

# DESTINATIONS

20 PERFECT WEEKEND ESCAPES





# Recharge in a historic spa town



Much more than most of its Napa Valley neighbors, Calistoga retains a lot of its original rural small-town soul. About 40 minutes from downtown Napa, it's quieter and more secluded. Its Main Street seems to be from another era, with galleries, craft shops, bookstores and, of course, the nearby Old Faithful Geyser. No wonder people flock to Calistoga for the famous natural mud baths.



■ **THE OLYMPIC-SIZE** sulfur pool at Indian Springs in Calistoga, above. Left: Old Faithful Geyser. Opposite: Figurines in the 30-foot-long diorama depicting Calistoga during the 1860s at the Sharpsteen Museum. Melon and tuna carpaccio at Evangeline.



## GO

**Relax/Dr. Wilkinson's Hot Springs Resort:** This family-owned spa, now run by the original Doc's children, is home to a classic no-frills mud bath ritual. Leave your modesty at the door: You'll be walking from station to station in nothing but your birthday suit. The service begins with climbing into a bath full of a mixture of volcanic ash, sulfur water from the hot springs and peat to increase buoyancy. Ten minutes later, you'll be hosed off and sent to relax in the mineral whirlpool bath, followed by a detox in the steam room (\$94). 1507 Lincoln Ave. (707) 942-4102. [www.drwilkinson.com](http://www.drwilkinson.com)

**Visit/Old Faithful Geyser:** If you've always avoided Old Faithful as just a tourist trap, consider taking a picnic there. Since a fire a few years ago, the complex has been rebuilt with new visitor center, a petting farm with llamas and goats, and cabana structures around the geyser with couches for lounging and eating. 1299 Tubbs Lane. (707) 942-6463. \$15, \$13 seniors, military, students and teachers, \$9 children 4-12, under 4, free. [www.oldfaithfulgeyser.com](http://www.oldfaithfulgeyser.com)

**Walk/Historic downtown:** The downtown stretch of Lincoln Avenue is just 1,000 yards long, so most dining and browsing is walkable. That said, most of the resorts and hotels are starting to offer loaner bicycles for getting around. Rise early, grab a bike and survey the options on Lincoln. Stop by the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce office for a map of the self-guided tour of downtown's historic buildings. 1133 Washington St. (707) 942-6333. [www.calistoga-visitors.com](http://www.calistoga-visitors.com)

**Tour/Sharpsteen Museum:** A block off Lincoln at the Sharpsteen Museum, history buffs can review the life and possessions of Sam Brannan, the state's first millionaire, as well as a miniature version of the town in the 1860s and an exhibit about Robert Louis Stevenson's stay in Calistoga. 1311 Washington St. (707) 341-2443. \$3. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. [www.sharpsteenmuseum.com](http://www.sharpsteenmuseum.com)

**Hike/Old Hill Mine Trail:** The entire 4.8-mile trail and back could take most of the day, but it only takes 30 minutes of a mild grade to get high enough above Calistoga for sweeping views of the Napa Valley. 2082 Oat Hill Mine Road.



## EAT

**Evangeline:** Few restaurants utilize outdoor space as fully as Evangeline, where even the host stand is in the open air. The food reflects Creole and French influences and appeals to a wide range of tastes: steak frites, braised pork shoulder and the must-try dessert Gaufre de Liege Avec Chocolat, an elegant name for a crisp waffle with Nutella melting into the indentations, topped with whipped cream. 1226 Washington St. (707) 341-3131. Dinner nightly, brunch weekends. Full bar. [www.evangelinenapa.com](http://www.evangelinenapa.com)

**Sam's Social Club:** A more recent addition to Indian Springs is Sam's Social Club. Spanning breakfast, lunch and dinner, the menus offer some interesting options, like breakfast of churros and dulce de leche cream; lunch of American Wagyu steak salad; and a vegetarian dinner featuring local Hodo tofu and forbidden rice. 1712 Lincoln Ave. (707) 942-4913. Lunch and dinner daily, breakfast Monday-Friday, brunch Saturday and Sunday. [www.indian-springscalistoga.com](http://www.indian-springscalistoga.com)

## STAY

**Mount View Hotel & Spa:** This historic Napa Valley hotel has been housing Calistoga tourists for more than 100 years. Established in 1912 as the "European Hotel," the building has gone through an evolution that mimics the changing times — from Mission-style to Art Deco to its current "artistic deco," combining old-timey charm with updated luxury. Of course the major appeal is going to be the Mount View Spa, where you can spend a whole day of relaxation, complete with mud baths, massages and facials. 1457 Lincoln Ave., Calistoga. (707) 942-6877. Rooms from \$179. [www.mountviewhotel.com](http://www.mountviewhotel.com)

**Calistoga Ranch:** This promise of seclusion — and relaxation in nature — is what Calistoga Ranch does best, shielding its guests from the crowds that swell along Highway 29 as tourists from around the world pour into the valley. All parts of the ranch, including the pools, spa and Lakehouse Restaurant, are for guests and owners only. Golf carts will take you wherever you want to go, but most people choose to walk the quiet property, where the rustling of leaves on trees is the only sound to be heard. 580 Lommel Road, Calistoga. (707) 254-2800. Rooms from \$685. <http://calistogaranch.aubergeresorts.com>



Every Thursday evening during the summer season, Calistoga's Pioneer Park becomes a concert venue hosting live music of all genres. Visit the event website for this year's talent lineup. Bring blankets, chairs and a picnic dinner for an evening the whole family can enjoy. Wine, sold on-site, is provided by a different, local winery each week. 1308 Cedar St. 6:30-8:30 p.m. June 15-Aug. 17. Free.

