

# How to Spend 50 Perfect Hours in Novato

By **Katie Morell** on October 08, 2015 9:30 AM



*(photo via New Avenue Homes)*

Just a hop from Wine Country, Novato features exciting museums and a countryside dotted with lush rolling hills.

## DAY 1

**8:30 a.m.** – Wake up in your comfortable bed at **Inn Marin**, a 70-room boutique hotel close to Highway 101 (ask for a room in the back of the property for less street noise). Put on some casual clothes, grab a light jacket, and slather on sunscreen. Walk downstairs and enjoy a free breakfast of coffee, juice, pastries, eggs, and fruit.

**9:30 a.m.** – Hop in the car and drive 20 minutes north until you arrive at **Willow Tree Stables**. Novato is surrounded by greenery and farmland, making a morning horseback ride all the more appropriate. Never been on a horse? No problem. Schedule a one-hour lesson with expert teacher Patricia Yates. Lessons are available for adults and children Tuesdays through Sundays (call ahead for a reservation—drop-ins aren't allowed). Prices for a group lesson are \$45 per person.

**11:30 a.m.** – Head back into town and stop at 5800 Nave Drive. Belly up to a table at **Toast**, a popular American eatery with crazy high ceilings and hip décor. Order the BBQ pulled pork sandwich, the chicken apple salad, or the buttermilk fried chicken sandwich. Better yet, order one of each and eat family-style.

**1:00 p.m.** – After lunch head to **Hamilton Field History Museum**, a very cool museum located at the former Hamilton Air Field. The field was built in 1928 and was military-operated until 1974. Today, travelers can stop by for free and check out historic exhibits or ask for a tour from an experienced docent.



*(photo via City of Novato)*

**3:00 p.m.** – Thank the friendly docents, then load into your car and drive over to Old Town Novato, a stretch of shops and restaurants along Grant Avenue. Tuck in the **Novato History Museum** and say hi to shop owners along the strip.

**5:30 p.m.** – Head back to Inn Marin, rest for a bit, then take a shower and put on some casual dinner clothes. Drive over to 454 Ignacio Blvd and ask for a seat on the patio at **Boca Pizzeria**. Start by ordering the roasted artichoke appetizer (maybe the bruschetta, too) and then dive into the pizza course. Don't leave without filling up on pizzas in the prosciutto di parma, roasted mushroom, and brussels and pancetta varieties.

**7:30 p.m.** – After you can no longer stand the sight of another pizza slice, finish off your evening with a trip to **HopMonk Tavern**, a fun spot with live music several nights per week (call ahead to ask what band is playing). In the mood for something sweet? Opt for a helping of the bread pudding; you'll want to lick your plate.

## **DAY 2**



*(photo via Yelp)*

**9:30 a.m.** – Sleep in, don't forget your sunscreen and hat, and then head over to **Marvin's Restaurant**, widely known as one of the best breakfast places in all of Marin County (this fact is also printed on the sign out front). Don't expect anything fancy; this is a local joint and you may have to wait in line to get in. Rest assured that the wait is worth it the minute you bite into a gourmet pancake, a spicy Mexican omelet, or a fork-full of French toast. Go nuts and order several items.

**10:30 a.m.** – Drive back towards the Hamilton Field History Museum, stop at 500 Palm Drive, and walk into the **Marin Museum of Contemporary Art**, a gem of a museum that not only features a variety of interesting exhibits but also has more than 40 working

studios on-site. Admission is free and donations ranging from money to office supplies, furniture, or installation tools are appreciated. Feeling inspired? Register for an art class (check [online](#) for dates/times).

**12:30 p.m.** – Ready for lunch? Drive over to **Garden Bistro**, a local Mediterranean favorite at 333 Enfrente Road. Light and airy, this place has a great outdoor patio surrounded by a garden. Don't leave without trying the fried calamari, taboleh salad, and eggplant sandwich. Delicious.

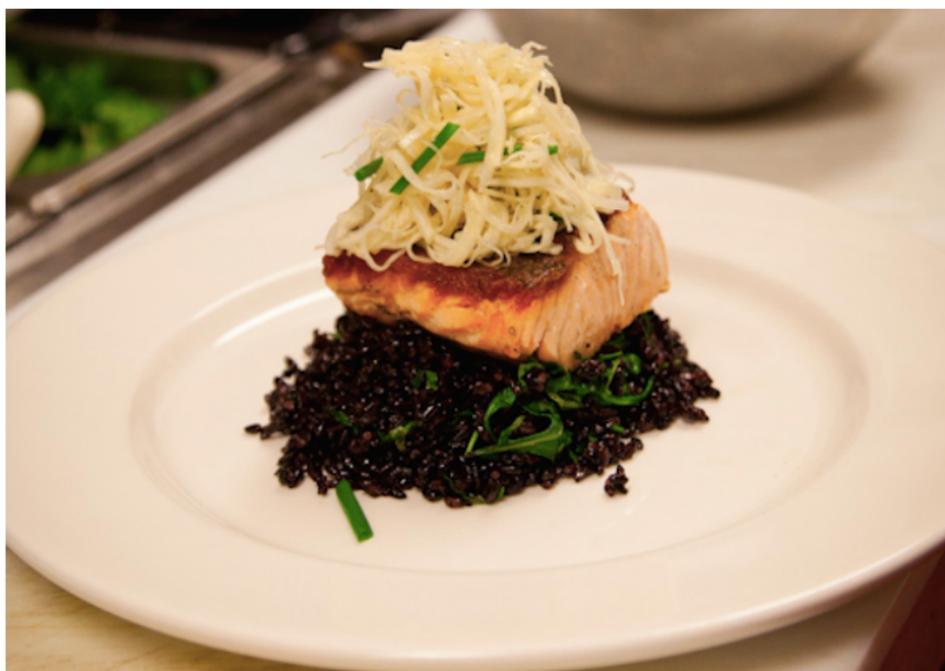
**1:30 p.m.** – Back in the car, head over to 464 Ignacio Blvd. and stop out front of **The Space Station Museum**. This place is entirely dedicated to preserving the history of space travel. Kids and adults can enjoy a variety of hands-on exhibits (admission is free) as well as photos of astronauts and space missions. (Note: The museum is open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and by appointment on Thursdays.)



*(photo via Trek Wine)*

**3:30 p.m.** – Spend your next two hours at **Trek Winery**, a chic spot in downtown Novato that feels somewhat like a mountain lodge inside. Try a few wines and relax on the comfy leather couches.

**5:30 p.m.** – Drive back to Inn Marin and change into some fancier dinner clothes. After relaxing, set your sights on **Hilltop 1892**, one of Novato's iconic restaurants. Evident in its name, this place has incredible views of Marin County (ask for a table near the windows). Start with a helping of the Marin oysters and then bite into its house burger or cedar plank salmon. Ask your server for the best wine parings and indulge. Stay late to see the city lights.



### DAY 3

**9:30 a.m.** – Wake up and check out of Inn Marin. Grab breakfast on your way out and

drive over to **Olompali State Historic Park** (open Wednesdays through Sundays). Walk around the grounds, enjoy the Northern California sunshine, and play a little frisbee.

*This article comes to us courtesy of the [San Francisco Bay Area Super Bowl 50 Host Committee](#). Each week the San Francisco Bay Area Super Bowl 50 Host Committee features a #Perfect50 Hours series detailing how to spend 50 hours in a different San Francisco Bay Area city. See more [here](#).*