

FIVE PLACES

See how it all gets made — maybe even with a free sample

Contrary to what national financial reports might tell you, our local economy is still producing quite a bit. Case in point: local factories that make products that are shipped all over the world. Here are five places where visitors can get an inside look at assembly lines, and walk away with some free stuff to boot.

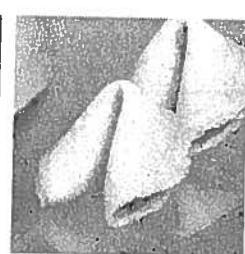
— Matt Villano



2. Boudin Sour-dough Bread Bakery, San Francisco
 The flagship location of San Francisco's most famous sour-dough bread company has been baking bread since 1849. The free, self-guided tour leads visitors through a collection of historic and interactive exhibits, ending at a 30-foot, floor-to-ceiling window and open-air catwalk that look out on an expansive demonstration bakery below. Hungry? Grab a roll and Peet's Coffee in the cafe at adjacent Baker's Hall. Tours daily from noon to 7 p.m. 160 Jefferson St., in Fisherman's Wharf, www.boudinbakery.com.



3. Mrs. Grossman's, Petaluma
 Who knew stickers required so much sophisticated machinery? This hour-long tour of Mrs. (Andrea) Grossman's 110,000-square-foot sticker-making factory introduces visitors to the technology behind the adhesives, including a whiz-bang machine called LaserWeb, which cuts stickers from a sheet with lasers. All guests receive free stickers (of course), and there's a card-making session at the end of the tour. Tours cost \$3 and are offered Monday-Friday by appointment only. 3810 Cypress Drive, www.mrsgrossmans.com.



4. Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory, San Francisco
 Tours are informal and free at this sweet-tooth mecca in the heart of Chinatown. The factory has been making cookies since 1962, and today the place is so cramped that most visitors watch from just inside the front door. Marvel as women peel thin, circular cookies off a hot press, insert a fortune, and quickly wind the dough over a steel rod to form the characteristic bow shape. All visitors get samples. 56 Ross Alley, www.sanfranciscochinatown.com.



5. Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Chico
 The free guided tour of this Central Valley factory leads visitors through the brewing process, from the brew house, where malted barley and hops are merged to make beer, to fermentation tanks, where yeast converts sugar into alcohol. Other stops include the filtration room and bottling line. After the tour, check out the Taproom & Restaurant, where bartenders pour free samples upon request. Closed Mondays. Tours daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 1075 E. 20th St., www.sierranevada.com.