Chapter Eight

The Gold Country guide

Grass Valley · Nevada City · the river

We live here. These are the places we send our guests, and the ones we go to ourselves. Everything is timed from our front door at 220 Colfax Avenue.

220 Colfax Avenue, Grass Valley · hello@chaptereight.house · Updated November 2026





any day of the week

Your first day, planned

Tonight

EVENING	Check in from 3. Walk across the street to Diego's, or nine minutes to Bicycle Thief for pizza.
AFTER	A nightcap at the Golden Gate Saloon in the Holbrooke.

Tomorrow

7:30 AM	Coffee at Caroline's.
8:15 AM	Walk fifteen minutes to Penn Gate and do the Hardrock Trail loop.
11 AM	Drive four minutes to Empire Mine for the estate tour.
1 PM	Pasties at Marshall's.
AFTERNOON	Booktown Books and Foothill Mercantile, then a tasting at Avanguardia.
DINNER	The Owl Tavern. Book ahead.

One more day

8 AM	Breakfast at Tofanelli's or South Pine Cafe. Check out by 11.
LATE MORNING	Drive to Nevada City and walk the Deer Creek Tribute Trail to the suspension bridge.
LUNCH	Three Forks, then Broad Street and the Nevada Theatre on your way home.

about seventy minutes

A walk from our door

Ten stops through the gold-rush town, on sidewalks, and back to the front door. About 2 miles. For a shorter walk, skip the museum and turn home after stop 9.

1 **The railroad corner** 4 MIN FROM THE FRONT DOOR

Bennett St at Kidder Ave

The Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad ran from here to Nevada City and to Colfax from the 1870s until its rails came up in 1942. Sarah Kidder, who later ran the railroad, built the Victorian at 306 Kidder in 1886.

2 **Bank Street** 4 MIN

Dow Alexander Park, 220 Bank St

The big Columbiad cannon came here from the Benicia Arsenal in 1911. A little further on, a marker remembers Grass Valley's Chinatown, which ran from Bennett Street to Auburn Street. Tinloy Street is named for the family who kept a store there from the 1880s.

3 **South Auburn at Main** 3 MIN

131 S Auburn St

The 1916 post office handled mail and the mines' gold shipments until 1984. On the corner stands a small stamp mill from the Red Ledge Mine, and at 114 East Main the Washington Brewery Building, which brewed beer until Prohibition.

4 **The first brick on West Main** 1 MIN

102 and 112 W Main St

Number 112 went up in 1854 and came through the fire of 1855; the City calls it the oldest brick commercial building in town. Next door, a pharmacy moved into the brick building at 102 that same fall and stayed for 77 years.

5 **The Holbrooke Hotel** 1 MIN

212 W Main St

A saloon stood here in the early 1850s. The brick hotel went up in 1862 and took the Holbrooke name in 1879. It's a state historical landmark, and the bar is open every day if you want to sit down.

Bar daily, 11 AM to 10 PM.

6 **Mill Street** 2 MIN

110 to 163 Mill St

Most of downtown burned in 1855 and was rebuilt in brick that same summer. Number 114 was a hardware store for more than a century; from 1890 to 1906 it was Elam Biggs Hardware, run by the man who built our house. Further down are The Union's 1903 newspaper building and the Del Oro cinema.

7 **The library** 3 MIN

207 Mill St

A Carnegie library from 1916, named for the philosopher Josiah Royce, whose family settled on this spot in the Gold Rush.

Monday to Saturday.

8 **Lotta Crabtree's corner** 2 MIN

238 Mill St

In the early 1850s Lotta Crabtree's family ran a boarding house for miners on this lot. Their neighbor Lola Montez taught the girl to sing and dance, and Lotta went on to a life on the stage.

9 **Lola Montez's home** 1 MIN

248 Mill St, at Walsh St

Lola Montez built the only home she ever owned on this corner in the 1850s. The cottage you see is a replica of it; the plaque is on the building.

10 **The Grass Valley Museum** 5 MIN, UPHILL

410 S Church St

Dedicated in 1865 as a convent and orphanage, now a free museum with a rose garden. Its exhibit on the town's Chinese families, with objects from the Tinloy family, runs through December 2026.

Wednesday to Saturday, 12:30 to 3:30 PM.

Back at the front door. Walk north on South Church Street to Neal Street and turn right. Neal Street becomes Colfax Avenue, and the house is on your left: about 16 minutes.



we don’t serve breakfast, so

Coffee and breakfast

There’s a Keurig and a kettle in your room. When you want more than that, these are a short walk away.

Caroline’s Coffee Roasters

6 MIN WALK

Roasts its own beans in town, and opens earliest.

From 6 AM on weekdays, 7 AM on weekends.

128 S Auburn St

Gloomy Bloom

6 MIN WALK

A short menu of plain coffee, made by weight, by two sisters.

Check before a Monday or Tuesday visit.

167 Mill St

The Fergon

7 MIN WALK

A small espresso bar tucked inside the West Home furniture store.

Opens at 10. Closed Tuesday.

155 Mill St

Brew Bakers Coffee & Chai House

10 MIN WALK

Family-run, with pastries baked on site. Go for the scones.

209 W Main St

Pepe’s Café

9 MIN WALK

A sit-down breakfast on Mill Street, with Latin touches on the diner classics.

110 Mill St

Tofanelli’s Gold Country Bistro

10 MIN WALK

The big breakfast: more than 100 omelets, and a patio.

302 W Main St · Dogs welcome

South Pine Cafe

10 MIN WALK

The busy local brunch, with a long menu.

102 Richardson St



Lunch

Pasties are the local food here: Grass Valley grew up as a Cornish mining town.

Marshall's Pasties

6 MIN WALK

Hand-made Cornish pasties, to take away or eat upstairs.

Closed Sunday and Monday.

203 Mill St

Sourdough & Co.

5 MIN WALK

Sandwiches, salads and soup on sourdough, bread bowls included. Open every day.

121 Neal St

MeZe Eatery

9 MIN WALK

Middle Eastern plates for sharing. The lighter option.

Closed Sunday.

106 Mill St

Corvus Bakery

7 MIN WALK

An all gluten-free bakery and café.

154 Mill St

leave the car where it is

Dinner

Most of these are a short walk. Mondays are thin: Bicycle Thief, MeZe, Grass Valley Brewing, Thirsty Barrel and the Golden Gate Saloon are open.

Bicycle Thief

9 MIN WALK

OUR PICK

Our pizza place: East Coast-style crusts, farm-driven small plates, Italian wine. Book ahead on weekends.

Closed Tuesday.

122 E Main St

Diego's Restaurant

ACROSS THE STREET

South American food with Chilean roots: empanadas, panqueques and sangria, on a patio.

Closed Monday.

217 Colfax Ave · Dogs welcome

The Owl Tavern

8 MIN WALK

Steaks, oysters on the half shell and French onion soup.

Closed Monday and Tuesday.

134 Mill St

Golden Gate Saloon

10 MIN WALK

The dining room and bar of the Holbrooke Hotel, whose saloon dates to 1852.

212 W Main St

Cirino's at Main Street

10 MIN WALK

Italian bar and grill in a brick-walled room, with tapas at the bar.

213 W Main St

KAIDO

10 MIN WALK

The downtown sushi, traditional and modern.

Tuesday to Saturday.

207 W Main St

Three Forks Bakery & Brewing

7 MIN DRIVE

Wood-fired sourdough pizza and beer brewed on site, in Nevada City.

Closed Tuesday.

211 Commercial St, Nevada City · Dogs welcome

Wine, beer and a cocktail

Two tasting rooms and two taprooms within ten minutes on foot. Golden Era is a drive, so plan a ride home.

Avanguardia Wines

6 MIN WALK

A small local winery that blends rare grapes from its own vineyards.

Wednesday to Sunday afternoons.

163 Mill St

Sierra Starr

8 MIN WALK

A family-run Grass Valley winery with its tasting room on Main Street.

Thursday to Sunday afternoons.

124 W Main St

Grass Valley Brewing

9 MIN WALK

The downtown brewery, open every day.

141 E Main St

Thirsty Barrel Taphouse

5 MIN WALK

Thirty craft beers on tap, and the closest bar to the house.

Closed Tuesday.

116 Neal St

Golden Era

6 MIN DRIVE

A cocktail lounge in Nevada City, with jazz, blues and soul on weekends.

Wednesday to Sunday.

309 Broad St, Nevada City



our pick

Yoga, and a place to work

For a work trip that needs a change of desk, or a class before the day starts.

Soulspace Collective

10 MIN WALK

OUR PICK

A yoga studio with a café and tea lounge, and room to work, next to the Holbrooke. Drop-in classes, and two weeks unlimited for new students.

Café Monday to Saturday, 9 to 3. Ask at the front about the workspace.

206 W Main St



The trails and the river

The forest starts a fifteen-minute walk from the front door. The river is a short drive.

Hardrock Trail at Empire Mine

15 MIN WALK

Walk from the house to forest trails past old mine workings. About 14 miles of trails start at Penn Gate.

No fee at Penn Gate. Sunrise to sunset.

Penn Gate, Empire Ct · Dogs welcome

Wolf Creek Trail

5 MIN DRIVE

An easy, mostly paved path by the creek, in town. The dirt Daspah Seyo Trail runs lower, by the water.

Freeman Ln · Dogs welcome

Deer Creek Tribute Trail

7 MIN DRIVE

From downtown Nevada City over a 150-foot suspension bridge. Two to three miles out and back.

Jordan St, Nevada City · Dogs welcome

Hirschman Trail

8 MIN DRIVE

Paved and wheelchair-accessible to the pond, then oak woods and pines beyond.

Cement Hill Rd, Nevada City · Dogs welcome

Bridgeport and the South Yuba

23 MIN DRIVE

Walk through the 1862 covered bridge, the world's longest single-span one, then down to the river.

Parking $10. No dogs at the bridge or on the river below it.

17660 Pleasant Valley Rd, Penn Valley

Independence Trail, east

15 MIN DRIVE

A flat trail on old flume routes, the first wheelchair-accessible wilderness trail in the country.

Only the east section is open.

Highway 49, north of Nevada City · Dogs welcome



The mines and the old towns

Grass Valley and Nevada City were built on gold. Most of it is still standing.

Empire Mine State Historic Park

4 MIN DRIVE

A mine that ran for more than a hundred years and closed in 1956. The owner's estate and the mineyard are open, with tours most days.

Adults $5. Dogs on the grounds and trails, not inside the buildings.

10791 E Empire St · Dogs welcome

North Star Powerhouse Mining Museum

4 MIN DRIVE

The 1895 powerhouse that ran on Pelton water wheels, full of mining machinery.

May to October, Thursday to Sunday. In winter, by appointment: (530) 273-4255.

933 Allison Ranch Rd

Downtown Nevada City

6 MIN DRIVE

A historic downtown of seventy old buildings on Broad and Commercial Streets, made for walking.

Broad St, Nevada City · Dogs welcome

Nevada Theatre

7 MIN DRIVE

Opened in 1865: California's oldest building built as a theater, and still putting on shows.

401 Broad St, Nevada City

Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum

6 MIN DRIVE

The local railroad's engines and cars, and a working restoration shop. Free.

Closed Wednesday and Thursday.

5 Kidder Ct, Nevada City



Shops worth a walk

All on the downtown grid, six to ten minutes on foot.

Booktown Books

7 MIN WALK

Fourteen booksellers under one roof: used and rare books, music and art.

107 Bank St

The Book Seller

9 MIN WALK

The downtown independent bookstore for new books.

107 Mill St

Make Local Habit

8 MIN WALK

Things made by more than 250 local artists and makers.

112 W Main St

Foothill Mercantile

9 MIN WALK

An old-fashioned general store of toys, games, candy and housewares.

121 Mill St

Tess' Kitchen Store

9 MIN WALK

A cook's shop of tools and good food to take home.

115 Mill St



If it rains

The mine tours and the Visitor Center at Empire Mine work in the rain too.

Del Oro Theatre

6 MIN WALK

The downtown movie theater, on Mill Street.

165 Mill St

The Center for the Arts

11 MIN WALK

The town's stage for live music and performance.

314 W Main St

Behind the Iron Gate

8 MIN WALK

Escape rooms on Mill Street, and very well reviewed. Good for two on a wet afternoon.

122 Mill St



bring the dog

With a dog

Dogs are welcome in every room. Diego's, Tofanelli's and Three Forks take them on the patio, and all the trails above take leashed dogs.

Dogs Run Free

6 MIN DRIVE

A fenced dog park of almost two acres under pines and oaks, in Condon Park.

Daily, 7 AM to 7 PM.

660 Minnie St · Dogs welcome

Mother Lode Veterinary Hospital

6 MIN DRIVE

The daytime vet in town, if you need one.

(530) 272-6651. Weekdays.

509 Amsel Way

VCA Loomis Basin

48 MIN DRIVE

The nearest vet open around the clock.

(916) 652-5816. Open 24 hours.

3901 Sierra College Blvd, Loomis

see you soon

Questions about town, or about the house? Write to hello@chaptereight.house. One of us answers.

220 Colfax Avenue, Grass Valley, CA 95945 · chaptereight.house