

travel  
itinerary  
wine country

# TASTE THE GOOD LIFE IN CALIFORNIA WINE COUNTRY: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA LOOP

A 10-day road trip exploring Northern California wine country from the legendary **Napa Valley** to **Sonoma** and **Mendocino** Counties

visit  
**California**



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- Day 1: **SFO/OAK to Napa**
  - Day 2: **Napa to Yountville**
  - Day 3: **Napa to Yountville**
  - Day 4: **Yountville to St. Helena**
  - Day 5: **St. Helena to Healdsburg**
  - Day 6: **Healdsburg & Geyserville**
  - Day 7: **Healdsburg to Boonville**
  - Day 8: **Boonville to Mendocino**
  - Day 9: **Mendocino to Guerneville**
  - Day 10: **Guerneville to Sonoma**

# NORTHERN WINE COUNTRY

## Itinerary overview

Taste your way through Northern California wine country, hopping from one picture-perfect town to the next. Indulge in exquisite Michelin-starred meals and casual farm-to-fork fare between wine tastings in contemporary urban tasting rooms, grand European-style estates and rustic barns. Discover the nuanced terroir of dozens of distinctive American Viticultural Areas as you loop through the Napa Valley,

Sonoma County and Mendocino County. Soar above vineyards in a hot air balloon, cruise around on bikes and take in the scenery from a wine train. Meet the winemakers, olive oil producers, cheesemakers, fishermen and farmers that contribute to making Northern California one of the world's most compelling culinary destinations. Sip, swirl and revel in the ultimate wine-lover's playground.



## ● Day 1: SFO/OAK to Napa

- Arrive in **Downtown Napa** and get your bearings in the pedestrian friendly city nestled along the Napa River.
- Cross the river to graze and browse through the **Oxbow Public Market**, home to an abundance of famed regional eateries such as **Hog Island Oyster Co.** and **Gott's Roadside**.
- Follow the footpath to the neighboring **CIA at Copia**, the Culinary Institute of America's food and beverage hub with free museum exhibits, a wine bar, market, café and hands-on classes.
- Back on the other side of the river, enjoy a flawless French bistro-style dinner at **Angèle Restaurant & Bar** and listen to live jazz music at **Blue Note Napa**.
- Overnight in **Napa**.

## ● Day 2: Napa to Yountville

- Enjoy breakfast at **Boon Fly Café**, renowned for its mini doughnuts and brunch fare.
- Check-in for a daytrip aboard the **Napa Valley Wine Train**. The three-hour **Grgich Hills Estate** experience includes a three-course meal aboard the train and a tasting stop with a tour of the iconic winery, with the opportunity to see the murals in the **Rail Arts District** as you roll by.
- Back in downtown Napa, pair wines with vinyl records at the urban **Benevolent Neglect Wines** tasting room and browse the unique shops.
- Spend the evening at **Stanly Ranch**, a newer Auberge Resorts Collection property on a working historic ranch with vineyards, fabulous art, gardens and indoor-outdoor dining at **Bear**.
- Overnight in **Napa** (downtown or Yountville).



### ● Day 3: Napa to Yountville

- Wake up early for a magical sunrise hot air balloon flight with [Napa Valley Aloft](#); flights depart from Yountville and you'll be transferred back to the starting point after landing.
- Upon return, dig into pastries and coffees at Thomas Keller's [Bouchon Bakery](#) and explore the [Yountville Art Walk](#), checking out the French Laundry Culinary Garden along the way.
- Rent bikes from [Napa Valley Bike Tours & Rentals](#) to cruise around town and pedal along [Napa Valley Vine Trail](#) bike path on e-bikes. Wineries in easy biking distance from Yountville include [Domaine Chandon](#) and [Hill Family Estate](#).
- Plan far in advance to score a coveted reservation for an elaborate multi-course feast at Thomas Keller's famed [French Laundry](#). Or dine at one of Yountville's many other fine dining establishments such as [Bistro Jeanty](#), [Bottega Napa Valley](#) and [RH Yountville](#).
- Overnight in [Yountville](#).





## ● Day 4: Yountville to St. Helena

- Start the day with breakfast at **Oakville Grocery**, a Napa staple going back to 1881 and California's oldest continually operating grocery store. If it's open, check out the **1881 Napa** wine history museum next door to the grocers, upstairs from the **Oakville Wine Merchant**.
- Continue north on CA-29, stopping for a tasting at cult favorite **Opus One** or the equally familiar Napa wine label, **Cakebread Cellars**; reservations are required for both.
- CA-29 becomes CA-128 as you enter the sophisticated, historic town of **St. Helena** (10 mi/16 km).
- Reserve the Paste e Vino experience at **Clif Family Enoteca** for an extraordinary food and wine pairing featuring produce grown on the Clif Family Farm and the winery's small production Howell Mountain wines.
- After lunch, browse the upscale clothing and housewares boutiques in St. Helena's **town center** and check into your next hotel.
- Savor dinner at St. Helena's popular, Michelin-starred **PRESS Restaurant**,
- Overnight in **St. Helena**.



## ● Day 5: **St. Helena to Healdsburg**

- Try the famous English muffin breakfast sandwiches at **The Model Bakery**.
- Drive up CA-29 N to **Calistoga** (8 mi/13 km) for a dose of wellness and relaxation in Napa Valley's northernmost resort town known for its mud baths and healing natural mineral springs.
- Book a mud bath or mineral soak and massage package at the newly updated **Dr. Wilkinson's Backyard Resort & Mineral Springs**, which first opened in 1952.
- Browse the shops on Lincoln Avenue and go to **Grove 45 Extra Virgin Olive Oil** for a refined olive oil tasting experience in the whimsical space.
- Drive up **Silverado Trail** for a glass of the revered chardonnay from **Chateau Montelena Winery**—the winery that helped put Napa and California wine on the world map at the Judgment of Paris in 1976 (the story told in the 2008 film *Bottle Shock*).
- Continue north on CA-128 W to **Healdsburg** (23 mi/37 km), entering **Sonoma County** and walk around the charming town plaza lined with shops, restaurants, tasting rooms and galleries.
- Settle into your hotel before venturing out for a dinner to remember at three-Michelin-starred **Single Thread** or one-Michelin-starred **Barndiva**; reservations required.
- Overnight in **Healdsburg**.





## ● Day 6: Healdsburg & Geyserville

- Start the day with New Orleans-style breakfast prepared with Sonoma ingredients at **The Parish Café**.
- Head out for a day exploring the **Alexander Valley AVA**, known for its cabernets. (36 mi/58 km roundtrip)
- Drive Alexander Valley Road to **Medlock Ames**, where you can try one of the private offerings, such as the unique Bell Mountain Immersive Sound Experience, a tour accompanied by a soundtrack created by a local sound artist followed by a tasting of the organically farmed wines.
- Retrace your route on CA-128 E to **Silver Oak** to sample the winery's cabernet sauvignon (one of the most renowned in the U.S.) as you take in the sweeping views of their Alexander Valley vineyards.
- Continue on to the architecturally captivating **Zialena** winery on River Road in Geyserville, where you can try their low intervention wines made in concrete tanks.
- End the day in **Geyserville**, a tiny hamlet with Wild Western storefronts housing fine art, antiques, collectibles and gifts.
- Have dinner at Michelin-starred **Cyrus** or the more casual **Diavola** known for its pizzas and house-cured salami.
- Overnight in **Healdsburg**.



## ● Day 7: Healdsburg to Boonville

- Hit the road via CA-128 W for a sojourn in bohemian, earthy **Mendocino County** (46 mi/74 km).
- En route, stop at **Seawolf Wines**, a female-owned natural wine producer. The tasting room serves up panoramic views from its perch at the top of the Anderson Valley.
- Continue up the highway to **Yorkville Cellars**, an early pioneer in organic winemaking based in the Yorkville Highlands AVA. Reservations are required.
- Carry on to **Pennyroyal Farm** to sample the divine goat and sheep cheeses made onsite daily.
- Check into the boutique **Boonville Hotel & Restaurant** and enjoy the beautiful grounds and gardens. Be sure to book a reservation for the excellent dinner on property if visiting Thursday through Monday nights. (**Lauren's at the Buckhorn** is a good back-up plan other nights of the week.)
- Overnight in **Boonville**.





## ● Day 8: Boonville to Mendocino

- After a relaxing morning, head north via CA-128 W and CA-1N towards **Mendocino** on the coast (40 mi/64 km).
- Pay a visit to **Baxter Winery** to sip delicious pinot noirs from the **Anderson Valley AVA**.
- Stop by **The Apple Farm** stand on your way to **Navarro Vineyards**, for a tasting of the award-winning wines
- Continue to the rugged coast, traveling through redwood forests and up a stretch of the Pacific Coast highway to the village of Mendocino.
- Upon arrival, explore the quaint town on foot and meander along the trails of the **Mendocino Headlands State Park**.
- Tuck into **MacCallum House** for an elegant dinner featuring local ingredients.
- Overnight in **Mendocino**. Hotels that offer booking commissions include **Brewery Gulch Inn**, **Stanford Inn by the Sea**, **MacCallum House** and **The Harbor House Inn** (the latter is an award-winning hotel with a two-Michelin-starred restaurant in Elk, 16 mi/26 km south of Mendocino).



## ● Day 9: Mendocino to Guerneville

- Start the day with a paddle in Big River with **Catch A Canoe**.
- Head down the coast via CA-1 S and CA-116 E to make your way to **Guerneville** on the Russian River (105 mi/169 km).
- En route, stop to see the iconic lighthouse and **Point Arena-Stornetta Lands**, walk the beach in **Gualala** and check out **Jenner-by-the-Sea**, where the Russian River meets the Pacific Ocean.
- Settle into your lodgings in Guerneville and meander around the town—don't miss the **Guerneville Bank Club**, a former historic bank building repurposed as a hub of eclectic local shops and purveyors.
- Enjoy dinner at contemporary **boon eat+drink** or the classic **Timberline at the River**.
- Overnight in **Guerneville**.





## ● Day 10: **Guerneville to Sonoma**

- Head southeast via CA-116 E and CA-12 E to the town of **Sonoma** to complete your wine country loop (43 mi/67 km).
- En route, stop in **Sebastopol** to visit **The Barlow Market District**, an impressive culinary complex in a former apple processing plant with several enticing eateries, wineries, breweries and distilleries. Have lunch and do a tasting or two before getting back on the road.
- Head for the hills of Santa Rosa to visit the enchanting **Belden Barns** winery—be sure to leave a wish on their wishing tree.
- End your grand tasting tour with a visit to **Buena Vista Winery**, California's oldest winery.
- Spend the rest of the day and evening in **Sonoma Plaza**, the vibrant town square filled with boutiques, tasting rooms and restaurants. Savor dinner at **Valley**, a cozy wine bar with a Michelin-endorsed menu, and toast to a successful trip.
- Overnight in **Sonoma**. (SFO is 64 mi/103 km away and OAK is 56 mi/90 km away)