



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



David

Ten Best Yosemite Dayhikes

Yosemite National Park, 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: So much to choose from! I had to put Half Dome at the top of my list; it's so unique. For the fit and determined it's just the right amount of challenge with a great reward on top. Key: start up in the dark, drink lots of water. Be aware that for 2010 you need a day use permit for Fri, Sat, Sun, holidays on Half Dome. For an easier jaunt, almost anyone can make the pleasant grade to Mirror Lake for a more intimate view of the canyon floor. Off Glacier Point Road, the hike up to Sentinel Dome affords a grand 360-degree panorama. Do a bit less than Half Dome but with the best of the dramatic start/finish miles by hiking up to Vernal Fall and/or go beyond it to the top of Nevada Fall - good training for a Half Dome assault next summer. Another way to see this part of Yosemite is to pay for the hikers' bus up to Glacier Point and hike down the Panorama Trail. At Tioga Pass, crawl up over a steep ridge to an isolated glacial basin at Gaylor Lakes; classic Sierra alpine terrain. In Tuolumne Meadows, getting to the top of Lembert Dome is the must-do viewing platform. A fine subalpine hike gets you to the two Cathedral Lakes. In the south part of the park, take a great climb up the Chilnualna Falls Trail from Wawona; warm work, but worth it. It is truly hard to go wrong with Yosemite trails; do get a good map at the Visitor Center and ask rangers about route difficulties. Always have plenty of water, snacks and layers for the weather.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Yosemite National Park



Half Dome Trail

The best hiking adventure for the very fit



Mirror Lake Day Hike

A fine walk with a good view up at Half Dome



Lembert Dome Trail

Popular climb that leads to a spectacular view



The Mist Trail

3-5 miles round-trip, steep ascent, huge waterfall!



Sentinel Dome Trail

Leads to the summit's sweeping views



Cathedral Lake Trail

Popular subalpine route to beautiful lakes and peaks



Nevada Falls Loop

Up the Mist Trail, down the John Muir Trail



Gaylor Lakes Trail

Access to several alpine lakes



Chilnualna Falls Trail

Wawona's best big hike



Panorama Trail

Descends 8.5 miles from Glacier Point

Day 1 - Yosemite National Park

QUICK NOTE

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location:

East end of Happy Isle Loop Road
Yosemite National Park CA 95389

1 Half Dome Trail

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Be smart and turn around if lightning or rain even threaten. Bring a filter to treat river water, so you can stay completely hydrated. Snack all day; you'll burn 5000 calories easy. Start really early and get to the cables before 11 unless you want to wait in line. New for 2011: you need to get a day hike permit for every day of the week from www.recreation.gov.

DESCRIPTION:

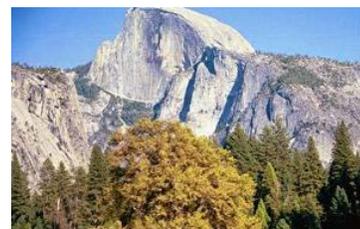
Don't try this incredible trail unless you're truly ready for a very challenging adventure. You can do it as one-day epic or as a backpack trek but either way, you need to be in top condition, with comfortable walking shoes, start up early in the morning and take in plenty of water and food as you go. If there's any chance of rain or lightning, do not go above treeline.

This is a tough day not just because it is 16 miles round-trip, but because it is 4800' up and then down. Large numbers of people are whipped before the top, almost everyone is completely thrashed when they do make it. Be aware that you'll need to have a new kind of permit for dayhikes every day of the week in 2011. Get these via www.recreation.gov. No one can go up the trail and the cables without either a day use permit or a Wilderness permit for overnighiting en route.

The trail starts at Happy Isles and climbs quickly up along the Merced River, past 100m Vernal Fall, then 200m Nevada Fall and into Little Yosemite Valley at about the 4.5 mile mark. If you reserved a Wilderness permit, or got in line at the Wilderness Center early the day before, you can pitch your tent in the campground here. The trail then climbs up through more forest until you come out on the steep stone stairs of the 'sub-dome' and the views of the landscape below you are astonishing. This elevator shaft does in many people, but the legendary cables come next. There are two steel cables, held up by steel posts every 5m or so; 2x4's across the base of the posts help for resting. Haul yourself up here and you've earned something special. Hopefully you've saved some juice for the long descent...

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MY NOTE: You really need to be physically fit for this trek.



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2 Mirror Lake Day Hike

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Cyclists can ride up to the edge of the lake, but must be very careful to control speed on the descent. Because of the hazard, rented bikes at not allowed up here.

DESCRIPTION: In a neat demonstration of sedimentary processes, Mirror Lake has been gradually filling up with sand, so (except in the springtime) it is not as mirror-like as it once was. Nonetheless, the lake's banks do provide a glorious view straight up Half Dome's face. Start from Shuttle Stop 17. This is considered an easy walk, with a mild uphill grade. The distance is just about a mile, and if you didn't care about fully experiencing this nice part of Tenaya Canyon you could complete the round-trip in about an hour. This area can get crowded in summer. In winter hikers must start from Shuttle Stop 19, which adds another mile to the trip. In summer months, there is access for vehicles with current disability placards.
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MY NOTE: If you've got more energy, keep going up on the north side of the creek and climb ten switchbacks up the Snow Creek Trail for a grand view. The Half Dome side of the trail along Tenaya Creek was buried in a major rockslide in March 2009; this'll be closed at least until fall of 2010.



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3 Lembert Dome Trail

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

If you have time for just one hike (2 hours) in the high country it should be this one.

DESCRIPTION: This 2-mile round-trip trail begins from the Dog Lake/John Muir Trailhead in Tuolumne Meadows. Find it by going in on the side road to Tuolumne Meadows Lodge. Bring water, snacks and a camera. Begin hiking uphill and north from the trailhead. Soon you cross the highway and continue on up through forested switchbacks. Take your time at this elevation. The Dog Lake route continues straight ahead over the top of the ridge, while you'll go left along the ridge, still going uphill until the trail puts you onto the granite shoulder of Lembert. A bit of easy walking then a somewhat exposed class 2 hop puts you on top of the viewing platform for Tuolumne Meadows. Wind, sun and a lot of rock await you. The gentle Tuolumne River winds below, and you can see its source in the Lyell Glacier miles to the south. Retrace your steps to descend, or go a bit further to Dog Lake, or circle around Dog Dome to come back to level ground to the west.
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MY NOTE: Much better route is to start from the Dog Lake/John Muir Trail parking lot near Tuolumne Meadows Lodge.



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4 The Mist Trail

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Mist Trail is closed in winter due to ice buildup.

DESCRIPTION: The Mist Trail parallels the John Muir Trail from Happy Isles to the top of Nevada Fall and many people make a loop of the two. Here we'll describe just the Vernal Fall section. The trail is paved or granite and is very popular for a good reason - astonishing scenery, a stiff ascent and an astounding 300' waterfall. Bring water, sun protection, and if it's May or June, consider bringing raingear, when the route beside Vernal Fall could be called the "Firehose Trail." The climb from Happy Isles runs steadily up a good paved surface with a few views of the Merced River's rapid descent. You first see Vernal from below at the footbridge, where in summer there is drinking water and a restroom. Another 20 minutes up and you'll reach the mistiest section. About 600 granite steps, with steel railings where needed, get you to the top of the fall. Be careful of the slick granite as you top out on the stairs and descend to the edge of the fall. Aggressive ground squirrels haunt the top - do not feed them or leave your stuff unattended. Peer over the railing at the edge, back down the gorge you've just climbed. Be careful around the swiftwater- too many people have been lost in the river along this stretch of trail; swimming above the falls is most unwise. There's a restroom just above the top of the waterfall, and the trail continues on up to Nevada Fall or to an airy view near Clark Point. The Vernal Fall section of the Mist Trail is closed in the winter because of the coat of ice that builds up.
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5 Sentinel Dome Trail

DESCRIPTION: This trail begins from the Taft Point/Sentinel Dome Trailhead along Glacier Point Road. The trailhead is on the southern rim of the Yosemite Valley. This short hike leads to one of the most popular, and climbable, domes in the valley, and amazing views of the natural features within Yosemite Valley. The trail is well used, with its course obvious to hikers.



Photo courtesy of national park

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6 Cathedral Lake Trail

DESCRIPTION: This trail begins along the Tioga Road less than a mile west of the Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center. There is no official parking area at the trailhead, just a gravel strip on each side of the road with limited parking. The first half mile of the trail ascends 400 feet then levels and turns westward. Descending slightly you'll see Fairview Dome to the north as you hike along its southern flanks. The trail dips to cross a small creek the begins the true ascent of this route. Beyond the small stream the trail ascends another 300 feet using switchbacks. Within a half mile the trail levels and begins crossing the western flanks of Cathedral Peak, 10940. Three quarters of a mile from the switchbacks you'll approach a fork in the trail. The right fork leads to lower Cathedral Lake. Follow this short trail as it descends gradually to the eastern shore of the lake. Lower Cathedral Lake lies at an elevation of approximately 9,300 feet, high in the Tuolumne River drainage. This site is heavily used by day hikers and backpackers. Although there are several campsites around the lake it is best to use this site as the destination of a day hike so as not to further impact the delicate terrain.



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7 Nevada Falls Loop

DESCRIPTION: This trail begins from the Happy Isles area of the Yosemite Valley. In winter, when the shuttle bus isn't working, hikers can begin from the Curry Village Day-Use Parking Area and walk eastward to Happy Isles. This will add two miles to your trip. Nevada Falls can be accessed from the Mist Trail above Vernal Falls or the John Muir Trail--begin with the Mist Trail, then return to the trailhead via the John Muir Trail.



Photo courtesy of Nevada Falls Loop.

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8 Gaylor Lakes Trail

DESCRIPTION: This description follows the trail to Lower Gaylor Lake, which is longer and frequented less than the trail to Upper and Middle Gaylor Lakes. A short cross-country trek will take you from the lower lake to the others without the crowds. An alternative to hiking cross country is to drive to Tioga Pass and follow the short, steep trail to the upper and middle lakes from there. Begin this hike from the Tuolumne Lodge parking area south of Tuolumne Meadows. The trail leads east from the trailhead along the Dana Fork Tuolumne River. Nearing two miles from the trailhead the path splits. The route to Gaylor Lakes branches left crossing the stream and Tioga Road. The trail begins to gain elevation steadily after crossing the highway. From this point in the valley the trail leads northward two miles to Lower Gaylor Lake. Once across the highway the trail parallels the outlet stream from the lakes. Approximately one and a half miles from the trail junction the trail veers west from the outlet stream toward Lower Gaylor Lake. The first lake is within one mile after the trail leaves the stream. Lower Gaylor Lake lies at 10,049 feet. Beyond Lower Gaylor Lake are four other lakes: two Granite Lakes and Upper and Middle Gaylor Lakes. The other Gaylor Lakes are frequently visited due to a short, but steep trail from Tioga Pass. To reach them hike eastward from the southeastern shore of Lower Gaylor Lake. You'll reach the outlet stream from the upper lakes within a half mile. Follow this creek northward to the lakes. To reach the Granite Lakes from

Lower Gaylor Lake walk to the northeastern shore. From there an inlet stream reaches the lake. Follow this stream northward one mile to southern Granite Lakes.

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9 Chilnualna Falls Trail

DESCRIPTION: The Chilnualna Falls Trail is a nice ascent of the eastern wall of the Wawona basin. Find the trailhead up Chilnualna Falls Road where there's usually plenty of parking. The route starts steeply along the creek, where the first few hundred yards are graced with the dramatic cascades of the lower creek. After topping out on a pleasant bench (an adequate picnic destination for many) in less than half a mile the trail leaves the creekside and climbs through yellow pine forest and fragrant mountain misery groundcover. Nice views appear near the top as the trail rejoins the creek at the top of Chilnualna Falls. It's about 3 miles to the top, where a well-earned rest should be enjoyed. Backpackers (with permits) can continue on to the east (no camping for another mile), dayhikers will return to Wawona by the same trail.



Photo courtesy of national park

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A Panorama Trail

DESCRIPTION: This trail begins from the Glacier Point parking area and descends to the Happy Isles area of Yosemite Valley. The trail is eight and a half miles long one way with a descent of 4,000 feet. A shuttle is ideal to reach your starting point from Happy Isles. Hikers will enjoy the views from this trail, which begin upon leaving the trailhead.



Photo courtesy of Panorama Trail

MY NOTE: Spend the \$20 to take the hiker's bus from Yosemite Lodge in the morning up to Glacier Point, then do the descent. Nice!

Yosemite National Park Snapshot

Local Info

The globally recognized landscape of Yosemite National Park is a stunning natural phenomenon, a crux element in environmental history, and a visitor-friendly playground. The park is almost 1200 square miles, the same size as Rhode Island and it gets about 4 million visitors a year. Most people focus their visit on Yosemite Valley where the most dramatic terrain is found, but the attractions extend far beyond this part of the mountains.

Yosemite Valley

Most tourism infrastructure is concentrated in the two square miles of the Valley's east end. This goes along with a density of remarkable scenery, which includes Yosemite Falls, Glacier Point and Half Dome. You may have heard that it gets too crowded here, but there are good reasons for this; you must see this part of Yosemite.

A natural starting place on any visit to the park is to park your car in one of the two Day Use Parking Lots and take the free shuttle to the Valley Visitor Center, located in Yosemite Village. Look at the big Valley map, ask a ranger some questions, see the excellent park film, explore the Visitor Center exhibits and those of the Yosemite Museum and the Indian Village. It's not too far to stroll a nice trail to the base of Lower Yosemite Falls. You can also take the shuttle to/from The Ahwahnee, Yosemite Lodge, Curry Village, Happy Isles and Upper, Lower and North Pines campgrounds.

The free shuttle can also deliver you to several trailheads. Easy walks, short hikes and more strenuous climbs open up breathtaking sights including Yosemite Falls, Mirror Lake and Vernal Falls. There is a lot of useful literature on Yosemite's natural history, photography, rockclimbing and quite a few excellent guidebooks available in the Valley Visitor Center, which can provide you with great nighttime reading or references along the trail.

Wawona and Southern Yosemite

The Highway 41 corridor runs south from (or north to) Yosemite Valley and includes features that are worthy of national park status in their own right. Wawona is a small historic settlement that could serve as a base of operations for an extensive

park visit. The historic Wawona Hotel is found here, with its adjacent 9-hole golf course, stables and cooling South Fork Merced River. Just south of Wawona is the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, a part of Yosemite's original preserved tract.

Along your way south is the Glacier Point Road which winds past the Badger Pass Ski Area, 16 miles to the breathtaking Glacier Point. This provides a view off a 3000' cliff, the spread of the high country, an interesting angle on Half Dome and 3 major waterfalls. Glacier Point is open all winter- just not to cars. Cross-country skiers follow groomed tracks to this snowy, solitary aerie.

Other worthwhile destinations along Highway 41 include Wawona's Pioneer Yosemite History Center, where park staff creates a living account of Yosemite's fascinating past, and the community of Yosemite West, where house and condo rentals can serve as cozy basecamps. Beyond the park boundary, Sierra National Forest has camping, Fish Camp has a big motel and B+B's, and Oakhurst has a range of hotels and restaurants, as well as grocery, hardware and clothing stores.

Tuolumne Meadows and the High Country

The historic Tioga Road provides unique access to the middle of Yosemite, the alpine peaks, alluring trailheads for hikers, and the through route to the completely different landscape of what locals call the East Side.

The road starts about a half-hour uphill from Yosemite Valley, runs through the beloved Tuolumne Meadows and over the highest highway pass in California, Tioga Pass.

The route leaves from Crane Flat where there's a gas station, campground and convenience store, and goes by the hidden charm of White Wolf where you'll find a campground and a small lodge. The intimate Siesta Lake and expansive Tenaya Lake lie beside the road, and a land of granite domes awaits between there and Tuolumne Meadows. Tuolumne has its own visitor center, a large campground and a rustic lodge as well as other amenities. It's well worth planning to spend some time in this cool high country locale.

Beyond 10,000' Tioga Pass is the precipitous drop to Lee Vining, Mono Lake, high desert terrain and relatively young volcanic vents. Year-round resorts of June Lake and Mammoth Lakes are fine destinations at the foot of the steep eastern escarpment of the Sierra on the backside of Yosemite.

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History

Ore-bearing Paleozoic metamorphic belts border the east and west edges of the park, while Mesozoic granitic intrusions comprise the main area of Yosemite. Uplift driven by powerful continental drift lifted the granite bodies to the surface, mostly within the past 5 million years, when a fracture along the east side of the Sierra Nevada opened up. During the Ice Age, starting about 2 million years ago, glaciers covered the highest parts of the park and slid down the river-carved canyons of the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers. Ice was as much as 4000' deep at times- a potent erosional agent. Over the 20,000 years since the last glaciers retreated, various elements of erosion sculpted (and continue to shape) the Yosemite area into the spectacular scenery you see today.

Perhaps 9,000 years ago, American Indians moved into the Sierra, adjusting subsistence patterns to rich seasonal resources. Later, Miwok-speaking people moved into the region from California's Central Valley and Paiutes came in from the east. The two cultures shifted territories and intermarried and for centuries they thrived in a 'hunter-gatherer-trader' life in the greater Yosemite/Mono Lake region. People spent summers in the higher terrain and Yosemite Valley, which they called 'Ahwahnee' and moved to the lowlands when winter came. The Indians aren't gone; they and their cultures are still here today.

Euro-Americans swarmed into the Sierra in the 1850's looking for gold. They forced the First People out of their homelands through disease and one-sided warfare. As the aggressive search for gold continued, clashes between the Indians and Euro-Americans increased, with the Euro-Americans either killing or rounding up

Yosemite National Park Snapshot continued

bands of Indians and forcing them into reservations and rancherias outside the mountains. By the 1870's, there were only a few dozen Miwoks/Paiutes in the Yosemite Valley area. A visit to the Indian Village of Ahwahnee will give you some of the history and the ongoing story of Yosemite's Indians.

Awareness of the wonders of Yosemite spread slowly at first. In 1855, English expat James Mason Hutchings brought the first group of tourists to the Valley and the party's artist, Thomas Ayres helped spread the fame of the area even more rapidly with his sketches. Hutchings stayed around and realized that ecotourism could be his livelihood.

Early conservationists, Israel Ward Raymond and Fredrick Law Olmsted (the landscape architect who previously helped establish New York's Central Park) believed this unusual landscape should be preserved. Raymond worked with Congress and Olmsted with the state to protect the area. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill that granted Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees to the State of California, essentially the world's first manifestation of the national park concept.

A wandering laborer named John Muir stumbled in to work in Yosemite and catalyzed a passion that still lives on today. His intelligence and his strong sentiment for environmental protection won him important allies in the idea of protecting more of the Sierra Nevada and other places. He wrote several influential articles, then books, which brought more people to the cause of preserving public lands simply because they were beautiful.

In 1890, the federal government created a huge national park that surrounded the two state parcels. The U.S. Army (including the legendary African-American Buffalo Soldiers) was put in charge of the park, and their work lives on today. They blazed trails, explored unknown areas, ran out shepherders, fought fires and prepared maps.

President Teddy Roosevelt came to visit Yosemite and go camping with John Muir in 1903, and Muir helped persuade Roosevelt to unify Yosemite wholly under federal control. This gave us more or less the park borders we know today.

Along with American prosperity and California's population growth, tourism grew. The scattered hotels and private camps were eventually unified under one concession company, which made commercial tourism easier to manage.

After what may have been the first national environmental battle, the city of San Francisco was given Congressional permission to build a large dam in the park on the Tuolumne River.

Another landmark moment came from Washington, D.C. in 1916 with the creation of the National Park Service, now the most admired agency of the federal government.

Its mandate was to 'conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations'. All of our national park lands are still governed by this notion that resources are to remain forever unimpaired and that people should come see them.

In 1984, 95% of Yosemite was designated as Wilderness and the United Nations recognized Yosemite National Park as being worthy of inclusion on the World Heritage Site list. Today about 20% of visitors come from other nations and Yosemite has sister national parks in Chile and in China.

The biggest challenge for the Park Service now, is keeping the park accessible to about four million people a year without harming its resources. With those things in mind science and citizen input inform the challenging mandate of the NPS. Caring for Yosemite involves everyone who visits; all who are inspired by the astonishing beauty should be stakeholders in the stewardship of this unique resource.

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Hotel Insights

Yosemite is a very popular place and travelers are advised to look into lodging and camping reservations as far in advance as possible. If you show up early in the morning you can usually find something on a walk-in basis.

Yosemite Valley and Wawona

Depending on how you count facilities and what season you're looking at, there

are over a dozen hotels or lodges within the park itself. The two nicest are the Ahwahnee and Yosemite Lodge, both about a mile apart in Yosemite Valley. Each has dining within, stunning views and good access to trails and shuttle buses.

At the southern end of the park is what most might say is the very nice#3 for Yosemite lodgings, the Wawona Hotel. It dates back over a hundred years and is considered to have a 'southern charm.'

In Yosemite Valley simpler accommodations include Curry Village and the Housekeeping Camp. These open cabins, with canvas roofs and walls and shared restrooms, feature direct access to the river and are hugely popular. Not only are they relatively inexpensive, but they also offer the 'roughing it' element. Despite some modern amenities, the property is primitive, allowing guests to reflect on how conditions were for the Park's first visitors.

There are five campgrounds in the Valley set up for just tents or both tents and recreational vehicles. All of these are located at the eastern end of the Valley, clustered on both sides of the Merced River. North Pines, Upper Pines, and Lower Pines, are for tent or RV camping. The two walk-in camps, Camp 4 and Backpackers, are both designed to facilitate backpackers and climbers. In the summer there are another dozen campgrounds located outside the Valley or just outside the park.

Tuolumne Meadows and the High Country

Tuolumne Meadows Lodge and White Wolf Lodge aren't what many people expect, but they're full all the time nonetheless. Both are collections of simple tent cabins with central bathing and shared dining facilities. Too 'rough' for some, but beloved by generations of Yosemite fans.

A chain of 5 High Sierra Camps connected by a day-long hike in-between each makes a marvelous loop of fine mountain scenery. Rangers lead some parties on a full loop, or you can pick just one camp to hike into for a few days.

Outside the Park

Yosemite is surrounded by gateway communities that host numerous hotels and rely on Yosemite visitors. Tioga Pass Road closes to cars in the winter, so places on the East Side become altogether separated from park tourism for part of the year.

Yosemite National Park Snapshot continued

In Lee Vining, a range of simple accommodations provide grand views of the austere Mono Lake. Resort towns of Mammoth Lakes and June Lake are enjoyed by mountain lovers for many reasons.

On the Highway 41 corridor, Fish Camp and Oakhurst have lots of motels and B+B's from which to choose. Along Highway 140 Yosemite View Lodge and Cedar Lodge are closest, then the Bug in Midpines, and then many more properties are found in Mariposa. Groveland and Big Oak Flat on Highway 120 west provide a Gold Rush flavor in places to stay, and some Yosemite visitors will stay over in Sonora, about an hour and a half away.

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Restaurants Insights

Generally, when people visit Yosemite National Park, their goal is to experience the spectacular scenery and see at least some of the Park's world-famous sights. Lots of people take tours, many come in cars for the day, and others camp and backpack for several days. The focus here is truly more on adventure and exploration than on food. However, after a few hours or days in the mountain air, you are sure to get hungry.

Yosemite Valley and Yosemite Village

The most interesting, elegant, and classiest is the historic Ahwahnee Dining Room. This huge, vaulted room is open for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and afternoon tea. The menus vary with the seasons and in the evening you must dress in something more elegant than shorts and T-shirts, but you will experience a taste of the original park both in dishes and decor. Yosemite Lodge has the almost equally fancy Mountain Room, and the simple Yosemite Lodge Food Court. Visitors will not have to wander very far in the Village to find some sort of restaurant or snack bar.

Wawona and the High Country

Three restaurants are in the park, but outside of the Valley. On the east side, you can have breakfast and dinner at the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge Restaurant (make reservations for evening meals); its prime rib and New York steak dinners are highly praised and sought after by hungry hikers.

Off Highway 41 is the Wawona Hotel Dining Room. Like the hotel, the dining room is full of light and airy ambience. The food has a good reputation for both quality and quantity. Breakfast is bacon or sausage and eggs, or French toast; lunch is a buffet that changes with the seasons and often includes local fresh vegetables and herbs. At dinner, you will find some amazing delicacies including Indian Tom's South Fork Trout or crackling roast duckling.

On the west side of the park, along Highway 120, is the White Wolf Lodge Restaurant. Open for breakfast and dinner, its casual dining room serves the usual bacon and eggs for breakfast and has a dinner menu that changes with the season—most days offer dinner specials that can include fish, chicken, beef, pasta or vegetarian dishes. The portions are large; the quality is excellent; and, the staff is happy to share 'secret vantage points' within the park.

Outside the Park

Variety abounds as you travel to and from the Park. If you are coming from Lee Vining, you will find several casual and fun places there, like Niceley's Restaurant, Bodie Mike's Barbeque or a top-drawer Tioga Lodge Restaurant on Mono Lake. Keep in mind that the eastern side of the Sierra often gets heavy snow in winter, so your selection during those months may be limited due to road closures. Do not miss out on the startling "Mobil Station" restaurant just where 120 leaves Lee Vining.

Mariposa is an interesting little historical town on the west side of the park. You can enter the park on either the south or west side from here. Here you will find Gold Rush charm and the upscale Charles Street Dinner House where you will want to wear something a bit more formal than shorts and T-shirts. Midpines is in between Mariposa and the west entrance of the park and Recovery Bistro & Cafe.

Oakhurst is a foothill town that is south of the park that offers a variety of dining choices. It also has some gold rush influence. Castillo's Mexican Food has the look and feel of a real Mexican cantina. You can have great scones, coffee, and ice cream, as well as regular meals at

the casual Yosemite Coffee and Roasting Company.

©

Fun Facts

Top 12 Facts About Yosemite

1. Scary fact: The largest glacier on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada is melting quickly. It's Yosemite's Lyell Glacier. Day hikers can get their binoculars on it from the top of Lumbert Dome in Tuolumne Meadows.
2. Strange fact: The tallest pine tree on our planet just died in the past year. It is a sugar pine that grew near Hodgdon Meadow in Yosemite.
3. Believe-it-or-not fact: The Ripley's resource cites a pinecone from this same area of Yosemite as the largest ever found in the world.
4. International fact: Hundreds of Chinese laborers built two of Yosemite's important early roads- dozens of miles were carved through the mountains in a matter of months. Now Yosemite has two sister national parks in China.
5. Interesting fact: Scholars consider Yosemite to be the first 'national park' on earth; the US Congress and President Lincoln protected the land here for all time. This was 8 years before Yellowstone was protected.
6. Random fact: As of 2011, the Yosemite Medical Clinic is operated by the US Public Health Service, a branch of the federal Department of Health and Human Services.
7. Wierd fact: Most fatalities in Yosemite are not lost hikers or falling rock climbers; they're people in cars. After car wrecks the number two cause of deaths in Yosemite is water: drowning, being swept over waterfalls, etc. Be careful!
8. Fun fact: Every national park ranger in the US wears a leather uniform belt embossed with sequoia cones, emblematic of the Mariposa Grove, part of the origin of our park system, in 1864.
9. Multicultural fact: African-American cavalry troops- the famed Buffalo Soldiers- were assigned to protect Yosemite in its early days as a national park.

Yosemite National Park Snapshot continued

10. Bureaucratic fact: The National Park Service will celebrate its Centennial in 2016.

11. Huge fact: Giant sequoias are considered by many to be the largest

living thingsever. They're bigger than blue whales or dinosaurs. Yosemite has three groves of these floral monsters.

12. True fact: The most important thing about your visit to Yosemite is YOU. The expectations you bring, the curiosity you

display while in the park, and your care for it as a citizen are what matter most. It's your park...

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