



# Northern Mountains

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Jack's Grill (p269)
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## Best Places to Stay

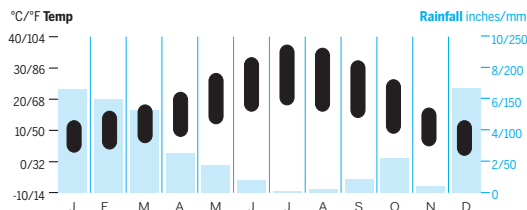
- » McCloud River Mercantile Hotel (p292)
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## Why Go?

The northeast corner is the remote, rugged, refreshingly pristine backyard of a state better known for sunny cities, sandy beaches and foggy groves of redwoods. This is California's wild frontier, where vast expanses of wilderness – some 24,000 protected acres – are divided by rivers and streams, dotted with cobalt lakes, horse ranches and alpine peaks. Much of it doesn't even look the way people envision California – the topography more resembles the older mountains of the Rockies than the relatively young granite Goliaths in Yosemite. Don't come here for the company (the towns are hospitable but tiny, with virtually no urban comforts); come to get lost in vast remoteness. Even the two principal attractions, Mt Shasta and Lassen Volcanic National Park, remain uncrowded (and sometimes snow-covered) at the peak of the summer.

## When to Go

### Lassen National Park



**Jul–Sep** Warm weather and snow-free passes are ideal for backcountry camping.

**Oct–Nov & Apr–May** Shoulder seasons; scattered showers and snow at the high elevations.

**Nov–Jan** Skiing Mt Shasta is the main draw. Prices drop outside of ski areas.

## REDDING & AROUND

North of Red Bluff the dusty central corridor along I-5 starts to give way to panoramic mountain ranges on either side. Redding is the last major outpost before the small towns of the far north, and the surrounding lakes make for easy day trips or overnight camps. If you get off the highway – way off – this can be an exceptionally rewarding area of the state to explore.

### Redding

Originally called Poverty Flats during the Gold Rush for its lack of wealth, Redding today has a whole lot of tasteless new money – malls, big-box stores and large housing developments surround its core. A tourist destination it is not, though it is the major gateway city to the northeast corner of the state and a useful spot for restocking before long jaunts into the wilderness. Recent constructions like the Sundial Bridge and Turtle Bay Exploration Park are enticing lures and worth a visit...but not a long one. Downtown is bordered by the Sacramento River to the north and east. Major thoroughfares are Pine and Market Sts.

### Sights & Activities

#### Sundial Bridge

BRIDGE

Resembling a beached cruise ship, the shimmering-white 2004 Sundial Bridge spans the river and is one of Redding's marquee attractions, providing an excellent photo op. The glass-deck pedestrian overpass connects the Turtle Bay Exploration Park to the north bank of the Sacramento River and was designed by renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava. The bridge/sundial attracts visitors from around the world, who come to marvel at this unique feat of engineering artistry. It is accessed from the park and connects to the Sacramento River Trail system.

#### Turtle Bay Exploration Park

SCIENCE CENTER

([www.turtlebay.org](http://www.turtlebay.org); 840 Auditorium Dr; adult/child 4-12yr \$14/10; ☉9am-5pm May-Sep, 9am-4pm Wed-Sat & 10am-4pm Sun Oct-Apr; 📶) Situated on 300 meandering acres, this is an artistic, cultural and scientific center for visitors of all ages, with an emphasis on the Sacramento River watershed. The complex houses art and natural science museums, fun interactive exhibits for kids (a recent show was 'Grossology', a study of the human

### FAST FACTS

- » **Population of Redding** 90,050
- » **Average temperature low/high in Redding** Jan 35/55°F, Jul 64/98°F
- » **Redding to San Francisco** 215 miles, 3½ hours
- » **Redding to Los Angeles** 545 miles, 8½ hours
- » **Redding to Eureka** 150 miles, three hours

body's less-delicate biology). There are also extensive arboretum gardens, a butterfly house and a 22,000-gallon, walk-through river aquarium full of regional aquatic life (yes, including turtles). The on-site **Café at Turtle Bay** (meals \$12) serves excellent gourmet coffee and great light meals.

#### Redding Aquatic Center

WATER PARK

([www.reddingaquaticcenter.com](http://www.reddingaquaticcenter.com); adult/child \$5/3; ☉1-5pm summer, with seasonal variations) Further west in Caldwell Park, this hugely popular center contains an Olympic-size pool, another vast recreation pool and a 160ft-long water slide. Also in Caldwell Park, you can pick up the **Sacramento River Trail** ([www.reddingtrails.com](http://www.reddingtrails.com)), a paved walking and cycling path that meanders along the river for miles.

#### Cascade Theatre

HISTORIC BUILDING

([www.cascadetheatre.org](http://www.cascadetheatre.org); 1733 Market St) Try to catch some live music downtown at this refurbished 1935 art deco theater. Usually it hosts second-tier national acts but, if nothing else, take a peek inside; this is a neon-lit gem.

### Sleeping

Redding's many motels and hotels huddle around noisy thoroughfares, though a few rooms can be found on less busy N Market St. A couple of motel rows lie close to I-5 at the southern end of town: just west of the freeway close to the Cypress Ave exit on Bechelli Lane, and on the east side of the freeway on Hilltop Dr. The chain hotels – and there are plenty of them – are all off I-5 and you can get great last-minute deals on the internet. The best tent camping is just up the road at Whiskeytown Lake (p271) or Shasta Lake (p271).