



Winter Camping Areas

Camp out of sight of all trails and water sources. Winter wilderness users must camp at least one mile away from a plowed road. When using trails from Yosemite Valley, camp above the valley rim. Camping in the Mariposa Grove is permitted only above the Clothspin Tree in the upper grove from December 1 to April 15. At other times, camping in this area is prohibited. Camping is prohibited in the following areas:

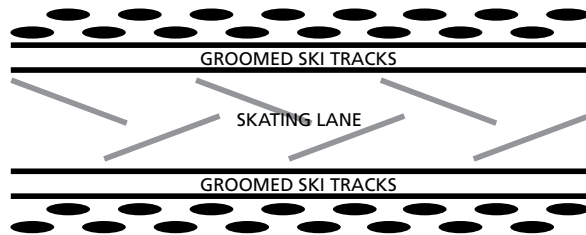
- Within 1½ miles of the Badger Pass ski area boundary
- Within Summit Meadow
- Within Tuolumne Grove
- Dewey or Glacier Points (*camping is permitted near both points, but not at the points themselves*)

Snowshoeing & Skiing Trails

Most winter users enjoy the marked winter trails around Badger Pass (7,200 feet), Crane Flat (6,200 feet), or in the Mariposa Grove (5,600 to 6,600 feet). Roads are maintained in these areas, although chains are often required. Each area has beginner, intermediate, and advanced trails, which range in length from less than one mile to over 20 miles round-trip. Another popular trip for more advanced skiers and snowshoers leaves from Yosemite Valley and heads toward Tuolumne Meadows via Snow Creek Trail. Visit www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/wintersports.htm for trail maps.

Skiers & Snowshoers: Maintain Separate Trails

If you are walking or snowshoeing, do not walk on ski tracks. Footsteps create holes in snow, which make skiing difficult and create hazards. Snowshoers should walk on the outer edge of the groomed area, outside ski tracks to prevent skier/snowshoer collisions, and maintain separate tracks in ungroomed areas. Skiers have the right of way.



Overnight Parking

Park in the overnight zones and park your vehicle with its front or rear close to the snow bank so it will not be an obstacle for the snow plows or other traffic. If you are parking in Badger Pass area, remember to leave the pink copy of your wilderness permit on your dashboard with the name and return date showing.



Winter Hiking

Snowshoes or skis are generally necessary for foot travel from December through April. Even in May, if you want to avoid snow, you're likely to be limited to trailheads in Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and Hetch Hetchy. Day hike maps are available at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center and online at www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/brochures.htm.

Typically the Four Mile Trail, and sections of the John Muir and Mist Trails, are closed during the winter. Portions of the John Muir and Mist Trails remain open, so it's still possible to hike to the tops of Vernal and Nevada Falls and to Little Yosemite Valley, though these trails are often snowy or icy. The Half Dome cables are not in use during the winter season. Check for winter trail closures online at www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/conditions.htm, at a visitor center or by calling 209/372-0200 before your trip.

Equipment

Rental skis, snowshoes, and cross-country ski lessons are available through the Yosemite Nordic Ski School at Badger Pass (209/372-8444). The Badger Pass season typically runs from mid-December through late March depending on snow conditions. Overnight (tent, stoves, sleeping bags, etc.) and safety equipment (shovels, avalanche beacons) are NOT available for rental.



*I must start for
the great temple
to listen to
the winter songs.*

John Muir

Welcome!

From December through April, backpacking in Yosemite usually involves snow camping and travel by skis or snowshoes. Most of the park is designated Wilderness—designated by Congress because the American people wanted areas where nature and its community of life remain unchanged by humans. You will experience nature on its own terms in Yosemite’s wilderness including snow bridges, avalanche, falling ice, collapsing snow, and sudden stormy weather. These are all part of the wilderness experience.

This brochure will help you understand how to plan for visiting the Yosemite wilderness in winter. Visit www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/wildwinter.htm or call 209/372-0200 for more information on trip planning, obtaining a wilderness permit, and trails.



Overnight Winter Permits

Wilderness permits for overnight use are required in winter (Nov.- April), but are available on a self-registration basis. No reservations are necessary. Follow directions for self-registration at permit stations located in Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, Wawona Visitor Center at Hill’s Studio, Badger Pass Ranger Station, or the Big Oak Flat Information Station. For trips originating from Hetch Hetchy, permits are issued by rangers at the Hetch Hetchy Entrance Station. Call 209/372-0200 for current Hetch Hetchy staff hours of operation and road closures. Only the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, Hetch Hetchy Entrance Station, and Badger Pass Ranger Station are staffed. For trips beginning at Badger Pass, you must obtain your permit at the Badger Pass Ranger Station (“A-frame”). Please register at the station closest to your starting point.

Winter Safety

- **Check the weather forecast** (209/372-0200) and be prepared for the unexpected.
- **Choose a reasonable route.** Keep in mind the physical condition and winter travel skills of the group’s least experienced member. Remember that winter days are short and you may not be able to travel as far as you expect. Heavy snowfall may also drastically reduce the number of miles you can travel in a day.

Winter Safety Continued

- **Let someone know your plans** and when you will return. Do not go alone unless you are very experienced.
- **Do not venture into steep, snowy terrain** unless you have had avalanche training. Wear an avalanche beacon and know how to use it properly.
- **Do not separate from your group.** Keep track of one another and stay alert for signs of altitude sickness, fatigue and hypothermia.
- **Stay oriented.** Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
- **Eat and drink plenty.** Bring high energy foods and carry extra water.
- **Be prepared for an emergency.** Carry a first aid kit, pocket knife, signal mirror, whistle, waterproof matches, shovel, avalanche beacon (as necessary), emergency blanket, flashlight (with extra batteries) and an emergency shelter such as a tent or garbage bag. Be prepared to spend a night out if necessary.
- **Wear proper clothing,** sun protection, and be prepared for sudden changes in the weather. Wool and synthetic fiber clothing helps keep you warm even when wet and may save your life.
- **Stream crossings may be dangerous.** Melting snow can cause high water and swift currents in streams and rivers.

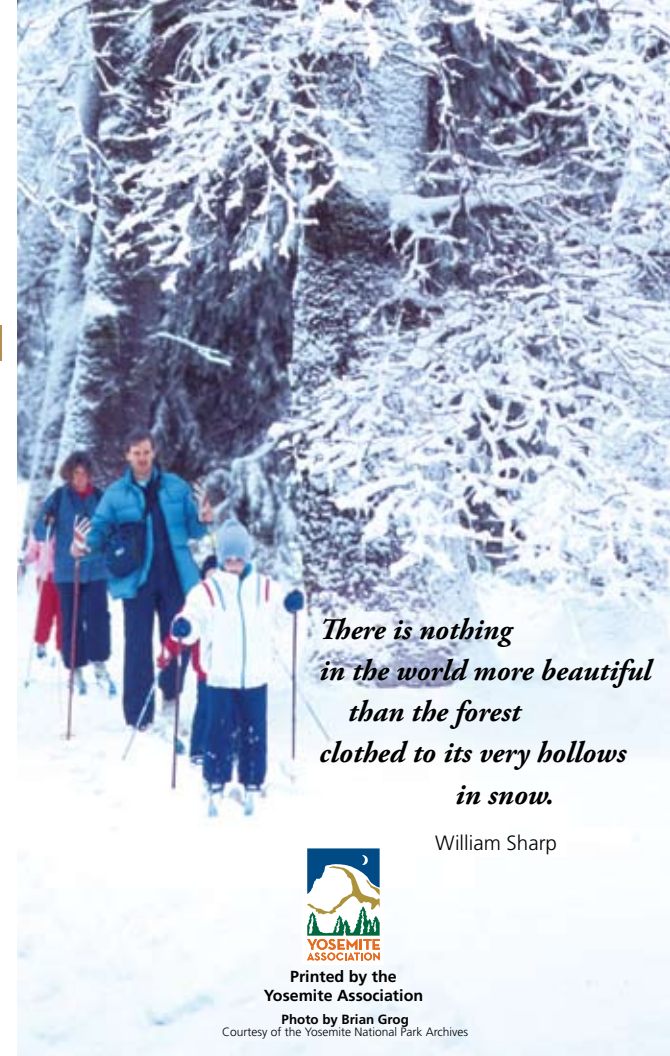
Winter Safety Continued

- **Purify all drinking water** from open sources by boiling, treating chemically, or water filtration.
- **Report emergencies via cell phone or radio,** and carry a whistle. Additionally, pay phones are available at the Badger Pass Ranger Station, Crane Flat gas station, Tuolumne Grove, and Mariposa Grove parking lots.

Minimum Impact

Leave no trace by following these guidelines:

- **Store your food properly.** Bears and other animals may be active even during the winter.
- **Bicycles and all motorized vehicles are prohibited** in Wilderness. **Pets** are only allowed on paved and plowed roads, trails, and parking lots.
- **Responsible human waste disposal** requires extra effort in the winter due to snow cover. Human waste must be buried at least 100 feet away from any drainage or body of water (even if water is covered by snow), and 4-6 inches below the soil’s surface (even if this means digging through deep snow). The snow isn’t usually as deep under trees—if necessary use a tree well to get below the snow. Additionally, scatter wastewater at least 100 feet from water sources.
- **Pack out all trash,** including used toilet paper.
- **Use a portable stove for any cooking.** Open fires should be used for emergencies only. Cutting of tree limbs is prohibited.



*There is nothing
in the world more beautiful
than the forest
clothed to its very hollows
in snow.*

William Sharp



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Photo by Brian Grog
Courtesy of the Yosemite National Park Archives