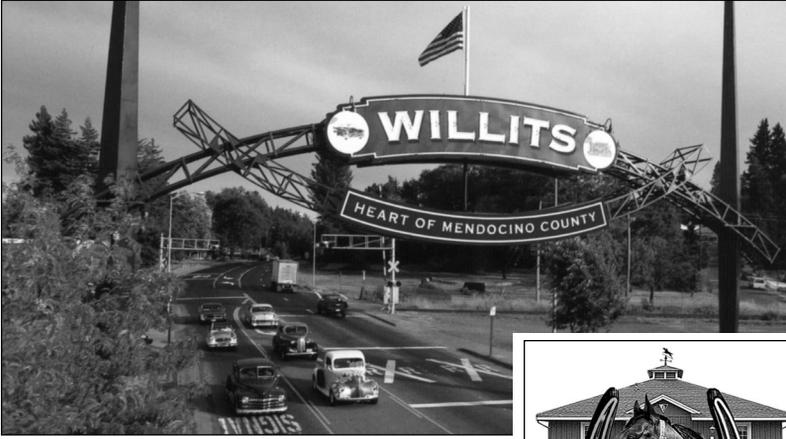


**192 Mendocino County Hwy 20 & Hwy 101 / Willits**

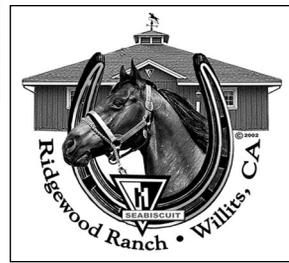
**HWY 101: WILLITS**

**The Geographic Heart of Mendocino County**

Photo Courtesy Willits Chamber of Commerce



*TOP: Downtown Willits is a destination community for rejuvenation, good food, art, book shopping and exploring off-the-grid lifestyles. The Willits sign was a gift from Reno. RIGHT: The historic Seabiscuit Stud Barn is at Ridgewood Ranch south of town.*



Willits is an ideal sized community of around 5,000 people. Located in a high valley (elevation 1,305 feet), it was settled by Pomo Indians who lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years. Pomo artifacts can be seen at the Mendocino County Museum east of town on Commercial Street. In 1855 Sam and Harry Baechtel drove a herd of cattle from Marin to become the first non-Indian settlers in what they came to call Little Lake Valley, due to the large watershed and heavier winter rains of a 100 years ago. According to chamber of commerce literature the Baechtels got along well with the 300 Indians they shared the valley with, inviting them to work on the ranch and erect a sweat lodge near the ranch house.

In 1865 a store was built on Hiram Willit's land and the town of Willitsville grew around it. In 1888, with the advent of the railroad, Willitsville incorporated with a population of 720 and called itself Willits. Lumbering had joined farming as a part of the local economy and the tanbark industry flourished. Farming, lumbering and tourism are an integral part of the present-day Willits economy. The Northwestern Railroad reached Willits in 1901 followed by the "Skunk" line 10 years later. Northwestern completed the line to Eureka in 1914 making Willits the center from San Francisco to Eureka.

A great place to park your car in the summertime shade is beneath the maples lining Willits Community Park, one block east of Main Street (Hwy 101) on Commercial Street. A short walk from the park is the Skunk Train Depot as well as the heart of town with numerous restaurants, galleries, bookstores and giftshops to explore.

## **Hwy 101 / Willits Mendocino County 193**

What makes Willits unique is the fact that many residents run successful businesses on Main Street Willits and return home to a private and quiet life off-the-grid. Off-the-grid living can give one confidence and focus to their lives.

The showroom at Earth Lab on Main Street will peak your interest in perhaps starting a new life in greater harmony with the planet. Author and organic vegetable gardener John Jeavons, who wrote the book "How to Grow \$10,000 Worth of Vegetables in Your Backyard", has an experimental garden east of town where he teaches food self sufficiency on less land than a city lot. For as long as the sun shines the future will be bright for those who live in harmony with this infinite source of wisdom and energy.

A picturesque drive or bicycle ride west of town is on Sherwood Road to Brooktrails Lodge and Golf Course. Originally the stage coach road between Fort Bragg and Willits, the highway climbs and then winds into a picturesque valley. During the hot summers you can go swimming at Brooktrails Lake and also at the Willits City pool by the high school at the north end of town. Numerous motels (many with pools) line Highway 101 south of the heart of Willits and there are campgrounds and RV parks.

### **WILLITS DINER'S CHOICE: Area Code (707)**

**Ardellas** (\$-\$\$), 35 East Commercial 459-6577;  
**Burrito Exquisito** (\$-\$\$), 42 S. Main, 459-5421; **Country Skillet** (\$-\$\$), 708 S. Main, 456-9916; **Fiesta Mexican Rest.** (\$-\$\$), Ridgewood Summit at 16580 N. Hwy 101, 459-4047; **Mariposa Market** (\$-\$\$) Health Foods, 600 S. Main, 459-9630; **Paradise Juice & Coffe House** (\$), 50 S. Main, 459-4750; **Pizza To Go** (\$-\$\$), 50 S. Main, 459-4750; **Purple Thistle** (\$\$), 50 S. Main, 459-4750; **Shanachie Pub** (\$) 50B South Main, 459-9194; **Sugar Magnolia** (\$-\$\$) 212 South Main, in the Country Mall 456-0396.

### **INTERNET ACCESS**

**Besides your local Motel or Bed & Breakfast try:**

**Mama Java's**

25 W. Mendocino, 456-9224

Open daily 10am-5pm

**Willits City Library**

390 E. Commercial, 459-5908

Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm

**ACCOMMODATIONS: Baechtler Creek Inn & Spa** (\$\$), 101 Gregory Lane, 800-459-9911; **Best Western Willits Inn** (\$\$) 1777 S. Main, 459-5800;

**Brooktrails Lodge & Golf Course** (\$\$) [www.brooktrails lodge.com](http://www.brooktrails lodge.com) 459-1596;

**Etta Place** (Bed & Breakfast (\$\$), 909 Exley Ln., 459-5953; **Old West Inn Motel**

(\$\$), 1221 S. Main, 459-4201; **Pine Cone Motel** (\$\$), 1350 S. Main, 459-5044;

**Quail Meadows RV Park & Campground** (\$), 23701 N. Hwy 101, 459-6006;

**White Deer Lodge Motel** (\$), 16680 N. Hwy 101 (ridgetop south of town), 459-

5373; **Willits KOA** (\$), 1600 Hwy 20, 459-6179.

**BOOKSTORES & GALLERIES : Blue Sky Gallery** (\$), 21 S. Main, 456-9025;

**Book Juggler** (\$), (Used Books) 182 S. Main, 459-4075; **Leaves of Grass**

**Bookstore** (\$), 15 S. Main, 459-3744; **Moon Lady** (\$), 100 S. Main, 459-0211;

**Trillium Giftshop** 29 S. Main, 459-6201.

**HEALTH and FITNESS: Brooktrails Golf Course** (\$\$), West on Sherwood Rd

from Hwy 101, 3 miles left on Brooktrails Dr, 459-6761; **Willits City Pool** (\$),

north end of town by high school, 459-5778; **Willits Fitness World** (\$), 1431 S.

Main, 459-6172; **Willits City Park** (Free) Stretch, Walk Dog, Jog, E. Commercial

St, (1block from corner of Main & Commercial).

**ATTRACTIONS: Mendocino County Museum** (\$), 400 E. Commercial, 459-

2736; **Noyo Theater** (\$), 57 E. Commercial, 459-NOYO; **Skunk Train Calif.**

**Western Railroad** (\$\$), 299 E. Commercial, 459-5248.

**194 Mendocino Coast Hwy 101 / Willits**

**BAECHTEL CREEK INN & SPA**

The Baechtel Creek Inn & Spa is the only Inn in Willits that sits right off Hwy 101 in a quiet cul-de-sac. The pool, hot tub and lobby area overlook the Baechtel Creek and is an ideal location to enjoy the expanded continental breakfast. Deluxe,



Premium & Standard rooms are available for \$79 - \$140 off season and \$89 - \$160 on season. Take time to enjoy the luxurious treatments at Spa Baechtel Creek, located on site. They offer a variety of Massages, Facials, Body Treatments & Spa Manicures & Pedicures,

using all natural products that are local to this northern California area. Room amenities include; two line telephones with data ports, voice mail, remote control satellite television, hair dryer, irons & boards, AM-FM alarm clocks, refrigerators & microwaves in the standard rooms. Premium and Deluxe rooms offer additional amenities. They do have a couple of pet friendly rooms.

Willits is called the "Heart of Mendocino County", making it an ideal headquarters for those on business trips or travelers wanting to explore the entire county. Just north of Willits is the famous, "Avenue of the Giants." Just west of Willits is the gorgeous Mendocino Coast and just South of Willits are many award winning wineries. Willits itself is home of Ridgewood Ranch, where Seabiscuit lived. Tours are available. Willits is also home to the Mendocino County Museum, a fascinating look into the history of this area. The Skunk Train has a terminus in town offering trips to Wolf Tree Turn and return to Willits.

**\$\$ BAECHTEL CREEK INN** 101 Gregory Lane, Willits, CA 95490  
Health Spa, Standard, Premium & Deluxe Rooms. Expanded  
Continental Breakfast Heated Pool, Hot Tub & Meeting Room  
Fax: (707) 459-0226 info@baechtelcreek.com www.baechtelcreekinn.com  
(707) 459-9063 AAA Approved 1-800-459-9911

**Hwy 101 / Willits Mendocino County 195**



**MARIPOSA MARKET**

Located in the geographic heart of Mendocino County is the Mariposa Market. Owner Mary Anne Trevey opened the market in 1979 with a commitment to offer the community fresh natural produce and an array of health foods, vitamins and supplements from A-Z. There are also plenty of snack foods and deli items for the road or picnic. Manager Marge Baylor points out this is where the people who eat natural & organic foods meet and network. Like many in Mendocino County, Mary and her family live off the grid with a solar array and small hydroelectric generator. Stop by and say hi to the talented and heart centered staff at Mariposa Market.

**\$-\$\$ MARIPOSA MARKET** 600 S. Main St., Willits, CA. 95490  
*Natural Foods and Life Style Market Approved checks (707) 459-9630*



**PARADISE JUICE & COFFEE HOUSE**

A fun oasis with a tropical decor and



excellent organic juice is the Paradise Cafe in Willits. The spacious and crispy clean interior with natural wood floors and furniture is most "cool" and relaxing. You can dine on soups, salads, sandwiches, specials and cookies, muffins, cakes, breads, scones and brownies. The colorful tropical murals are by artist Larry Todd and enthusiastic help serving up refreshing smoothies, fresh squeezed vegetable and fruit juice drinks and organic wheatgrass helps make the day a big plus. Gourmet espresso drinks, mochas, espresso and lattes are served inside or at the convenient drive by window. For the wild and free the Paradise Cafe is the spot.

**\$ PARADISE JUICE & COFFEE HOUSE** 349 S. Main Street, Willits,  
*Fresh Squeezed Juices and Natural Foods (707) 456-0155 Sit down/to go*

## **196 Mendocino Coast Hwy 101 / Willits**



### **PURPLE THISTLE**

There is a deeply held Celtic belief that all forms and energies of the Universe are connected and interrelated. The Purple Thistle symbolizes this. Proprietors Dana and Frank and their family bless their

guests with an international river of cuisine, each dish artfully prepared to order from the freshest seasonal ingredients (organic wherever possible). The menu offers fresh wild fish, Harris Ranch marinated and grilled New York steaks, 6-8 varieties of sushi daily, Cajun pan fried oysters, prawns, fish or chicken, tempura dishes, Thai, Caribbean or wild mushroom pasta and daily specials they dream up by living off-the-grid beneath a star studded sky in the

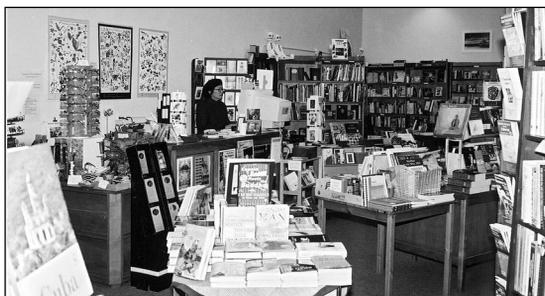


wilds near Willits. Often there is one dish or another of yummy comfort food. Fish tacos, Thai spring rolls and bouillabaisse are a few popular specials. There is a large selection of mineral water, juices, soy milk, and organic herbal teas and coffee. The wine list features vintages created from organically grown grapes. After dinner your waitperson will tempt you with a platter full of sumptuous desserts. Summertime the back patio is very popular and

out back is the Shanachie Pub "where friends gather" with hearty libation's and live open mike entertainment. Summertime open Tues - Sat from 4:30pm - 9pm, Winter time Tues - Thur 4:30pm - 8pm, Fri & Sat till 9pm.

**\$\$ PURPLE THISTLE** 50 South Main, Willits, CA 95490  
International Cuisine Cash or Checks (707) 459-4750 Res. advised

### **LEAVES of GRASS BOOKSTORE**



Established in 1987 the Leaves of Grass bookstore is conveniently located right on busy Hwy 101 in downtown Willits. Cozy and colorful, you'll enjoy shopping here to feed your curiosity, intellectual needs and sense of humor. New

releases, mysteries, bestsellers, religion, psychology, biographies, cookbooks, travel, history, nature and bargain books are all sold. There are children's books, a section of books-on-tape or CD, blank journals and reading glasses. Of special interest are the travel and USGS topo maps. Leaves of Grass is open Mon-Fri from 10am-5:30pm, Saturday 10am-5:30pm and Sunday from noon to 5pm.

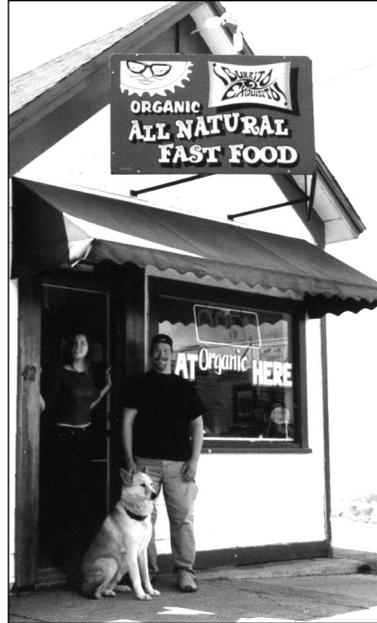
**\$ LEAVES OF GRASS BOOKSTORE** 15 South Main, Willits, CA.  
General Interest Bookstore [www.leavesofgrass.booksense.com](http://www.leavesofgrass.booksense.com) 459-3744

## Hwy 101 / Willits Mendocino Coast 197

### BURRITO EXQUISITO

There is a magical attraction to Burrito Exquisito that people from the Canadian to Mexican border experience when traveling through this stretch of northern California. Since 1994 owner Tom Girdauskas and his "team Burrito Extreme" have been totally dedicated to serving all natural organic produce at their tiny oasis. The burritos, taco salads, nachos, quesadillas, soft tacos, smoothies and cookies as well as fair trade organic coffee, "Rocky Jr." chicken and farmed shrimp are delicious. The "dog friendly" garden patio is a big plus - especially when the flowers are in bloom.

Tom has a dream. He wants to "get a all-organic cafe and garden in every school and teach the kids how to run it". Wow! Lets help him achieve this dream. Open daily from 11am-9pm. Remember to believe!



**\$ BURRITO EXQUISITO** 42 South Main, Willits, CA. 95490  
Fresh Organic California-Mex Cuisine 459-5421 Sit down or to go

### SUGAR MAGNOLIA ICE CREAM and TREATERY

Everyone is blessed when heart centered and humanitarian oriented restaurateurs move to town with a commitment to serve exciting - never boring, fresh organic and natural world-beat cuisine. Chef John Mayock and Linda and Jason Schaefer are the creative sparks



behind Sugar Magnolia (named after a Grateful Dead song). International dishes include Spanish paella-valenciana, Italian rolle di tacchino all bolognese, Greek moussaka me agninares, British Isles beef brisket & cabbage, Middle Eastern kebab bel laban, French coq au vin blanc or Caribbean columbo y camarones frita. The ice cream parlor serves delicious organic shakes, smoothies, banana splits and sundaes and there is local delivery of all entrees, soups, salads, gourmet foccaccia pizza and desserts in Willits. There is live entertainment, free wireless internet and catering for socially conscious events.

**\$\$\$ SUGAR MAGNOLIA** 212 South Main, Willits, CA. 95490  
Fresh Organic Cuisine & Treats Free wireless internet and catering  
[www.sugarmagnolia.com](http://www.sugarmagnolia.com) (707) 456-0396 Sit down, to go or delivery