



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



David

The Best Cultural Experiences in Yosemite

Yosemite National Park, 1 Day

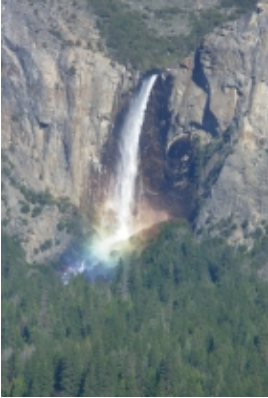
Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

My List 3

Yosemite National Park Snapshot 8

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Yosemite has a cultural importance on a global scale, in that our nation preserved it as a park before Yellowstone, and it is now one of America's small number of World Heritage Sites. Twenty percent of Yosemite's visitors come from other countries and Yosemite has sister national park relationships with Chile and China. Shop the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center's bookstore for the best selection of Yosemite literature and arts, and catch the free film there every half-hour. On summer nights, the film is replaced by live theater; watch John Muir come to life or legendary rockclimber Ron Kauk describe his craft. Right next door is the Yosemite Museum where there is a rotating gallery exhibit and a unique Indian Cultural Museum staffed by area Indians. Right out back is the reconstructed Indian Village, a great place to learn, and still used by Yosemite's First People for ceremonies 4 times a year. Just across the road is the Yosemite Cemetery where some of the park's important historic people are interred; a book you can find in the Visitor Center gives you all their stories. On the other side of the Valley Visitor Center is the renowned Ansel Adams Gallery, where the great landscape photographer's work is displayed. Just down the pedestrian mall, beyond the Village Store is the Yosemite Art and Education Center where every week a different professional artist displays their work and teaches free classes from 10 am - 2 pm most summer days. In the park's high country it's worth taking the stroll across Tuolumne Meadows to Parson's Lodge, a unique structure designed by Bernard Maybeck and which hosts a summer speaker series and an August Poetry Festival. Hetch Hetchy Valley is Yosemite's twin and the center of America's first great conservation battle; a visit to the dam highlights the issues at stake historically and today. In the south part of the park is the small community of Wawona where the Pioneer History Center displays historic buildings from around the park. Just above this is the delightful Hill's Studio which serves as the Wawona Visitor Center; included in the wealth of art displays is the painting featured during President Obama's inauguration. For more depth on Yosemite, sign up with Yosemite Association (www.yosemite.org) for a field seminar on park history, Native American culture, painting, or photography. They even host a special series called "A Park for All People" highlighting the contributions made by people of color to Yosemite's preservation and future.

contact:

tel: +1 209 372 4413
fax: +1 209 372 4714
<http://www.anseladamsgallery.com/>

location:

POB 455
Yosemite National Park CA
95389

1 Ansel Adams Gallery

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Highly recommended whether you're into photography or not; you're guaranteed to learn something on a free camera walk.

DESCRIPTION: Yosemite's best known artist was trained as a classical pianist, but he married into a photography business and it is still run by the Ansel Adams family today. The Gallery is located in Yosemite Village, right next to the Valley Visitor Center, and it's open all year. Whether you're a photographer or not, the Gallery is worth a visit, for some unique shopping, rotating exhibits of various artists and photographers (many local), and a look at some of the master's work on display. There is jewelry, Native American craftwork, help with camera issues, a great selection of Yosemite and other books, as well as posters, videos, postcards, fine art prints, ceramics, etc. Free camera walks go out with a local pro each morning in spring, summer and fall; reservations are strongly advised. High-level photography workshops are described on the Gallery's website. Ansel's inspiration lives on strongly in the digital age.
© NileGuide



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 209 372 0200
<http://www.yosemite.org>

location:

Village Drive & Castle Cliffs Court
Yosemite National Park CA
95389

hours:

10a-noon; 1p-4p daily

2 Yosemite Museum Gallery

DESCRIPTION: The Yosemite Valley has long been recognized as one of nature's true wonders. Its beauty has drawn artists from all over the world for well over 100 years. This museum displays a collection of works by such artists, all selected by a jury. The works include a variety of styles and range from old to contemporary. In addition to the paintings, the gallery features historical exhibits, which change from time to time. The museum as a whole gives a good visual sense of Yosemite through the ages. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 209 372 0200
http://www.yosemite.ca.us/ahwahnee_village/

location:

Indian Canyon Road
Yosemite National Park CA
95389

hours:

3 Indian Village of Ahwahnee

DESCRIPTION: This replica of a Native American village gives you a taste of how the Miwok and Paiute peoples lived; the places where they prepared and cooked their food, and more. The village is setup in a more or less natural setting behind the Yosemite Museum Gallery. There is no fee for this attraction. Weather permitting, the staff of the Indian Cultural Exhibit puts on demonstrations of basket weaving, beadwork and game



wcities

Dawn-dusk daily

playing. These programs usually take place between 9a and noon and again between 1:30p and 4:30p. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +1 209 372 0200
http://www.yosemite.ca.us/library/pioneer_cemetery/

location:

Castle Cliffs Court & Village Drive
Yosemite National Park CA 95389

hours:

Dawn-dusk daily

4 Yosemite Cemetery

DESCRIPTION: This graveyard dates back to the 1800s. Its location, just west of the Yosemite Museum Gallery, was originally far away from the normal traffic flow. Today, it is an interesting, peaceful spot. Perfect for visiting genealogists, history buffs and the simply curious, the cemetery includes graves of Native Americans buried alongside former valley residents and even a few casual visitors. Purchase the Guide to the Yosemite Cemetery at the Visitor Center. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 209 372 0263
http://www.nps.gov/yose/plan_yourvisit/historic.htm

location:

Yosemite National Park Road, 1.2 miles west of Tioga Pass & Tuolumne Meadows Lodge Road
Yosemite National Park CA 95389

5 Parsons Memorial Lodge

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

You have at least a half mile walk to reach Parsons Memorial Lodge. Bring water and sun protection - this is 8600'

DESCRIPTION: This rustic granite and timber building near Soda Springs is a good place to visit while exploring Tuolumne Meadows, the place where John Muir and Robert Underwood Johnson conceived the idea of establishing Yosemite National Park. Walking to and from Parsons will give you a sense of why Muir called the Sierra the "range of light." The former Sierra Club building is staffed by Yosemite Association volunteers, was designed by the famed Bernard Maybeck, and has exhibits that feature area history and natural history. Ranger Margaret Eissler assembles and hosts an excellent speaker series every weekend all summer. Speakers include authors, scientists and artists whose work is relevant to Yosemite and the Sierra. Every August one weekend is devoted to the Tuolumne Meadows Poetry Festival, which includes leading lights of the genre. Parsons is open in the summer only.
© NileGuide



Yosemite

contact:

tel: +1 209 372 1442
<http://www.yosemite.org>

location:

Yosemite Village
95389

6 Yosemite Art and Education Center

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Check www.yosemite.org for a list of artists scheduled, and something about their medium.

DESCRIPTION: The non-profit Yosemite Association operates the Yosemite Art and Education Center in cooperation with



DNC and NPS. All summer (May-September) there are free art classes taught by a different visiting professional artist each week. You can sign up beforehand, or just show up (and hope it's not filled); classes run from 10-2, Wednesday through Saturday. The YAEC has pretty much everything you need for art supplies for painting/sketching en plein air, as they say. Few studios are as remarkable as Yosemite and this center helps beginning and experienced artists alike to take a bit of Yosemite home on paper. The center relies on donations, so consider a little something for the effort. © NileGuide

contact:
tel: +1 209 379 2321
<http://www.yosemiteconservancy.org>

location:
PO Box 230
El Portal CA 95318

7 Yosemite Outdoor Adventures

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Photography courses tend to fill months ahead of time.

DESCRIPTION: Sponsored by the park's non-profit Yosemite Conservancy, this series of field courses, "Yosemite Outdoor Adventures" changes annually and includes courses in snowshoeing, winter natural history, birding, geology, botany/wildflowers, backpacking, photography, plein air painting, history, writing, Indians, and more. Family camping programs in the high country are popular as are special naturalist hikes to lesser known destinations and off-season explorations. The course details are on YC's website, or call or email YC for a free course catalog. YC also provides "Custom Adventures": naturalist/guides for families or groups that want their own guide on a private tour for the day. © NileGuide

MY NOTE: Top notch field seminars in Yosemite's cultural history, painting, photography, literature and more. Unique programs include Indian basketry, and a series of courses detailing the park's history of people of color.



editor

contact:
tel: 209-372-0200
fax: 209-372-0220
www.nps.gov/yose/

location:
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite CA 95389

8 Pioneer Yosemite History Center

DESCRIPTION: The Pioneer Yosemite History Center lies in the Wawona area of the park, adjacent to the Wawona Store, across the Covered Bridge. It contains a grouping of historic structures built within the park's boundaries. The structures date to the mining and logging era of the region and represent vernacular architecture of the high Sierra. A 30-minute, self-guided tour through the history center provides information for visitors about the controversial history of the Yosemite region. The Center is always open and interpretive signs and brochures are located within the facility. Visitors can expect an easy walk through the center, except during extreme snow conditions. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:
tel: +1 209 372 1000
<http://www.hetchhetchy.org/>

location:
North end of Evergreen Road
Yosemite National Park CA
95389

9 O'Shaughnessy Dam

DESCRIPTION: This dam is just plain huge, and is a spectacular sight to visit. Built in July 1923, and at that time was the largest single structure on the West Coast, it rises 430 feet high and spans 900 feet. The dam holds the water from the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, which is the water supply for the San Francisco area. The water can be released through 14 outlets to control the water levels. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:
tel: 209-372-0200
fax: 209-372-0220
www.nps.gov/yose/

location:
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite CA 95389

10 Yosemite Museum

DESCRIPTION: The Yosemite Museum is located in Yosemite Village next to the Visitor Center. The site contains an Indian Cultural Exhibit and reconstructed Miwok-Paiute village, which is open daily 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed for lunch). The museum shop is open daily 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during the summer months through November 28. It offers traditional Indian arts and crafts and books on related subjects.



Photo courtesy of Yosemite Museum

contact:
tel: 209-372-0200
fax: 209-372-0220
www.nps.gov/yose/

location:
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite CA 95389

11 Yosemite Valley Visitor Center

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Yosemite Valley relief map is a really useful tool for planning excursions.

DESCRIPTION: The Yosemite Valley Visitor Center is the heart of Yosemite Village and is open daily, with hours varying with the season. The visitor center is immediately west of the main post office in the park at shuttle bus stops #6 and #9. You'll find information, maps, books, a series of great natural and cultural history exhibits, and helpful rangers to get you oriented to visiting the park. Every half hour the park's award-winning film is shown in the Theater out back. The Indian Museum and Indian Village are adjacent. © NileGuide

MY NOTE: An award-winning film shows every half hour and will leave you inspired. The best bookstore is here, with a broad selection of resources for deepening your knowledge of the park's history and nature.



contact:

tel: +1 209 375 9501

www.nps.gov/yose

location:

Wawona Hotel Drive, off 41
Yosemite National Park CA
95389

12 Wawona Visitor Center

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The only other place in the south end of the park that you might go first would be the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias.

DESCRIPTION: Located adjacent to the stately Wawona Hotel, the NPS Visitor Center is housed in the former Hill's Studio. Artist Thomas Hill is famed for his ginormous landscape paintings - one of which was specially hung in Washington, D.C. for President Obama's inauguration. If you've entered Yosemite from the south this is the place to get started with your orientation to the park, to buy books, maps, posters, etc., to pick up a Wilderness permit for backpacking and to ask a ranger your questions. Find the Wawona VC by turning in at the Wawona Hotel entrance, and looping the drive until you see the sign. The facility is closed in the winter.
© NileGuide

MY NOTE: Nicely redesigned in 2009, the Wawona Visitor Center is inside the historic Hill's Studio, where the famed Thomas Hill did many of his grand landscapes.



wcities

Yosemite National Park Snapshot

Local Info

The globally recognized landscape of Yosemite National Park is a stunning natural phenomenon, a crucial 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.

© NileGuide

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.

© NileGuide

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.

© NileGuide

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...

© NileGuide