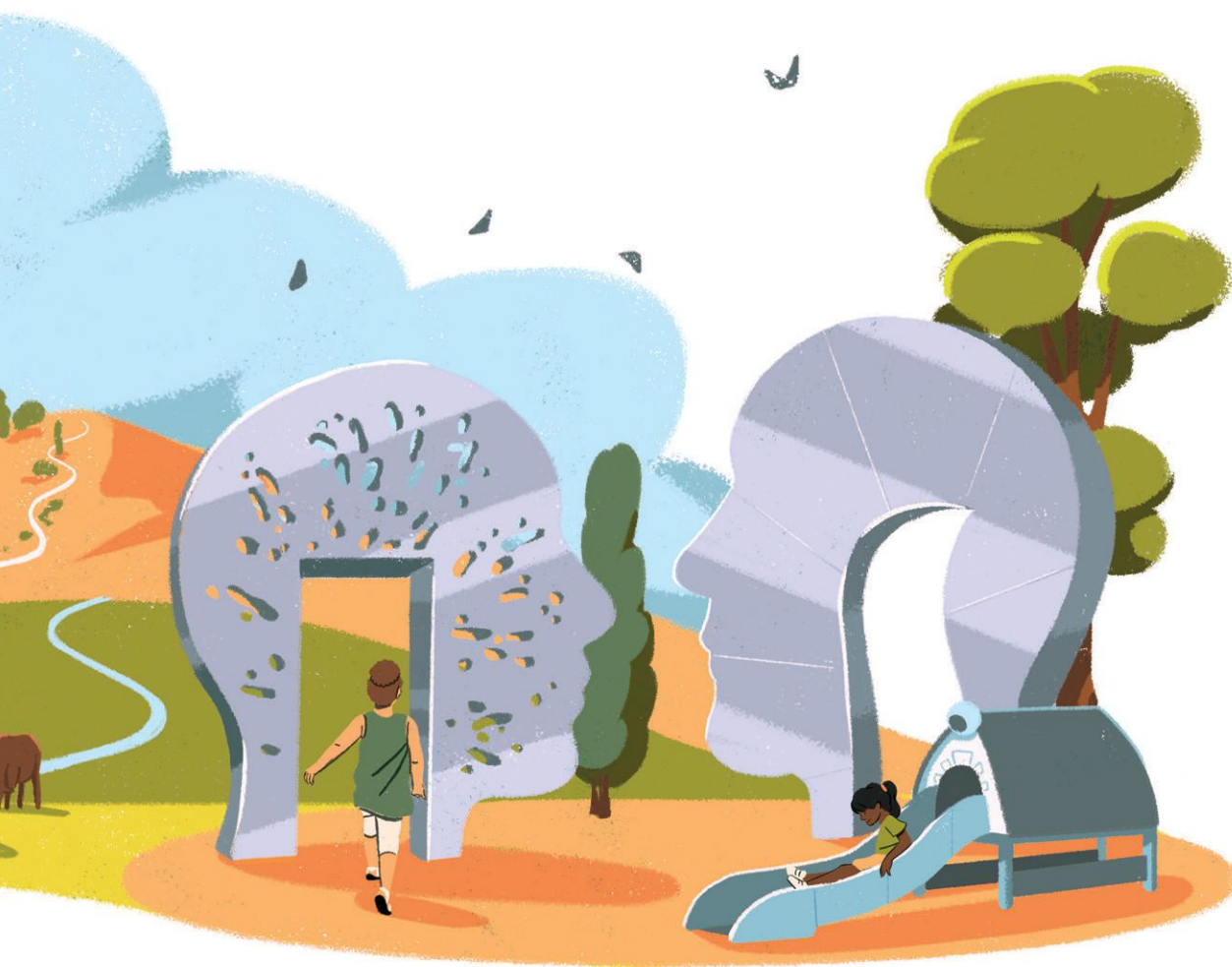




# *Insider's Guide to* **DUBLIN**



► Long before the 580 and 680 freeways converged in a multilane, cloverleafed cluster of commuters, Dublin was at the crossroads. Native American trading routes passed through here, as did Gold Rush prospectors, Spanish explorers, cattle ranchers, and stagecoaches full of migrating families. For years, the local Alamilla Springs was a place for travelers to stop and freshen up, change horses, and check in with each other on the journey ahead.

Those springs are all but forgotten today, just a stone marker in front of an apartment complex. But thousands of people travel the same crossroads, heading to job sites south in Silicon Valley or west toward San Francisco, and back again in the evening. North of the interchange, Dublin has evolved from a mostly rural community to one of the fastest-growing cities in America. Its 67,000 residents enjoy top-ranked schools, several parks and trails, popular community events, name-brand shopping and entertainment, and an impressively diverse culinary scene. Learn more about this up-and-coming city, and pull off for a visit the next time you're at the crossroads.

Note: Some of the locations mentioned in this story may be closed due to COVID-19 safety measures. Confirm the status and hours of your destination before you go.



At the crossroads of the Tri-Valley, this burgeoning city is all about family-friendly fun and international eats.

WRITTEN BY LEEANNE JONES

ILLUSTRATION BY FAGOSTUDIO





## DID YOU KNOW?

Impress your friends with some Dublin history and trivia.



### LUCK OF THE IRISH

Named after the capital of Ireland in honor of its many early Irish immigrants, California's Dublin unabashedly celebrates the Emerald Isle. Shamrocks adorn the street signs, environmentally friendly businesses are awarded "Green Shamrock" rankings, and the annual Saint Patrick's Day festivities include a parade and a two-day street fair with Celtic music and carnival rides. The city's second high school, opening in 2022, will be called Emerald High.

### END OF THE LINE

Dublin is the farthest east one can travel in the Bay Area via BART's Blue Line, which terminates at the Dublin/Pleasanton station. Used by commuters from all over the Tri-Valley as well as the San Joaquin Valley, the busy station had its parking burden slightly eased with the opening of the "infill" West Dublin/Pleasanton station in 2011, just a mile and a half up the track. Both are surrounded by new mixed-used developments of condos, townhomes, and retail.

### HOUSING HOT SPOT

In the 1960s, Dublin transformed from a mostly agricultural area to a suburban community, thanks to the widening of the old Lincoln Highway (now Dublin Boulevard) and an ambitious new housing development by the Volk-McLain company. And it kept on growing. In 2019, according to a United States Census report, Dublin was the fastest-growing city in California (and the 11th fastest-growing large city in the U.S.), nearly doubling its population over the previous decade.

### TAPS AND TARGET PRACTICE

Three U.S. Navy bases called Dublin home during World War II, known collectively as "Fleet City."

Today, only Camp Parks remains, now serving as the training facility for the 11,000-plus U.S. Army Reservists in the San Francisco Bay Area. Other former sites are used by the county as a prison and a bomb disposal range—the latter garnering national media attention in 2011 when a cannonball fired there during the filming of a *Mythbusters* episode damaged two houses and landed inside a minivan.

### LOCKED UP

The former Navy brig is now the Santa Rita Jail, the primary prison for Alameda County. Able to house about 4,000 inmates, it's the third-largest jail in the state. Nearby is the women-only Federal Correctional Institution. Among its famous inmates were heiress Patty Hearst; Sara Jane Moore, who attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford; "Hollywood Madam" Heidi Fleiss; and actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin, of the recent college admissions scandal.

### NOTABLE NAMES

Companies based in Dublin include Patelco Credit Union, butter-maker Challenge Dairy, discount retailer Ross Stores, software company CallidusCloud, HR service provider TriNet, and Arlen Ness Motorcycles (which has a little-known but fascinating custom motorcycle museum above its showroom). Former and current residents include controversial biographer Christopher Andersen, professional *League of Legends* gamer Damonte, Muay Thai world champion and *Fight Girls* cast member Miriam Nakamoto, and U.S. Congressman Eric Swalwell.

**OPPOSITE:** THE WEST DUBLIN/PLEASANTON BART STATION WAS ADDED TO EASE CONGESTION AT THE END OF THE LINE.  
**THIS PAGE:** UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN ERIC SWALWELL MOVED TO DUBLIN IN THE SIXTH GRADE.



## High-Profile Representative

United States Congressman Eric Swalwell may have the highest national profile of any person who grew up in Dublin. Swalwell, 40, has represented California's 15th District since 2013 and has had a constant presence on cable news shows over the past few years, due to his opposition to the policies of the Trump administration as well as his bid for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.

When Swalwell was growing up in Dublin, his focus wasn't on politics. He was all about sports. "I could jump my fence and be on the grounds of the high school," Swalwell says. "I grew up shooting hoops and kicking field goals there."

**Q: When did you move to Dublin? What was the city like when you arrived here?**

**A:** I moved here in 1992 and started sixth grade at Wells Middle School. Dublin was a little bit of a military town. Camp Parks was probably a mile away, and I could hear "Taps" at night coming from the base. When I was growing up, I got involved in soccer and played with kids from San Ramon, Danville, and Alamo. I quickly learned that Dublin's nickname was "Scrublin," and people viewed it as a low-income area and had low expectations for the town. I always carried that as a chip on my shoulder.

**Q: When did Dublin lose the Scrublin nickname?**

**A:** I think it was when Whole Foods moved in [laughs]. Just 10 years after I moved here, the city's growth and development were incredible—we were building new schools and libraries. We went from being called Scrublin to hearing complaints about too much traffic and our schools being overcrowded. It was kind of like, "Give me those problems!"

**Q: What do you hear from your constituents about changes the area needs for the future?**

**A:** The area is a victim of its own success, and we need to make sure that our growing pains don't create too much conflict with quality of life here. I want to see money for infrastructure in the region, specifically to get funding for Valley Link, a rail project that will connect the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station to a train that runs at more than 100 mph all the way out to Stockton. That project will get more than 30,000 cars off the road.

**Q: What's an inside tip that you can give our readers about life in Dublin?**

**A:** I get most of my suits at the Nordstrom Rack, which is by Whole Foods. It's a nice amenity to have. And I hate to give this one up—although it's hardly a secret—but Johnny's Donuts on Village Parkway has the most delicious maple bars. I always call ahead to make sure they still have them, and if they do, I will get two. —**Peter Crooks**





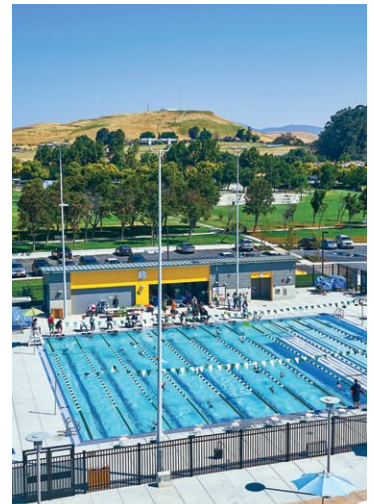
# OUT AND ABOUT

From hurtling down a waterslide or around an ice rink to browsing spice shops and craft stores, Dublin offers fun for everyone.



## COOL OFF

The Tri-Valley is no stranger to hot summers, and thankfully Dublin has some cool retreats. The Wave at Emerald Glen Park, a \$43 million facility that opened four years ago, features indoor and outdoor swimming pools; a shallow, interactive splash zone for toddlers; and a six-waterslide tower with thrills for a range of ages. For something even colder, head to Dublin Iceland, which hosts open-skate sessions and lessons as well as broomball and ice hockey games.



## GO RETRO

Keep the fun going by rolling a strike at Earl Anthony's Dublin Bowl. The 40-lane facility has public and league play, a bar, snacks for sale, and events like cosmic bowling with laser lights. Travel back in time, check out Dublin Heritage Park and Museums, where you'll find the Murray Schoolhouse (built in 1856), Old St. Raymond's Church (built in 1859), and the Kolb House (built in 1910). Nearby, members of the Donner Party are buried in the historic cemetery.



### HIT THE HILLS

Sitting in 580 traffic through Dublin Canyon is no fun. Getting up above it at the 1,138-foot Donlon Point is pretty great. Dublin Hills Regional Park spans 654 acres with a few loop-trail options that traverse cattle-grazing land and creeks. Across town is another hilly destination—for golfers. The Dublin Ranch Golf Course has an efficient 18-hole design featuring valley views. Visit the full-service restaurant before or after play, or order some mid-game onion rings at the café by the ninth hole.

### FRIENDLY COMPETITION

Settle your scores and challenge your friends in new ways. At K1 Speed, get behind the wheel of an electric go-kart and zoom around an indoor track. Bonus: The winner gets bragging rights with a celebratory podium photo. If you prefer a court to a track, check out Bintang Badminton, an indoor facility with multiple courts available for rental or lessons. Or use your own hands and feet in a class at Combat Sports Academy. The gym specializes in Krav Maga, Muay Thai, Brazilian jujitsu, boxing, wrestling, and CrossFit.

### FUN IN THE SUN

While the Saint Patrick's Day festival is Dublin's biggest annual event, there is more fun to come through summer. Emerald Glen Park is the place to be on warm evenings. On Fridays (June 18 to August 6) is Picnic Flix, when families spread out blankets for dinner and a movie, from classics (*Grease*) to recent releases (*Onward*). On Thursdays (through September 30) is the Dublin farmers market, where you can shop for produce and artisan goods and then dance to hits, from the Rolling Stones to Prince, played by tribute bands at the Summer Concert Series.

### WHOLESOME FUN

Kids and kids at heart can bounce the day away at Rockin' Jump, a warehouse arena filled with

connected trampolines. There's a rock wall and a foam pit, too. For outdoor thrills, check out the new Imagine Playground. Opened in March, it's the first all-abilities park in the region, featuring smooth ground, ADA-compliant restrooms, and a variety of fun attractions including musical instruments. Music-loving adults should reserve a spot at Heartbeat KTV Karaoke Lounge. Ten private rooms feature leather couches, ambient lighting, and food and drink service, so you can sing your favorite songs into the wee hours.



### SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

Dublin is a destination for name-brand retailers. Shoppers from around the region head here for Barnes and Noble, Best Buy, Dick's Sporting Goods, Guitar Center, Lowe's, Nordstrom Rack, and Whole Foods—and future development plans include an Ikea.

Crafters and quilters are especially covered on supplies, with Michael's, Joann Fabrics, and Hobby Lobby all within one block. Notable indie shops include Cassara's Italian Men's Wear; Barons Jewelers; Dublin Sewing Center; HopTech Homebrewing Supplies; and Guns, Fishing, and Other Stuff (which has an indoor shooting range).

### GLOBAL GOODS

Several specialty markets make finding ingredients a cinch. There's a 99 Ranch Market location from the growing Asian supermarket chain, offering a large selection of seafood (including sand goby and king crab live in tanks), baked goods (red bean bread, raisin buns), and fresh produce (daikon leaf, dragon fruit), plus aisles of snacks and appliances such as rice cookers and tea kettles. Sahara Market specializes in Persian and Afghan food including halal meat, fresh-baked bread, and other groceries—and has an on-site restaurant. New India Bazar sells fresh produce as well as pantry staples such as tea, rice, lentils, naan, and spices.

**OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT:** DUBLIN'S SAINT PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION IS A DON'T-MISS EVENT; THE WAVE AQUATIC CENTER AT EMERALD GLEN PARK FEATURES SWIMMING POOLS AND WATERSLIDES. **THIS PAGE:** LOCALS SHOP FOR PRODUCE AT THE DUBLIN FARMERS MARKET.



# SIP AND SAVOR

Taste the exotic flavors of the world without leaving Dublin.



## Amakara //

This longtime neighborhood sushi spot moved into a swanky new space in the Aster complex two years ago, and now its show kitchen and dining room are as exciting as its rolls. Under a whimsical mural, diners can enjoy salty grilled edamame, the architectural spicy sesame seared tuna roll, and the restaurant's peachy namesake cocktail. [eatamakara.com](http://eatamakara.com).

## Burma! Burma! //

Tucked into an unassuming strip mall is a culinary journey to Myanmar. Start with traditional tea leaf salad, move on to minted jalapeño chicken with extra heat from sambal chili sauce, and wash it all down with a Myanmar Lager. Black sticky rice makes a sweet finish, with brown sugar, coconut milk, condensed milk, and a scoop of ice cream. [burmaburma.com](http://burmaburma.com).



FROM LEFT: NADER KHOURI; MICHAEL WANG



**Blossom Bee //**

Here, you can order a savory or sweet crepe—or just give in and get both. On the savory side are breakfast (Dublin Rancheros with salsa), lunch (chicken pesto with mozzarella), seafood (smoked salmon and cream cheese), and Thai options (massaman coconut curry). On the sweet side are classics (Nutella lover) and fun twists (s'mores). [blossombeecrepes.com](http://blossombeecrepes.com).

**Casa Orozco //**

This family-friendly favorite has expanded multiple times over the years, creating a cavernous but spirited space. Arroz con pollo is comfort on a plate, with chicken and rice covered in enchilada sauce and melted Jack. Or sample a piping-hot bowl of barbacoa or chili verde with a stack of tortillas. It could take a lifetime to try all the tequilas and margaritas on offer. [casaorozco.com](http://casaorozco.com).

**Chaat Bhavan //**

There's often a wait at this Indian vegetarian eatery, the third location in a mini chain of local family-owned restaurants. The Northern Indian menu includes an extensive snacks section (*pani poori*, *hakka* noodles) as well as house-made breads (*paratha*, *roti*, *naan*), in addition to entrées such as *malai paneer*: cheese cooked with spices in a creamy sauce. [chaatbhavan.com](http://chaatbhavan.com).

**Coco Cabana //**

This lively restaurant, lounge, and bar brings the heat and vibe of Latin America. Go with a group and sample several things off the tapas menu, including spicy shrimp ceviche, lamb lollipops with chimichurri, and charred corn on the cob with cayenne and feta. Then toast to friendship over sangrias or mojitos. [cococabanadublin.com](http://cococabanadublin.com).

**Denica's Real Food Kitchen //**

Before it expanded to Livermore and Castro Valley, Denica's was a tiny Dublin breakfast spot with giant cinnamon rolls. Start the

day with something new from its wide-ranging menu: purple ube pancakes, andouille pigs in a blanket, chilaquiles, kalua pig *loco moco*, or avocado toast. There's lunch too, but why not order more breakfast? [denicascafe.com](http://denicascafe.com).

**Hana Japan Steak and Seafood //**

Nearly every Dublin resident has celebrated a birthday or special occasion at this entertaining teppanyaki restaurant, and many of them are pictured in the photo collage at the entrance. Showy tableside cooking with your own private chef may be pricey, but the melt-in-your mouth freshly seared cubes of filet mignon or salmon are worth it. [hanajapan.com](http://hanajapan.com).

**Inc 82 Brewing //**

This microbrewery and restaurant is named after the year Dublin incorporated as a city. Pick a spot on its large outdoor patio, and dig into mango habanero wings, poke nachos, or a Dublin burger with classic fixings and comeback sauce. On tap are several house IPAs, as well as Oregon-made ciders. [inc82.com](http://inc82.com).

**Khyber Pass Kabob //**

Owned by two sisters who are daughters of immigrants, this colorfully decorated spot offers a taste of Afghan culture. Try authentic dishes such as mantoo (dumplings stuffed with ground beef and Afghan spices served with yogurt sauce) and *quabili pallow* (basmati rice with lamb topped with raisins, almonds, and carrots). [khyberpass-kabob.com](http://khyberpass-kabob.com).

**Koi Palace //**

The dim sum selections here draw a weekend crowd often queued up along the Ulferts Center walkway. Once you're in, there's

so much to try, from the colorful rainbow Shanghai dumplings sampler to classic shrimp shumai. There's also a menu of Cantonese favorites such as Peking duck and beef chow fun. Call ahead for a whole roasted suckling pig. [koipalace.com](http://koipalace.com).

**Market Tavern //**

Taking over the former Mimi's Cafe spot two years ago, Market Tavern serves up a range of comfort eats, from wood-fired pizzas to beef Stroganoff to Nashville fried chicken. Week-end brunch includes huevos rancheros and griddled corn bread with poached eggs. Swing through the market on your way out for ready-to-go meals, fresh bread, and specialty goods. [markettaverndub.com](http://markettaverndub.com). ■

**OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT:** AT HANA JAPAN STEAK AND SEAFOOD, GUESTS CAN WITNESS TABLESIDE COOKING FROM A PERSONAL CHEF; ENJOY TEA LEAF SALAD, GARLIC NOODLES, AND MORE AT BURMA BURMA. **THIS PAGE:** INC 82 BREWING'S BLUE BURGER, WITH BLUE CHEESE AND FRIED ONIONS, COMES WITH A BASKET OF FRIES.