

ONE FINE DAY

Downtown Martinez

This former Gold Rush boomtown is booming again with gourmet restaurants, boutiques, and cocktail bars.

BY ALEJANDRA SARAGOZA



The chorizo flatbread at Bar Cava Wine Bar and Eatery.

Downtown Martinez may be the East Bay's best-kept secret. With its recent revitalization, the area is home to a bevy of cool bars, new restaurants, and unique boutiques. But its small-town charm and relaxed vibe still remain, making Martinez the perfect quaint escape. Here's what to do in this waterfront destination.

Brunch

BAR CAVA WINE BAR AND EATERY

Start with a Spanish-style meal at Bar Cava Wine Bar and Eatery. The sophisticated-yet-unpretentious restaurant offers a taste of Spain with its tapas-inspired menu and an impressive compendium of vinos from Napa, France, and Spain. Snag a table on the patio, and order a glass of the Pere Mata Cupada Rosé, a dry, crisp,

sparkling Spanish wine—perfect for sipping outdoors. Enjoy it with the cheesy chorizo flatbread or the flavorful strata, a savory bread pudding loaded with jamón, manchego cheese, egg, and saffron. barcava.com.

Shop

LAVENDER MOON INTERIORS

Pop next door to Lavender Moon Interiors, where you'll find an assortment of country-chic furniture—from antique dressers to cocktail tables—along with glittery throw pillows, fragrant soy candles, and bath products. lavendermooninteriors.com.

Play

RADKE MARTINEZ REGIONAL SHORELINE

Spend the rest of the afternoon exploring the Radke Martinez

Regional Shoreline. The idyllic park offers three miles of trails that wind through protected marshland and along the waterfront. Take a leisurely stroll on the Duck Pond and Pickleweed trails, where you can spot geese, then head over to the fishing pier and marina for scenic Bay views. ebparks.org.

Dinner

CUFF AND COLLAR HOME KITCHEN

Merely a five-minute drive away lies Cuff and Collar Home Kitchen, a down-home eatery serving sustainable, organic fare for dinner. The menu offers elevated comfort food favorites like fried chicken, mac 'n' cheese, and meatloaf, plus seasonal salads and small bites. Don't miss the heavenly bacon-wrapped dates, or the flavorful pear burger with Prather Ranch beef, tangy blue cheese, and slices of white wine-poached pear on a challah bun. And save room for dessert—the maple bacon crème brûlée is to die for. facebook.com/CuffandCollarKitchen.

Sip

BARREL AGED COCKTAIL BAR AND LOUNGE

After dinner, grab a nightcap at Barrel Aged Cocktail Bar and Lounge. Housed in the back of Barrelista Coffee House, this late-night hot spot crafts both classic and creative concoctions. You'll find old-school favorites such

as sidecars and negronis, but if you're feeling adventurous, order the Berry Smokey. This inventive tippie features a delectable combination of mezcal, fresh strawberries, muddled mint, and a touch of absinthe. facebook.com/BarrelAged.

See

ARMANDO'S

End your night with a show at the venerable Armando's. The intimate venue hosts an array of performances by talented local musicians, who play everything from blues to jazz to rock 'n' roll. It's the best place to cap off your day of adventure in Martinez. armandosmartinez.com.



The Berry Smokey at Barrel Aged Cocktail Bar and Lounge.