tradition at Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival, a century-old parade that features vintage fire engines; car enthusiasts have a blast at the Vintage Race Car Festival. Held the first weekend in October, Sonoma County Harvest Festival is the area's biggest wine event of the year. Passport to Dry Creek is arguably the most raucous of the festivals; hosted by popular wineries, limited ticketing ensures an intimate experience.

Sonoma County is an outdoor lover's paradise, with activities that range from active to romantically laid-back. Cyclists will enjoy both Sonoma Cyclery, which offers affordable bike rentals, and Goodtime

Sonoma Snapshot continued

Touring Company, which provides bike excursions at various levels. Burke's Canoe Trips on the Russian River leads canoe and kayak trips through the redwoods; Bodega Bay Kayak provides tours and rentals along the coast. Golfers have over a dozen courses to choose from, from the luxurious Sonoma Golf Club to the coastal Links at Bodega Harbor. Hikers encounter a variety of trails, from coastal hikes to redwoods walks. Experience Sonoma from a bird's eye view with Up & Away Hot Air Ballooning's unique and romantic rides, or with Vintage Aircraft Company's exciting excursions. Rejuvenate at one of the many spas, from Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa's healing thermal baths to pomegranate and fig oil massages at MacArthur Place's Garden Spa. Or have it all at Morton's Warm Springs Resort, featuring picnic sites, warm mineral swimming pools, trails and sports fields.

And it's not just a playground for adults; Sonoma County is home to plenty of family-friendly fun. Children and adults alike enjoy Train Town, a scale railroad with over a mile

of track. Families also enjoy educational Audubon Canyon Ranch, a marshland preserve for native plants and animals, as well as exotic Safari West, an African-style safari and reserve featuring African wildlife. For older kids, Macdougald Skate Park is located just 10 minutes south of Sonoma Plaza.

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Travel Tips

Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport serves Sonoma County, with direct flights from Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland and Las Vegas via Horizon Air. Nearby international airports include San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento.

Most visitors opt to rent a car, as the sights of Sonoma County are spread out and often not serviced by mass transit. Highway 101 and 116 runs through the heart of Sonoma Valley, while the ever-spectacular Highway 1 hugs the curves of the Sonoma Coast. Truly off-the-beaten-path, the city of Sonoma has no freeways

or major highways running through; the closest is Highway 12 from Napa, Petaluma or Santa Rosa. Highway 116 takes you to Guerneville, on the northern edge of the county. Once in Sonoma, bicycle rental is a pleasant option and makes for a fantastic day trip. Sonoma Valley Cyclery (707 935-3377) rents bikes at approximately \$6 per hour.

Mass transit is an option in Sonoma County, although bus service is limited and often infrequent. Sonoma County Transit (www.sctransit.com) connects Sonoma County's cities and towns, with limited local service in Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Sebastopol, Windsor and Guerneville. Golden Gate Transit (www.goldengatetransit.org) serves Sonoma County's larger cities of Santa Rosa and Petaluma along Highway 116, with connections to San Francisco, Marin and Contra Costa Counties. Taxis, airporters and car service are also available.

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