



Napa to Calistoga

Route Overview

You will be met at your hotel where we load up the bikes before heading north across the Golden Gate Bridge for the 90 minute transfer to Northern Napa. We drop off in along the Silverado Trail . where exactly depends on how far you would like to cycle today. Drop points include a Napa, Yountville or Oakville.



Before you head off, your guide will answer any questions you may have and make sure that you are comfortable with your equipment. Once you are comfortable, you will begin your journey north through the NapaWineValley.

The route starts in Napa and heads first up the west side of the valley before cutting across to Yountville. The eponymous George Yount was the founder of Yountville - and reputedly the first American settler to come to the Napa Valley. Hence Yountville's claim that, "this is where it all began." George is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery just across the street from the Yountville Park (corner of Washington & Lincoln) - a nice place for picnic (the park not the cemetery).

And, if it weren't for food, Yountville's story might end there. But, Yountville is home to the *French Laundry* - repeatedly awarded Best Restaurant in the World (by Restaurant Magazine). It has recently been demoted to third but still holds on to the Best in America award which is not too shabby.

Modern-day Yountville, however, does not have the most historic feel to it. For that you need to head north to St Helena & Calistoga. But first you pass through Oakville . home of the excellent *Oakville Grocery* and one of the best places in the valley to pick up a picnic. From here you head over to the Silverado Trail for the run in to Calistoga. The Silverado Trail runs along the east side of the Napa Valley and has wineries every mile or so.



Indeed, today's ride will take you meandering past numerous wineries. Several, such as Stags Leap and Opus One, have won international acclaim. Unlike some of the quieter growing regions, opening times here tend to be good with many wineries open year round. However, there is a price . the areas wineries are relatively commercial and can be busy and charging for tasting is now the norm.

The last town on your route is St Helena. This is where most people stop for lunch. For more details about this town, see *St Helena* in the *Wine Country Towns* section at the start of this guide.



You stay overnight in the quirky-but-charming spa town of Calistoga. See *Calistoga* in the *Wine Country Towns* section at the start of this guide for more details on in this town.

Route Options

The regular route is over gently rolling terrain. For the most part, the well-surfaced road has a good shoulder. But you are not off the beaten track. You will see plenty of other cyclists enjoying this route as well as some car traffic. There are no extended or very steep climbs on the regular route.

To shorten the ride, ask to be dropped off nearer to Calistoga, along the route. The Oakville Grocery is a good place for this.

For a longer ride, stay on Dry Creek Rd. for a steady and mostly rolling 6.8 mile climb along Dry Creek. Ignoring lanes on left and right, continue until you reach the stop sign at Oakville Grade. Turn right on Oakville Grade and continue to climb for over a mile. Take care on the very steep and curvy downhill toward the town of Oakville. At the stop sign, take a left onto Route 29 toward Oakville. Rejoin the basic route to St. Helena at the Oakville Grocery.

For a hilly detour, head up Howell Mountain Rd. This is a right turn off the Silverado Trail where you would normally turn left into St Helena down Pope St. You then enjoy a 4-mile climb up Howell Mountain Rd. When you reach the main road (Deer Park Rd/Howell Mt Rd) you have a choice. Either continue straight across onto White Cottage Rd or return to the Silverado Trail down Deer Park Rd. If you continue onto White Cottage Rd you'd be heading towards PopeValley. You can either go all the way to PopeValley and loop back around the scenic-but-tough Ink Grade or simply take a right and head back to the NapaValley when you rejoin Howell Mountain Rd. Check the map; it's a lot simpler than it sounds! The point is that you have choices.

Lunch

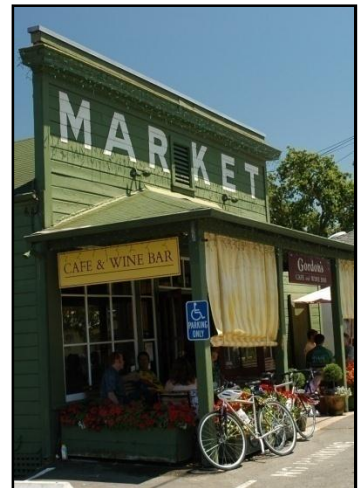
There are many options for lunch. Depending where you start, you could simply drop down to one of the towns on Route 29 when you are ready to eat. Yountville, Oakville, and Rutherford all have good options. However, most people eat in St Helena as this leaves them an easy 10-mile cruise into Calistoga.

Just before you reach Yountville it's a short detour to the *Étoile Restaurant* inside *Domaine Chandonat* 1 California Drive / (707) 944-2280. This is a quite formal restaurant with great view. However, service isn't always super-fast so you could end up having to race the rest of the day if you linger this early on the route.

In Yountville:

Bistro Jeanty will have you thinking you pedaled all the way to the Loire Valley to this French bistro at 6510 Washington St / (707) 944-0103. Gets repeated good feedback and has some outdoor dining.

Bouchon Bakery at 6528 Washington St. / (707) 944-2253 is popular with locals and cyclists and has a small outdoor verandah. but can get busy at weekends.



The Bouchon Restaurant is another eating option at 6534 Washington St. / (707) 944-8037 but you may struggle to get a table at the Parisian-style eatery. [Bouchon is owned by Thomas Keller also owner of the \$300+ per head *French Laundry*. The three-month booking window at the French Laundry makes the line at Bouchon look very reasonable.

Hurley's is another nice restaurant at 6518 Washington St. / (707) 944-2345. Compared to its very pricy neighbors its fixed price menu can seem quite good value. Mediterranean cooking is their niche.

Bottega is yet another classy restaurant at 6525 Washington St. / (707) 945-1050. The outdoor dining can be pleasant if you're in your bike gear on a warm day.

If you're looking for something a little simpler than the typical Yountville haute cuisine, try Pacific Blues Café, at 6525 Washington St. / (707) 944-4455 for sandwiches and burgers.

Alternatively, pick up a sandwich and head to one of the many wineries to enjoy a picnic lunch. The best place to get a sandwich in the area is probably the *Oakville Grocery* in Oakville: 7856 St. Helena Highway (Route 29): (707) 944-8802. Several guests have enjoyed taking their sandwiches on to the family-owned Peju winery for a picnic and a glass of wine in the winery gardens. Peju is on the east side of Hwy 29 shortly before the Hwy 128 at 8466 St. Helena Highway, Rutherford. 1-800-446-7358.

There is also the Rutherford Grill in Rutherford if you don't care to picnic.

St Helena also has numerous options for food. See *St Helena* in the *Wine Country Towns* section at the start of this guide for more details on where to eat in St Helena.

Wineries en Route

There are many more wineries on your route today than there are hours in the day to visit them. Here is a selection. You can find more details of these wineries in the *Vineyards & Wines – Winery Listing* section at the start of this guide. They are listed under the *Napa Valley North* and *Napa Valley South* regions.

Napa Valley South:

- Cliff Lede Vineyards
- Mumm Cuvée Napa
- Nickel & Nickel Vineyards
- Opus One
- Robert Sinskey Vineyards
- Rutherford Hill Winery
- Stags' Leap Wine Cellars

Napa Valley North:

- Clos du Val
- Duckhorn
- Frank Family Vineyards
- Schramsberg Vineyards
- Sterling Vineyards

Useful Contacts en Route

Bike Shop: There are a couple of bike stores in Napa. *Bicycle Works* is closest to your drop point at 3335 Solano Avenue. (707) 253-7000. A reasonable alternative . though a little off your route . is Napa River Velo at the Riverfront Plaza, 588 Main Street. (707) 258-8729.

Stores: There is a grocery store in Yountville, *Ranch Market Too*, 6498 Washington St (between Oak Cir. and Mulberry St.). (707) 944-2662. See also Lunch, above.

See *Wine Country Towns - Calistoga* at the start of this guide for more details on the facilities at your overnight destination.

