



DISCOVER

1. Mendocino Headlands State Park. 2. Vintage furniture at Honey & Ro. 3. Good eats courtesy of GoodLife Cafe and Bakery. 4. The back deck at Trillium Cafe. 5. Specialty soaps from Honey & Ro.



A PERFECT DAY IN

MENDOCINO

Great eats, historic inns, stunning views. The only thing you won't find in this NorCal seaside town is cell service. And that's the point. *By Christopher Hall*

In for the krill

The ocean bluffs of **Mendocino Headlands State Park** offer VIP viewing to the best show in town this month when migrating gray whales journey from Baja breeding grounds back to Alaska. "They stick fairly close

to shore," says park ranger Dave Rodrigues, "and you'll sometimes see whole pods spouting less than a mile away." Catch a glimpse at the **Mendocino Whale Festival** (Mar 5-6), where you can take a docent-led whale-watch walk

before sampling chowders and sipping Mendocino County wines. More of a landlubber? Farther inland, **Van Damme State Park's** Fern Canyon Scenic Trail runs 3.5 miles long, passing through lush redwood forest (home to five owl species)

and crossing nine bridges as it follows a creek where river otters are known to frolic. **Headlands State Park:** parks.ca.gov/?page_id=442. **Whale Festival:** mendowhale.com. **Van Damme State Park:** \$6/vehicle; parks.ca.gov/?page_id=433. →



GETTING HERE

Mendocino is 2 hours northwest of Santa Rosa. Take U.S. 101 north to State 128 west to State 1 north.

It takes a village to feed you

Cafe Beaujolais achieved near-legendary status after Margaret Fox took over the farmhouse turned restaurant back in 1977. Four decades and several owners later, its Cal-French mojo still works with dishes like pan-roasted California sturgeon with a truffle emulsion, and bouillabaisse brimming with fresh seafood. A few blocks away at **Trillium Cafe**, the menu might include grilled wild-mushroom flatbread, local albacore, and a creamy Meyer lemon tart. Two streets over, **GoodLife Cafe and Bakery** serves sweet treats but also a great selection of lunch dishes, from Cubano panini and pesto-spinach-mushroom quiche to soups like poblano-corn chowder. *Cafe Beaujolais: \$\$\$; 961 Ukiah St.; cafebeaujolais.com.*

Trillium: \$\$\$; 10390 Kasten St.; trilliummendocino.com. GoodLife: \$; 10483 Lansing St.; goodlifecafemendo.com.

The path of history

Just how did Mendocino get from rip-roaring, 19th-century lumber town to a nationally designated historic preservation district? Find answers at the **Kelley House Museum**, a trove of Pomo baskets, shipwrecked Chinese porcelain, and other curiosities. The museum's docent-led walks around the town's historic core include stops at the tiny 1854 Temple of Kwan Tai, and *Father Time and the Maiden*, a sculpture atop Masonic Hall, carved over a six-year period from a solid block of redwood. \$5 donation suggested, walks \$10; 45007 Albion St.; kelleyhousemuseum.org.

Souvenirs from near

Honey & Ro isn't your average small-town emporium. Feather-light alpaca ponchos drape alongside comfy Turkish robes and hefty white-oak chopping blocks from local maker Million and Clark. "I wanted to create the kind of place that reflects the trends in the city," says owner Robyn Leeds. Nearby, the decorative and fine arts at **Highlight Gallery** include elegant turned redwood-burl



6



7



8



9

6. Fern Canyon Scenic Trail in Van Damme State Park. 7. Trillium Cafe. 8. Point Reyes blue cheese salad at Trillium Cafe. 9. Ocean views from Mendocino Headlands State Park.

bowls and sleek chairs from North Coast woodworkers. *Honey & Ro: 45062 Ukiah; honeyandro.com. Highlight: 45094 Main St.; thehighlightgallery.com.*

Watch the walls

The **Mendocino Art Center** has been a magnet for Northern California artists for years. "We started in 1959 in the refurbished carriage house of the old, burned-down Preston

mansion," says administrative director Celia Shelden. These days, there's a '60s-throwback feel to the complex of courtyards and weathered buildings, which hosts 150 classes each year—watercolors, jewelry—plus free monthly exhibitions that range from plein air paintings of the Mendocino Coast to Korean-influenced ceramics. 45200 Little Lake St.; mendocinoartcenter.org. ☺

MAKE IT A WEEKEND

An 1879 farmhouse with a wraparound porch anchors the **Joshua Grindle Inn**. Reopened after a two-year closure, the inn's 10 rooms feature antique accents. No TVs here, but with in-room fireplaces, who wants them? From \$169; joshuagrindlemendocino.com.