

MAP  
INSIDE



VISIT  
**BAKERSFIELD**  
CALIFORNIA  
THE SOUND OF *Something Better*

## DRIVING TOUR



# DRIVING TOUR


**Begin your day of exploring in Bakersfield,  
California's 9th largest city**

**Approximate distance: 30 miles / 48 kilometers**

Begin at Rosedale Highway and Freeway 99. Head east on Route 178 (24th Street). About 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers) ahead, turn left at Chester Avenue. As you approach 30th Street, you will see a large statue of Father Francisco Garces, a Franciscan missionary who was the first European to visit this area. Father Garces stands guard over Garces Circle, one of the last remaining traffic circles in California. Veer right around the circle, then turn right and continue north on Chester Avenue.

Your first stop is Kern County Museum\*, 3801 Chester Avenue. With more than 50 historic structures and exhibits depicting the history of Kern County, California, and the West, the museum provides a unique snapshot into the past as you walk among these historic buildings set amid 16 acres of beautiful grounds. The replica of the Beale Memorial Clock Tower out front is Bakersfield's #2 Snapshot Spot<sup>1</sup>.




 Kern County Museum

<sup>1</sup>For a list of Bakersfield's Top Ten Snapshot Spots that will guarantee you memorable photos of Bakersfield, check out page 29 of the Official Bakersfield Arrival Guide.

Exit the museum and turn left (north) on Chester Avenue. Turn right at the stop-light (West Columbus Street). As you start up the hill past San Dimas Street, you will pass a historical marker on your left just before Isla Verde Street. Near this spot stood the last home of Elisha Stephens, the first permanent settler in the Bakersfield area. Stephens was notable as the first person to bring a wagon train through what would later be called Stephens Pass. It was through that same pass years later that the famous Donner Party perished, and Stephens Pass became known as Donner Pass.




 Elisha Stephens

At the stop light at Union Avenue, turn left but stay in the far right lane toward Panorama Drive. On your right is Garces Memorial High School, named after Father Garces, whose statue you passed earlier.

Panorama Drive provides drivers with a view of the nearby Sierra Nevada foothills, and a popular path parallel to the roadway offers walkers wide open spaces to enjoy those views. At the first stoplight (River Boulevard), there is a parking lot on your left, so stop for a panoramic view of the Kern River Oilfield, one of the largest in the world. Just below the bluffs is the Kern River, one of the fastest falling rivers in North America. It drops from 12,800 feet north of Mount Whitney to 400 feet along its 140 mile journey to the San Joaquin Valley below where you are standing.



 Panorama Bluffs

Back in your car, continue east up the grade on Panorama Drive, passing Bakersfield College on your right. Bakersfield College is one of the oldest community colleges in the nation and celebrated its 100th birthday in 2013. As you pass Bakersfield College, turn left on Alfred Harrell Highway. A large rock monument on your left marks the beginning of what was called “Alfred Harrell Boulevard” in 1933 as the gateway to Kern River Park.

You will immediately head down a steep grade that provides yet another panoramic view of the nearby Sierra Nevada and its foothills. As you near the bottom of the grade stay in the right lane toward Hart Park then look to your left to see Ethel’s Old Corral Café (Snapshot Spot #10). Depending on when you visit, you may see horses in the parking lot.



In about four miles (6.5 kilometers) you will enter Hart Memorial Park, one of Kern County’s oldest parks. It was dedicated in 1929 as Kern River Park and was envisioned to be built with private funds. However, the Great Depression slowed those efforts. Funds from the WPA, the Works Progress Administration, helped complete the park. It was renamed in 1947 for Kern County Supervisor John O. Hart. Its 370 acres (149 hectares) contains two lakes with trout, catfish and bass. Hart Park also provides wildlife habitat for kit fox, possum, raccoon, beaver, muskrat, skunk, white egret, blue heron, and ducks. The northeast corner of the park is home to wandering peacocks and peahens, a popular sight for children of all ages.



Continue on Alfred Harrell Highway as you exit Hart Park. Soon you will pass Kern County Soccer Park on your left, one of the most outstanding sports facilities on the West Coast with 24 fields on more than 40 acres (16 hectares). Open skies above the fields are a treat for model aircraft clubs.

The golden foothills and the Kern River provide the perfect backdrop for your next stop, the California Living Museum\*, or CALM, California’s premier native zoo and botanic garden. CALM focuses exclusively on California’s native plants and animals. Many of the 200 animals living at CALM are unreleasable, meaning they cannot live in the wild. At CALM, they have a secure home and purpose – to educate people about the wonderful wildlife around them.





📷 Basque Heritage mural at Woolgrowers

After your time at CALM, it's time for lunch, so turn left onto Alfred Harrell Highway for three miles (4.8 kilometers) then turn right at Kern Canyon Road (Route 178) toward Bakersfield. About seven miles (11 kilometers) ahead, exit at Beale Avenue (Exit 3), then turn left. At the bottom of the overpass 1.3 miles (2.1 kilometers) ahead, veer right onto East 19th Street. Consider two nearby choices for lunch. One block ahead on your left is Luigi's, a Bakersfield lunchtime tradition, where the walls are covered with local sports memorabilia and the air is filled with the aroma of traditional Italian cooking. Make sure to check out Luigi's outstanding delicatessen next door before you leave.

For a fix of Basque food, Wool Growers is just one more block ahead on your right. Bakersfield is nationally known for its many Basque restaurants, and Wool Growers is probably the most popular.\*\* Enjoy the flavors of the south of France and northern Spain, but make sure to bring a b-i-g appetite!



📷 Luigi's



📷 Mill Creek Bridge by Gilbert Vega

After lunch, continue west on East 19th Street. In one mile (1.6 kilometers), you will pass Central Park on your right and the award-winning Mill Creek Linear Park. Look past the lagoon to see the red covered bridge, which is a backdrop for many weddings and community events (Snapshot Spot #3). Just past the lagoon on your right is a historical plaque that marks the location of the last home of Alexis Godey, who was a guide for John C. Fremont through this area. Godey's large home on 19th Street was called Belmont Acres and he later subdivided the surrounding 80 acres which is known as the Godey Tract.

Turn right at "R" Street and park your car. Now there are choices, choices. Art or antiques? Or both? For art, visit the renowned Bakersfield Museum of Art at 1930 "R" Street. Explore the museum's spectacular award-winning exhibits for every taste, then visit the serene sculpture garden, a cool retreat on a warm afternoon. BMOA is the only nationally-accredited museum in Bakersfield.



📷 Bakersfield Museum of Art



📷 Fox Theater by Gilbert Vega

Directly across 19th Street are two large antique shops with a combined almost 60,000 square feet (5,574 square meters). That's a lot of antiques! Both Great American Antiques and Central Park Antique Mall are at 19th and "R" streets. \*\*\*

Time for a mid-afternoon refresher? From "R" Street, turn left at 21st Street, then left at Eye Street. One block on your right is locally-owned Dagny's Coffee Company at 1600 – 20th Street. Sit outside the coffee house's retro 40's storefront and enjoy some hometown brewed coffee.

After your stop at Dagny's turn right at 20th Street, then right on "H" Street. On your left is the landmark Fox Theater which opened Christmas Day, 1930. Turn left at 21st Street and pass the historic Bakersfield Main Fire Station on your right.

Continue west on 21st Street as you pass through one of Bakersfield's more established older neighborhoods. At the stoplight at Oak Street, turn right, then left at 24th Street. Cross the Kern River, then turn right at the first light, Buck Owens Boulevard. The street name should give you a clue about your next and final stop: dinner at Buck Owens' Crystal Palace, an all-in-one restaurant, museum, and theatre that focuses on the rich history and sounds of country music. Turn right at the first light and pass under the famous Bakersfield Arch, Bakersfield's #1 Snapshot Spot. The Crystal Palace is on your right.

After dinner, it's time to rest after discovering that Bakersfield truly does have . . . **More to Explore!**



📷 Bakersfield Sign by Gilbert Vega

## For more information about exploring Bakersfield:

[www.VisitBakersfield.com](http://www.VisitBakersfield.com),  
(661) 852-7282, or Toll Free (866) 425-7353.

### Before you explore . . .

Check with the museums and restaurants to make sure they are open on the day you plan to visit. All numbers are Area Code 661:

#### **KERN COUNTY MUSEUM**

437-3330

[www.kerncountymuseum.org](http://www.kerncountymuseum.org)

#### **CALIFORNIA LIVING MUSEUM**

872-2256

[www.calmzoo.org](http://www.calmzoo.org)

#### **LUIGI'S**

322-0926

[www.shopluigis.com](http://www.shopluigis.com)

#### **WOOL GROWER'S**

327-9584

[www.woolgrowers.net](http://www.woolgrowers.net)

#### **BAKERSFIELD MUSEUM OF ART**

323-7219

[www.bmoa.org](http://www.bmoa.org)

#### **DAGNY'S**

634-0806

[www.dagnyscoffee.com](http://www.dagnyscoffee.com)

#### **BUCK OWENS' CRYSTAL PALACE**

328-7560

[www.buckowens.com/index2.html](http://www.buckowens.com/index2.html)

*\*Visit Bakersfield (515 Truxtun Avenue, 661-852-7282) can provide you with discounted admission to this museum, plus the Buena Vista Museum of Natural History and Science (2018 Chester Avenue, 661-324-6350, [www.sharktoothhill.org](http://www.sharktoothhill.org)).*

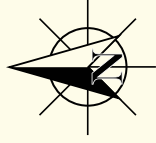
*\*\* "The Bakersfield Basque Restaurant Guide" is a complete listing of Bakersfield's historic Basque eateries, including a map showing each restaurant's location. The Guide is free and is available at Visit Bakersfield.*

*\*\*\* "Explore Antiques & Collectibles Shops" provides addresses and phone numbers for these and other shops in the area. It is available free at Visit Bakersfield.*



**VISIT  
BAKERSFIELD**  
CALIFORNIA

THE SOUND OF *Something Better*



## DRIVING TOUR



1. Father Garces/Garces Circle

2. Kern County Museum

3. Elisha Stephens Marker

4. Garces Memorial High School

5. Overview of Kern River Oilfields

6. Bakersfield College

7. Alfred Harrell Blvd Marker

8. Ethel's Old Corral Cafe

9. Hart Memorial Park

10. Wandering Peacocks

11. Kern County Soccer Park

12. California Living Museum (CALM)

13. Luigi's

14. Wool Growers

15. Mill Creek Covered Bridge

16. Alexis Godey Marker

17. Bakersfield Museum of Art (BMOA)

18. Great American Antiques

19. Central Park Antique Mall

20. Dagny's Coffee

21. Fox Theater

22. Buck Owens' Crystal Palace

23. Bakersfield Arch