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## Oakland Is Officially the Coolest City in California Right Now

In case you haven't heard, Oakland, California, is hella awesome! Rach's bud Brittney Cade shared with us how this sister city to San Francisco is a worthy destination unto itself.

KAREN SOLOMON · SEP 12, 2018

### WHAT TO DO

#### Oakland Museum of California

[museumca.org](http://museumca.org)

A masterpiece of late-1960s design, OMCA has “a cool lawn area and art that's vibrant and daring,” says Cade. Go on Friday nights for the half-price admission, food trucks, and 10 p.m. closing time.

#### Lake Merritt

[lakemerritt.org](http://lakemerritt.org)

Walk the three-mile loop around this picturesque lagoon (or run it, as Cade's husband, Green Day bassist Mike Dirnt, does), take a gondola ride, or just explore shops in the area. If you have kids, don't miss the retro Children's Fairyland amusement park.

#### Oakland First Fridays

[oaklandfirstfridays.org](http://oaklandfirstfridays.org)

This street-art crawl is “so colorful and hipster-chic,” says Cade. Start at West Grand and Telegraph Avenues and eat, drink, and walk your way through blocks of street performances, food trucks, and people-watching opportunities.

#### Grand Lake Theatre

[renaissancerialto.com](http://renaissancerialto.com)

Built in 1926, the Vaudeville theater-turned-cineplex—complete with organ preludes before Friday and Saturday night shows—pairs blockbusters with architectural opulence. “It's like stepping back in time,” says Cade.

#### Mercy Vintage

[mercyvintage.com](http://mercyvintage.com)

Find pieces like a Céline silk set, Valentino stilettos, and 1980s novelty tops at this decades-spanning shop. “The owners, Karen Anderson Fort and Rachel Cubra, have such a unique eye,” says Cade. “I always find a treasure there!”

## WHERE TO EAT

### Shan Dong Restaurant

[shandongoakland.com](http://shandongoakland.com)

Visit Oakland’s Chinatown to gawk at its colorful murals, then join the queue at Shan Dong Restaurant for hand-pulled noodles, succulent pork dumplings, and crisp onion pancakes. Totally worth the wait.

### Commis

[commisrestaurant.com](http://commisrestaurant.com)

Oakland’s only Michelin-starred restaurant, this eclectic New American spot (striped bass with chicory, slow-poached eggs with dates) is splurge-worthy dining at its best. You can reserve a table in the dining room or sit at the kitchen bar like Cade does: “That way, you can watch what the chefs are doing.”

## WHERE TO STAY

### Waterfront Hotel

[jdvhoteles.com](http://jdvhoteles.com)

The upscale Jack London Square hotel features nautical vibes (oar-printed wallpaper, compass-patterned carpets), a heated pool and bay-facing balconies. Easy ferry access into San Francisco and a free shuttle to public transit (BART) are a boon to those exploring the city without a car.