Day trip
Davis

Why go now: March is the perfect time to get schooled on Davis’s finer qualities: bike-friendly streets, one-of-a-kind retail, and farm food at its freshest. The scene: A loosely wound downtown with shops and galleries. West of that, the parklike campus of UC Davis.

Unofficial nickname: Bicycle Capital of the U.S.
Total miles of bike lanes, paths, and trails: 135
Hall of fame: Hit the U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame to see the 1984 bike and Tour de France yellow jersey of Greg LeMond (10–2 Sat; $5; 303 Third St.; usbhof.org). Load up on goodies: Saturday mornings, the Davis Farmers Market overflows with Sac Valley bounty (Fourth St. at C St.; davisfarmersmarket.org). Dinner and a show: Try the grass-fed beef pot roast at Tucos ($$; 180 G St.; 530/757-6600) before an on-campus concert at the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts (off Old Davis Rd.; mondaviarts.org).

Spring spirit: Catch the chemistry magic show and battle of the marching bands at the 98th annual UC Davis Picnic Day (Apr 21; picniday.ucdavis.edu).

1. Spin some spokes
Hand-signals down, the best way to get around town is the Davis Bike Loop. Meandering for about 12 miles through parks, past spring blooms, and along dedicated paths and quiet residential streets, the flat route allows leisurely riding for all ages and skill levels. cityofdavis.org/bicycles
2. Warm-beverage break
Coffeehouses don't come any mellower than Mishka's, with its brick red walls, soft lighting, and grad students tapping on MacBooks. Need to rev it up a bit? Try a Dark Balkan Night, a triple-shot mocha made (as all coffee drinks here are) with house-roasted organic beans. 610 Second St.; 530/757-0811.

3. A sip and a song
Develop an intimate relationship with silky Yolo County Syrah and other small-lot, unfiltered vintages at Rominger West Winery. A corner of the production floor serves as a tasting room, and Friday nights (5:30-7:30 p.m.) draw a locals' crowd for the live tunes. Closed Sun; $5 tasting fee; 4602 Second St.; romingerwest.com.

4. You'll only find it here
Found, a pocket-size boutique, brims with reasonably priced curios from around the globe. Pining for a quilt fashioned from vintage saris? Or intricate Victorian rings, lockets, and fobs? Look no further. Closed Sun; 132 E St.; 530/757-1075.

5. Meet all your vegetables
Bet you didn't know that carrots didn't get their trademark orange color until the 17th century. The UC Davis Good Life Garden is packed with fun facts like this, as well as an ever-changing edible landscape. The 1.5-acre garden is at the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science, where you can see student winemakers and brewers at work. 392 Old Davis Rd.; goodlife@ucdavis.edu.

Take it home
For dinner tonight: a thick, marbled porterhouse steak from student-raised beef that's butchered on campus in a federally inspected facility. Available at the UC Davis Meat Lab. 1-5 p.m. Wed-Fri, Cole Facility Building C on L Street; animalscience.ucdavis.edu/facilities/meat.htm.

Getting there
Davis is about 15 miles west of Sacramento on I-80.

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