



City of
OAKLAND
California

News from: Economic & Workforce Development Department

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Free Walking Tours Offer Glimpse of Downtown Oakland's History and Ongoing Renaissance

Oakland, CA – Downtown Oakland's continuing renaissance has captured national media attention, with Uptown emerging as a premier arts and entertainment destination. Local residents and visitors can glimpse both today's happening scene and landmarks from Oakland's past during the 2018 Oakland Tours season.

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Free 90-minute walking tours of downtown Oakland will be offered every Wednesday and Saturday from May to October. The twice weekly guided tours showcase the city's changing skyline, landmarks, churches and high-rises.

The six-month-long tour season ensures ample opportunity to take in each of the eight different tour itineraries. Each tour, led by a volunteer guide, begins at 10 a.m. from various starting locations depending on the itinerary. Reservations are recommended by leaving a message on the Tours' 24-hour hotline at (510) 238-3234 or via email to aallen@oaklandnet.com. The tour brochure, itinerary descriptions, dates and starting locations are available at oaklandnet.com/walkingtours.

Tour 1 – Old Oakland

This tour explores the 1870s business district where carefully restored brick commercial buildings now house offices, galleries and eateries. The historic district is a visible reminder of Oakland's designation in 1869 as the Western Terminus of the Transcontinental Railroad. The tour starts in front of Ratto's Market & Deli, 821 Washington Street. Tour 1 will be offered May 5, May 30, June 23, July 21, August 1, September 29 and October 27.

Tour 2 – City Center

Explore the upbeat style of modern City Center, alongside restored historic landmarks like the Tribune Tower, the Rotunda Building and City Hall. The tour starts in Frank Ogawa Plaza, in front of City Hall. Tour 2 will be offered May 16, June 13, July 7, August 8, September 8, September 26 and October 10.

Tour 3 – Uptown to the Lake

Nestled among the many new restaurants and clubs, Oakland's vibrant art deco-era landmarks, including the Fox Oakland Theater, the Paramount Theatre and the jazzy blue and silver Floral Depot Building, are the focus of this tour. The tour also features the Kaiser Center's "secret" rooftop garden overlooking Lake Merritt. The tour starts in front of the Paramount Theatre at 2025 Broadway. Tour 3 will be offered on May 26, June 9, July 18, August 22, September 12, October 6 and October 31.

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Tour 4 – Preservation Park

On this tour, view fine details of the Victorian architecture of several 19th century houses that have been relocated and restored as a nonprofit office and meeting complex in a tranquil setting. The tour starts at the entrance to Preservation Park at 13th Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Tour 4 will be offered on May 9, June 2, July 28, August 11, September 5 and October 13.

Tour 5 – Oakland Chinatown

Explore this multi-ethnic downtown district packed with shops, restaurants and cultural institutions and learn about the contributions made by Chinese and other Asian immigrants to California's history. The tour starts at the courtyard fountain in the Pacific Renaissance Plaza at 388 Ninth Street. Tour 5 will be offered on May 19, June 27, July 4, August 4, August 29, September 22 and October 24.

Tour 6 – Jack London Waterfront

Follow the footsteps of Oakland's famous literary son Jack London and see some of his favorite haunts. Visit a wholesale produce market that has been in operation since the early 1900s, alongside newly built residential developments. The tour starts by the Jack London Square entry arch at the foot of Broadway. Tour 6 will be offered on May 12, June 6, June 30, July 11, August 18, September 1 and October 3.

Tour 7 – Churches and Temples

Visit historic places of worship and learn about their influence on the history of Oakland. Featured buildings include the First Presbyterian Church, First Congregational Church and Temple Sinai. The tour starts in front of the First Presbyterian Church at 2619 Broadway, Tour 7 will be offered on May 23, June 16, July 25, August 25, September 19, and October 20.

Tour 8 – New Era/New Politics

This tour highlights African-American leaders who have made their mark on Oakland. Learn how Lionel Wilson, Delilah Beasley, Robert Maynard and Byron Rumford changed the city and the Bay Area. The tour starts at the African American Museum and Library at 659 14th Street. Tour 8 will be offered on May 2, June 20, July 14, August 15, September 15 and October 17.

The free walking tours are a program of the Economic & Workforce Development Department's Cultural Affairs Division. During the 2017 season, nearly 1,800 residents, visitors and school children toured downtown Oakland on these guided walks.

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