Things to Do

Keep this Guide with you to get the most out of your visit

What do you want to do with your special time in Yosemite? The choice is yours. Here are some popular activities for a day in Yosemite National Park.

Take the Bus
Free shuttles, including some environmentally-friendly electric/diesel hybrids, are available in Yosemite Valley year-round. Park your car and let an expert drive you to some of the most scenic and historic points in the park. Not only will you be doing your part to cut down on traffic congestion and vehicle pollutants, you’ll also have both hands free for that perfect shot of Half Dome.

Enjoy Winter Fun at Badger Pass!
California’s original ski resort, Badger Pass Ski Area is a perfect place for visitors of all ages and skill levels to play in the snow. Learn to ski with one of our lessons, get some practice in on 10 runs, or catch some air in one of two terrain parks. You can also set-out on an easy, guided snowshoe hike or embark on a cross-country skiing adventure from the Nordic center. Badger Pass is open everyday, weather and conditions permitting. Downhill ski lifts operate from 9am to 4pm. Call 209/372-1000 for current snow conditions. Equipment rentals and lift tickets are available from 8:30am to 4pm.

Go on a Snowshoe Hike
Join a naturalist for a guided hike or rent or bring your own equipment for a fantastic winter experience. Be sure to weather and snow conditions before you go. Snowshoe rentals are available at Badger Pass Ski Area. The Rental Shop is open from 8:30am to 4pm. For weather conditions, please call 209/372-0200 or check at any visitor center. (See page 5 for guided hike schedule.)

Explore a Sequoia Grove
Meet the most massive living trees on earth as you explore a sequoia grove. Yosemite is home to three groves—each within walking distance of a road. Skis or snowshoes are recommended if the trail is snow covered. (See map on page 2 and info on page 7.)

Visit the Yosemite Museum
Learn about Yosemite Indians by exploring a museum collection that includes remarkable woven baskets and traditional dress. Tour the outdoor Indian Village or talk with an Indian cultural demonstrator. The Yosemite Museum is located in Yosemite Village at shuttle stops #5 and #9. (See page 6.)

Take a Photography Class
Learn how to best capture the landscape of Yosemite by joining a photography expert from the Ansel Adams Gallery. Several classes are offered each week. Some have fees, some are free. Learn more and sign up at the Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite Village. Shuttle stops #5 and #9. (See pages 5 and 6.)

Hike to Mirror Meadow
Situated at the base of Half Dome, the site of Mirror Lake frames reflections of Yosemite’s most iconic cliff. (The lake, which dries in late summer, fills again after the first spring runoff.) The quiet trail is gentle and follows Tenaya Creek as it winds its way through the eastern Valley. The trail starts at shuttle stop #17. (See Valley map on the back of this Guide.)

Visit the Other Valley: Hetch Hetchy
Hetch Hetchy Valley and its reservoir are located about 40 miles north of Yosemite Valley. The contours of Hetch Hetchy are much like its southern neighbor—with precipitous cliffs and waterfalls. Take an easy stroll across the dam for a great view across the reservoir or, if conditions permit, walk to Wapama Fall. (See page 3 for specifics on visiting Hetch Hetchy.)

Drive to Tunnel View
One of the most famous views of Yosemite Valley, Tunnel View has captivated visitors for over 75 years, offering expansive views of El Capitan, Clouds Rest, Half Dome, and Bridalveil Fall. (See map, page 2.)

Walk with a Ranger
Learn about park wonders on a ranger-guided walk. Programs are offered daily in Yosemite Valley and focus on wildlife, geology, trees, and other topics. (See page 5 for times and places.)

See Half Dome at Sunset
Towering more than 4,000 feet above the eastern end of Yosemite Valley, Half Dome is one of the most recognizable features in the Valley. Sunset lights up the cliff face, creating a dramatic and colorful scene. Witness the effect from Sentinel Bridge or one of the meadows near Yosemite Village or Curry Village. (See the Valley map on the back of this Guide.)

Visit the Ice Rink at Curry Village
Take the shuttle to Curry Village for a one-of-a-kind ice skating experience with a spectacular view of Half Dome. Four sessions are available on weekends and holidays: 8:30am to 11:00am, noon to 2:30 pm, 3:30pm to 6:00pm, and 7pm to 9:30pm. Monday through Friday, two sessions are available from 3:30pm to 6:00pm and 7:00pm to 9:30pm. (Closes for season March 6)

Take a Twilight Stroll with a Naturalist
On selected early evenings, take a one-hour leisurely walk with a naturalist through the meadows and forests surrounding The Ahwahnee. Enjoy views of alpenglow views, glimpses of passing wildlife, and stories of Yosemite’s deep human history during this peaceful way to get up-close and personal with Yosemite. Check the Scheduled Events in Yosemite Valley on page 5 of this newspaper or local listings for exact meeting times and locations.

Curl Up in Front of a Fireplace!
The Ahwahnee has three oversized fireplaces that match the proportion of the structure and that have always provided heat during the year’s cooler months. Bring a book, a warm drink, or at least a pair of frosty hands for a good warm-up in front of the flames.

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Discover Yosemite

Entrance Fees
Reservations are NOT required to enter Yosemite. The park is open year-round, 24 hours/day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Valid for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yosemite Pass</td>
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<td>1 year in Yosemite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interagency Annual Pass</td>
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<td>Interagency Senior Pass</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>1 year for citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interagency Access Pass</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>lifetime for disabled citizens</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Reservations
Campground Reservations
877/444-6777
www.recreation.gov

Lodging Reservations
801/559-5000
www.yosemitepark.com

Regional Info
Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)
www.yarts.com

Highway 120 West
Yosemite Chamber of Commerce
800/449-9120 or 209/962-0429
Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
800/446-1333
www.tcvb.com

Highway 41
Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau
559/683-4636
www.yosemitehiking.com

Highway 132/49
Coulterville Visitor Center
209/878-3074

Highway 140/49
Mariposa County Visitor Center
866/424-5834 or 209/666-7081

Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
209/742-4567
www.homeofyosemite.com

Highway 120 East
Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce and Mono Lake
Visitor Center, 760/647-6629
www.lievining.com

Calif. Welcome Center, Merced
800/446-5353 or 209/724-8104
www.yosemite-gateway.org

Yosemite Valley

Iconic Yosemite Valley is known around the world for its impressive waterfalls, cliffs, and unusual rock formations. It is open year round and can be reached via Highway 41 from Fresno, Highway 140 from Merced, and Highway 120 west from Manteca. The Valley is known for massive cliff faces like El Capitan and Half Dome, and its plunging waterfalls including Yosemite Falls, the tallest waterfall in North America. Take an easy stroll to the base of Lower Yosemite Fall or, if you’re looking for a bigger challenge, hike to Vernal and/or Nevada Falls. Admire El Capitan, the massive granite monolith that stands 3,593 feet from base to summit. Whether you explore the Valley by foot, car, or with a tour, the scenery will leave you breathless and eager to see what’s around the next corner.

Granite, the Merced River, trees, and meadows compose the Valley’s unique blend. Photo by Christine White Loberg

Tioga Road and Glacier Point Road close after the first significant snowfall. For current road and weather information, please call 209/372-0200.
Glacier Point Road and Badger Pass

Glacier Point, an overlook with a commanding view of Yosemite Valley, Half Dome, and the Yosemite high country, is located 30 miles from Yosemite Valley. Although the road is closed to vehicles past the Badger Pass Ski Area in winter months, a system of cross-country ski tracks is maintained along the road, and numerous snowshoe and ski trails originate from it. Badger Pass Ski Area (open December 11, conditions permitting) offers downhill skiing, tubing, and ski instruction. From Yosemite Valley, take the Wawona Road (Highway 41), then turn left onto Glacier Point Road.

Wawona and Mariposa Grove

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is located 36 miles (1½ hours) south of Yosemite Valley via the Wawona Road (Highway 41), two miles from the park’s South Entrance station. The road to the Mariposa Grove is closed from sometime in December to April. The nearby Pioneer Yosemite History Center in Wawona is a collection of historic buildings associated with people and events that shaped the national park idea in Yosemite.

Crane Flat and Tuolumne Grove

Crane Flat is located 16 miles from Yosemite Valley at the junction of the Big Oak Flat and Tioga Roads. A number of hikes through pleasant meadows are available—when snow covers the ground these turn into delightful ski and snowshoe tracks. To see giant sequoias, park at the Tuolumne Grove parking area located on the Tioga Road, and walk one steep mile down to the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias. Or, park at Merced Grove trailhead and walk two steep miles down to this small grove. These groves north of Yosemite Valley are smaller than the more-famous Mariposa Grove, but are quieter and off-limits to vehicles. Remember that the walk down is easier than the walk back up.

Tuolumne Meadows and Tioga Road

Closed to vehicles in the winter, the Tioga Road offers winter adventurers a 39-mile scenic ski or snowshoe past forests, meadows, lakes, and granite domes. The road’s elevation ranges from 6,200 to just under 10,000 feet. In winter, Tuolumne Meadows is often reached by skiers via the Snow Creek Trail from the Mirror Lake trailhead, a short distance east of Yosemite Valley.

Hetch Hetchy

Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, a source of drinking water and hydroelectric power for the City of San Francisco, is home to spectacular scenery and the starting point for many wilderness trails. The area’s low elevation makes it a good place to hike in autumn and winter. Hetch Hetchy Reservoir is located 40 miles from Yosemite Valley via Highway 120 and Evergreen and Hetch Hetchy Roads. Hetch Hetchy Road is open limited hours: 8 am to 7 pm through Oct. 31; then 8 am to 5 pm through March 31. The road is accessible via the Big Oak Flat Road and Evergreen Road and is a 1 hour and 15 minute drive from Yosemite Valley. Trailers, vehicles over 25 feet long, and RVs and other vehicles over 8 feet wide are not allowed on the narrow, winding Hetch Hetchy Road.

Glaciers: Did you know?

Learn more about glaciers in our feature story on page 10 of the Yosemite Guide

- A glacier is a mass of ice that develops from accumulated snowfall on the land over a period of years, and is sufficiently thick and heavy to begin moving under its own weight.
- The most recent glacier in Yosemite Valley reached its maximum size about 20,000 years ago. At that time, it extended down the Valley as far as Bridalveil Fall.
- The Lyell Glacier in Yosemite National Park is the second-largest glacier in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The largest glacier in the Sierra Nevada is the Palisade Glacier in the John Muir Wilderness of the Inyo National Forest.
Yosemite Valley

Spectacular vistas in the heart of the park

Yosemite Valley embraces one of the world’s most outstanding concentrations of waterfalls, granite walls, meadows, wildflowers, and trees. The Valley also harbors a rich collection of human stories, from American Indian lore to the birth of the National Park movement.

The base of Lower Yosemite Fall is an easy walk from shuttle stop #6. This hike features educational exhibits and a picnic area, and is accessible to the mobility impaired.

Bridalveil Fall is a year-round waterfall that you can visit by car on your way into or out of the Valley. Winds swirling about the cliff lift and blow the falling water in a delicate free-fall.

El Capitan, a massive granite monolith, stands 3,593 feet from base to summit. From spring to fall, climbers come from all over the globe to scale El Capitan.

Half Dome, Yosemite’s most distinctive monument, dominates most views in Yosemite Valley. Forces of uplift, erosion from rivers and glaciers, and rockfall all shaped this famous feature into what we see today. Cook’s Meadow, Sentinel Bridge, Tunnel View, Glacier Point, and Olmsted Point are just a few locations with stunning views of Half Dome.

Happy Isles is a place to see dramatic natural processes at work. It is easily reached by shuttle at stop #16. Cross the footbridges onto the Isles or wander through outdoor exhibits detailing Yosemite’s geologic story.

Shuttle buses may not travel to stop #16 when the road is snow-covered or icy. For a strenuous day hike, you can use this trailhead to reach Vernal Fall footbridge (¼ miles) and Nevada Fall (2.7 miles) via the John Muir Trail. Tunnel View, along Wawona Road (Hwy 41) provides a classic view of Yosemite Valley, including El Capitan, Half Dome, Sentinel Rock, Cathedral Rocks, and Bridalveil Fall. It is particularly spectacular at sunset or after the clearing of a storm.

To experience the Valley on foot, stop by a visitor center for a trail map and the most current trail conditions, or see below for a list of popular Valley day hikes.

Yosemite Valley Day Hikes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAIL / DESTINATION</th>
<th>STARTING POINT</th>
<th>DISTANCE / TIME</th>
<th>DIFFICULTY / ELEVATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridalveil Fall</td>
<td>Bridalveil Fall Parking Area</td>
<td>0.5 mile round-trip, 20 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Yosemite Fall</td>
<td>Lower Yosemite Fall Shuttle Stop #6</td>
<td>1.0 mile round-trip, 20 minutes</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Yosemite Fall Trail to Columbia Rock</td>
<td>Camp 4 Near Shuttle Stop #7</td>
<td>1 mile round-trip, 2–3 hours</td>
<td>Strenuous 1,000-foot gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Upper Yosemite Fall</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>1.2 miles round-trip, 4–6 hours</td>
<td>Very Strenuous 2,700-foot gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror Lake (A seasonal lake)</td>
<td>Mirror Lake Shuttle Stop #17</td>
<td>2 miles round-trip, 1 hour</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernal Fall Footbridge, winter route</td>
<td>Happy Isles Shuttle Stop #16</td>
<td>1.4 miles round-trip, 1–2 hours</td>
<td>Moderate, 400-foot gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Vernal Fall, winter route</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>5 miles round-trip, 3–5 hours</td>
<td>Strenuous 1,800-foot gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Nevada Fall, winter route</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>8 miles one-way, 9–11 hours</td>
<td>Very Strenuous 2,000-foot gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Mile Trail to Glacier Point (Closed in winter past Union Point)</td>
<td>Southside Drive</td>
<td>4.8 miles one-way, 3–4 hours</td>
<td>Very Strenuous 2,300-foot gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Floor Loop</td>
<td>Lower Yosemite Fall Shuttle Stop #6</td>
<td>13 miles full loop, 5–7 hours full loop</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Events and Programs
Where to go and what to do

Yosemite Valley
BADGERS PASS
WAWONA

Saturday

12:30pm  JUNIOR SNOW RANGERS (January 16, 23, 30 and February 6, 13 only) 1 hr.
Front of Yosemite Valley Visitor Center. Bring warm clothing. Recommended ages 7-13 (NPS)

1:00pm  Crane Flat to Clark Range Vista Snowshoe Walk (Starts on January 15, Sundays except February 6). No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk (DNC) $

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – A Charming Yosemite 1½ hrs. Front of Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (NPS) $

7:00pm  Evening Program 1 hr. Check local listings for venue & topic (DNC) $

9:00am  Adventure Hike - Snowshoe to Dewey Point 1½ hrs. Badger Pass Nordic Center, Mountainview School. (YMS) $

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

6:30pm  Full Moon Snowshoe Walk (January 16 only) 2 hrs. No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk. Badger Pass Lodge (DNC) $

Sunday

8:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign up in advance at the Ansel Adams Gallery and meet at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG)

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Yosemite’s First People 1½ hrs. Front of Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (NPS) $

4:00pm  History of Bracebridge Talk (December 29 only) ½ hr.

6:00pm  Full Moon Snowshoe Walk (January 17 and February 14 only) 2 hrs. No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk. Badger Pass Lodge (DNC) $

Monday

9:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign-up in advance at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG) $

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

4:00pm  Winter Twilight Stroll (Except December 20 and 27) 1½ hr. The Ahwahnee back lawn (DNC) $

7:00pm  Ranger Program 1 hr. Lodge. Check local listings for venue & topic (NPS) $

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

6:30pm  Full Moon Snowshoe Walk (January 18 and February 15 only) 2 hrs. No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk. Badger Pass Lodge (DNC) $

5:30pm  Vintage Music Of Yosemite (an evening when the hotel is open) 4 hrs. Live music & historical programs with pianist Tony Bopp. Programs are available by request, usually given at 8:30pm. Drop by the piano early in the evening & ask Tim for details, Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

Tuesday

9:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign-up in advance and meet at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG) $

12:30pm  “Using Your Digital Camera” Class 4 hrs.

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

4:00pm  Winter Twilight Stroll (Except December 20 and 29) 1½ hr. Yosemite Lodge at the Falls Cliff Room (DNC)

7:00pm  Evening Program 1 hr. Check local listings for venue & topic (DNC) $

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

5:30pm  Vintage Music Of Yosemite (an evening when the hotel is open) 4 hrs. Live music & historical programs with pianist Tony Bopp. Programs are available by request, usually given at 8:30pm. Drop by the piano early in the evening & ask Tim for details, Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

Wednesday

9:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign-up in advance and meet at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG) $

10:00am  Open House 3 hrs. (January 26 only) Yosemite Visitor Center Auditorium. Meet park staff to learn about current and upcoming plans and projects (NPS) $

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Wild About Wildlife 1½ hrs. Front of Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (NPS) $

4:00pm  History of Bracebridge Talk (December 22 only) ½ hr.

6:00pm  Ranger Program 1 hr. Lodge. Check local listings for venue & topic (DNC)

9:00am  Adventure Hike - Snowshoe to Dewey Point (Except December 16) 1½ hrs. Badger Pass Nordic Center, Mountainview School. (YMS) $

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter (except December 15) Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

6:30pm  Full Moon Snowshoe Walk (January 19 and 26 only) 2 hrs. No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk. Badger Pass Lodge (DNC) $

5:30pm  Vintage Music Of Yosemite (an evening when the hotel is open) 4 hrs. Live music & historical programs with pianist Tony Bopp. Programs are available by request, usually given at 8:30pm. Drop by the piano early in the evening & ask Tim for details, Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

Thursday

9:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign-up in advance and meet at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG) $

10:30am  “In the Footsteps of Ansel Adams: Swing Artistically with your Camera” 4 hrs.

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Geology (except December 21) ½ hr.

4:00pm  History of Bracebridge Talk (December 16 only) ½ hr.

6:00pm  Ranger Program 1 hr. Lodge. Check local listings for venue & topic (DNC)

9:00am  Adventure Hike - Snowshoe to Dewey Point (Except December 16) 1½ hrs. Badger Pass Nordic Center, Mountainview School. (YMS) $

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter (except December 15) Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

5:30pm  Vintage Music Of Yosemite (an evening when the hotel is open) 4 hrs. Live music & historical programs with pianist Tony Bopp. Programs are available by request, usually given at 8:30pm. Drop by the piano early in the evening & ask Tim for details, Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

Friday

9:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign-up in advance and meet at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG) $

12:30pm  “Using Your Digital Camera” Class 4 hrs.

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Yosemite’s Legacy 1½ hrs. Front of Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (NPS) $

5:00pm  Film: Ansel Adams (Except December 24 and 31) 1½ hr.

9:00am  Adventure Hike - Snowshoe to Dewey Point (except December 16) Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter (except December 15) Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

5:30pm  Vintage Music Of Yosemite (an evening when the hotel is open) 4 hrs. Live music & historical programs with pianist Tony Bopp. Programs are available by request, usually given at 8:30pm. Drop by the piano early in the evening & ask Tim for details, Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

Saturday

9:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign-up in advance and meet at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG) $

12:30pm  “Using Your Digital Camera” Class 4 hrs.

1:00pm  Crane Flat to Clark Range Vista Snowshoe Walk (Starts on January 3). No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk (DNC) $

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Winter Ecology 1½ hrs. Front of Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (NPS) $

4:00pm  History of Bracebridge Talk (December 18 and 31) 1½ hr.

6:00pm  Ranger Program 1 hr. Lodge. Check local listings for venue & topic (NPS) $

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter (except December 17) Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

5:30pm  Vintage Music Of Yosemite (an evening when the hotel is open) 4 hrs. Live music & historical programs with pianist Tony Bopp. Programs are available by request, usually given at 8:30pm. Drop by the piano early in the evening & ask Tim for details, Wawona Hotel lounge (DNC) $

Sunday

9:00am  Camera 1½ hrs. Sign-up in advance and meet at The Ahwahnee Hotel (AAG) $

12:30pm  “Using Your Digital Camera” Class 4 hrs.

1:00pm  Crane Flat to Clark Range Vista Snowshoe Walk (Starts on January 3). No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk (DNC) $

2:00pm  Ranger Walk – Winter Ecology 1½ hrs. Front of Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (NPS) $

4:00pm  History of Bracebridge Talk (December 18 and 25 only) 1½ hr.

5:00pm  Evening Program 1 hr. Check local listings for venue & topic (DNC) $

10:30am  Snowshoe Walk – Explore the Forest in Winter (except December 16) Conditions permitting, 2 hrs. Meet at ranger office A-frame for natural tour of winter landscape. Bring warm clothing; snowshoes provided (suggested donation $10) (NPS)

2:30pm  ADVENTURE HIKE RANGERS (January 15, 22, 29 and February 1, 8, 15 only) Conditions permitting, 3 hrs. Meet at larger office A-frame. Bring snowshoes; recommended ages 7-13 (NPS)

6:30pm  Full Moon Snowshoe Walk (January 15 and 22 only) 2 hrs. No experience required, advance sign up required at any tour desk. Badger Pass Lodge (DNC) $
Even when it’s cold outside, Yosemite Valley offers great activities and programs for the whole family.

Valley Visitor Center and Bookstore
Visitor center and bookstore hours are 9 am to 5 pm, just west of the main post office (shuttle stops #5 and #9). The center offers information, maps, and books in the attached bookstore. Explore the new exhibit hall and learn how Yosemite’s spectacular landscape was formed, how people have interacted with it through the centuries, how wildlife adapts and survives, and how your national park continues to evolve.

Yosemite Cemetery
This historic cemetery is located just west of the Yosemite Museum, across the street. Guide to the Yosemite Cemetery is available at the Valley Visitor Center.

Wilderness Permits
Permits are required year-round for overnight wilderness use. Wilderness permits can be obtained at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center seven days a week from 9am to 5pm. Bear canisters can be rented and a wide selection of maps and books are available for purchase.

Yosemite Museum
Located in Yosemite Village next to the Valley Visitor Center. Open 9am to 5pm, may close for lunch.

Indian Cultural Exhibit
Interprets the cultural history of Yosemite’s Miwok and Paiute people from 1850 to the present.

Yosemite Museum Store
Open daily December 15 – January 2, from 9 am to 5 pm. (May close for lunch) From January 3 to February 15 the store will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 9am to 5pm. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

Ansel Adams Gallery
The gallery is located in Yosemite Village next to the Valley Visitor Center and is open daily. Hours are 9 am to 5 pm through January 3, then 10am to 5pm. The gallery offers the work of Ansel Adams, contemporary photographers, and other fine artists. See page 5 for photo walk and other event times. For more information, call 209/372-4413, or visit www.anseladams.com. The Gallery will be closed from Monday, January 24, 2011- Thursday, February 11, 2011 for repairs. Please check for early opening.

Tours
Motor coach sightseeing tours are available in Yosemite Valley year-round. To experience the Valley with a guide, take the Valley Floor Tour. This 2-hour tour departs several times daily from Yosemite Lodge. During winter, tours travel by motorcoach, while warm-weather tours are offered on open air trams. Call 209/372-1240 for reservations or inquire at tour/transportation desks at the Yosemite Lodge.

Expand Your Yosemite Experience at Home!
Yosemite Nature Notes is a video podcast series that tells unique stories about the natural and human history of Yosemite National Park. Produced by the Yosemite National Park Service, this series features park rangers, scientists, historians and park visitors as they discuss the diverse plants and animals that make Yosemite their home, as well as the towering cliffs, giant waterfalls and mountain peaks that are known throughout the world. In the most recent episode, videographer Steve Bumgardner joined Yosemite geologist Greg Stock and others for a trip to the Maclure Glacier. Here are his reflections about the trip.

“The best part of shooting the glacier episode was actually roping up and rappelling down into the bergschrund, a large crevasse that forms at the top of the glacier. This is an area that is very dynamic, and it fills with snow and ice each year. As the glacier moves downslope, the bergschrund opens up and one can actually get down into it. Although it was cold and dark, it was very exciting to explore this part of the glaciers.”

As a producer, your highest hopes for your work is that you’ll inspire action. Whether we’re showing frazil ice, or big trees or glaciers, I hope that folks will appreciate these amazing features and want to experience them for themselves.”

Want to see more? Visit http://www.nps.gov/yose/photosmuitimediaynn.htm to watch the episode. You can also subscribe to Yosemite Nature Notes on iTunes or on YouTube (in high definition).
Wawona
Pioneer Yosemite History Center

Go back to a time of horse-drawn wagons, a covered bridge, and log cabins. A visit to the Pioneer Yosemite History Center explores Yosemite’s history and explains how Yosemite was the inspiration for national parks across America and around the world. The center offers open 10am-5pm, with interpretive exhibits and brochures available.

Evening Programs
Join pianist/singer Tom Bopp in the Wawona Hotel lobby from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm, Tuesday through Saturday, as he performs songs and tells stories from Yosemite’s past.

Wilderness Permits
Visitors can obtain wilderness permits at a self-service kiosk on the porch of the Wawona Visitor Center at Hill’s Studio, adjacent to the Wawona Hotel. Please come prepared with your own allowed bear canisters. Bear canisters are available for rent at the Wawona Store.

Mariposa Grove
Located near Yosemite’s South Entrance, the Mariposa Grove is the park’s largest stand of giant sequoias, with about 500 trees. The road to the Grove closes in November or December and opens sometime in April. Visitors can walk, ski, or snowshoe when the road is closed to vehicles.

Getting to Mariposa Grove
Allow 1 ½ hour driving time to reach the grove’s access road from the Valley. A locked gate prevents vehicles from entering the closure area. Limited parking is available near the gate.

Snow Travelers to the Grove
Skiers and snowshoers can follow the snow-covered road into the grove. Trails within the grove are marked by yellow flags attached to trees above ground level. When snow covers the ground, access is limited to foot, snowshoe, or ski.

Distance and Elevation
Distances below do not include the 2-mile approach from the locked gate near the park’s south entrance.

Grizzly Giant
Distance from trailhead: 0.8 mile/1.3km Elevation gain: 400 ft/122m
Fallen Wawona Tunnel Tree
Distance from trailhead: 2.5 miles/4km Elevation gain: 1,000 ft/305m
Dogs and bikes are not permitted anywhere in the Grove.
Protecting yourself...

Keep yourself safe while exploring your park.
There are many ways to experience the wildness of Yosemite. While the forces of nature can create unexpected hazardous conditions, with a little common sense and some pre-planning, you can minimize the risks associated with many activities.

Around Ice and Water

• Stay off of frozen lakes, rivers and streams and away from swiftly-moving water. Keep children from wandering on or near these hazards.
• Never swim or wade upstream from the brink of a waterfall, even if the water appears shallow and calm. Each year, unsuspecting visitors are swept over waterfalls to their deaths when swimming in these areas.
• Swimming is prohibited in Emerald Pool (above Vernal Fall) and in the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir.

Avoid Hypothermia
Sierra winters are comparatively mild, but temperatures can drop into dangerous territory with little warning. Winter sports require a high degree of preparation and training. Be prepared to shelter overnight even when out just for the day. Know how to use your gear and carry basic repair materials.

Avoid the combination of wetness, wind, and cold. Know symptoms of hypothermia. Carry emergency fire-starting materials and food. Avoid dehydration; carry and drink plenty of water and carry emergency high-energy food.

Water Quality
To protect yourself from disease, treat any surface water before drinking. Treatment methods include boiling for five minutes, use of a Giardia-rated water filter, or iodine-based purifier. To prevent the spread of Giardia and other water-borne disease organisms, use restroom facilities where available, and always wash hands afterwards with soap and water. In natural areas where facilities are not available, wash, camp, and bury human waste at least 100 feet away from any water source or trail, burying human waste six inches deep and pack out any toilet paper.

Traffic Safety
Roads leading to the park are two-lane, narrow, and winding. When traveling on park roads you can protect yourself, other visitors, and park wildlife by observing the following simple rules: Please obey posted speed limits. Yosemite’s roads are used by both visitors and park wildlife. Use turnouts to pull completely out of the road, to take photos, consult the park map, or simply enjoy the park’s scenery and wildlife.

Effects of Altitude
Altitude sickness may develop in otherwise healthy and fit people who are exposed to rapid increases in altitude. It can develop at altitudes as low as 8,000 feet (Yosemite Valley’s elevation is 4,000 feet). Should altitude sickness develop, descend to a lower elevation. The Yosemite Medical Clinic in Yosemite Valley is experienced in diagnosing and treating this sickness.

Hiking, Backpacking, Backcountry Snow Travel, and Rock Climbing
There are no scheduled winter patrols, so be prepared. Be honest about your abilities and plan with the least experienced member of your group in mind. Tell someone where you are going and when you are due back.
• Be prepared for icy travel before conditions arise. Bring crampons, ice axe, climbing skins, and other traction devices.
• Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
• Check weather forecasts. Snow can occur with little warning, and can make route finding very difficult.
• Avoid dehydration or heat exhaustion; carry and drink plenty of water, and bring high-energy food.
• Be prepared to set up emergency shelter even when out just for the day.
• Know how to use your gear and carry basic repair materials.

Wilderness Permit Details
Free wilderness permits are required for all overnight trips into the Yosemite Wilderness. Permits are issued and bear canisters are available for rent at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, the Badger Pass A Frame, and the Hetch Hetchy entrance during hours of operation. Wilderness permits are available via self registration at the Hill’s Studio in Wawona, at the Ranger Station in Tuolumne Meadows, and on porch at the Big Oak Flat Information Station 24 hrs a day. Call the parks main phone line at 209/372-0200, or check the web at www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/wildpermits.htm for additional information.

For summer trips, reservations are taken from 24 weeks to two days in advance of the start of your trip. A processing fee of $5 per permit plus $5 per person is charged to each confirmed reservation. Check the park’s website for trailhead availability and call 209/372-0740.

More Information
• www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/backpacking.htm
• Leave No Trace www.lnt.org
• Friends of Yosemite Search and Rescue www.friendsofyosar.org

Photo: DNC Parks and Resorts at Yosemite
Keeping Bears Wild
Black bears are active year-round!

Keep Yosemite’s Black Bears Wild and alive.

1. Store Your Food Properly.
(See table below for details.)

Black bears eat a lot. A 400-pound black bear can eat 20,000 calories worth of food in an ice chest. Bears have excellent vision and can see in color, so they recognize ice chests, grocery bags, and other food containers as potential food sources.

2. If you see a bear, scare it away or keep your distance.

You may not see a bear during your visit because they naturally avoid people. However, if you see one in a developed area (like a campground or parking lot), act immediately to scare it away. Make noise and yell as loud as possible. If there is more than one person, stand together to present a more intimidating figure, but do not surround the bear. If you see a bear anywhere else, consider yourself lucky—but keep your distance (at least 50 yards, or about the distance made by four shuttle buses parked end to end). If you get too close, you will be helping the bear become used to being around people. Bears that become comfortable around humans lose their natural fear of us and may become too aggressive. When that happens, they sometimes have to be killed.

3. Drive the speed limit.

The most common human-related cause of death for a black bear in Yosemite is being hit by a car. Slow down! Driving too fast is almost always the cause of these accidental deaths.

Red Bear, Dead Bear
Did you notice the red bear markers as you drove through the park? Each of them mark a place where a bear was recently hit. Every year, hundreds of deer, and countless other animals are killed while trying to cross park roads. Many of these deaths could have been avoided if drivers observed posted speed limits.

Please remember that Yosemite National Park is a wildlife preserve: by driving the speed limit you are helping to protect the park and its wildlife.

Backpackers: Save Your Food, Save A Bear

Bear resistant food canisters are 2.7-pound containers that can be used to store five or more days of backpacker food when meals are carefully planned. Canisters have an inset lid that bears can smell but cannot open. When used correctly, bears learn that—although they smell like food—the canisters are not worth investigating.

Report Bear Sightings!

To report bear sightings, improper food storage, trash problems, and other bear-related problems, leave a message for the Bear Management Team at 209/372-0322. Your call can be made anonymously.

For more information regarding bears and proper food storage, visit the park’s website (www.nps.gov/yose/bears).

Weather in Yosemite

Dressing in layers and bringing plenty of water (even during cooler months!) will help you stay safe through Yosemite’s changing weather conditions.

As is true of all mountainous regions, weather in the Sierra Nevada can change rapidly in any season of the year. Elevation plays a major role in temperature and precipitation variability, and Yosemite ranges in elevation from 2,000 feet to more than 13,000 feet above sea level.

Temperatures in winter can range well below freezing up into the 60s during the day. Shady spots on trails and roads can remain icy even during the warmth of the day.

Yosemite Guardians

Visitors to Yosemite National Park are the park’s most important guardians. With nearly 4 million people watching over its special plants, animals, historic, and archeological sites, imagine how well-protected these park resources could be!

During your visit to Yosemite be aware that there are people who either unknowingly or intentionally harm park resources. Please contact a park official if you see any of the following illegal acts:

- Feeding or approaching wildlife
- Collecting plants
- Hunting animals
- Collecting reptiles and butterflies
- Picking up archeological items, such as arrowheads
- Using metal detectors
- Driving vehicles into meadows
- Biking off of paved roads
- Camping outside of designated campgrounds
- Possession of weapons inside federal facilities

If you see activities that could harm people or park resources, jot down any descriptions or a vehicle license plate number and call the park dispatch office at 209/379-1992.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about Yosemite National Park regulations visit www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/official if you see any of the following illegal acts:

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Nearly 140 years ago, in October of 1871, John Muir was on one of his many saunters through the Yosemite high country. When he arrived at the base of Merced Peak (he called it Black Mountain), Muir was riveted by a small stream issuing from the foot of a massive, unstable boulder field. The water was running thick with a strange mud unlike anything Muir had ever seen. Upon rubbing the gritty sediment, known as “glacial flour,” between his fingers, Muir exclaimed, “Glacier mud -- mountain meal!” As an amateur geologist, Muir knew glacial evidence when he found it, and he soon set about documenting and measuring glaciers elsewhere in Yosemite.

Muir discovered and measured many glaciers in the Sierra Nevada. His methods for measuring glaciers may seem quaint and archaic to today’s digital-age readers. After placing a line of wooden stakes across the face of the Maclure Glacier, Muir returned 47 days later to measure their displacement, assuming that the stakes in the center of the glacier would travel farthest. Muir found that the Maclure glacier moved nearly four feet during his study. Regardless of his experiments’ elegant simplicity, Muir’s discovery of the Merced Peak Glacier, and his careful studies of other glaciers in Yosemite, proved the existence of living glaciers in the Sierra Nevada. It also initiated a profound rethinkong of geologic processes in Yosemite.

A Glacial Struggle

Until the 1870s and Muir’s glacial revelation, Josiah Whitney, head of the California Geological Survey, was the most prominent voice among California geologists. Whitney believed that Yosemite Valley had been formed cataclysmically when great earthquakes caused the Valley floor to subside. In contrast, Muir contended that the small, isolated glaciers he saw in the high country had once been part of massive ice fields that flowed into Yosemite Valley, sculpting and transforming the landscape as they progressed.

While Whitney acknowledged the presence of glaciers near Yosemite’s highest peaks, he refused to assign them any role in the formation of Yosemite landmarks like Half Dome or El Capitan. Over time, Muir won converts from the scientific community, even while Whitney waged a decades-long war of words against that “ignorant shepherd” who lacked even a college degree.

Long-isolated from this historical controversy, today’s geologists can see how perceptive Muir was, but they also realize that he overestimated the role of glaciers in landscape formation throughout California. Muir also believed that his glaciers were the literal remnants of the last major ice age, which peaked about 20,000 years ago. Modern science, however, points to a much more recent origin for the ice that still remains in the Sierra Nevada.

The Future of Yosemite's Glaciers

The transition from glacier to snowfield has been documented at many locations in Yosemite. The Merced Peak Glacier that Muir discovered had disappeared by the 1970s. The list of these once-active glaciers reads like an obituary, with only the largest and highest-elevation ones still advancing downslope.

The loss of glaciers has potentially important implications for Yosemite and California. Glaciers provide highly specialized habitat for rare plant and animal species—habitat that is shrinking every year. The runoff from glaciers also provides a dependable water source to aquatic ecosystems in Yosemite, as well as to millions of Californians; uncertainty over water availability will provoke some challenging transitions.

But, sadly, we are also going to lose one of the features that defines Yosemite. At the current rate of retreat—and including the predicted shift in global temperatures—it is possible that Yosemite will lose all of its glaciers within the next several decades. When that happens, we will have lost more than habitat and clean water. These disappearing glaciers are a profound link to the natural world and how it has been studied, a tangible reminder of how the Yosemite landscape was formed.
Supporting Your Park
Providing for Yosemite’s Future

Enhance the Visitor’s Experience
It takes a legion of people working together to protect this special park for you and future generations of visitors. You, too, can extend your connection to Yosemite well after you return home by getting involved with the organizations that partner to preserve Yosemite.

This publication was made possible by the Yosemite Park Partners listed on this page. Read more below or visit www.yosemitenetwork.org to learn more about helping these organizations provide for the future of Yosemite National Park.

The Ansel Adams Gallery
The Ansel Adams Gallery, owned by the family of photographer Ansel Adams since 1902, is a center that celebrates the arts and the natural grandeur of our environment. It cultivates an aesthetic appreciation and concern for our world by offering visitors a unique variety of literature and art, as well as programs that inspire creativity. Visit online at www.anseladamsgallery.com.

DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite
DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite (DNC) operates hotels, restaurants, sightseeing tours, recreational activities, interpretive programs, stores, shuttles and service stations in the park under contract with the U.S. Department of the Interior. DNC encourages its employees to develop a strong relationship with the park during their tenure. For more information and employment opportunities with DNC at Yosemite, visit online at www.YosemitePark.com.

Yosemite Institute
Since 1971, thousands of school-age children have benefited from learning in “nature’s classroom” through the residential field-science programs offered by Yosemite Institute (YI). A YI experience strives to foster a life-long connection to the natural world—whether it is in Yosemite, on a city street or in our own backyards. YI also offers professional development for teachers, summer youth programs, backpacking adventures, community outreach programs and service learning projects. For more information, visit www.yi.org.

Yosemite Conservancy
Yosemite Conservancy is the new nonprofit formed by a merger of the Yosemite Association and The Yosemite Fund. The Conservancy has a long history in Yosemite with over 100 years of combined experience supporting the park. Yosemite Conservancy can make the difference you see around you because we are the only philanthropic organization that is dedicated exclusively to Yosemite.

Our mission remains the same: Providing for Yosemite’s future is our passion. We inspire people to support projects and programs that preserve and protect Yosemite National Park’s resources and enrich the visitor experience.

The Yosemite Conservancy has funded over 300 projects through $55 million in grants to help preserve and protect Yosemite National Park’s resources and enrich the visitor experience. The work of the Conservancy can be found in every aspect of the visitor experience from trail restoration, bear-proof lockers and canisters, habitat restoration, outdoor education and so much more. Annually the Yosemite Conservancy recruits over 400 volunteers to work in the park to repair trails, remove invasive species, and provide visitor information.

For more information, visit park bookstores or online at yosemiteconservancy.org.

Want to get involved?
Yosemite National Park is busy planning for the future. Visit us at one of our regular Open Houses on January 26, 2011 from 1pm to 4pm at the Valley Visitor Center Auditorium. Park entrance fees are waived for Open House participants.

Sign up for our mailing list and receive emails about current and upcoming plans and projects on our website: http://www.nps.gov/yose/park-mgmt/planning.htm.

Above right: Half Dome. Photo: Christine White Loberg