

# Art of fruit pie worth the drive in summer

By Noelle Carter, Los Angeles Times



A couple of weeks ago, I was out on the road in Northern California, heading southeast from Sacramento on Highway 16 toward the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. It's a beautiful drive, and on that blistering summer day I might have noticed the massive old oaks dotting the rolling hills or the occasional solitary weathered barn as the highway shimmered in the heat up ahead. But I was on a mission.

I hung a right onto Highway 49, heading toward the heart of California's Gold Country. "Historic 49," as it's often called, meanders through scenic little Gold Rush towns with names like Drytown and Sutter Creek before continuing on toward Jackson and Angels Camp, where one Samuel Clemens originally made a name for himself under the pen name Mark Twain, writing about a jumping frog. But I wasn't out for the scenery, or a history lesson.

I wanted pie.

Fresh blackberry pie, to be exact. I stopped in Amador City and walked down the wooden plank sidewalk to Buffalo Chips Emporium, a tiny storefront diner complete with an old-fashioned soda fountain, and ordered a slice of pie from owner Ashley Putz as she worked the griddle behind the counter.

It came still warm, its sugar-dusted crust glittering in the sunlight through the front window, the light, flaky exterior

quietly shattering under the fork with each bite. Underneath, the rich berry filling oozed slightly – the thick, sweet glaze cradling tender, slightly tart berries that seemed to pop with every mouthful. It was magical.

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