



Northern Mountains

When visitors envision Northern California – even when Californians picture Northern California – their mental images are of cable cars, foggy wharfs, redwoods, grapevines, wild coasts and a tall orange bridge...all beautiful and true. But there is another, wilder Northern California, remote and mountainous, pristine and thinly populated.

Vast expanses of untamed wilderness cover the Northern Mountains region. The terrain courses with rivers and streams. Unspoiled cobalt lakes grace alpine peaks. An enormous variety of species, some found nowhere else in the world, inhabit its isolated reaches. Intimate towns beckon with charm and lore. You'll encounter all the natural splendor of Yosemite and all the '49er romance of the Gold Country, but without the crowds. Even at the peak of summer, the region's biggest draws, Mt Shasta and Lassen Volcanic National Park, remain accessible and calm.

What has safeguarded the beauty and vibrancy of the Northern Mountains thus far is this: of the approximately 24,000 sq miles that comprise the region, roughly 65% is protected national forest. Still, where growth is possible it is flourishing, and recently public land has been exposed to private development. Ex-urbanites are drawn here in the hope of mining this era's gold – space and tranquility. For now, however, the Northern Mountains remain California's most untouched and wild frontier.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Sweetest mountain village** Explore the wilds of nearby mountains from the shelter of bucolic Weaverville (p325)
- **Most dramatic volcanic adventure** Camp, hike and boat on the desolate crags of Lassen Volcanic National Park (p306)
- **Easiest blast to the past** Re-create history on McCloud's narrow-gauge Shasta Sunset Dinner Train (p322)
- **Mellowest afternoon outing** Grab an inner tube and float down the Feather River in Quincy (p311)
- **Cushiest alpine hideaway** Stay in an isolated fire lookout near the slopes of Mt Shasta (p316)



