



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Santa Fe Trail
(Tulare)**
California



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California

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The 19th-century railroad-building boom brought the town of Tulare into existence in California's Central Valley. More than 100 years later, the town transformed a former railroad spur into the Santa Fe Trail, which connects residential areas on both ends with the downtown commercial district.

The 5-mile paved trail takes an east-west route that is as flat as the surrounding valley; the only exception is the ramp up to a pedestrian bridge that crosses an active railroad line. Much of the trail, except through downtown, is accompanied by a bridle path separated by a fence.

The valley is cloudy and cool in the winter but hot as blazes in the summer. You will find about a dozen drinking fountains to quench your thirst along the way, or

you can escape the heat by strolling beneath the streetlights that illuminate the trail at night through downtown. Although there's no leafy canopy, trees planted along the corridor offer occasional shade.

The town was founded in 1872 as a regional headquarters for the Southern Pacific Railroad. It was named for nearby Tulare Lake, whose name comes from the tules (bulrushes) that the Indigenous people of the area fashioned into reed boats and more for centuries. The lake has since dried up, and the town faced a similar fate when the railroad headquarters moved away. Instead, the town built canals and adopted other dry-land agricultural practices that have made the area a dairy industry leader.

The trail follows a spur line once operated by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. It opened in 2004, 10 years after the railroad ceased operations. Popular for recreation, the trail also runs within a half mile of virtually all of Tulare's schools to enable safe student travel.

Starting at the northeast edge of town on Prosperity Avenue, you'll notice a separate, fenced horse path paralleling the paved trail. This dirt path goes 2.2 miles to North Cherry Street, then resumes on the other side of downtown for a 0.9-mile run between North West Street and the trail's terminus at West Inyo Avenue/CA 137.

Near the trail's northeastern end, the trail arrives at Live Oak Park, where you'll find parking, ball fields, restrooms, and picnic shelters. In another half mile, you'll cross over the busy Golden State Highway/CA 99, then go another mile to downtown, with its variety of restaurants, bus station, and library, among other amenities.

To take the pedestrian overpass across an active rail line, cross North K Street, go a half block north, and then turn left at the sidewalk that leads to the ramp. You'll pick up the trail on North I Street and continue west through a residential area



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States: California

Counties: Kings, Tulare

Length: 5 miles

Trail end points: E Prosperity Ave, 0.4 mile east of N Mooney Blvd (Tulare) to W Inyo Ave/ CA 137 & W Souls Dr

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Dirt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline

Skating, Wheelchair Accessible, Horseback Riding, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at a number of locations along the trail. Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all options, available transit lines, and detailed directions.

To access the northeast trailhead, take State Route 99 to E. Prosperity Avenue. Follow the road east for 1.6 miles. The trailhead is on the right. There is no parking here, but a shopping center 0.5 mile west on E. Prosperity has plenty of parking.

To access the southwest trailhead, take SR 99 to E. Tulare Avenue (SR 137). Go west for 0.8 mile, turn left and follow M Street for two blocks. Turn right and follow W. Inyo Avenue for 2 miles. The trailhead is at the intersection of W. Inyo and W. Souls Dr. There is no parking at the trailhead, but you can look for parking in the neighborhood south of W. Souls Dr.

Parking is also available at Live Oak Park (600 N Laspina St, Tulare) and there is municipal parking on 463 N J Street, between E Cross Avenue and E San Joaquin Avenue.



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