



Oakland, Berkeley and most of the surrounding towns aren't full of big-box stores or mega-malls. They are networks of communities rich with old-fashioned neighborhood shopping districts, including antique shops, chic boutiques, and ethnic treasure houses. Ethnic shops abound in Chinatown and the Latin-flavored Fruitvale district, while College Avenue and Piedmont are lined with upscale stores.

BAY STREET, EMERYVILLE

This is more of a traditional mall with an urban twist. Encompassing two city blocks, Bay Street is home to more than 65 shops, 10 restaurants, and a 16-screen AMC theatre. Its retail line-up includes Apple, Sephora, Pottery Barn, Banana Republic, H&M and Bebe, Gap, Coach, Old Navy, PF Changs, California Pizza Kitchen to name just some. Weekend concerts and street performers create an active nightlife and popular downtown alternative. 5616 Bay Street, Emeryville, Ca. • baystreetemeryville.com

ELMWOOD DISTRICT, COLLEGE AVE, BERKELEY

The Elmwood Shopping Area is located on College Avenue in Berkeley between the U.C. Berkeley University area and the Rockridge Shopping district. The shops here are more neighborhood in type and at the same time include great restaurants and coffee shops. College Ave between UC Berkeley and Rockridge • elmwoodshop.com

FOURTH STREET, BERKELEY

This district is distinguished by a very open and accessible area with an incredible array of upscale and unique one-of-a-kind shops along with some favorite chains such as the Crate & Barrel outlet store, Anthropologie, Restoration Hardware and Z Gallerie. Located in Berkeley immediately off the University exit on the 80/580 freeway. • 4thstreetshop.com

FRUITVALE DISTRICT, OAKLAND

The flavor of this expanding neighborhood is defined by its many Latino residents-as well as by several large, colorful murals. Browse ethnic specialty stores, food shops, and clothing boutiques. When you get hungry, stop in at one of the area's many restaurants and taquerias, where you're likely to find the perfect enchilada. www.fruitvalemerchants.com

HISTORIC PARK STREET, ALAMEDA

Take a stroll back in time and shop the boutiques and restaurants in a newly restored downtown section of historic Alameda. Once home to a closed Naval Air Station, Alameda has undergone a facelift and now caters to young families and a hip single crowd. Park Street between Encinal Ave and Buena Vista Ave, Alameda, Ca. 510.523.1392 • shopparkstreet.com

MONTCLAIR VILLAGE, OAKLAND

Stroll through this residential neighborhood's narrow, picturesque streets and you'll get an idea how this area earned its moniker. The locals are prone to sip coffee, whiling away their days on benches scattered along the main thoroughfare. You'll want to take full advantage of the great specialty shops, fine boutiques, and children's clothing and toy stores. • montclairvillage.com

PIEDMONT AVENUE, OAKLAND

Like its longer counterpart, College Avenue, this busy neighborhood street in the northern part of Oakland draws scores of shoppers, both local and out-of-area. Particularly known for its vintage and antique shops, this small stretch of commercial buildings is also home to specialty boutiques, gourmet food stores, restaurants, cafés, and bars. For a bite to eat after window shopping, stop in at the ever-popular Piedmont Grocery, or treat the kids to a giant sundae at the old-fashioned Fenton's Creamery and Restaurant.

ROCKRIDGE, COLLEGE AVE, OAKLAND

Stretching from Alcatraz to Broadway, the beautiful Rockridge area contains many gourmet and specialty food shops along with many unique clothing, jewelry and children's stores. There are some wonderful coffee houses, each with their own character and reputation. There are also 35 restaurants from formal to casual plus Market Hall, a gourmet food hall. College Ave between Alcatraz to Broadway, rockridgeshop.com

