

# YOSEMITE

## Rim Trails

A guide to hiking trails north and south from Yosemite Valley.

EL CAPITAN • POHONO TRAIL • SENTINEL DOME  
 YOSEMITE FALLS • DEWEY POINT • TAFT POINT  
 GLACIER POINT • EAGLE PEAK • NORTH DOME



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## RIM TRAILS

This guide details all the trails to the famous viewpoints overlooking Yosemite Valley. At points along these trails, hikers can enjoy close-up views of Yosemite Falls, wild-flower gardens, mountain streams, or grand vistas.

The table below summarizes key information on the major trails described in this guide, comparing them as to climb, length and time required. Times are those required by an average hiker going one way, including normal rest stops. You should allow extra time for meal stops, camera stops, or just enjoying the view.

### Trail Facts

	Climb (feet)	Descent (feet)	Miles (one-way only)	Hours
<b>NORTH RIM TRAILS</b>				
Yosemite Creek Trail—from Yosemite Creek Campground to Camp 4	+560	-3,745	9.2	6.5
Top of Yosemite Falls—from Camp 4	+2,990	-360	3.4	4.5
Eagle Peak—from Camp 4	+4,110	-320	6.0	6.0
Yosemite Point—from Camp 4	+3,316	-370	4.1	5.0
North Dome Trail—from Porcupine Creek Campground to North Dome summit	+582	-800	3.8	2.5
El Capitan Trail—from Cascade Creek to El Capitan summit	+2,120	-711	6.7	4.5
Rocksides Trail—from Cascade Creek to valley floor	+0	-2,080	5.4	2.5
<b>SOUTH RIM TRAILS</b>				
Four-Mile Trail—from valley to Glacier Point	+3,360	-150	4.6	4.0
Pohono Trail—from Glacier Point to Wawona Tunnel	+1,905	-4,725	13.0	1.0
Taft Point—from Glacier Point Road	+100	-320	1.1	0.5
Sentinel Dome—from Glacier Point Road	+420	-0	1.0	1.0
McGurk Meadow lateral—from Pohono Trail to Bridalveil Creek Campground	+480	-240	2.2	1.5

### Other Where-To-Hike-Maps •

The Where-To-Hike series of trail maps and guides is designed by hikers for hikers. Each one is carefully researched, and the maps are specially prepared to provide the information a hiker wants for trip planning or while on the trail. Other Where-To-Hike maps on Yosemite are:

- Happy Isles** • *Day and overnight trips from Happy Isles.*
- The High Sierra Loop** • *Backpacking trips along the famous loop of High Sierra Camps.*
- Tuolumne Country** • *Day and overnight trips from Tuolumne Meadows and Tioga Pass.*
- Tuolumne to the Postpile** • *The John Muir Trail from Tuolumne Meadows to the Devils Postpile.*

Cover: Aerial view of Yosemite Valley, looking east. — R. Fouquet photo

### A WHERE-TO-HIKE-MAP

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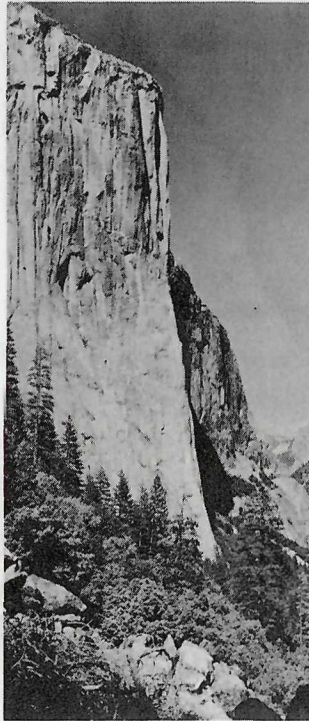


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## Yosemite's Beginnings

Some of the trails on this map date back to the earliest days of Yosemite's existence as a park. It was in 1864 that President Lincoln approved Congress' grant of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to the State of California "to be held for public use, resort and recreation." No roads reached the valley then and visitors came by horse or on foot, numbering only a few hundred each year. During the next decade, the Four-Mile and Eagle Peak Trails were built and the Big Oak Flat Road was completed along the route now followed by the Rockslides Trail.

Today, almost 100 years later, over two million people visit Yosemite annually, still able to enjoy the park's natural splendor much as it was a century ago.



El Capitan from the Rockslides Trail. — NPS photo

## Park Guidelines

Yosemite's popularity and the large number of visitors who come each year make it necessary to have some rules so that all may share the park with safety and enjoyment.

- Smoking is never permitted while hiking. You may smoke while stopped, however, but be extremely careful with all fire.
- Motorcycles or trail bikes are not permitted on the trails, neither are dogs or other pets, on or off the leash.

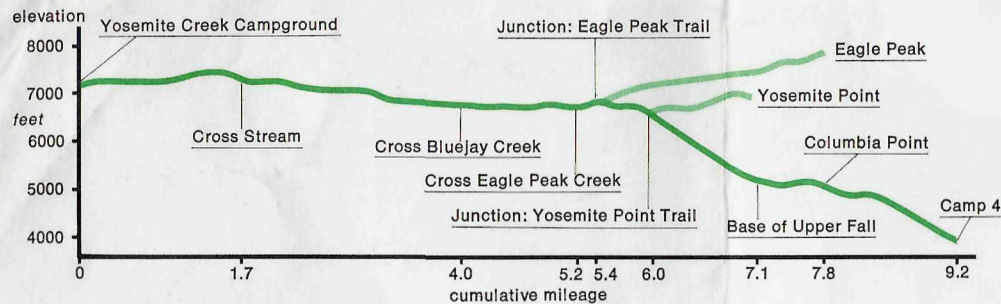
- Never roll or throw rocks over the edge of a cliff because of the danger to persons below.
- Carry out all litter—cans, pop-top rings, film wrappers, plastic bags, everything.
- You may not camp "just anywhere" along the trails on this map, but only in four locations: Eagle Peak Creek above Yosemite Falls, at the top of Nevada Fall, in Mono Meadow, and by the Snow Creek Bridge above the Tenaya Zigzags. Campfire permits are required and may be obtained from the Visitor Center or ranger stations.

## Hiking Tips

Most of these trails are suitable for one-day trips. Some are long, however, making an early start advisable. Some trails can be hot and are best taken early in the day (or season) to avoid the worst of the summer heat. Many of the streams shown on the map will go dry in summer so carry water with you. Hikers should not attempt to climb or descend the valley walls except on the marked trails. Also, use special caution if off-trail at the base of Upper Yosemite Fall where there is danger of serious injury from falls on the smooth rock.

## NORTH RIM TRAILS

### Yosemite Creek Trail

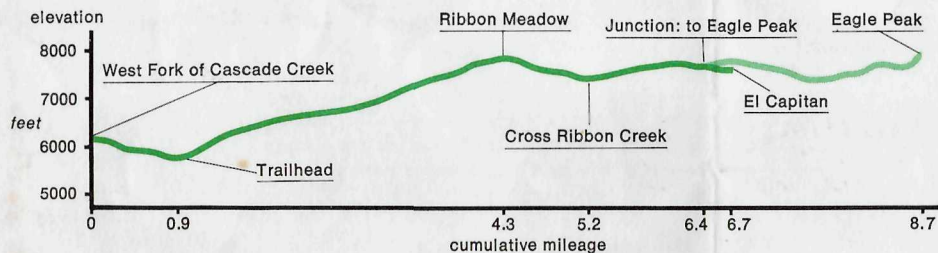


The Yosemite Creek Trail is usually hiked southbound towards the valley to take advantage of the 3,200 foot drop in elevation. From Yosemite Creek Campground, it is 9.2 miles, making a long day. If you wish to make the trip in two easy days, camping is permitted at Eagle Peak Creek, a half mile above Yosemite Falls. Leaving Yosemite Creek Campground, the trail climbs gradually for the first mile. From there it descends steadily, at times steeply, paralleling Yosemite Creek through the forest. Just after crossing Eagle Peak Creek, a spur trail leads to

the right 2.3 miles to Eagle Peak, the summit of the highest of the Three Brothers. 0.6 mile beyond the Eagle Peak trail junction, the trail forks to the left 0.3 mile to the top of Yosemite Falls and, 0.7 mile further, Yosemite Point. On the main trail it is 3.2 miles to the valley floor at Camp 4.

The top of the falls, Eagle Peak, or Yosemite Point can be reached on a round-trip day hike from the valley. The trail is steep, rising 2,600 feet in the first 3.2 miles, but it affords some magnificent views.

### El Capitan Trail



This long trail takes you to the top of El Capitan. Start by driving down the Old Big Oak Flat Road from Gin Flat, past the Tamarack Flat Campground to the west fork of Cascade Creek where the road is closed to automobiles. Continue on foot 0.9 mile beyond to where the El Capitan Trail leads uphill to the left. The trail climbs 3.4 miles through sparsely wooded country, gaining almost 2,000 feet to the highest point in the trail near Ribbon Meadow.

A mile beyond, you come to Ribbon Creek. An interesting half-mile side trip is to follow the west side of Ribbon Creek

downstream to the top of Ribbon Fall, the highest in North America.

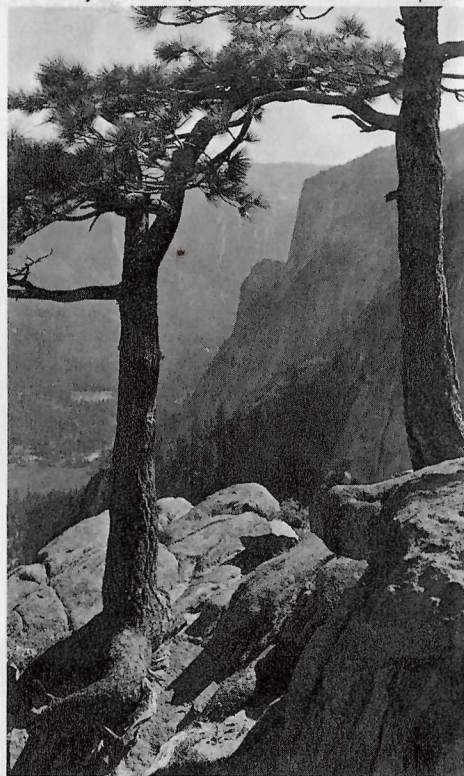
From the point where the main trail crossed Ribbon Creek, it is 1.5 miles to the summit of El Capitan, 3,500 feet above the valley floor. At the summit, the panorama view is memorable, with the scooped-out "hanging valley" of Bridalveil Creek very apparent to the south.

To return, you can either retrace your steps back to Cascade Creek (distance: 6.7 miles) or continue east past Eagle Peak and Yosemite Falls to return to the valley at Camp 4 (distance: 8.2 miles).



Yosemite Falls and trail. View from Union Point. — NPS photo

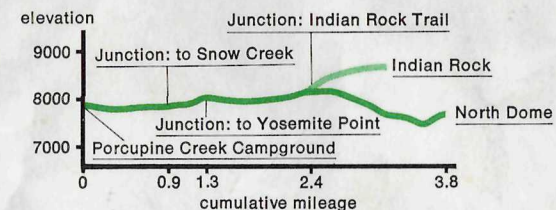
The valley from the top of Yosemite Falls. — NPS photo



### North Dome Trail

The shortest route to North Dome is from the Porcupine Creek Campground, a mile south of the Tioga Road. From the campground, it is 3.8 miles to the top of North Dome making this one of the more accessible viewpoints along the valley's north rim.

The trail crosses Porcupine Creek at the campground and climbs gradually in the first two miles up the western slope of Indian Ridge. Near the top, a half-mile spur leads



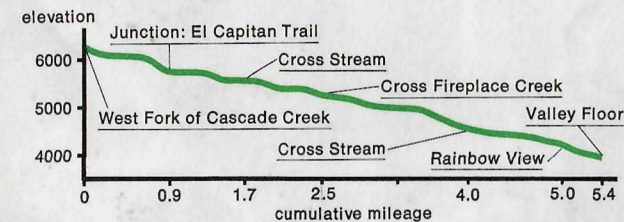
to Indian Rock, an interesting natural arch. The main trail continues south from the junction, descending slowly down the ridge to a saddle below North Dome. From the trail junction just before the saddle, it is a half-mile to the summit.

The easiest return is by the same route, back to Porcupine Creek Campground. A considerably longer route goes west from North Dome through forest for much of the distance to Yosemite Point. From there, the trail continues west, crosses Yosemite Creek just above the falls and then descends the Yosemite Creek Trail to the valley floor at Camp 4, 7.9 miles from North Dome.

### Rockslides Trail

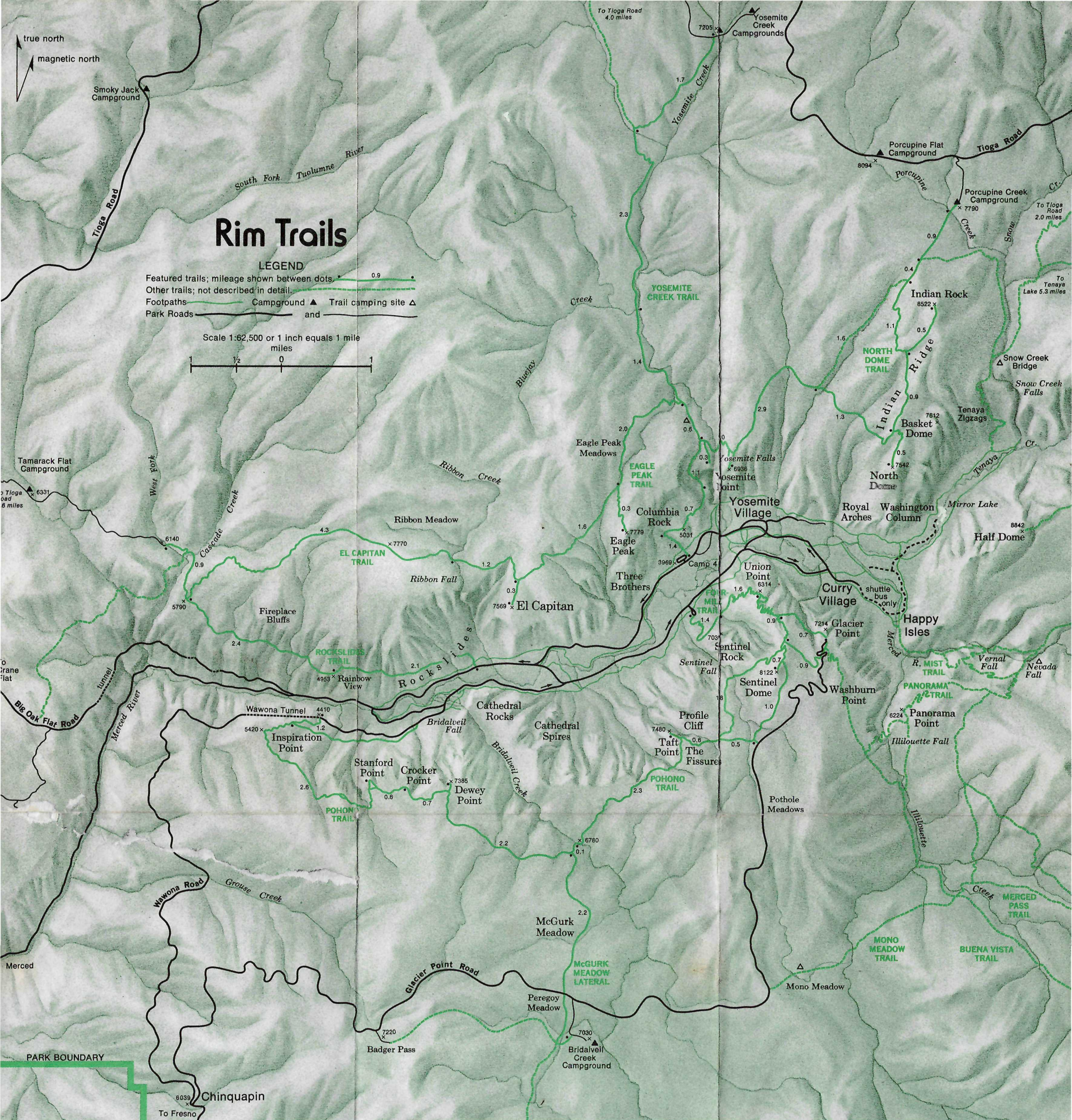
**Caution: this route is not part of the trail system maintained by the park. In some places short lengths of the trail are partly obliterated or overgrown.**

The Rockslides Trail follows the route of the Old Big Oak Flat Road down into the valley. First built in 1874 as a toll wagon road, the route was used as a road until 1940 when the new Big Oak Flat Road was opened between the valley and Crane Flat. In 1945, massive rock-



slides obliterated the old road at several places and since then, the route can be used only by hikers.

You may drive down the Old Big Oak Flat Road from Gin Flat to the west fork of Cascade Creek. From there, you hike gradually downward 5.4 miles to the valley floor just west of El Capitan. There are frequent views of the valley features on the way, particularly at Rainbow View.



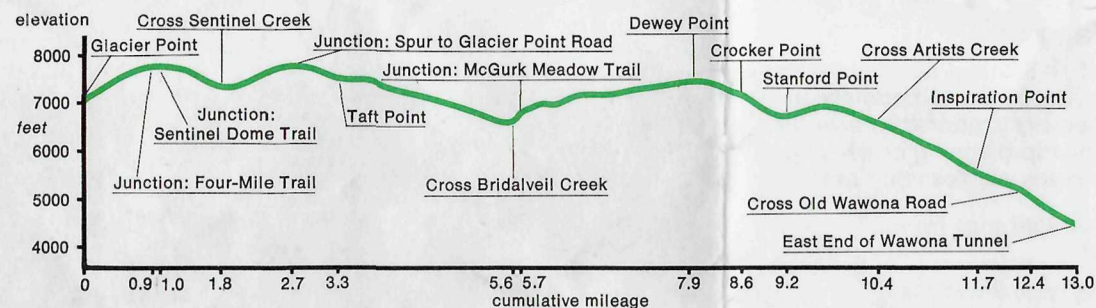
### SOUTH RIM TRAILS

#### Pohono Trail

This very beautiful trail is long—13 miles—and no overnight camping is permitted along it. The trail takes you the length of the south rim of the valley with breathtaking views at many points along the way.

From Glacier Point the trail goes west, passing below Sentinel Dome on its way to Taft Point and the Fissures. Some four miles further

on, after crossing Bridalveil Creek, you come to Dewey Point, overlooking the west end of the valley. Further west, you come to Crocker and Stanford Points before winding down to the parking area at the east end of the Wawona Tunnel. Between viewpoints, the trail leads through forests dotted with wildflower displays in late spring and early summer.

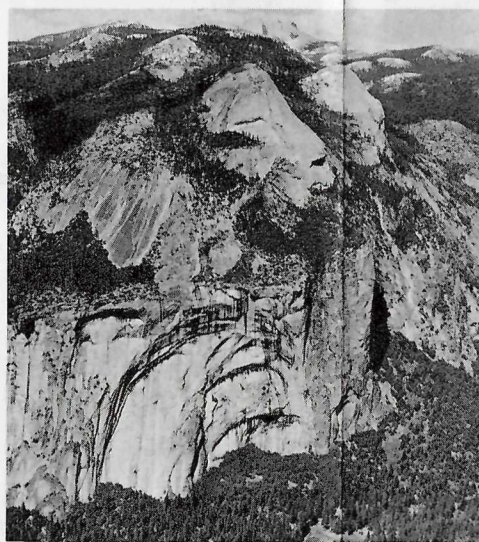


**McGurk Meadow Trail** From near the midpoint of the Pohono Trail, just west of Bridalveil Creek, a lateral goes south through McGurk Meadow, across the Glacier Point Road to the Bridalveil Creek Campground (where overnight camping is permitted). This trail is 2.2 miles long and provides a means of taking the Pohono Trail in segments.

**Sentinel Dome** From the parking area on the Glacier Point Road, 2.6 miles from Glacier Point, there is a short, easy trail to the top of Sentinel Dome, the highest point in the area.

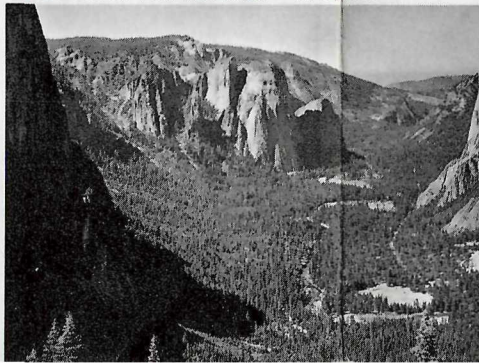
The trail is only a mile long and climbs 400 feet. At the summit is the much-photographed, Jeffrey Pine and an unequalled view.

**Taft Point** From the same trailhead on the Glacier Point Road, there is a short trail 1.1 miles long, to Taft Point overlooking Yosemite Valley. About half way out, you meet the Pohono Trail. Follow it to Taft Point and the adjacent Fissures. Taft Point is the top of Profile Cliff, so named because from the valley, the outline of the cliff resembles a man's profile.



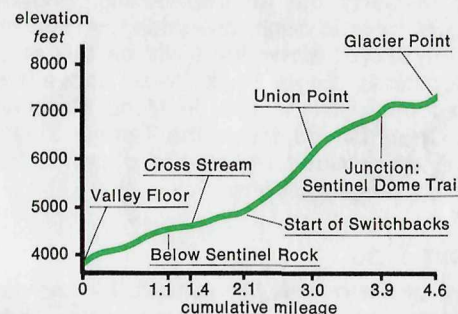
Mt. Hoffman, Indian Ridge, North Dome, Basket Dome, Washington Column, Royal Arches. View from Glacier Point. — NPS photo

Sentinel Rock (l.) and Cathedral Rocks. View west from Union Point on Four-Mile Trail. — NPS photo



#### Four-Mile Trail

This historic and spectacular trail rises 3,200 feet in 4.6 miles, climbing steeply from the valley floor to the rim at Glacier Point. From the valley end, the trail starts from a small parking area below Sentinel Rock. It climbs the talus slope, traverses east, then zigzags steeply up to Union Point. Here, you are 2,300 feet above the valley floor. There are more switchbacks and more views above as you climb the last thousand feet to Glacier Point. Allow about four hours for the trip up and carry water. The trail can be hot in the afternoon, so an early start is advisable.



**Illilouette Trails** From Glacier Point, the Panorama Trail goes south and east 5 miles to Nevada Fall. From junctions along the Panorama Trail, the Buena Vista and Merced Pass Trails lead to the country along the park's southern boundary.