



## ---FUN DESTINATIONS---

submitted for NRI Flying Club by Sean Calhoun

### Fun Destinations: Angels Camp, CA

*By Kristine Zeigler*

**Fly into:** Columbia, O22.

**Activities nearby:** Columbia State Park, Sierra foothills gold mining history, panning for gold, farmer's market at the airport, Angels Camp's annual [Frogtown](#) USA parade, fair and amphibian leaping contest.

**What we did:** We called a taxi to take us to the Calaveras County Fair and Jumping Frog Jubilee, an event made famous by Mark Twain's short story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," published in 1865. The taxi driver spoke few words, as befitted his barrel-shaped chest, tattoos, nose ring and bald head. He didn't seem to mind the long drive to Angel's Camp, as he would make a nice cash-only fare. We had no idea it would cost so much, but we consoled ourselves by rationalizing that we were supporting the local economy. And possibly a "Sons of Anarchy" motorcycle club member. Once we arrived at the fairgrounds, the joyful frogs were everywhere – on wine labels, t-shirts, tote bags, baby bibs, aprons and carnival rides.

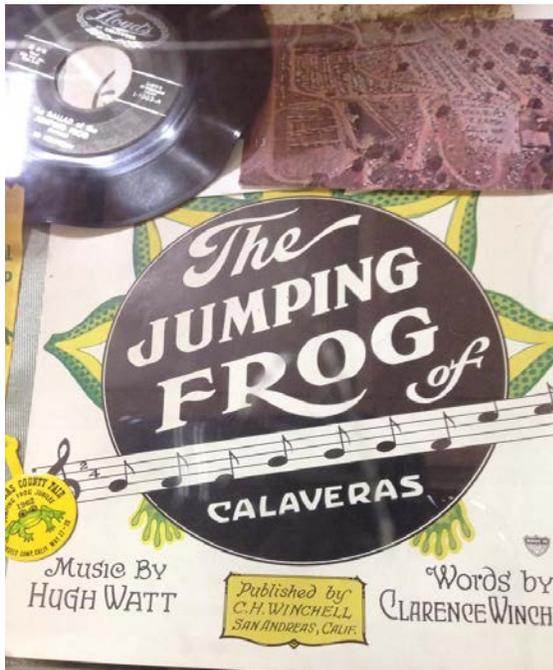


The atmosphere is undeniably American and evocative of small-town character and entertainment that the ghost of Mark Twain would still appreciate. Twain can still be found here. You can take pictures with him for a few dollars at the booth near the jumping frog contest stage.



The biggest event is not the jumping frog contest, which pulls in hundreds of spectators, but the late afternoon destruction derby, which draws thousands of locals rooting on teams competing in American-only hardtop model stock cars and station wagons. We stuck to the frogs, and enjoyed watching the jockeys and their crews preparing the frogs in an attempt to beat the world record holder Rosie the Ribiter, whose jump of 21 feet and five and one-quarter inches has not been beat since 1986. This year's event takes place Sunday May 22, 2016. Find a full schedule [here](#).

The county fair is a real hoot – there are 4-H displays where kids show off their rabbits, calves and goats and almost everyone is a winner when it comes to the quilts, cookies, pies and artwork contests.



**Notes:** The FBO at Columbia does not have a crew car. Had we known, we would have flown to Calaveras County Airport instead, which has a pickup truck for pilots, not to mention an airport cat and parakeet (KCPU). Hertz and Enterprise are both located near the Columbia Airport and would probably be cheaper than our cab fare. But you can easily walk to town to visit [Columbia State Park](#), which has the state's best preserved Gold Rush buildings and pioneer atmosphere. In fact, on the weekends there are usually dozens of volunteers who dress in period clothing and sell handcrafted housewares, candles and food on the main street. We love the Seven Sisters Soap and Candle Shop – most recently we purchased autumn-colored taper candles for our Thanksgiving meal and several black Millennium Falcon and R2-D2-shaped *Star Wars* soaps. For lunch we love El Jardin at 22758 Broadway Street. Prior to flying back, we always get a coffee or some dessert at the Fallon House Ice Cream Parlor. The friendly service and 19<sup>th</sup> century décor take you back in time.

On Wednesdays and Saturdays you can pick up local produce, organic foods and products at the indoor farmer's market located in the former armory adjacent to the airport.

The airport has a [campground](#) and the prices can't be beat – just \$8 per night. In June the airport hosts a [Father's Day fly-in](#).

**Contact Information:** Benedict Stuth, Airports Manager. Phone: (209) 533-5685. Hertz (209) 588-1575. Enterprise (209) 533-0500.

**Website:** <http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/index.aspx?NID=372>

*Kristine is a writer and conservation nonprofit executive. Read her [blog](#) and visit her [website](#).*