



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



David

Yosemite done differently

Yosemite National Park, 4 Days

Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

Itinerary Overview 3

Daily Itineraries 5

Yosemite National Park Snapshot 11

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Yosemite's not all about searching for parking, going to see the most popular waterfall, and waiting in line for an ice cream cone. Some folks have figured out some of the cooler things to do in a Yosemite visit and we'll share them here. It starts with your basecamp at the locally cherished Yosemite Bug Hostel, or "The Bug" as we call it. This place has funk and soul, is a great spot to meet fellow travelers from many countries, to have a great meal, get an inexpensive bed, and from which to make forays with companions into Yosemite. There's often live music and there's always a fun vibe. You can catch the public transport just down the driveway and not have to drive into the park (see www.yarts.com), or you can hop in with carpool and hiking partners. It's not quite an hour up the gorgeous Merced River canyon into Yosemite Valley. In the summer, especially, there is so much going on in Yosemite. Take a free art class, sign up for an easy rockclimbing lesson with an excellent school, watch the sunset from a remote yet accessible prominence, be one of the few to visit Yosemite's shy twin sister, or eat at what is probably the nation's very best gas station mini-mart. Unexpected? Yes. Worth doing? Oh, yes. Yosemite? Most definitely!

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Yosemite National Park

DAY NOTE: Follow Highway 140 up into the Sierra, through the Gold Rush town of Mariposa and on into Midpines to the Bug. This place is an unexpected locale of culture and community which makes a great base for Yosemite excursions.



Yosemite Bug Lodge & Hostel
Hostel & Lodge in Midpines



Cafe at the Bug
A great place to relax in Midpines

Day 2 - Yosemite National Park

DAY NOTE: Check the YARTS schedule at the Bug office and catch the bus up into the park. Your ticket includes park entry. Get off in Yosemite Village by 10 a.m. and head to the Yosemite Art and Education Center for a free art class with an expert plein aire teacher. It can't hurt to call the day before to sign up: 209/372-1442. No experience is needed at all. Bring your own materials or buy some at the center. Classes go outside until two, so you'll want to bring a daypack with lunch, water and sun protection. This is a calmly focused way to get introduced to Yosemite Valley, meet some other students of the arts and to create some meaningful and attractive souvenirs of your visit to this amazing canyon. At the end of the day, catch that YARTS bus in front of the Visitor Center.



Yosemite Art and Education Center
Free art classes in Yosemite Village



Yosemite Bug Lodge & Hostel
Hostel & Lodge in Midpines

Day 3 - Yosemite National Park

DAY NOTE: Eat a good breakfast for today's activities, then put water, food and an extra layer into the car. Today you're becoming a rockclimber. Yesterday you called the Yosemite Mountaineering School to register for a beginner 'Intro to Climbing' class and today's the day to get vertical (209/372-8344). Drive up into Yosemite Valley and follow signs for Curry Village. Be there by 8:15. Make sure to remove any food from your car and stow it in a bearproof locker. A day's class with YMS runs \$117 and is well worth it for the expert instruction, the latest in hardware and a well-honed curriculum that will get

anyone up the rock. Have fun and don't forget to breathe. When you're done, swing into Degnan's Deli and have them make you a sandwich. Add some celebratory treats and beverages, and make the drive up Highway 41 to the Glacier Point Road. Drive out to the Sentinel Dome trailhead and haul your picnic dinner a mile up to the top of the dome. You brought your headlamp, right? A tired mountaineer deserves a reward at the end of a hard day on the granite, so you get a spectacular sunset over the Coast Range - a view no dinner with royalty could match. Adrenaline, honestly tired muscles, some finger scrapes, food, liquids, hearty companions - the stuff we live for. Watch out for deer on the drive back to the Bug.



Yosemite Mountaineering School
Learn to rock climb inside the park



Sentinel Dome Trail
Leads to the summit's sweeping views



Degnan's Delicatessen
Sandwiches & Groceries



Yosemite Bug Lodge & Hostel
Hostel & Lodge in Midpines

Day 4 - Yosemite National Park

DAY NOTE: It's a big park (the size of Rhode Island) and you'll put a few miles on your wheels today. Depart the delightful Bug, head up to the edge of Yosemite Valley, but go north where the signs indicate Highway 120. Follow 120 northwest back out of the park again, and about a kilometer outside the park entrance go right where the sign says Hetch Hetchy. Follow this winding old road through forest and meadows to a park entrance station that sees but a tiny fraction of Yosemite's visitors. Once through here, you follow an old railroad grade up and over a saddle then prepare to be awestruck: here's another ginormous canyon! Soaring cliffs, leaping waterfalls - and few people- and, oh, yeah, the bottom of this canyon is filled with water. You've found the famed Hetch Hetchy Valley on the Tuolumne River. Park near the dam and walk across and through the rock tunnel. It's a beautiful canyon even with the big cement dam and the pool of water where there was once a meadow with a meandering river. The water and carbon-free electricity go to San Francisco where they serve millions -was it worth it? The debate continues today. From Hetchy, drive back to Highway 120 and head back into the park, uphill to Crane Flat where there's a gas station and store. If you feel like walking two miles round trip there's a small grove of giant sequoia trees, including the world's first tunnel tree. Now drive east on 120 towards Tioga Pass. After climbing through the

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Hetch Hetchy Reservoir

Yosemite Valley's twin sister



O'Shaughnessy Dam

Large dam in the park's northwest



Tioga Road

45 miles through the park's northern portion



Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center

High country orientation

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contact:

tel: 1 209 966 6666
fax: 1 209 966 6667
<http://www.yosemitebug.com/index.html>

location:

6979 Hwy 140
Midpines CA 95345

1 Yosemite Bug Lodge & Hostel

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The YARTS bus between the Merced Amtrak station and Yosemite Valley stops right out front.

DESCRIPTION: Part of Hostelling International, this lovely wooded compound is located about 25 miles from Yosemite Park. There are co-ed, single-gender and group cabins. The beds are of good quality, and fresh linens are provided. The compound includes a bistro, lounge, restaurant and bookstore.
© wcities.com



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contact:

tel: 1 209 966 6666
fax: 1 209 966 6667
<http://www.yosemitebug.com/cafe.html>

location:

6979 Highway 140
Midpines CA 95345

hours:

Daily 11a-7p

2 Cafe at the Bug

DESCRIPTION: The Bug is loved by locals, by international visitors and by anyone open to a different kind of casual dining. People are friendly, most are there to see Yosemite, and it's easy to find a conversation with someone from Ireland or a group of rangers gathering off duty. Good coffee, wine, beer and always a different menu of tasty entrees and baked goods. Order off the menu board at the kitchen counter then relax by the fireplace, or in an easy chair with a Yosemite guidebook. The staff will find you with your food when it's ready. Open all year, with easy access to the park.
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contact:
tel: +1 209 372 1442
<http://www.yosemite.org>

location:
Yosemite Village
95389

1 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



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fax: 1 209 966 6667
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© wcities.com



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contact:

tel: +1 209 372 8344
<http://www.yosemitepark.com/activitylist.cfm>

location:

Southside Drive & Happy Isle Loop Road
Yosemite National Park CA 95389

hours:

Daily 8a-9p

1 Yosemite Mountaineering School

DESCRIPTION: This school offers instruction in hiking, backpacking, and backcountry skiing; however, it is known for its rock climbing classes. Yosemite is a great place to learn to climb and many participants gain the skills needed to climb Half Dome and other mountains in the park. All instructors are certified climbers. If you want to practice your climbing skills, you can rent the equipment needed. The classes range in price, depending on the length and class chosen. Class fees include equipment rental. © wcities.com



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contact:

tel: 209-372-0200
fax: 209-372-0220
<http://www.nps.gov/yose/plan/yourvisit/glacierhikes.htm>

location:

P.O. Box 577
Yosemite CA 95389

2 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

contact:

tel: 1 209 372 1000
www.yosemitepark.com

location:

9015 Village Drive
Yosemite National Park CA 95389

hours:

8a-6p daily

3 Degnan's Delicatessen

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

If you're lunching outside, don't let those ground squirrels get any crumbs; keep them wild.

DESCRIPTION: Degnan's is a social hub for Yosemite Village and it's overflowing at lunchtime. There's a lot to choose from, but their sandwich selection (all named for park



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landmarks) is great and the soups are just the thing on a chilly mountain day. Lots of beverage fridges, ice cream novelties, chips and candy can round out a meal for a picnic table outside or will fill your daypack for a hike to Mirror Lake or up Yosemite Falls. Open year-round. © NileGuide

contact:

tel: 1 209 966 6666
fax: 1 209 966 6667
<http://www.yosemitebug.com/index.html>

location:

6979 Hwy 140
Midpines CA 95345

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contact:

tel: +1 209 372 0200

http://www.nps.gov/yose/plan_yourvisit/hetchhetchy.htm

location:

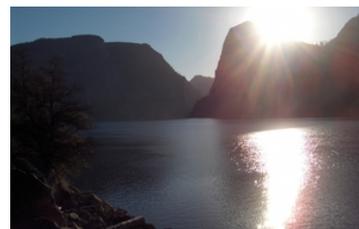
North end of Evergreen Road
Yosemite National Park CA
95389

1 Hetch Hetchy Reservoir

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

This little-known spot is truly worth a day's exploration.

DESCRIPTION: The building of the O'Shaughnessy Dam within Yosemite NP was perhaps the nation's first great conservation battle. The city of San Francisco gets the water and the electricity, the park gets either an ugly water tank, or a quiet canyon with few visitors, depending on your perspective. Almost no one comes out here, and some people feel that the reservoir actually saved this canyon from the overdeveloped infrastructure of Yosemite Valley. There are still high granite walls, tremendous waterfalls and some fine hiking - truly an unknown sister to Yosemite Valley. Spring flowers are terrific. In the winter the road is closed at night and sometimes closed all day in snowy or icy conditions.
© NileGuide



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

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

2 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



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

location:
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite CA 95389

3 Tioga Road

DESCRIPTION: Tioga Road, State Route 120 East, lies in the northern portion of Yosemite National Park. It begins in Crane Flat and leads 45 miles eastward gaining 4,000 feet in elevation to exit the park at Tioga Pass. The road is the main thoroughfare through Tuolumne Meadows and provides access to a variety of recreation opportunities including backpacking, camping, picnicking, swimming, fishing and hiking. Tioga Road is open to vehicles from late May or June (weather permitting) until the first major snow storm after November 1. In winter and early spring, the snow covered Tioga Road serves as an ungroomed cross-country ski route and entrance into the northern Yosemite backcountry.



Photo courtesy of National Park

contact:
tel: +1 209 372 0263
www.nps.gov/yose

location:
Hwy 120 East
Yosemite National Park CA
95389

4 Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The ranger staff here are some of the park's best naturalists.

DESCRIPTION: Open only in the summer, this is the place to start your visit if you're arriving from the east, or just to get oriented to the park's high country. The building is part of a historic CCC camp and has a few exhibits, a nice little bookstore, and the ever-helpful rangers and YA volunteers and staff to answer questions. There are restrooms outside. The TMVC is a half mile from the campground. Several hiking trails take off from here, with the trail across the street, over to Soda Springs being an excellent, easy introduction to this vast subalpine meadow. You're at 8600' so expect to gasp a little. © NileGuide



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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.

© 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.

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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.

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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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