

## Need a Little Retail Therapy? Make Your Way to San Jose

**SAN JOSE, CA** — The hub of Silicon Valley is both prosperous and diverse, which equals a dynamic and colorful shopping experience. From the rich flavors of Japantown to the high-end fashions of Santana Row, from big malls to quaint neighborhoods, you'll find plenty of places to unwind with a little retail therapy. For a start, head to one of the city's oldest neighborhoods.

### Japantown

"We're the new kids on the block," jokes the clerk at **Nikaku Japanese Arts**. "We've only been here 20 years—some shops have been here more than 100 years!" In San Jose's Japantown, along Jackson Street centered at 4th Street, history and heritage blend to create a shopping district that is both colorful and unique. Gourmet cooks pop into the **Nijiya Market** for rare and exotic spices, an astonishing array of dried mushrooms, and fresh fish from salmon to octopus. Since 1902, **Nichi Bei Bussan** has displayed its silken kimonos alongside house wares and, more recently, martial arts gear. And after strolling the neighborhood, if you're hungry, you can nosh on everything from shave ice to sushi. For more details, check [www.japantownsanjose.org](http://www.japantownsanjose.org).

### Downtown

In San Jose's downtown core, you'll find colorful little alleyways are alive with shopping. Start at Plaza de Cesar Chavez and head east along charming Paseo de San Antonio. The flower-lined pedestrian mall is filled with surprises, from **Mosher's** and **Rosies & Posies Florist** to **Circle-A Skateboards**, at the edge of the SJSU campus. Near the convention center, in the historic district on First Street, there are several boutique clothing and jewelry stores, as well as day spas where you can get a quick pedicure or other relaxing treatment.

And most Fridays, the **Downtown Farmer's Market at San Pedro Square** transforms the Square with vivid colors and flavors from the freshest locally grown California fruits and vegetables (open from 10-2, it runs Fridays between May and the second Friday in December). There's usually live music to keep you entertained, and an array of unique crafts and gift vendors have added to the vivid hues of the produce displays. And if you're hungry, there are always tasty treats, from **Greenlee's Cinnamon Bread** (a local tradition) to **Tony's Crepes**. For more shopping options downtown, check [www.sjdowntown.com](http://www.sjdowntown.com).

Other farmer's markets to look for include those in Santana Row, Japantown, and nearby Campbell, Los Gatos, and Sunnyvale.

### Santana Row

Just a short cab ride from downtown, Santana Row is the city's hippest shopping enclave. It has a kind of 'Silicon Valley meets Mediterranean village' vibe, with the sidewalk tables, outdoor fire pit, and balconied architecture. See a movie (at **CineArts Theatre**), wander the shops, dozens of restaurants, or pop into any of five spas. Or make a weekend of it at the stylish **Hotel Valencia**. It's a comfortable blend of high-end (**Burberry, Gucci**) and accessible (**Ann Taylor, Chico's, The Container Store**) plus unique stores like **Vintage Wine Merchants**. Soon, European clothing retailer **H&M** opens its first South Bay location at Santana Row.

Insiders like Theresa Stenger, Santana Row's Director of Marketing, are happy to reveal a few secrets to help you make the most of your shopping day. "Shop Saturday mornings," advises Stenger. "The crowds are lightest before noon, and often Santana Row has free events on Saturdays, so you can take a break from shopping and enjoy free music and other entertainment." And when it's busy and you just can't find a parking spot? "Valet park it—only \$5 for the entire day." Simply drop off your car at either the Hotel Valencia (between Olin Avenue and Tatum Lane) or next to CineArts (on Olsen Drive). For a complete list of shops, check [www.SantanaRow.com](http://www.SantanaRow.com).

### Great malls

For one-stop shopping, and pure retail therapy, you can't do better than Silicon Valley's wonderful malls. At **Westfield's Oakridge** and **Valley Fair** locations, new stores are opening all the time and the conveniences are as amazing as the shops: try free shopping bags and carry-out, or mommy-to-be parking. With a swanky hotel, **The Pruneyard** can turn a shopping trip into a vacation. Out on Saratoga Avenue, at the **Westgate Mall**, you can browse for deals at **Nordstrom's Rack** or catch a movie at the multiplex.

A short drive takes you to the ginormous **Great Mall** of the Bay Area in nearby Milpitas, housed in a former Ford automotive plant; from **Neiman Marcus Last Call** to **OFF 5th Saks Fifth Avenue**, it has something for everyone. It's just a 30-minute drive south, off U.S. 101, to the bargains at the **Gilroy Premium Outlets**, offering everything from **Ann Taylor** to **Polo Ralph Lauren** and a little trolley to hop on for shoppers who get too pooped from trying to hit all 145 of the outlets here.

Head north about 30 minutes to Palo Alto and you'll find the **Stanford Shopping Center**, where elegant shops (**Neiman Marcus**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Nordstrom's**) and hip restaurants are surrounded by blooming flowers and 35 varieties of trees; coming soon, the over-the-top fashions of **Betsey Johnson**.

### East San Jose

San Jose's fast-growing population of Vietnamese-Americans has brought the vivid colors and piquant aromas of Southeast Asia to the business area along Story Road, near Senter Road. From what was once a handful of shops and cafes, now more than 200 unique Vietnamese shops thrive, from noodle houses and grocery stores to music shops and pho cafes. Look for a new Vietnam Town Mall coming soon.

Out on Berryessa Road, the **San Jose Flea Market**, remains the largest open-air flea market in America. It opened in 1960, but remains an ever-changing experience; among its 120 acres of booths, some change every weekend. Picture the pages of EBay come to life and you'll get a sense of the range of goods sold here—from palm trees to perfumes, cell phones to jewelry. The most impressive sight is the blocks-long Produce Row, where locals in the know come to find vine-ripened tomatoes, papayas, and dried chilies galore (varieties like arbol and puya). The flea market is open dawn-dusk Wednesday-Sunday; parking is \$1 weekdays and \$5 weekends. For more details, visit [www.sjfm.com](http://www.sjfm.com).

### Willow Glen

Drive down the neighborhood's main drag, Lincoln Avenue between Willow and Minnesota streets, and you'll see a sign that says, "Smile, You're in Willow Glen". And you do just that in this family-friendly, tree-lined San Jose neighborhood. Young moms push SUV-like strollers past a street dotted with a few chain outfits and a lot of unique shops: **Powell's Sweet Shoppe** (loaded with every candy you remember from childhood, plus ice cream and fresh chocolates); **Wine Styles** (grouped by flavor profiles and most under \$25), **Love & Peace Showplace** (antiques and home furnishings). Then relax on the patio of **Aqui**, for a great burrito and their famous avocado margarita. For a full store and restaurant list, go to [www.downtownwillowglen.org](http://www.downtownwillowglen.org).

### Los Gatos

Tucked in the foothills a few miles east of San Jose, quaint Los Gatos offers a mix of upscale and laid-back shopping. It's a town that looks forward while revering its past: many shops are in restored historic landmark buildings. Stroll its well-shaded main thoroughfare, **Santa Cruz Avenue**, and you'll find one-of-a-kind boutiques like **Time Out Clothing** and high-end chain stores like **Domus**. For more, check (<http://losgatoschamber.com/shopping.html>).

Whether you're looking for high-end shopping, antiques, ethnic treasures or bargains, San Jose offers a great variety of places to get a little retail therapy.

### About The San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB)

The San Jose Convention & Visitors Bureau (SJCVB) mission is to enhance the image and economic well being of San Jose by marketing San Jose as a globally recognized destination. The SJCVB offers visitors, meeting planners, and tour operators, a range of services to ensure a successful event and fun visit to San Jose. For a copy of the Official Visitors Guide, please contact the SJCVB at 1.800.SAN.JOSE (1.800.726.5673) or visit <http://www.sanjose.org>.

