



Convention & Visitors Bureau

2009 Bakersfield Story Ideas

Basque in the Glory

Did you know Bakersfield is home to largest population of Basque restaurants outside of the Pyrenees Mountains? Traditionally meals are served family style. Occasionally seating will be at a long table with others; this is most likely to occur at the historic hotels. Dinner is delivered in courses: soup and bread, salad, beans, french fries, and a meat entree. Lamb, beef, pork, and chicken are popular and occasionally seafood is available. Local Basque eateries include Woolgrowers (Barbra Streisand and James Brolin's favorite!), Noriega's, Pyrenees, Chalet Basque, Benji's, and Narducci's.

Emerging Arts & Culture District

The fertile ground of the Central Valley has cultivated artists of all forms who now call Bakersfield home. The result is a budding arts & culture district encompassing most of downtown Bakersfield. The historical area is now the canvas for murals, sculptures, galleries, theaters, and stage houses. From original Rembrandt artwork to galleries filled with local up-and-coming artists, you'll find it on the streets (and buildings!) of Bakersfield.

The Bakersfield Sound

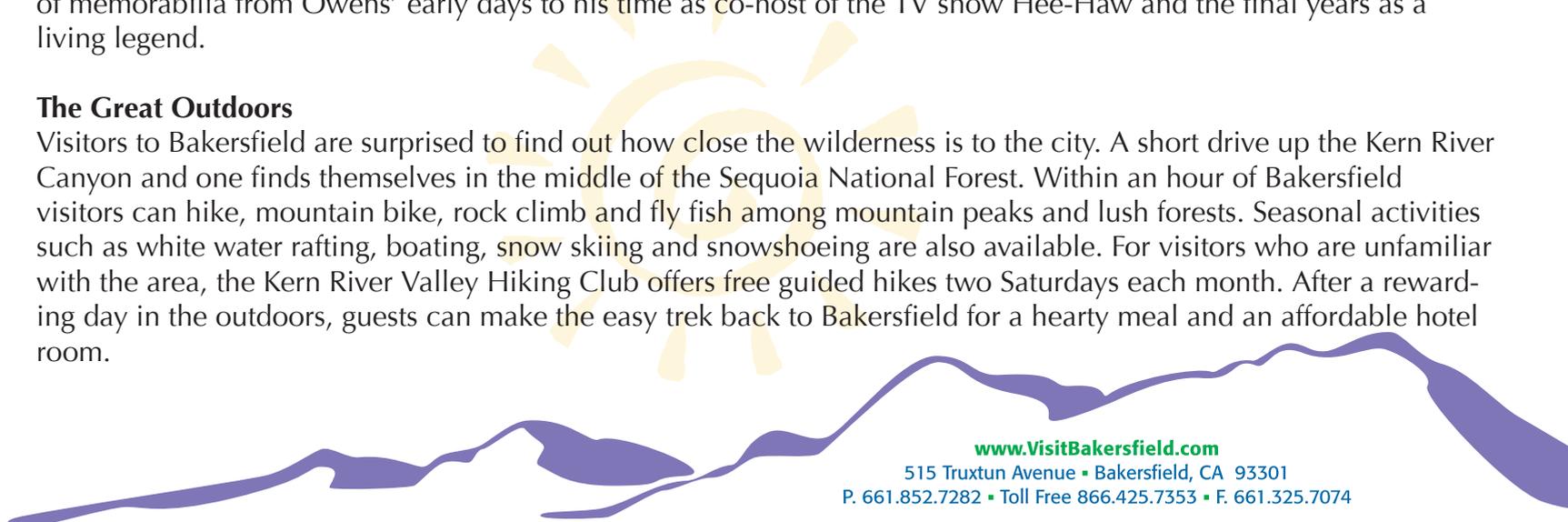
The Country Music Capital of the West Coast...Nashville West, whatever you want to call it, Bakersfield is home to a musical legacy unlike any other city. Bakersfield's own Buck Owens and Merle Haggard made the Bakersfield Sound, a product of dust bowl migrants, famous in the 1950's. The sound continues to thrive with artists such as Dwight Yoakam and Brad Paisley carrying on the musical style of their predecessors. The total Bakersfield Sound experience includes: a live show at Buck Owens' Crystal Palace, a historical look at the music roots of Bakersfield at the Kern County Museum and a night spent dancing away at one of the last true honkytonks, Trout's in Oildale.

The Crystal Palace

Completed in 1996, the country music venue is the proud creation of country music legend Buck Owens. Many of today's biggest stars interrupt world tours to play the intimate 550-seat nightclub, museum, and restaurant. The venue has been nominated for "Nightclub of the Year" eight times by the Academy of Country Music®, winning the award three times (1997, 2004, 2006). Until his passing in 2006, Owens would perform each weekend for fans that came from across the country to pay homage to the star. In 2005 country superstar Garth Brooks proposed to then girlfriend and country singer Trisha Yearwood on the Palace stage. In addition, the Palace is home to a career's worth of memorabilia from Owens' early days to his time as co-host of the TV show Hee-Haw and the final years as a living legend.

The Great Outdoors

Visitors to Bakersfield are surprised to find out how close the wilderness is to the city. A short drive up the Kern River Canyon and one finds themselves in the middle of the Sequoia National Forest. Within an hour of Bakersfield visitors can hike, mountain bike, rock climb and fly fish among mountain peaks and lush forests. Seasonal activities such as white water rafting, boating, snow skiing and snowshoeing are also available. For visitors who are unfamiliar with the area, the Kern River Valley Hiking Club offers free guided hikes two Saturdays each month. After a rewarding day in the outdoors, guests can make the easy trek back to Bakersfield for a hearty meal and an affordable hotel room.



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Sports!

Amateur, collegiate and professional sports all have a home in Bakersfield. No matter the time of year, sports fans can find an event to participate in or just be a spectator. The annual state high school wrestling championships take place each spring at the Rabobank Arena. The arena is also home to the Bakersfield Condors hockey team, Bakersfield Jam NBA D League basketball team, and the Cal State University Bakersfield men's basketball team. The Bakersfield College Renegade football team is a perennial junior college powerhouse, regularly playing to large crowds at on campus Memorial Stadium. Arguably the most popular sport in Bakersfield is auto racing. The Auto Club Famoso Raceway host races throughout the year, with the two most popular events being the March Meet and the California Hot Rod Reunion.

Meeting for Less

Convention, meeting, and event organizers love Bakersfield for many reasons. Location: Bakersfield is within four driving hours of 90 percent of California's population. Group attendees spend, on average, less time traveling and more time at the meeting. Value: on average hotel room rates in Bakersfield are 40 percent lower than the state average. With organizations and businesses looking to save money during these hard economic times, Bakersfield makes it easy to do! Unique: No where else can a group find the eclectic mix of boutique shopping, restaurants, entertainment and outdoor recreation. With over 200,000 sq ft of meeting space and 5,400 hotel rooms, Bakersfield is emerging a favorite second tier meeting destination.

Agriculture & Wine

A drive to the outskirts of Bakersfield reveals the rich and fertile lands full of fruits, vegetables and nuts. The Central Valley of California has long been known as a cornucopia, annually producing tons of food that finds its way to dinner plates across the United States. A well-timed trip can result in viewing the almond trees in bloom, grapes on the vine or the sweet smell of citrus fruits as they ripen. A trip to Murray Family Farms is the perfect way to get the real agriculture experience. The farm just east of Bakersfield gives visitors the experience of hand picking in-season fruit or vegetables. Additionally visitors can get a hayride tour of the working farm, browse the farmers market or picnic among the 360 lush acres. Just east of the farm is the Souza Family Vineyards. Nestled in the Tehachapi Mountains, the award winning winery offers tastings and tours Friday thru Sunday. Each week visitors and locals flock to the Golden State Mall in downtown Bakersfield to attend the farmers market. The outdoor event provides buyers with "direct from the field" produce, guaranteed to be the freshest around.



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