

Nick and J-Mo Guide to Oakland (with some help from Charles.)

Welcome to Grand Prix Oakland 2016



Nick Rutkowski

I've moved to Ca about 8 years ago and made the Oakland area my home. Much like Jeff I am a foodie and it shows. I currently work in downtown Oakland for Ac Transit. So I get to wander around looking for food. My office is about 6 blocks north of the convention center.



Jeff Morrow

Welcome to my home town! When I tell people I'm from Oakland, the typical reaction is something along the lines of "how many times have you been shot?" OK, yes, like most cities, Oakland has some rough parts, but it also has some very nice parts, plus a vibrant culture and a world-class culinary scene.

As you may already know, I'm a real foodie, so part of this guide will focus on that. However, here's some basic information first.

Traversing the Bay Area



Most of you coming from out of town will be flying into either Oakland or San Francisco. Fortunately, getting from either airport to the venue is super easy on BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit).

From OAK: take the AirBART shuttle, then take any SF/Daly City or Richmond train to 12th Street Oakland City Center. Total One-Way Fare: \$4.75. NOTE: AirBART will only take \$3 BART tickets or cash, and they do NOT make change! Make sure you have \$3 handy.

From SFO: just get on BART at the airport. Get on a Pittsburg/Bay Point or Richmond train. Get off at 12th Street Oakland City Center. Total One-Way Fare: \$8.50.

From the BART station: head west on Broadway and you will see the staff hotel: the Marriott City Center. For other transportation, you can check out the extensive local bus system at actransit.org, and you can find out more about BART at bart.gov.

Things to See

Jeff on San Francisco: OK, I'll level with you. I'm not going to spend my time writing about all the amazing tourist stuff there is to do in San Fran. Suffice to say it is a major tourist destination...for good reason. Even a trip to the ultra-touristy and kitschy Fisherman's Wharf is worth doing at least once. If you're gonna be a tourist, just Google "tourist San Francisco" and you won't be disappointed.

Mon-Sun: Open 24/7 (Ain't no party like an SF party cause an SF party don't stahp!)

UC Berkeley: Just a few BART stops away from downtown Oakland is our local prestigious university. The campus itself is quite beautiful and so it is a popular tourist destination in its own right. Just take BART to Downtown Berkeley, then walk east a few blocks and you'll be on campus.

Mon-Sun: Hours vary

Lake Merritt: About a mile or so south of the venue is Lake Merritt, which I like to think of as the cultural heart of Oakland. In addition to park land and a jogging path that goes all the way around, there are a bunch of nice restaurants and shops near the lake on Lakeshore Avenue and Grand Avenue.

Mon-Sun: Hours vary depending on activity, but generally open from dawn to dusk

Places to Be



Pacific Pinball Museum (1510 Webster St, Alameda): We're all geeks, right? Well, Alameda has a great museum of old-timey pinball machines, and you can play them all! You can't get here by BART, but it's an easy bus ride—get on the 51A right on Broadway outside the staff hotel and it will take you straight there. This place is definitely worth a trip, especially if you're a pinball geek (I'm looking at you, *Richter!*)

Mon: Closed, Tues-Thurs: 9:00am-2:00pm, Fri:2:00pm-12:00, Sat: 11:00am-12:00am, Sun: 11:00am-9:00pm



Chabot Science Center (10000 Skyline Blvd. Oakland, <http://www.chabotspace.org>): Oakland has a planetarium! It also has a cool science museum attached. If you're interested, look here for transportation options: <http://www.chabotspace.org/directions.htm#public-transportation>.

Mon-Tues: Closed, Wed/Thur/Sun: 10:00am-5:00pm, Fri-Sat: 10:00am-10:00pm



Oakland Museum of California (1000 Oak Street, Oakland, <http://museumca.org>): This ambiguously-named museum has three galleries: one on the natural history of California, one on the political and cultural history of California, and one of art by California artists. And it's walkable from the venue. (Added bonus: the walk goes through Chinatown!)

Mon-Tues: Closed, Wed-Thur: 11:00am-5:00pm, Fri: 11:00am-9:00pm, Sat-Sun: 10:00am-6:00pm

Shops to G(ame)

Endgame: one of the finest game stores in the area is right across the street from the venue! Check it out if you get the chance.

Mon-Sun: 10:00am-7:00pm

Eudemonia (2154 University Ave, Berkeley): The East Bay stop for magic singles and team Magic Traders.

Mon-Fri: 12:00pm-12:30am, Sat-Sun: 11:00am-12:30am

Versus Games (1716 Taraval St, San Francisco): Easy to spot team Vs, as they wear the bright red shirts. This store while small in size has a big impact in the community.

Mon-Thur: 2:00pm-10:00pm, Fri: 2:00pm-12:00am, Sat-Sun: 12:00pm-7:00pm

Channel Fireball Game Center (1650 Coleman Ave Santa Clara): Home to team fireball and host of the GP. This store is a little further away than the others but a place to check out if you can manage to get there.

Mon-Thur: 5:30pm-10:30pm, Fri: 3:00pm-11:00pm, Sat-Sun: 11:00am-7:00pm

Safety

The couple of blocks around the venue is known as “Old Oakland”, and is a moderately safe little enclave of downtown. However, I still recommend against going out alone after dark. Going out in a group should be fine, though. If you’re going more than a half-mile or so away from the venue, take a cab.

With that out of the way, let us get to the stomach of the matter.

The Coffee

Starbucks (801 Broadway): The local Starbucks is on Broadway, just west of the venue.

Mon-Sat: 4:30am-8:00pm

Peet’s Coffee (1111 Broadway): And if you’re too much of a coffee snob for Starbucks, there’s also a Peet’s nearby.

Mon-Fri: 5:30am-7:00pm, Sat: 7:00am-4:00pm, Sun: Closed

Local Good Eats (Lunch Edition)

Quick and Easy

Panda Express, Popeye's, etc (500 12th St): a couple of blocks in the other direction is a business park complex thingy otherwise known as city center. In the outdoor mall in the middle of it all are several fast food places.

Hours vary, but most closed Saturday/Sunday

Burger King (1240 Broadway): Yup, there's a BK a couple of blocks away. Let's put it this way: they have security guards on payroll.

Mon-Sat: 6:00am-10:00pm, Sun: 7:00am-10:00pm

Chinatown: Just south of the venue is Oakland's Chinatown! It has everything from nicer sit-down restaurants to holes in the wall that serve phenomenal pork buns.

Hours vary, 10:00am-10:00pm every day generally

Sobo Ramen (988 Franklin St): This is not your cheap store bought packaged ramen. It might not be quick but it's worth it.

Mon-Sun: 11:00am-3:00pm, 5:00pm-9:00pm

Just Slightly Greasy



G.B. Ratto (821 Washington St): Just a block away from the venue is a neat little Italian market that makes great sandwiches. A fine choice for your lunch break.

Sun-Fri: 8:30am-4:30pm, Sat: 10:00am-4:00pm



Cosecha (907 Washington St): I've never eaten at this Mexican place, but Louis says it's good, and who am I to argue with those handsome, chiseled features?

Mon-Sun: 11:30am-3:30pm, 5:00pm-9:30pm



Rosamunde Sausage Grill (911 Washington St): Sean recommended that I put this place with the fancier places listed below, and it sounds like it would deserve to be there, but it's here because it's a block from the venue. I haven't been here yet, but I'm really looking forward to it, because it sounds amazing, with sausages like "wild boar with apples" and "duck with figs".

Sun-Tues: 10:00am-10:00pm, Wed-Sat: 10:00am-11:00pm

OK, so that's some of the stuff you can grab on your lunch break. Now here's...

The Good Stuff For Which You Will Remember Oakland

The Trappist (460 8th St, <http://thetrappist.com>): A few blocks away from the venue (around the corner from Starbucks) is a great place that specializes in Belgian beers. Let's put it this way: I don't like beer very much and I've had a couple of things at this place that even I like. Strongly recommended for an after-hours drink.

Sun-Thur: 12:00pm-12:30am, Fri-Sat: 12:00pm-1:30am

Pican (2295 Broadway, <http://picanrestaurant.com>): One of the great downtown restaurants, this place serves high-end southern food, and they make a mean mint julep.

Mon-Thur: 11:30 am - 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm - 9:30 pm, Fri-Sat: 11:30 am- 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm-10:30 pm, Sun: 10:30 am-2:30 pm, 5:00 pm-9:00 pm

Ozumo (2251 Broadway, <http://ozumo.com>): Right next to Pican is an excellent sushi place with the best sake menu in the East Bay. (It's pricey, though...)

Mon-Thur: 11:30 am - 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm - 9:30 pm, Fri: 11:30 am- 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm-10:00 pm, Sun: Closed

Gather (2200 Oxford St, Berkeley, <http://gatherrestaurant.com>): If you find yourself in Berkeley, this is a great place to check out. They specialize in the organic, locally-sourced, yummy stuff that's becoming popular all over the country.

Mon-Thur: 11:30 am - 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm - 9:30 pm, Fri: 11:30 am- 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm-10:00 pm, Sat-Sun: 10:00 am- 2:30 pm, 5:00 pm-10:00 pm

Phil's Sliders (2024 Shattuck, Berkeley, <http://philssliders.com>): Also in Berkeley is another place that looks amazing, but I haven't been to. But it comes recommended by both SeaCat and TJ, so that's good enough for me!

Mon-Sun: 11:00am-9:00pm



Camino (3917 Grand Ave, <http://caminorestaurant.com>): I'm saving the best for last. This is one of my favorite restaurants anywhere. If you're any kind of a foodie, you've probably heard of Chez Panisse, the restaurant that defined the concept of "California cuisine". Well, over the years, Chez Panisse has exported many chefs that have gone on to start their own great restaurants. Camino is one of these. I describe this restaurant as "Chez-Panisse-quality food for about a third of the price". It's really that good. The best way to get there from the venue is to take a cab, but I guarantee you it will be worth the trip. Either make a reservation or arrive right when they open at 5:30. (Warning: they're closed on Tuesdays.)

Mon, Wed-Fri: 5:30 pm - 10:00 pm, Tues: Closed, Sat-Sun: 10:00 am- 2:00 pm, 5:30 pm-10:00 pm



Angeline's Louisiana Kitchen (2261 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley) Jeff may have his favorites but this place is the one place I tell everyone they must eat at. Cajun food with atmosphere. Everything on the menu is fantastic. I'm a huge fan of the deep fried cheese grits covered in a crawfish etouffee.

Mon: 5:30pm-9:30pm, Tues-Thurs, Sun: 11:30am-9:00pm, Fri-Sat: 11:30am-10:00pm

End of Guide... but certainly not the end of all the cool stuff Oakland has to offer. Get out there and explore and add something to this guide next Grand Prix Oakland!!!