

Gustine, CA City Guide | About Living in Gustine

\$399,861 Average Value

Gustine is a city with a small-town feel in the San Joaquin Valley

Gustine in the San Joaquin Valley is considered part of Westside, which refers to its location within Mercer County. The population is about 6,100, according to U.S. Census estimates, and the economy is based around agricultural businesses, like dairy farms and nut processors. "It's a city, but we are really like a small town. I like to joke and call us cow town because we have more cows than people," says Zachery Ramos, president of both the Gustine Downtown Business Association and the Gustine Traveling Library. "I'm very lucky to live in a community where when we face challenges, there are people willing to help. There's nothing better than the small-town heart and soul of America, and I really believe that Gustine has this."

Gustine history, including the nickname of a rancher's daughter

In the early 1900s, Gustine was developed around a station on the Southern Pacific Railroad. The city, incorporated in 1915, was founded by Henry Miller, an immigrant from Germany who was later called the Cattle King for his influence as a rancher. The city's name honors Miller's daughter, Sarah, who died in a horse-riding accident in 1879. Sarah was nicknamed Gussie, as she often wore fancy clothes or, in the language of the time, was "gussied up."

Bungalows, ranch-style and contemporary homes are options in Gustine

Gustine's early 20th-century homes include bungalows and farmhouses. Ranch-style homes and contemporaries were added later. The newest construction, including 2020s homes, are concentrated toward the west and north. Prices typically range from about \$210,000 to \$520,000. Prices are about \$40,000 to \$90,000 for mobile and manufactured homes in the Green Acres Mobile Manor, a senior community in southwest Gustine.

People living close to the train tracks, which run parallel to Railroad Avenue and SR-33, may experience noise from freight trains. Fires continue to be a threat in the region, though Gustine is not a high-risk area, according to the 2025 Fire Hazard Severity Zones map issued by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

A downtown focused on locally owned businesses; more in Newman

Gustine's downtown is around Fifth Street, which is also known as Main Street. It's focused on locally owned businesses, including small markets, specialty shops and restaurants. "Growing up here, I would walk up Main Street every day on the way to high school and wave to the shopkeepers. Everyone actually knows your name in Gustine," Ramos says. Ramos recommends L&E Café and More, known for fresh bagels and coffee, and Wolfsen's Meat & Sausage, which makes more than 70 types of sausages in-house. WhichCraft Taproom is a family friendly spot with brews on tap and non-alcoholic beverages. It also hosts karaoke. About 4 miles north is Newman, a small city with more shopping options, including Nob Hill Foods grocery store. In June, the Newman Downtown Market farmers market is held on Fridays.

Public schools, a basketball tournament and a traveling library

Students may attend public schools in the Gustine Unified School District. Gustine Elementary School and Gustine Middle School earn C-minus grades from Niche. Gustine High School receives a C-plus and is known for the Gustine

Rotary Basketball Tournament. Held for over 80 years, it's the longest-running high school basketball tournament in California.

The Gustine Traveling Library (GTL), founded by Ramos, distributes over 300,000 books to youth across the region. "We really try to be a one-stop shop for people in need in the Central Valley," Ramos says. In addition to numerous charitable endeavors, the GTL operates the Gustine Discover Center, which provides educational and recreational programming for kids.

Recreational spaces in Gustine, like parks and a community center

Gustine offers recreational spaces like Harry Schmidt Park, which is 26 acres and includes tennis courts, a multiuse path and a baseball field. The park's Al Goman Community Center is a rentable event venue and has also hosted classes for seniors. Henry Miller Park, close to downtown, has a pool and playground. The park hosted the inaugural Pickleball for a Cause Tournament in May 2025.

Events celebrate Portuguese culture, classic cars and aviation

Gustine has a large Portuguese American population, and the Our Lady of Miracles Festa celebrates the heritage and culture. The multiday event in September attracts approximately 20,000 attendees. "We've been known for many, many years for having one of the biggest festas in the U.S," Ramos says, adding that visitors have even come from Portugal. Sopas, a traditional beef stew, is one of the top draws. Another festival highlight is the Bodo del Leite Parade, which features cows.

Other events include the Motors on Main car and motorcycle show in April, and a Fourth of July parade and fireworks. "A lot of families come out here because we are one of the few communities that still holds their own fireworks celebration," Ramos says. In October, there's the Gustine Airport Fly-in, with airplane rides and a car show. It's held at the Gustine Municipal Airport, a general aviation facility.

Access to highways, transportation services and medical facilities

State Routes 33 and 140 meet in Gustine, and Interstate 5 is about 5 miles west of downtown. It's about 20 miles from Gustine to Los Banos and 30 miles to Merced or Modesto. The trip to San Francisco, Sacramento or Yosemite National Park is roughly 100 miles.

Bus service is available on The S, a Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority system with a route from Gustine to Newman and Patterson. Merced County Transit's The Bus runs from Gustine to Santa Nella and Los Banos, primarily by reservation. Ramos cycling is also convenient since most amenities are accessible within a small geographical area. There are several medical facilities, including Community Health Centers of America offices, plus hospitals in Merced and Modesto. For passenger flights, it's about 30 miles to the Merced Yosemite Regional Airport, which has service on Advanced Air to Los Angeles and Las Vegas.



Written By

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