



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

Yosemite National Park embraces a great tract of scenic wildlands set aside in 1890 to preserve a portion of the Sierra Nevada that stretches along California's eastern flank. Ranging from 2,000 feet above sea level to more than 13,000 feet, the park encompasses alpine wilderness, groves of giant sequoia trees, and Yosemite Valley. The story of Yosemite's landscape began about 500 million years ago when the Sierra Nevada region

lay beneath an ancient sea. Thick layers of seabed sediments eventually were folded and twisted and thrust above sea level. Simultaneously molten rock welled up from deep within the earth and cooled slowly beneath the sediment layers to form granite. Erosion wore away nearly all of the overlying rock, exposing the granite. Even as uplifts continued to form the Sierra Nevada, water and then glaciers worked at carving Yosemite's face. Weathering and erosion still shape it today. This con-

stant changing of the landscape by weather, water, fire, and other natural forces makes Yosemite unlike any place in the world. Along with its towering trees, flowering meadows, and massive granite formations, it is this unique wildness that is protected here.

Visiting the Park



These climbers enjoy a spectacular view and well-earned rest after achieving their goal.
A Steller's jay perches on a branch for a brief rest.



Fresh snowfall brings a hush to the park and lets a skier see the familiar in another perspective.



Nature's camouflaging protects this mule deer fawn.
Watching birds and other wildlife can be rewarding for the entire family.



At every turn the beautiful and rare are common—place in Yosemite. Here sunlight's last rays touch Half Dome.



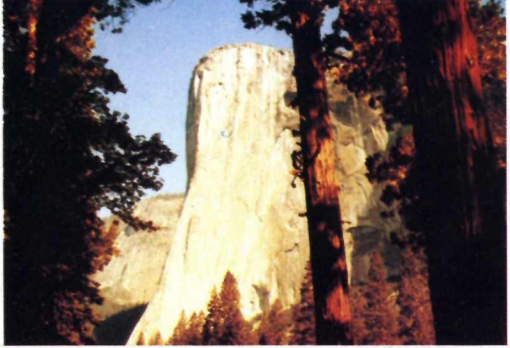
The stage arrives at the Pioneer Yosemite History Center.



The areas near Tioga Pass and Tuolumne Meadows offer many trails into the wilderness.
El Capitan's sheer walls attract experienced rock climbers from around the globe.



Camping in Yosemite can be the source of many memories.
Although brown, this mother and cub are American black bears.



Tuolumne Meadows and the Highcountry
Tuolumne Meadows and the highcountry offer some of the Sierra Nevada's most rugged, sublime scenery. In summer, meadows, lakes, and exposed granite slopes team with life. Because the growing season is short, plants and animals maximize the warm days to grow, reproduce, and store food for the coming winter.

The scenic Tioga Road (Highway 120) crosses Yosemite's highcountry. Built as a mining road in 1882-83, the road was realigned and modernized in 1961. It passes sparkling lakes, fragile meadows, polished domes, and lofty peaks that only 10,000 years ago lay under glacial ice. Overlooks along the road afford superb views. At Tioga Pass the road crosses the Sierra Nevada's crest at 9,945 feet, California's highest automobile pass. It is closed from late fall to mid-spring or longer.

Tuolumne Meadows, at 8,600 feet, is the Sierra Nevada's largest subalpine meadow. It is 55 miles (1½ hours by car) from Yosemite Valley via the Tioga Road. A visitor center, camping, lodging, food service, and gas are available in summer. A favorite starting point for backpacking trips and day hikes,

this area is popular for winter mountaineering. Spectacular also in summer, the meadows abound with wildflowers and wildlife. Foot traffic easily damages Yosemite's fragile meadows; all are closed to bicycles, strollers, and vehicles. Highcountry trips can be rewarding, but at elevations of 7,000 to 13,000 feet, strenuous exercise can tax even hardy visitors.

Glacier Point
Glacier Point can overwhelm you with the vast scenery, especially at sunset or when full-moon nights transform the pastel granite landscape into a magical vista. There is a bird's-eye view of Yosemite Valley from atop the 3,200-foot sheer cliff. Across the Valley, Yosemite Falls makes its 2,425-foot drop. The High Sierra's panoramic expanse to the north and east evokes awe. Trails lead from near here to other spectacular Valley overlooks. In summer you can drive to Glacier Point, 32 miles (one hour) from Yosemite Valley. In winter the road closes at the Badger Pass Ski Area, and Glacier Point becomes a favorite destination for cross-country skiers.

Giant Sequoia Groves
Giant sequoia trees are found in three groves in Yosemite. The Mariposa Grove, 35 miles (1½ hours) south of Yosemite Valley, is the largest. Tuolumne Grove and Merced Grove are near Crane Flat (¼-hour drive from Yosemite Valley). Largest of all living things, these towering trees have endured for thousands of years. Our understanding of the giant sequoia environment has changed recently. We now know that sequoias are so well adapted to fire that suppressing all fire impedes their reproduction. The wood and bark are fire-resistant, and black scars on many healthy, large trees show they have repeatedly survived scorching fires. The tiny seeds need bare, mineral soil to germinate, and the seedlings need sunlight.

Historically, frequent natural fires opened the forest, thinned out competing plant species, and left rich mineral soil behind. But years of fire suppression have allowed debris, such as fallen branches, to accumulate, stifling reproduction and allowing shade-tolerant trees to encroach. Prescribed fires, meant to simulate natural fires and improve forest health, are now set by the National Park Service.

Mariposa Grove's Grizzly Giant, 1,800 years old, is thought to be Yosemite's oldest living sequoia. It is along the Mariposa Grove's main trail, less than a one-mile hike from the parking area. You may take a tram tour through the Grove from May until October. Tuolumne Grove and Merced Grove, each about a mile from parking, are accessible by trails. These trails are also available year-round for hiking or cross-country skiing.

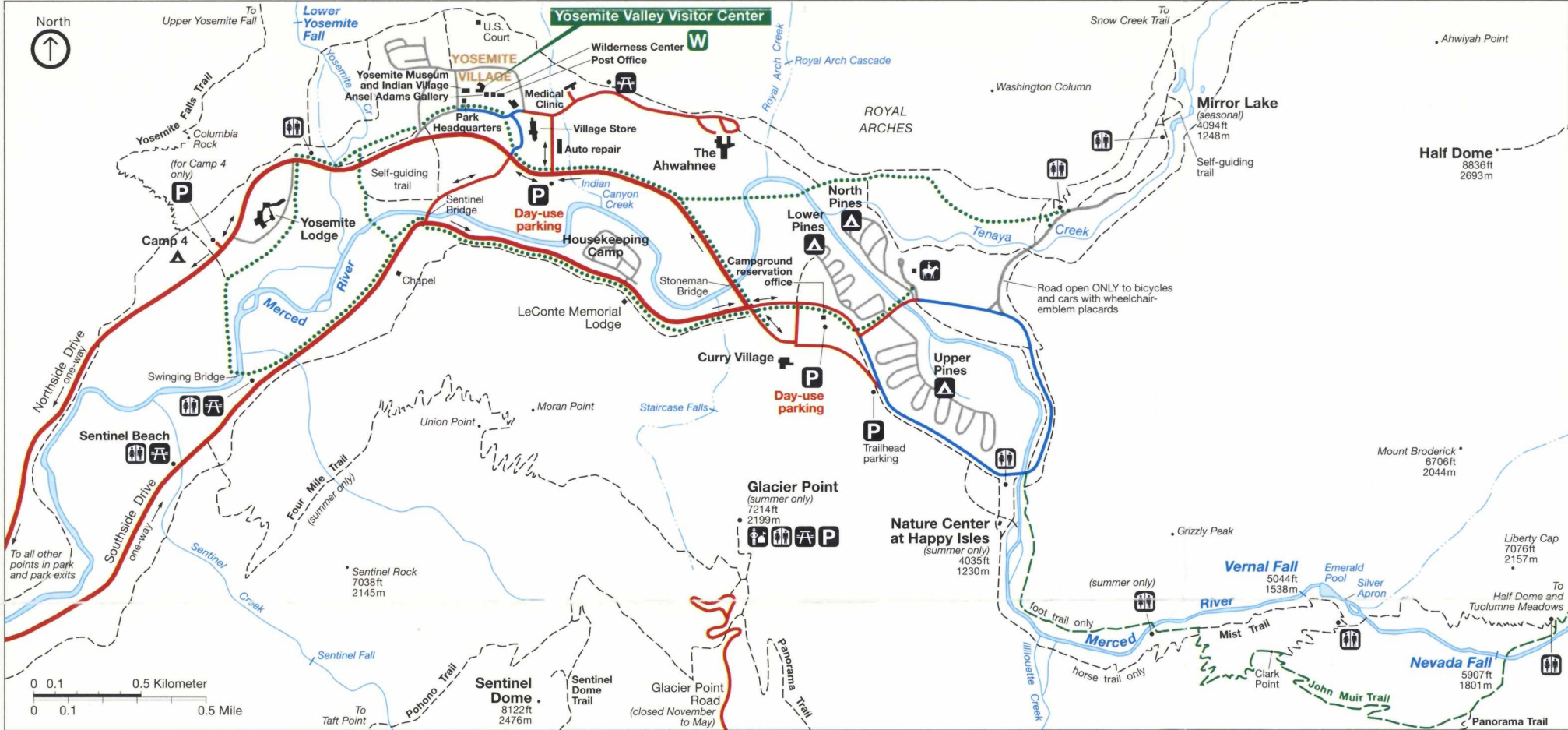
Wawona
Wawona, home to American Indian people for thousands of years, was where Galen Clark built a wayside hotel in 1857. Clark's Station was a stop for travelers between Yosemite Valley and the town of Mariposa. When Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove were set aside for protection in 1864, Clark became the area's first guardian. In 1875 the original Wawona Road opened, and the Washburn brothers bought the area and built the Wawona Hotel, still in operation today. Wawona focuses on Yosemite's human history. Its Pioneer Yosemite History Center displays relocated historic buildings and horse-drawn coaches.

Wilderness
Wilderness designation protects some 94 percent of Yosemite's nearly 750,000 acres under the 1964 Wilderness Act. The park's varied wilderness provides hiking and backpacking for both seasoned and novice hikers. Some 800 miles of trails offer wide choices of climate, elevation, and spectacular scenery. Near the crest of the Sierra Nevada you can take long and short trips at elevations above 9,000 feet. The higher regions offer a cool climate; lower elevations are warmer and drier. Maps and guide books at visitor centers can help you plan your trip.

To protect the wilderness, wilderness permits are required for all overnight use. They are issued at wilderness permit stations and visitor centers seasonally, or up to 24 weeks in advance by mail. When you get your permit, ask about trail conditions, weather forecasts, campfire regulations, and special precautions you should take where you will travel. Read the information accompanying your permit, observe regulations, and minimize your impact. Use the appropriate equipment and sturdy boots. Double-check your equipment, stay

on established trails, don't shortcut switchbacks, and use a bear-proof canister to store your food. If you hike alone, tell someone where you are going and when you will return. For stock use, check at any information station. Pets, bicycles, strollers, and firearms are not allowed in the wilderness. Wilderness centers throughout the park (open mostly in summer only) offer trip planning assistance.

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing open a new world for winter wilderness users. Deep snow covers the higher elevations and masks some of summer's landmarks. The harsh Sierra Nevada winter is far more demanding than summer. Good equipment, warm clothing, and proper planning are essential for your safety.



Information, Activities, and Services
Planning your visit? The *Yosemite Guide* provides up-to-date park information. *Yosemite Today* has a calendar of activities. Get these free publications at entrance stations and visitor centers. You may buy publications about Yosemite in the park or contact: Yosemite Association, Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318; 209-379-2648; www.yosemite.org
For More Park Information
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389-0577
209-372-0200 or TDD 209-372-4726 (for recorded information and 24-hour road/weather conditions)
www.nps.gov/yose

Accessibility Visitors with disabilities can get an information packet and vehicle placard (for driving and parking privileges) at entrance and information stations. www.nps.gov/yose/trip/access.htm

Lodging Lodging, eating facilities, and stores are available in the park. Check *Yosemite Today* for more information. Reservations for accommodations in the park are recommended. Contact: Yosemite Park Lodging Reservations
5410 East Home
Fresno, CA 93727
559-252-4848 or TDD 559-255-8345

For more information on High Sierra Camps call: 559-253-5674.

Campfires Campfires are permitted only at designated campsites and at existing fire rings in the wilderness. Check local regulations when camping in Yosemite Valley. To protect air quality, burn only dry wood to minimize smoke. Extinguish fires with water before leaving. Smoldering campfires that burn into the ground can travel great distances and burn back to the surface.

Firewood Gathering firewood is prohibited in Yosemite Valley, in giant sequoia groves, and at elevations above 9,600 feet. It is allowed elsewhere. Gathering anything but dead and down-on-the-ground wood is prohibited.

Protect Yourself
Serious injuries and fatalities sometimes occur. Causes vary, but a common denominator is that victims underestimated the potential danger.

Bears are attracted to human food. In trying to get food and garbage, bears cause hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage each year. Do not leave food or scented items in your car after dark. Use food lockers when available. Improper food storage is a violation subject to fine. See the *Yosemite Guide* for details.

Mountain lions live in this park. Lion attacks are rare but avoid hiking or running alone. Do not let children run ahead on the trail. If you encounter a lion, do not run or crouch down. Pick up children. Wave, shout, throw stones! If attacked, fight back.

Do not feed wildlife, including birds, coyotes, or squirrels. Your food threatens their survival. While

Yosemite Valley
Often called "the incomparable Valley," Yosemite Valley may be the world's best known example of a glacier-carved canyon. The dramatic scale of its waterfalls, rounded domes, massive monoliths, and towering cliffs has inspired painters, poets, photographers, and millions of visitors.

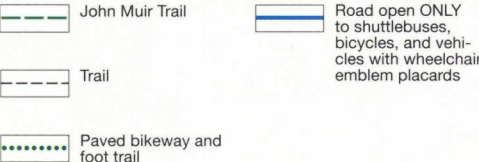
The Valley's sheer walls and flat floor evolved as alpine glaciers moved through the canyon of the Merced River. The ice carved through weaker sections of granite, plucking and scouring rock but leaving intact harder portions, such as Half Dome, El Capitan, and Cathedral Rocks. Glaciers greatly enlarged the canyon that the Merced River had carved through successive uplifts of the Sierra Nevada. When the last glacier melted, its terminal moraine (left at its farthest advance into the valley) dammed the melting water to form ancient Lake Yosemite in the carved U-shaped valley. Eventually sediment filled in the lake, forming today's flat valley floor. The glaciers did not reach Merced Canyon (along today's Highway 140 outside the park), and its river-cut V-shaped profile contrasts markedly with Yosemite Valley's sheer walls.

Today, Yosemite 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 diverse communities. Waterfalls on the Valley's perimeter reach their maximum flow in May and June, but some have little or no water from mid-August through the early fall. The most prominent falls are Yosemite, Bridalveil, Vernal, Nevada, and Illioullette. Meadows, riverbanks, and oak woodlands are sensitive and have been severely damaged by long-term human uses. Please respect restoration efforts in these areas and stay on maintained trails.

Visit the Valley Visitor Center and see its orientation film, publications, theater programs, and exhibits that highlight Yosemite Valley's natural and human history. Near the Visitor Center are self-guiding trails, Indian Village, and Yosemite Museum, with exhibits about the native Miwok and Paiute people and a gallery with artwork by Yosemite artists, past and present.

Note: To alleviate traffic in Yosemite Valley, park your car and walk to the places you want to see or ride the free shuttle buses that serve the Valley's east end. If visiting for the day, park in the day-use parking lot near Yosemite Village.



animals may look tame, they can inflict serious injury. It is illegal to feed or approach park wildlife.

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

Stay on trails when hiking. Rock climbing and cross-country hiking are for the experienced. Routes can be more difficult than they look; even short falls can mean serious injury or death. Horses and mules have the right of way on trails; stand quietly at trail-side until they pass.

Do not leave valuables unattended. Store them securely and lock your vehicle. If you camp, place all equipment inside your tent or vehicle when you leave your campsite. Report thefts promptly.

Bicycles are allowed only on paved public roads, in parking areas, and on designated paved bikeways. Pedestrians and wildlife share bikeways, so please ride slowly. Keep right of the center line except to pass. Bicycles are prohibited on trails.

Pets must be kept on a leash; they are not allowed on trails, beaches, in public buildings, or in the backcountry. Pets are only allowed in a few campgrounds; check the *Yosemite Guide* or ask when making your reservations. There is a boarding kennel at the Yosemite Valley stable in summer.

Fishing is permitted with a valid California license, which can be purchased in the park. State rules apply for season and catch. Local regulations apply in Yosemite Valley.

EMERGENCIES: CALL 911

Yosemite

Speed limits do not exceed 45 mph in Yosemite and are lower where posted. Drive only on roads.

Do not stop in roadways; find a safe turnout to take a picture, watch wildlife, or consult your map.

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

Do not pick wildflowers or other plants, collect pine cones or rocks, or kill, capture, feed, or molest wildlife.

Tap water is safe in Yosemite but do not drink untreated water from streams, lakes, or melted snow.

To treat water, boil it for five minutes or use an iodine-based purifier or Giardia-rated water filter.

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

Yosemite National Park is part of the National Park System, one of more than 380 parks preserving important

examples of our nation's natural and cultural heritage. www.nps.gov

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