

This bustling arts-and-culture hub is equal parts grit and grandeur.

By Allison McCarthy



UPTOWN

Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY



Iconic music venues. Galleries promoting Bay Area artists. Hot bars mobbed by stylish patrons. If you think you're in San Francisco, guess again—Oakland is just as lively these days. Creatives of all stripes have fled S.F.'s crazy rents to put down roots here. The heart of the action is in Uptown, where a slew of restaurants and shops have popped up amid grand art deco architecture, old brick buildings, and swanky new condos. The Saturday afternoon art stroll is catnip for gallery hoppers. But right now, Uptown is bumping any day of the week.

MAP: MARGARET SOGAN/OPENSTREETMAPS.ORG



10 A.M. Grab a sweet, flaky kouign-amann pastry from **Firebrand Artisan Breads** (firebrandbread.com), then take it a few doors down to the shipping-container outpost of local roaster **Red Bay Coffee** (redbaycoffee.com) in the industrial-chic Hive courtyard.

11 A.M. Walk east to **Lake Merritt Boating Center** (oaklandnet.com) and rent a kayak, canoe, or pedal boat for a leisurely ride with a view of Uptown's skyline. On Oakland's beloved (albeit brackish) lake, you'll also float by architectural gems like the Doric columns of the Oakland Scottish Rite Center.

12:30 P.M. Expect a line out the door at Korean-Mexican **Belly** (bellyuptown.com), but don't worry—tables turn over quickly. Try the Korean Cali Fries topped with sirlain, kimchi, and a fried egg. Save room for a treat two blocks east: a scoop of the caramel-bourbon-pean Dirty South at **Little Giant Ice Cream** (littlegianticecream.com).

2:30 P.M. Discover contemporary work by emerging and mid-career artists at **Vessel Gallery** (vessel-gallery.com), housed in a spacious former horse livery. Then, two blocks



Clockwise from above: Itani Ramen; Latham Square at Telegraph Avenue and Broadway; sneakers at SoleSpace. Opposite: Vessel Gallery.

south, walk through a gorgeous arched-brick doorway and into **Chandra Cerreto Contemporary** (chandracerretotemporary.com) to check out installations by the current artist in residence.

4:30 P.M. Locals are fiercely proud of their town, and they wear their pride on anything you can screen-print. At **Oaklandish** (oaklandish.com), pick up a T-shirt



GETTING HERE South of Grand Avenue, Uptown is served by the 19th Street BART stop.

blaring Oakland love and you'll fit right in. Two blocks away on Telegraph Avenue, the light-flooded **Sole Space** (solespace.com) carries limited-edition Pumas and Adidas Originals—kicks worthy of this West Coast hip-hop capital.

6 P.M. Ease into a temperate Bay Area evening with a warm bowl of miso pork ramen at **Itani Ramen** (itaniramen.com), a two-year-old spot from the chef behind neighborhood fave Hopscotch.

7:30 P.M. Stroll over to **Starline Social Club** (starlinesocialclub.com) for a drink in a historic Victorian that was once an Odd Fellows hall. Grab a seat at the bar or a cozy two-person booth, and hit up the smart cocktail list. The DJ starts spinning at 9 p.m. ▶



PERFECT NIGHT Hotels are scarce, but Airbnbs abound. After a day of exploring, return to a Victorian flat a short walk from the heart of Uptown. From \$111 (3-night min.); airbnb.com/rooms/6766479.