



Stress-Free Weekend in Calistoga, California

A historic hamlet soothes frazzled nerves with hot springs, spa treatments, and world-class wine.

BY DEBORAH FRANKLIN • MARCH 1, 2019



California pioneer Sam Brannan founded a spa at the north end of Napa Valley in the 1860s, and the town of Calistoga grew up around it. It's still one of the best places in wine country to soak away stress.

Built on the grounds of Brannan's original holiday spot, **Indian Springs Calistoga** offers a broad menu of traditional treatments. Those spooked by mud baths may prefer to float in the naturally heated outdoor pool or indulge in an exfoliating salt scrub.

The **Sharpsteen Museum** is full of surprises, such as one of Brannan's guest cottages furnished Victorian style and a diorama of the 19th-century resort, complete with a pavilion for dancing and roller-skating. The bookshop is a trove of local history, with works on the Native Wappo and on Prohibition in Calistoga.

For brunch at **Lovina's**, enjoy a salad of warm duck confit, kale, and locally foraged wild mushrooms. Or try the lightly sauced barbecued Berkshire pork sandwich with a lemony kohlrabi slaw.



Prefer to pack a picnic? Head over to **Cal Mart**, where the deli is a local fave and the wine selection includes hard-to-find half bottles. On Saturdays, check out the farmers' market for treats like Heron Fox Farm walnuts or coconut-cashew butter from Handsome Carver.

Sofie Contemporary Arts specializes in works in a variety of media that are connected—one way or another—to California. One recent show *New Naturals* included collages assembled from wasp paper, and a triptych of hand-milled oak panels embedded with glass.

From the edge of downtown, the **Oat Hill Mine hiking trail** climbs steadily through grassland and chaparral into forests of oak, cypress, and Douglas fir. The old stagecoach road runs 8.3 miles end to end, but even shorter stretches reward with sweeping vistas of the valley.