



Gold Country

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ New Moon Café (p312)
- ➔ Big Springs Gardens (p315)
- ➔ Argonaut Farm to Fork Cafe (p317)
- ➔ La Cocina de Oro Taqueria (p314)
- ➔ Taste (p320)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Outside Inn (p311)
- ➔ Lure Resort (p314)
- ➔ Camino Hotel (p355)
- ➔ Imperial Hotel (p320)

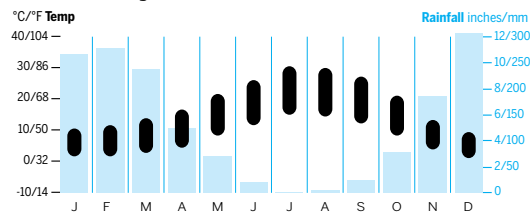
Why Go?

Hollywood draws the dreamers and Silicon Valley its fortune-hunters, but this isn't the first time droves of young folk looking to hit paydirt streamed into the Golden State. After a sparkle in the American River caught James Marshall's eye in 1848, more than 300,000 prospectors from America and abroad started digging for gold in the Sierra foothills. Soon California entered statehood with the official motto, 'Eureka,' solidifying its place as the land of discovery and opportunity.

The miner forty-niners are gone, but a ride along the aptly named Hwy 49 through sleepy hill towns, past clapboard saloons and oak-lined byways, is a journey back to modern California's founding. Between the quaint antique stores and sprawling wineries, historical markers still tell tales of Gold Rush violence and banditry. Many travelers hardly stop while rushing between California's coasts and mountains, but those who slow down will be rewarded with a taste of the helter-skelter era that first kick-started the heartbeat of this state.

When to Go

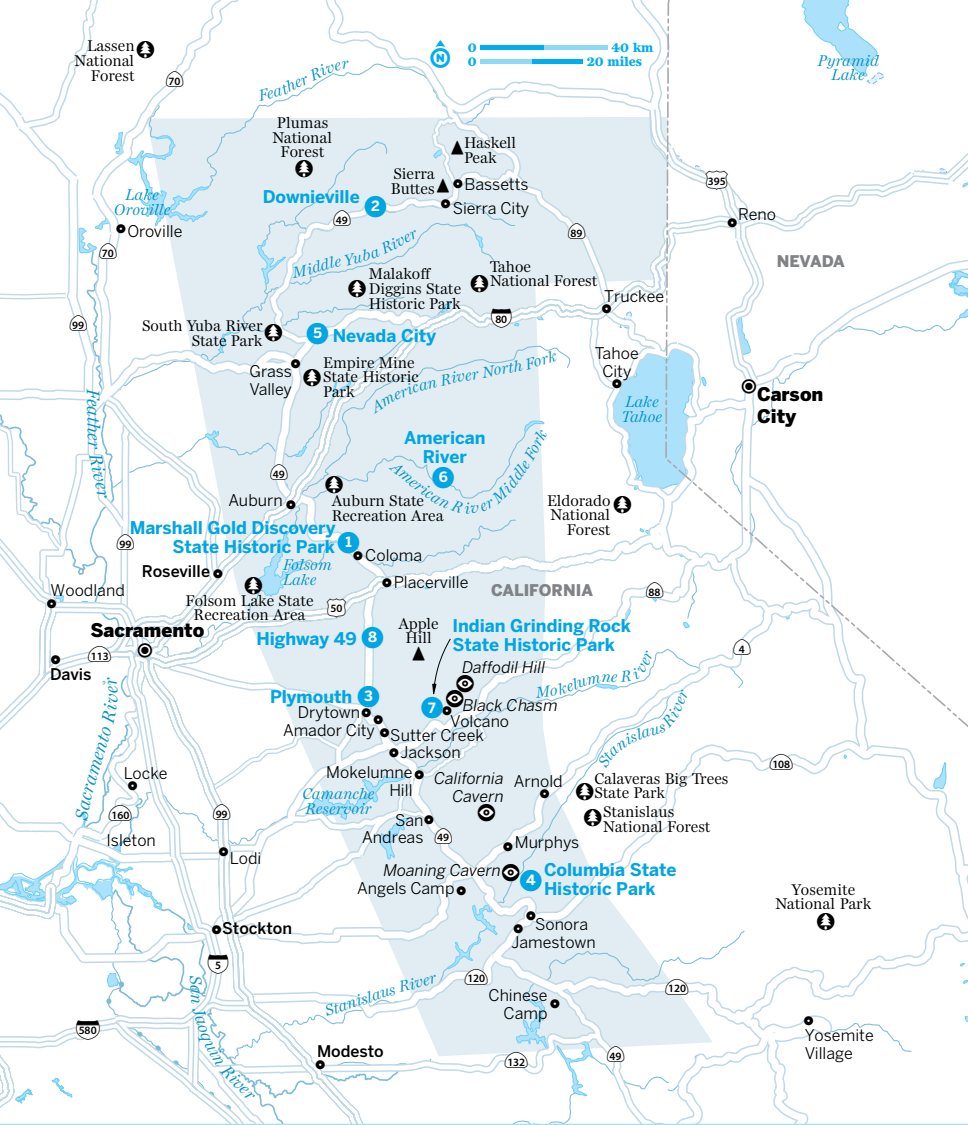
Nevada City



Apr–May Pan for gold after the snowmelt washes the treasure into Jamestown's hills.

Jul When temperatures are scorching, plunge into a refreshing South Yuba swimming hole.

Sep–Nov When crisp apples are ripe for the picking, head to Apple Hill's ranch lands.



Gold Country Highlights

- 1** Seeing the birthplace of modern California at **Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park** (p316).
- 2** Rumbling down the premier single-track bike trails above **Downieville** (p313).
- 3** Tasting the wines made from grapes grown in the **Plymouth** (p319) hills.
- 4** Spotting the anachronisms in the living history of **Columbia State Historic Park** (p326).
- 5** Wandering the historic streets of **Nevada City** (p310), Gold Country's relaxing jewel of a town.
- 6** Riding the white water **American River** (p316).
- 7** Discovering traces left by the Miwoks who once thrived near **Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park** (p322).
- 8** Driving down **Highway 49** (p316) through El Dorado & Amador Counties in pursuit of antiques and ice cream.