

OTHER THINGS TO DO/PLACES TO VISIT

THE NORTHERN MINES

Background - Gold mining in California began with placer mining...basically panning for loose gold nuggets in the streams and rivers flowing westerly from the Sierra Nevada mountains. But as this easily-recovered gold became more difficult to find, more productive and “industrialized” methods became needed. One of these was hard rock mining. You’ll visit a good example of this mining process during this tour.

The Tour - Start this tour by traveling east on I-80 toward the Sierra Nevada mountains and the Gold Country. When you reach Auburn, about 35 miles from Sacramento, exit the freeway onto Highway 49 north toward Grass Valley and Nevada City. Nevada City is about 28 miles north of Auburn. The two-lane Highway 49 becomes a freeway in the vicinity of Grass Valley. Exit the freeway at West Empire Street and turn right to reach the [Empire Mine State Park](#) at 10791 East Empire Street.

Empire Mine State Historic Park is the site of one of the oldest, largest, deepest, longest and richest gold mines in California. In existence for more than 100 years, the mine produced 5.6 million ounces of gold before it closed in 1956. (5.6 million ounces of gold is equivalent to a box 7 feet long, 7 feet high, and 7 feet deep filled with gold.) The park contains many of the original mine buildings and the owner’s home and restored gardens, and the entrance to 367 miles (the distance, as the crow flies, from Grass Valley to Las Vegas, NV) of abandoned and flooded mine shafts. Guided tours and audio-visual presentations are offered throughout the day at various times.

After touring the Empire Mine, return to Highway 49 and continue north towards [Nevada City](#). This town is one of the best preserved historic towns in the Mother Lode area. The entire downtown district is a National Historic Landmark with quality restaurants and a large variety of shops, boutiques, galleries, and museums. The downtown is centered on Broad Street and the parallel streets on both sides. Exit at Broad Street and turn left to visit this interesting town.

Lunch Options -Nevada City has a number of options for lunch. If you arrive in Auburn around lunch time, there are restaurant choices on Highway 49 just south of I-80. There are fast-food outlets on Highway 49 on the way to Grass Valley.

Time Allowance - Grass Valley is about an 1½ hour from the Convention hotels, with Nevada City 15 minutes further up the freeway.

Note - *These directions are fairly general. You should carry a good map and/or GPS.*