

Yosemite

National Park
California

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

From Glacier Point the scenery spreads out in all directions, giving you a breathtaking view no matter which way you look. Looking east, you see Half Dome.

Yosemite National Park embraces a vast tract of scenic wildlands set aside in 1890 to preserve a portion of the Sierra Nevada mountains that stretches along California's eastern flank. The park ranges from 610 meters (2,000 feet) above sea level to more than 3,960 meters (13,000 feet) and offers three major features: alpine wilderness, groves of Giant Sequoias, and Yosemite Valley. The 325 kilometers (200 miles) of roads give access to all of these features either by car or by free shuttlebus in some areas. To get to know the real Yosemite, however, you must

leave your car and take a few steps on a trail. You don't have to walk far to discover the grandeur that can be found here and the values this special place offers. Thousands of people have come to Yosemite and left refreshed and relaxed and perhaps a bit more knowledgeable about what they want out of life. See what you can find.

The story of Yosemite began about 500 million years ago when the Sierra Nevada region lay beneath an ancient sea. Thick layers of sediment lay

on the sea bed, which eventually was folded and twisted and thrust above sea level. Simultaneously molten rock welled up from deep within the earth and cooled slowly beneath the layers of sediment to form granite. Erosion gradually wore away almost all the overlying rock and exposed the granite. And even as uplifts continued to form the Sierra, water and then glaciers went to work to carve the face of Yosemite. Weathering and erosion continue to shape it today.

Visiting the Park



▲ Two climbers enjoy a spectacular view and a well-earned rest after achieving their goal.



▼ Mirror Lake is silting up and in a few years' time will be a meadow.



▲ A fresh snowfall brings a hush to the park and gives the skier the opportunity of seeing the familiar in another perspective.



▲ Nature's camouflaging protects this mule deer fawn.



▼ Birding is a rewarding pastime, especially as your ability to identify birds grows.



▲ Wherever you turn you'll soon discover that the beautiful and rare are commonplace in Yosemite. Here the sun's last rays touch Half Dome.



▼ The stage arrives at the Pioneer Yosemite History Center.



▲ The areas around Tioga Pass and Tuolumne Meadows offer many trails into the high country wilderness.



▼ El Capitan's sheer walls attract experienced rock climbers who have made numerous successful assaults.



▲ Camping in Yosemite can be the source of many memories.



▼ Though brown, this mother and cub are black bears.



Tuolumne Meadows and the High Country
This section of Yosemite has some of the most rugged, sublime scenery in the Sierra. In summer the meadows, lakes, and exposed granite slopes teem with life. Due to the short growing season, the plants and animals take maximum advantage of the warm days to grow, bloom, and store food for the long, cold winter ahead.

The Tioga Road, Calif. 120, crosses this area. This scenic highway, originally built as a mining road in 1882-83, was realigned and modernized in 1961. The road passes through an area of sparkling lakes, meadows, domes, and lofty peaks that only 10,000 years ago lay under glacial ice. Scenic turnouts along the road afford superb views. At Tioga Pass the road crosses the Sierra's crest at 3,031 meters (9,945 feet), the highest automobile pass in California. Here you see two striking contrasts: to the west, peaks and meadows; to the east, high desert.

Tuolumne Meadows (at 2,620 meters/8,600 feet) is the largest subalpine meadow in the Sierra. It is 89 kilometers (55 miles) from Yosemite Valley via the Tioga Road. Long a focal point of summer activity, it is also growing in popularity as a winter mountaineering area. In the summer Tuolumne

Meadows is a favorite starting point for backpacking trips and day hikes. The meadows are spectacular in early summer, abounding in wildflowers and wildlife. Rangers at the Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center, open during the summer, can help you.

A trip into the high country can be immensely rewarding. But remember that the elevation ranges from 2,100 to 4,000 meters (7,000 to 13,000 feet). Even robust individuals find that vigorous exercise can make them short of breath. Slow down your pace; take time to awaken your sense of wonder.

Glacier Point
Glacier Point is one of those rare places where the scenery is so vast that it overwhelms the viewer. Just below your feet a sheer rock cliff, about 975 meters (3,200 feet) straight down, affords you a bird's-eye view the length and breadth of Yosemite Valley. Across the valley you can see the entire 739-meter (2,425-foot) drop of Yosemite Falls. Beyond, the panoramic expanse of the High Sierra stands out in awe-inspiring clarity. Interpretive signs identify the major peaks. Sunset and full-moon nights are ideal times to visit the point. During full moon millions of stars overhead and the pastel granite transform the landscape into a fairy-

land. In summer you can drive to Glacier Point (52 kilometers/32 miles from Yosemite Valley); in winter, when the road is closed at Summit Meadow, it is a favorite destination for cross-country skiers. But no matter how you arrive or when you go, Glacier Point offers what may be Yosemite's finest view.

Giant Sequoia Groves
The Mariposa Grove, 56 kilometers (35 miles) south of Yosemite Valley, is the largest of three Sequoia groves in Yosemite. The Tuolumne and Merced Groves are near Crane Flat. Despite human pressures, these towering giants, largest of all living things, have endured for thousands of years. Only in recent years, however, have we begun to understand the Giant Sequoia ecosystem. During the last 100 years protection has sometimes been inadequate and sometimes too much. For example, in the late 1800s tunnels were cut through two trees in the Mariposa Grove. At the other extreme, good intentions created another problem: fire protection led to adverse effects.

The Sequoia is wonderfully adapted to the danger of fire. Its wood and bark are fire-resistant. Black scars on a number of large trees that are still prospering indicate they have survived many scorching

fires. Sequoia reproduction also depends on fire. Its tiny seeds require mineral soil for germination, and its seedlings need sunlight. Frequent natural fires open the necessary seedbed and thin out competing species. But years of fire suppression have allowed forest debris to build up into a thick layer that stifles reproduction, and shade-tolerant species of trees have encroached. Prescribed burning in the groves by the National Park Service now simulates this vital natural process, and young Sequoias are more abundant.

As you look at these trees, keep in mind that they have been here since the beginning of history of the western world. The Mariposa Grove's Grizzly Giant is 2,700 years old and is thought to be the oldest of all Sequoias. Private vehicles are not permitted beyond the parking lot in the lower Mariposa Grove. You can ride the free trams through the Grove from about May 1 to October 15. You can use the trails year round for either hiking or for cross-country skiing.

Wawona
An Indian word that apparently meant "big tree." Wawona was the site of a wayside hostel built in 1857 by Galen Clark, the first guardian of the

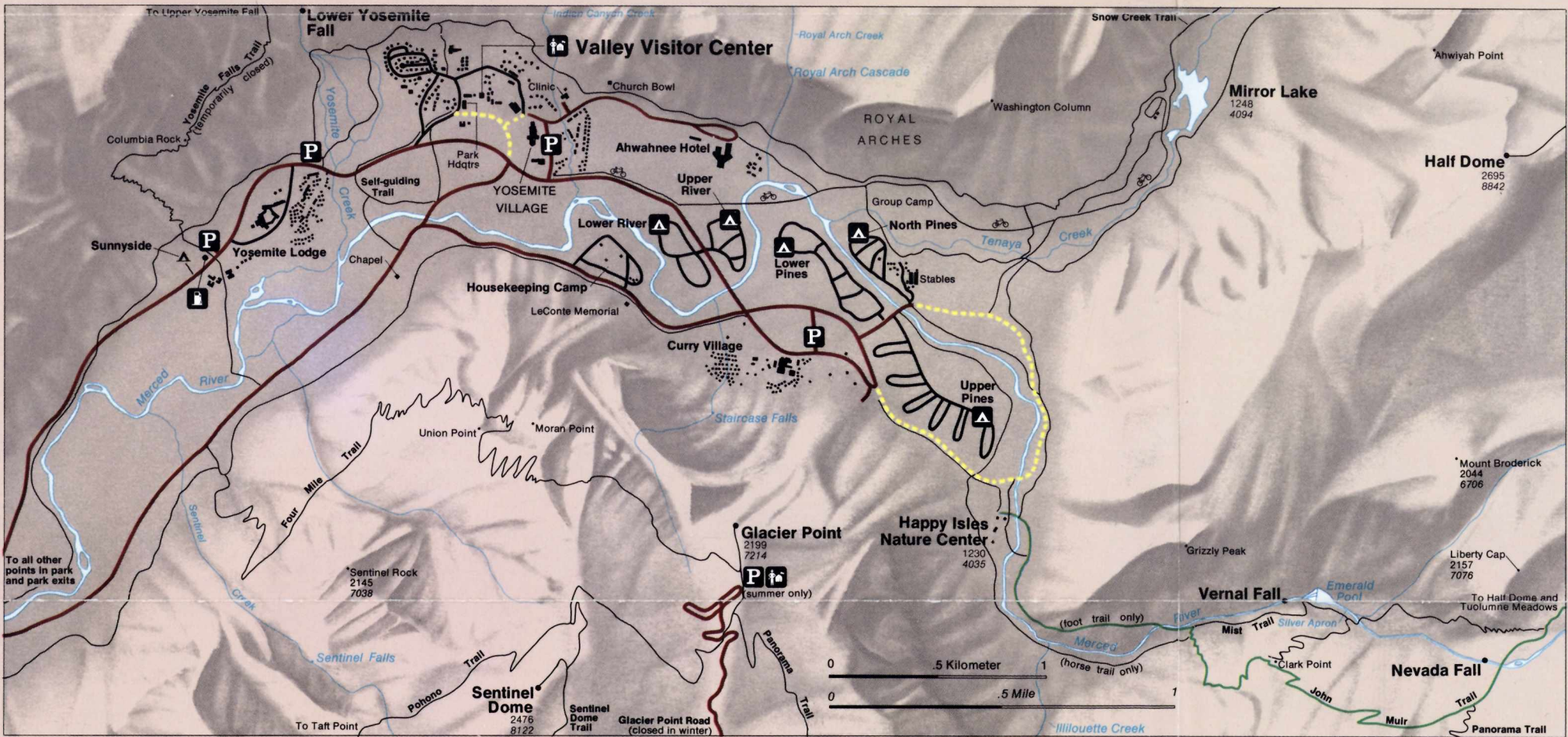
Yosemite Grant. Known as Clark's Station, it served as an overnight stop for visitors in transit between Yosemite Valley and Mariposa. In 1875, the year the original Wawona Road was opened, the Washburn brothers purchased the area and built the Wawona Hotel that is still in operation today. Wawona emphasizes Yosemite's human history. It is the setting of the Pioneer Yosemite History Center, a collection of furnished relocated historic buildings and historic horse-drawn coaches.

Backcountry
Yosemite's wilderness is varied and offers day hiking and backpacking experiences for both the seasoned hiker and the novice. More than 1,210 kilometers (750 miles) of trails offer a variety of climate, elevation, and spectacular scenery. Near the crest of the Sierra you can take both long and short trips at elevations above 2,745 meters (9,000 feet). The higher regions offer a cool climate, while lower elevations are warmer and drier.

For overnight backcountry trips you will need a wilderness permit (free at visitor centers and ranger stations throughout the park), appropriate equipment, good footwear, and desire. Be sure to read the brochures you will receive with your per-

mit and observe all regulations. Above all remember to keep your impact to a minimum.

During winter the backcountry is receiving increased mountaineering use. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing have grown in popularity and open up a new world for the backpacker. The high country is a wonderland. Deep snow covers the land, and summer landmarks may be unrecognizable. But winter in the backcountry is more demanding than summer. Good equipment is an absolute must, as is wool and down clothing. Proper planning is paramount to assure a safe and comfortable trip into the harsh Sierra winter environment. Backcountry travel, both summer and winter, can be gratifying. However, you are experiencing the mountains on their terms, and the mountains are not very forgiving to the careless or unprepared. When you get your wilderness permit, ask about the trail conditions, weather forecast, and special precautions you should take in the area through which you will be traveling. Double-check your equipment and food, stay on established trails, don't shortcut switchbacks, and if you hike alone, tell someone where you're going and when you expect to return. For horse and mule use check at all information and wilderness permit stations.



Yosemite Valley
"The Incomparable Valley," so it has been called, is probably the world's best known example of a glacier-carved canyon. Its leaping waterfalls, towering cliffs, rounded domes, and massive monoliths make it a preeminent natural marvel. These attributes have inspired poets, painters, photographers, and millions of visitors beginning with John Muir for more than one hundred years. Nowhere in Yosemite is the sense of scale so dramatic.

Yosemite Valley is characterized by sheer walls and a flat floor. Its evolution began when alpine glaciers lumbered through the canyon of the Merced River. The ice carved through weaker sections of granite, plucking and scouring rock but leaving harder, more solid portions—such as El Capitan and Cathedral Rocks—intact and greatly enlarging the canyon that the Merced River had carved through successive uplifts of the Sierra. Finally the glacier began to melt and the terminal moraine left by the last glacial advance into the valley dammed the melting water to form ancient Lake Yosemite, which sat in the newly-carved U-shaped valley. Sediment eventually filled in the lake, forming the flat valley floor you see today. This same process is now filling Mirror Lake at the base of Half Dome.

In contrast to the valley's sheer walls, the Merced Canyon along Calif. 140 outside the park is a typical river-cut, V-shaped canyon, for the glaciers did not extend this far. Back from the rim of the valley itself, forested slopes show some glacial polish. But for the most part these areas also were not glaciated.

Note the V-shape of the valley from which Yosemite Falls (739 meters/2,425 feet high) plunges.

The valley is a mosaic of open meadows sprinkled with wildflowers and flowering shrubs, oak woodlands, and mixed-conifer forests of ponderosa pine, incense-cedar and Douglas-fir. Wildlife from monarch butterflies to mule deer and black bears flourishes in these communities. Around the valley's perimeter, waterfalls, which reach their maximum flow in May and June, crash to the floor. Yosemite, Bridalveil, Vernal, Nevada, and Illilouette are the most prominent of these falls, some of which have little or no water from mid-August through early fall.

The Indian Cultural Museum and the Indian Village behind the Valley Visitor Center commemorate the Native Americans who inhabited this region long before it was "discovered." The Ahwahneechee Indians lived in the valley for several thousand years. Acorns were a food staple, as were the animals they hunted and fished.

Take time to visit the Valley Visitor Center where an orientation slide program and publications are available. Exhibits highlight the valley's natural and human history. Rangers on duty will be glad to answer your questions or otherwise help you.

NOTE: When you arrive in Yosemite Valley, park your car and walk to the places you want to see. Distances are short. If you prefer, use the free shuttlebus system that serves the eastern half of the valley. Either way, you'll save gas and frustration.

Activities, Services, and General Information
The *Yosemite Guide*, a free newspaper, is your key to current park information. It contains a current listing of all interpretive programs, facilities and services, general information, and feature articles. The *Guide* is available at entrance stations, ranger stations, visitor centers, and other contact sites. Current road, weather and camping information is also available by telephone. Consult the *Yosemite Guide* or phone directory for numbers.

Campgrounds are situated throughout the park; one in the valley and another at Wawona are open all year. No utility hookups are available, but all campgrounds have or are near water and restrooms. Eating facilities, stores, and lodging are

available in Yosemite Valley and at Wawona, El Portal, Tuolumne Meadows, and White Wolf. Reservations for accommodations are recommended. Write to the Yosemite Park and Curry Co., Yosemite National Park, CA 95389 or call 209-373-4171.

A special information packet for disabled visitors and wheelchair-emblem placards for vehicles for special driving privileges are available on request at entrance and information stations.

Printed information in Spanish, Japanese, German, and French is also available on request for visitors needing it.

The *Yosemite Road Guide* is a descriptive booklet

keyed to numbered posts along park roads. You can purchase a copy at most information stations and gift shops. Other publications about the park are available at outlets throughout the park or by writing to Yosemite Natural History Association, Box 545, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389.

Protecting Yourself
Each year, the vacations of a substantial number of visitors to Yosemite end in tragedy. Serious injuries and fatalities occur with frightening frequency and the loss of or damage to personal belongings is a common complaint. The causes of these incidents are varied, but they have a common denominator—the victims did not know that what they were doing was dangerous. Ability to recog-

nize potential hazards is a valuable skill that experienced visitors develop quickly.

Speed limits in Yosemite nowhere exceed 45 miles per hour and are lower where posted. Most accidents occur because of excessive speed, coupled with careless driving. Many drivers look everywhere except where they are going—watch out for them! Driving off the roads is not permitted.

Bears are attracted by the odors of food people bring with them. In trying to obtain that food, bears cause tens of thousands of dollars in damage to vehicles, foodstuffs, and camping equipment each year. Please do not leave food inside the passenger section of a car or in an unattended ice chest. To

secure food properly, store it in an ice chest, then lock it in a trunk or recreational vehicle. Improper food storage is a violation subject to fine. Additional information on bears and precautions that you should take will be given to you at the entrance station or campground registration station.

Rivers, streams, and waterfalls can be treacherous at all times, but especially when water levels are high. Approach them cautiously and be alert for undermined banks and slippery rocks. Fast currents and cold water are a deadly combination. Do not swim above waterfalls or in swift water.

Trails are the safest routes when traveling off roads. Straying off trails results in lost children and hikers

as well as injuries caused by falls. Please do not scramble up cliffs or over rocks—take the trail. Rock climbing is for the experienced. For safety reasons horses and mules have the right-of-way on trails; stand quietly at trailside until they pass. While hiking in steep terrain watch out for rock slides.

Valuables should not be left unattended. Store them securely and lock your vehicle when you leave it. If you camp, place lanterns, stoves, and other equipment inside your tent or vehicle when you leave your campsite. Report thefts promptly to a ranger.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES CALL 911.

Yosemite

Caution. This map should not be used for hiking. Use appropriate USGS topographic maps.

Through trail
Trail

• Mono Pass
3232
10604
Elevations are given in meters, with feet in *italics*.

0 1 Kilometer
0 1 Mile

camping fees and limits on length of stay.

Trees and limbs that are dead and down may be used for firewood in campgrounds. Cutting standing trees or attached limbs, alive or dead, is prohibited.

Campfires are permitted only at designated campsites and firesites. Extinguish them with water before leaving. Smoldering campfires can burn down into the ground and then laterally for great distances. Where there is sufficient fuel, they may burn back to the surface. Report all wildfires to the nearest ranger station.

Pets must be kept on leash. They are not allowed on trails, beaches, in the backcountry, or in public buildings. Camp-

ers with pets are restricted to Bridalveil Creek, Crane Flat, Hodgdon Meadow, Tuolumne Meadows, Upper Pines, Wawona, White Wolf, and Yosemite Creek campgrounds. A boarding kennel is available at the Yosemite Valley stables.

Firearms. Hunting or discharging any kind of weapon is prohibited. Firearms must be unloaded and cased at all times within the park.

Fishing is permitted with a California license, which can be purchased

at the Village Store Sport Shop (summer) or Curry Village Mountain Shop (winter). State rules apply on season and catch.

All park features are protected. Do not deface or remove any natural or historic features. Do not

pick wildflowers or other plants, or kill, capture, feed, or molest wildlife.

Ranger station

Food service and lodging

Campground

High Sierra Camp

Walk-in campground

Gas station

