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Jun-Jul 2008

Highcountry Meadow. Photo by Ken Watson

Where to Go and What to Do in Yosemite National Park

June 11 – July 22

Yosemite Guide

Welcome to Yosemite

Keep this Guide with you to Get the Most Out of Your Trip to Yosemite National Park



Illustration by Lawrence W. Duke

The Yosemite Experience

John Muir once wrote, “As long as I live, I’ll hear waterfalls and birds and winds sing. I’ll interpret the rocks, learn the language of flood, storm and the avalanche. I’ll acquaint myself with the glaciers and wild gardens, and get as near the heart of the world as I can.” Yosemite provides nearly 1,200 square miles of forests, meadows, granite cliffs, lakes and ponds, trails, roads, and pristine wilderness to do just that.

As Muir understood, there are as many ways to experience this amazing place as there are granite rocks in the Sierra Nevada landscape. To make the most of your time here, read through and enjoy this newly designed edition of *Yosemite Guide*. The contents of this publication will first give you options for what experiences you choose to have here, help you plan those experiences, provide a listing of services and programs available in each area of the



Giant Sequoias. NPS Photo

An Internationally Recognized Park

Designated a World Heritage Site in 1984, Yosemite is internationally recognized for its spectacular granite cliffs, waterfalls, clear streams, giant sequoia groves, and biological diversity.



High Sierra. Photo by Bob Roney



Half Dome. NPS Photo

park, then provide more detailed information on topics such as camping and hiking.

Keep this guide with you as you make your way through the park. Pass it along to friends and family when you get home. Save it as a memento of your trip. This guide represents the collaborative energy of the National Park Service, The Yosemite Fund, DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Yosemite Association, The Ansel Adams Gallery, and Yosemite Institute—organizations dedicated to Yosemite and to making your visit enjoyable and inspiring (see page 23).

National parks were established to preserve what is truly special about America. They are places to be shared, places where everyone is welcome, places where we can re-connect with our spirit. Whether you are here for a few hours or a few days, let Muir’s words—and this guide—bring you nearer to the heart of Yosemite. During your visit to Yosemite, perhaps you too will make a lasting connection with this place.



Illustration by Tom Whitworth

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Entering a National Park

Prepare yourself for a wild experience. Yosemite is a place where natural forces—such as rockfall, fire, and flood—are constantly at work. Here, wildlife freely roams. This is a place where wilderness prevails. The National Park Service recognizes the importance of Yosemite’s natural processes and is bound by its mission to protect them for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. While you are enjoying your visit, be attentive to the special regulations in place to protect park resources (page 6) and those designed for your safety (page 7).

Fire – Police – Medical Emergency: Dial 911

Road, Weather, and General Park Information: 209/372-0200

Yosemite Wilderness

Congress has designated nearly 95 percent of Yosemite National Park as Yosemite Wilderness. Wilderness is meant to protect the land’s natural conditions, scientific,

educational, ecological, and historic values; and provide opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. To learn more about how to plan your trip and reduce your impact on the Wilderness during your visit, see pages 6 and 7.



Park Access & Parking

The *Yosemite Accessibility Guide* is available at park entrance stations, visitor centers, and online at www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm. TTYs are available inside Yosemite Lodge and The Ahwahnee, and outside the Valley Visitor Center and Curry Village office.

Accessible parking spaces are available just west of the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center. To reach these, enter the Valley on Southside Drive. Turn left on Sentinel Drive. Turn left on Northside Drive, and follow the blue-and-white accessibility signs.

A sign language interpreter may be available for deaf and hard-of hearing visitors. Call 209/372-4726 to request an interpreter. Advance notice of 14 days is requested.

Assistive Listening Devices are available upon advance request. Inquire at a visitor center.

Weather

Sudden changes in weather are common in the Sierra Nevada. Check at a park visitor center for the most up-to-date weather forecast. The National Weather Service broadcasts weather information for Yosemite National Park 24 hours a day on NOAA Weather Radio station KAD-94, on a frequency of 162.450 MHz. Please note that reception may not be available in remote areas.



Road Information

Construction may cause short delays or detours on some park roads. Call 209/372-0200 for recorded road information.

Lost and Found

To inquire about items lost or found at one of Yosemite’s restaurants, hotels, lounges, shuttle buses, or tour services, call 209/372-4357. For items lost or found in other areas of the park, call 209/379-1001.

Exploring Yosemite

Spectacular Vistas and Quiet Corners of the Park



To experience the Valley on foot, see page 21 for a listing of popular day hikes and stop by a visitor center for a trail map.

To experience the Valley by bike, bring or rent a bike. Rentals are available daily, weather permitting. Baby-joggers, wheelchairs, and six-speed bikes with trailers can be rented as well. Rentals at Yosemite Lodge and Curry Village are both open 8:30 am to 8:30 pm. Call 209/372-8319 for information.

To experience the Valley on an open-air tram tour, take the Valley Floor Tour. This 26-mile, 2-hour tour departs several times daily from Yosemite Lodge. Moonlight Tram Tours also available the days just prior to and after the full moon.

Experience the Valley by raft along the Merced River. Raft rentals are available daily, weather and river conditions permitting. Rentals at Curry Village are open 10 am to 4 pm. Call 209/372-8319 for information.

To experience the Valley on mule or horseback, 2-hour rides depart daily. Call 209/372-8348. The stables are located at shuttle stop #18 and are open 7 am to 5 pm.

The Incomparable Yosemite National Park

Yosemite National Park embraces one of the world's most outstanding concentrations of spectacular mountain-and-valley scenery. Its Sierran setting harbors a grand collection of high waterfalls and forests, including three groves of giant sequoias. During your visit, experience as much of this glorious place as you desire. These three pages will touch on some ways to experience Yosemite Valley as well as explore the park's other areas and quiet corners.

Yosemite Valley

An unlimited array of possibilities await you in Yosemite Valley. Most involve sightseeing and learning about the scenery before you. See pages 12-15 for more information on program topics and visitor services available.

The base of **Lower Yosemite Fall** is an easy walk from shuttle stop #6. Impressive views of both the upper and lower falls are seen on the path to the base. This hike features educational exhibits and a picnic area, and is accessible to the mobility impaired. Although Yosemite Falls will dry up by the end of the summer, **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. *Note: Please park on the paved road shoulder next to El Capitan Meadow. Delicate meadows are easily damaged by trampling, so please stay on footpaths.*

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. Cooks 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. The Nature Center at Happy Isles has interactive exhibits and is a great place to take kids. For a strenuous day hike, you can use

this trailhead to reach Vernal Fall footbridge (¾ miles) and Nevada Fall (3½ miles). Visitors with mobility impairments can obtain a placard at the Valley Visitor Center or an entrance station that will authorize them to drive to the Nature Center at Happy Isles or Mirror Lake.

The walk to **Mirror Lake/Mirror Meadow** is a moderately easy, one-mile walk from shuttle stop #17. During spring, you will see mirror reflections of Half Dome. The lake is naturally evolving into a meadow and dries up by summer's end.

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.



Top Left: Biking through the Valley. Photo by P. Meierding

Top Right: Valley Visitor Center Desk. NPS Photo

Bottom Right: Lower Yosemite Fall. Photo by Ray Santos

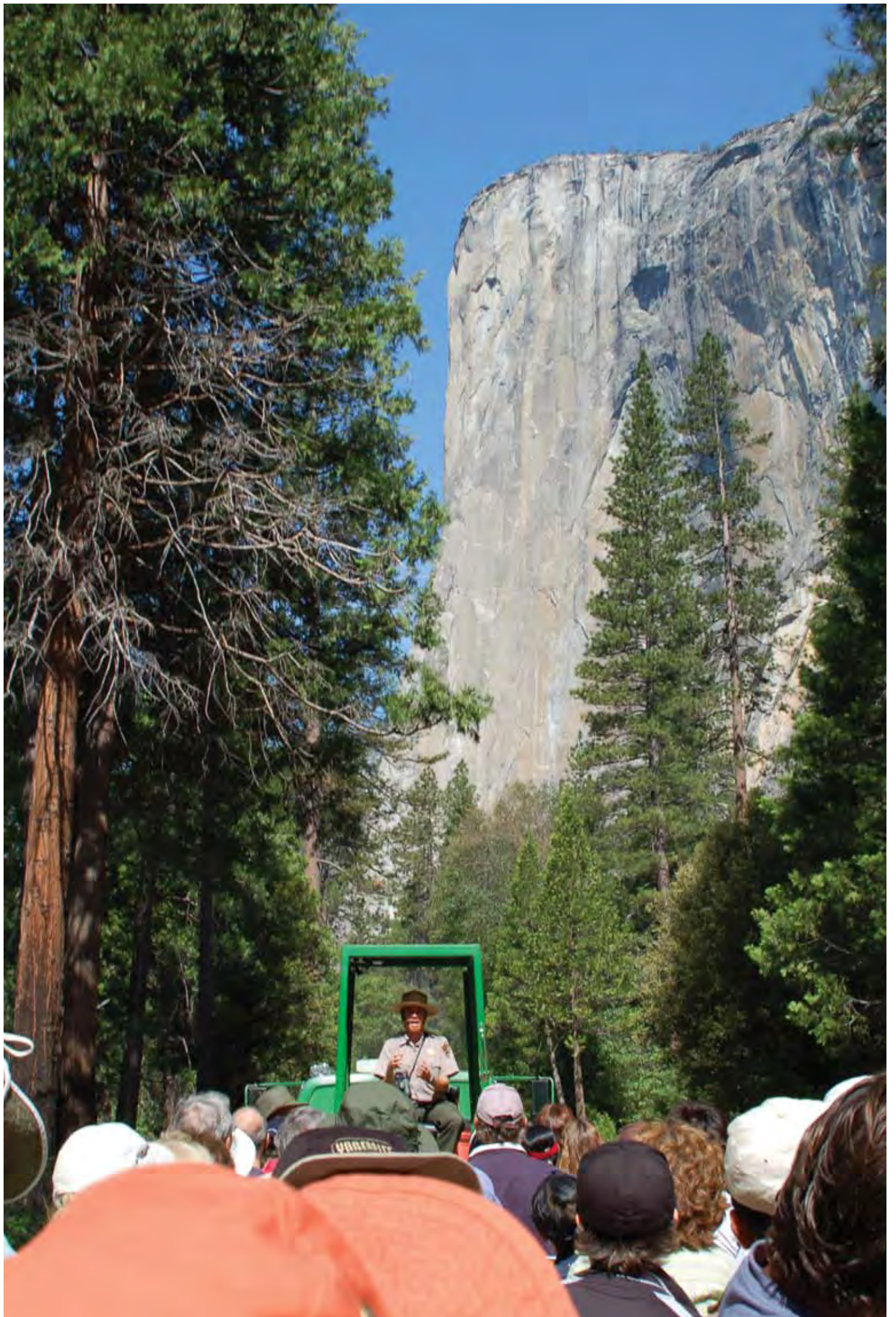
Wawona

Located six miles from the park's South Entrance or a one-hour drive from the Valley, the Wawona area tells the story of Yosemite's human history and pioneer past. The charming 19th-century Wawona Hotel and the Pioneer Yosemite History Center are a history buff's delight. The center is a collection of historic buildings associated with the people and events that shaped the national park idea in Yosemite. Interpretive signs and a brochure provide a self-guiding tour. In summer, take a journey through time on a horse-drawn stage ride. Hill's Studio, a painting studio from the 1880s, now operates as a visitor information station. To experience Wawona on mule or horseback, the Wawona Stable is open 7 am to 5 pm. Call 209/375-6502. Also in Wawona, you will find walks and hikes of varying difficulty to places like Wawona Meadow and Chilnualna Falls, one of the tallest outside Yosemite Valley.

A short drive from Wawona is the **Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias**, Yosemite's largest stand of giant sequoias (about 500 trees), and one of three groves of giant sequoias in the park (road closed to vehicles from sometime in November through May). Trail brochures are available in several languages. A one-hour tram tour of the upper and lower groves is available (normally operating between mid-May and mid-October, 9 am to 5 pm). This audio tour is available in five languages and for the visually impaired. Call 209/375-1621 for information. *Note: To reduce traffic congestion and avoid parking delays, ride the free shuttle spring through fall from Wawona to the Grove. Trailers and vehicles 25 feet and longer are not allowed on the Mariposa Grove Road. Neither bikes nor dogs are allowed in the grove.*

Glacier Point

The Glacier Point Road is open late May through sometime in November; Glacier Point is approximately a one-hour drive from either Yosemite Valley or Wawona. The Glacier Point Road takes you right to the brink of Yosemite Valley. Go to the railing's edge and catch your breath at an exhilarating view, looking down 3,214 feet to the Valley floor. The paved trail to Glacier Point is wheelchair-accessible. For a 360-degree panoramic view of Yosemite's unbelievable landscape, take the 1.1-mile hike from the Sentinel/Taft Trailhead to the top of Sentinel Dome. For a hike to deep fissures and an overhanging look-out point, choose the trail to Taft Point.



Top Right: Sequoia with Dogwood. Photo by Christine White Loberg

Top Far Right: Glacier Point. Photo by Christine White Loberg

Middle Far Right: At Tunnel View. Photo by Bob Roney

Bottom Right: Valley Floor Tour. Photo by P. Meierding

A wonderful place to learn about nature, history, and yourself

Tuolumne Meadows is a stunningly picturesque region at 8,600 feet up in the dramatic sky of Yosemite's high country. Contained in a basin about 2.5 miles long, this meadow system is one of the largest in the Sierra Nevada at the subalpine level.



Tuolumne Meadows and Lembert Dome Before Storm. Photo by John Sun

Tuolumne Meadows

Tuolumne Meadows is only 55 miles (1.5 hrs) by road from Yosemite Valley, but it's a world apart. The hiking around Tuolumne Meadows is first-rate. The trails are varied, the scenery is exceptional, and the weather usually cooperative (but plan for afternoon thundershowers). A person could take a different hike every day of the week and still not exhaust the possibilities. Some popular hikes are those to Cathedral Lakes, Elizabeth Lake, Lembert Dome, Dog Lake, or along the Tuolumne River through Lyell Canyon. Stop at the Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center for hiking information. For hiking adventures departing from Tuolumne Meadows and arriving in Yosemite Valley, take advantage of the Tuolumne Meadows Hikers' Bus, which departs from Yosemite Lodge at 8:20 am daily. Call 209/372-1240 for information. To experience the Tuolumne Meadows area on mule or horseback, visit the Tuolumne Meadows Stable. Open 7 am to 5 pm. Call 209/372-8427.

Tioga Road

Originally a wagon road built by the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company in 1883, the Tioga Road splits Yosemite National Park in two. Improved to its present condition and realignment in 1961, the road opened up some of Yosemite's most stunning country and allowed easier access to previously remote high-country destinations. This road is generally closed from November to late May or early June. There are several stops along the road that are worth a visit.

At **White Wolf**, you could easily spend an entire afternoon exploring the lush meadows and forests of this Tioga Road retreat. Take a day hike to a peaceful lake, such as Harden Lake (a mostly flat six-mile round trip). You will find the trailhead located near the campground in the heart of White Wolf.

Olmsted Point is located about midway between White Wolf and Tuolumne Meadows. This overlook offers one of the most spectacular vistas anywhere in

the park. Here, the sheer granite walls of Tenaya Canyon and Clouds Rest frame a magnificent view of Half Dome.

A few minutes east of Olmsted Point is **Tenaya Lake**, named for the leader of Yosemite Valley's native people when Euro-Americans arrived. Tenaya Lake is approximately eight miles west of Tuolumne Meadows, or 30 miles east of Crane Flat. This is one of the best places to have a picnic along the Tioga Road. The inviting sandy beach on the eastern shore is a wonderful spot, but if you decide to swim, be prepared for some cold water.

Hetch Hetchy

Hetch Hetchy Valley is accessible via the Big Oak Flat Road and Evergreen and Hetch Hetchy Roads; it is 40 miles from Yosemite Valley. The Hetch Hetchy Road has restricted hours. Call 209/372-0200 for the most up-to-date information. Vehicles over 25 feet are prohibited on the narrow Hetch Hetchy Road. Once considered a twin to Yosemite Valley, this valley was

described by John Muir as "a grand landscape garden, one of Nature's rarest and most precious mountain temples." Hetch Hetchy is located along the Tuolumne River in the northern part of the park and now contains a reservoir created by the O'Shaughnessy Dam. This dam was built to provide water for the city of San Francisco, and the dam was completed in 1923 and raised to its present height in 1938. Hetch Hetchy's towering cliffs and plunging waterfalls make this a popular hiking area from spring to fall. Hetch Hetchy's relatively low elevation gives the area one of the longest hiking seasons in Yosemite. **Lake Eleanor** is also nestled in the northwestern edge of Yosemite. Fishing, camping, swimming and motorless boating are permitted on this reservoir. The lake can be accessed from Highway 120.

Sight-Seeing By Motor Coach

Several motor coach sightseeing tours are available to destinations within Yosemite.

The Glacier Point Tour is a four-hour round trip from Yosemite Valley to Glacier Point, which departs daily at 8:30 and 10 am, and 1:30 pm from Yosemite Lodge. The Glacier Point Tour also offers a one-way ticket for adventurers to hike back down to Yosemite Valley. The Grand Tour is an eight-hour combination of Big Trees and Glacier Point tours and departs at 8:45 am daily from Yosemite Lodge.

Call 209/372-1240 for reservations or inquire at tour/transportation desks at the following locations:

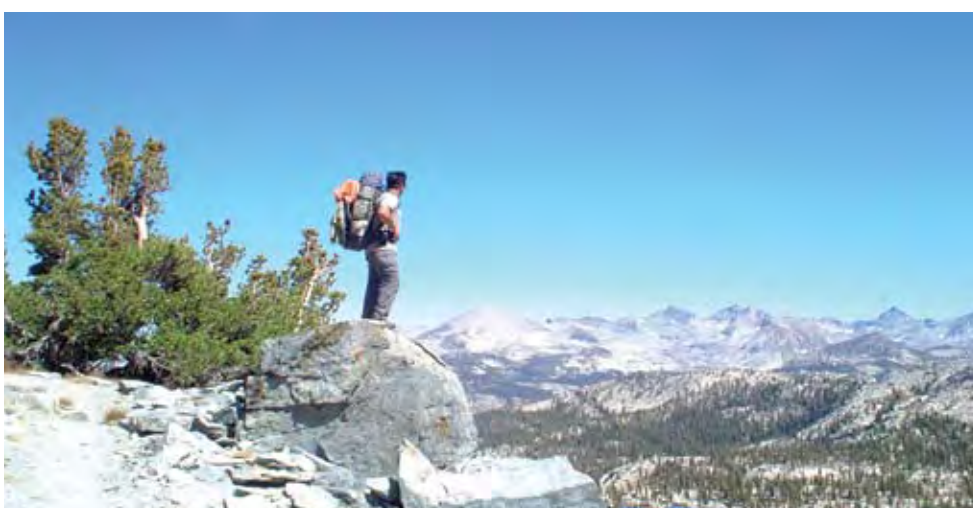
Yosemite Lodge Tour Desk
7:30 am to 7 pm

Yosemite Valley Visitor Center
9 am to 7 pm

Village Store Tour Kiosk
7:30 am to 3 pm

Curry Village Tour Kiosk
7:30 am to 3 pm

Big Trees Tour Kiosk
9 am to 5 pm



Backpacking near Red Peak Pass. Photo by Victoria Mates



Olmsted Point Erratic. NPS Photo

Bears and Wildlife

Enjoying wildlife safely and responsibly



Sow and Cub. Photo by Christine White Loberg

Keeping Bears Wild (while protecting yourself and your property)

Top Three Ways to Keep Yosemite's Black Bears Wild and Alive:

1. Store Your Food Properly.

(see table below for details) 4,000 to 20,000 calories worth of grasses, berries, acorns, and grubs—that's the typical diet of most bears. It's a lot easier for a bear to eat the thousands of calories of food in an ice chest than it is to spend all day nibbling at grasses. Their incredible sense of smell allows them to detect things we can't, which helps them find food—a black bear can smell a dead deer three miles away. To top it off, 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.

Did you notice the red bear markers as you drove through the park? Each of them marks an area where several bears have been hit by cars in recent years. Every year, bears, 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 are unable to open. When used correctly, bears quickly learn that—although they smell like food—the canisters are not worth investigating.

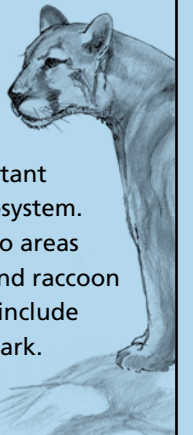
Bear canisters are available for \$5 per trip at the Valley Wilderness Center, the Wawona Information Station at Hill's Studio, Big Oak Flat Information Station, Tuolumne Meadows Wilderness Center, and the Hetch Hetchy Entrance Station. Canisters can be rented and returned at any of these locations.

Report All 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).

Mountain Lions



Mountain lions are a normal and important part of the park ecosystem. They are attracted to areas with healthy deer and raccoon populations, which include many areas of the park. Although lion attacks on humans are extremely rare, they are possible, just as is injury from any wild animal.

For your safety:

Do not leave pets or pet food outside and unattended. Pets can attract mountain lions.

Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely and never let them run ahead or lag behind on the trail. Teach children what to do if they see a lion.

What should you do if you meet a mountain lion?

Never approach one, especially if it is with kittens. Most lions will avoid confrontation. Always give them a way to escape.

Don't run. Stay calm. Hold your ground, or back away slowly. Face the lion and stand upright. Do all you can to appear larger. Raise your arms. If you have small children with you, pick them up.

If the lion behaves aggressively, wave your arms, shout, and throw objects at it. The goal is to convince it that you may be dangerous. If attacked, fight back!

Generally, mountain lions are calm, quiet, and elusive. Sightings are rare, so if you spot one, consider yourself privileged!

How to Store Food

"Food" includes any item with a scent, regardless of packaging. This may include items that you do not consider food, such as canned goods, bottles, drinks, soap, cosmetics, toiletries, trash, ice chests (even when empty), and unwashed items used for preparing or eating meals.

LOCATION	FOOD STORAGE	WHY?
Your Vehicle	You may store food in your car (with windows closed) only during daylight hours. Do not store food in your car after dark: use a food locker. Remember to clear your car of food wrappers, baby wipes, and crumbs in baby seats.	Bears can smell food, even if it's sealed in the trunk or glove compartment, and they recognize boxes and bags as potential food sources. They can easily and quickly break into all kinds of vehicles!
Your Campsite or Tent Cabin	You must store all your food in food lockers—not in your tent or tent cabin. A food locker is available at each campsite and tent cabin. Food may be stored out of sight in hard-sided RVs with windows closed.	Bears may enter campsites when people are present, and some will even check food lockers to see if they're secured. Keep food lockers closed and latched at all times, even when you are in your campsite or tent cabin.
Picnic Areas & on the Trails	Do not leave food unattended. Always keep food within arm's reach. Don't turn your back to your food.	Bears may investigate picnic areas or backpacks for food even when people are present, so be alert.
Backpacking in the Wilderness	Bear resistant food containers are required throughout the Yosemite Wilderness. Hanging food is prohibited in Yosemite.	In Yosemite and the southern Sierra, bear canisters are the only effective and proven method of preventing bears from getting human food.

Note: Improper food storage may result in impoundment of your food or vehicle, a fine of up to \$5,000, and/or revocation of camping permit. Following these regulations and precautions decreases the chance of personal injury or property damage. However, bear damage and confrontations are still possible, even when all the regulations and guidelines are followed.



Protecting Your Park

Special Protection for Special Places

The Water Ways

Not long ago, many areas along the Merced River showed signs of human trampling. Now, because of the careful actions of park staff and visitors, many of these areas have been restored to more natural conditions. The plants, birds, insects, and animals that depend on living in or near the water have been able to return to these once barren areas. You can help continue this progress by entering and exiting the river at designated launch and removal points. Packing out what you pack in will also help keep the river free from trash and prevent animals from swallowing harmful plastic or aluminum.

Please observe the following safety tips to protect Yosemite's river and lakeshore habitats and to safely enjoy water activities throughout the park.

Swimming

Choose swimming areas carefully and swim only during low water conditions.

- Always supervise children closely.
- Avoid areas of whitewater, where streams flow over rocky obstructions.
- 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 not permitted in the Hetch Hetchy reservoir, May Lake or Emerald Pool.

River Crossings

In summer, rivers and creeks swollen by runoff from snowmelt are dangerous.

- Stay away from river and creek banks during high water conditions and avoid rock hopping. Stream-polished rocks along the water's edge are slippery when wet or dry.
- If you choose to cross a stream without a bridge, avoid places where the water is either swift or over your knees. Use a stick or pole for balance and try to cross where there is a gravel bottom. Crossing on a natural bridge of rocks or logs can be surprisingly

slippery. Consider where you will land if you fall. Never cross above rapids or falls. To prevent being pulled under by the weight of your pack, unbuckle the waist strap so you can shed it if you fall in. Do not tie yourself into safety ropes—they can drown you.

Rafting

Conditions permitting, rafting on the Merced River in Yosemite Valley (Stoneman Bridge to Sentinel Beach) and the South Fork of the Merced River in Wawona is open from 10 am to 6 pm daily to any type of non-motorized vessel or other flotation device.

- The entire length of the Merced River in Yosemite Valley is closed to all flotation devices whenever the river gauge at Sentinel Bridge reads 6.5 feet or higher.
- You must wear or have a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device immediately available.
- Fallen trees and other natural debris in the river create important habitat for fish and other wildlife. Be alert—they can also create hazards for rafters.

Fishing

Fishing in Yosemite is regulated under state law. A valid California sport-fishing license is required for those persons age 16 years and older. When fishing, the license must be plainly visible by attaching it to an outer layer of clothing above the waistline.

- Trout season opens on the last Saturday in April and continues through November 15 (except Frog Creek near Lake Eleanor, which opens June 15).
- Special fishing regulations apply on the Merced River in Yosemite Valley from Happy Isles downstream to the Foresta Bridge in El Portal. Within these reaches of the river, it is catch-and-release only for rainbow trout. Brown trout limits are five fish per day. Only artificial lures or flies with barbless hooks may be used.
- The use of live or dead minnows, bait fish or amphibians, non-preserved fish eggs or roe is prohibited.

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 (6 inches deep) at least 100 feet away from any water source or trail.

Pets

Some visitors choose to bring pets along on their vacations. Kennels (open only in summer) are located at the Yosemite Valley Stable, should you need a place to board your dog (call (209)372-8348). Keep in mind, in Yosemite, pet owners have a few rules to follow:

- Pets are only allowed in developed areas and on roads and paved bike paths. They are not allowed on other trails, in wilderness areas, or where signs are posted indicating as such.
- Pets must be on a leash (6 feet or less) or otherwise physically restrained.

- For the courtesy of others, human companions are responsible for cleaning up and depositing pet feces in trash receptacles. This protects pets and wildlife from disease.

- Pets are not allowed in any accommodations within the park and are not allowed in some campgrounds.

- Pets may not be tied to an object and left unattended.

Bicycling

Each season, plants are crushed from bicycle travel in meadows, campgrounds, and picnic areas. Please respect park resources and keep

bicycles on paved roads and paved trails. They are not allowed to travel off-trail, on unpaved trails, or in wilderness areas. Mountain biking opportunities are available in designated areas outside of Yosemite.

Red Bear, Dead Bear

Speeding cars hit dozens of black bears, hundreds of deer, and countless other animals on park roads every year. The Red Bear, Dead Bear signs along park roads mark a place where a bear was recently hit. Driving the speed limit can help save wild animals.

Our Guardians...

Visitors to Yosemite National Park are the park's most important guardians. With nearly 3.5 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 to locate and collect historic objects
- Driving vehicles into meadows
- Camping outside of designated campgrounds
- Possession of weapons

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/plan_yourvisit/yoursafety.htm and find a copy of the *Superintendent's Compendium*. This document is a compilation of designations, closures, permit requirements, and other restrictions made by the superintendent, in addition to what is contained in Title 36 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (Chapter 1, Parts 1 through 7 and 34), and other applicable federal statutes and regulations.



Upper Yosemite Fall. NPS Photo

Protecting Yourself

Experience Yosemite —Safely



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.

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.

Pack Water

Avoid dehydration or heat exhaustion; carry and drink plenty of water.

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). The risk of occurrence increases with age and with diseases of the heart and lungs. Symptoms include headache, nausea, insomnia, irritability, shortness of breath, general malaise and fatigue. The best way to avoid it is to slowly acclimatize yourself to higher elevations, over the span of two to three days by gradually gaining elevation until you reach 10,000 feet (Tioga Pass). Avoid alcohol, sugar and high-fat meals. 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, Rock Climbing and Scrambling

- Be honest about your abilities and plan activities with the least experienced member of your group in mind.

Tell someone where you are going and when you are due back. Carry a signal mirror and whistle. Solo activities require increased precautions.

- Stay on designated trails or routes. Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
- Avoid scrambling in steep terrain or off-trail. If new to climbing, take a class to learn important safety techniques before venturing out alone.
- Check weather forecasts prior to your trip. Sudden, extreme changes in weather can occur even in summer.
- 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.
- Avoid the combination of wetness, wind, and cold. Know symptoms and treatments for hypothermia. Carry fire starting materials and food.

Protect Yosemite's Wilderness

- Pack out all trash and toilet paper/sanitary products.
- Use gas stoves rather than wood fires.
- Camp in an existing campsite at least 100 feet from water and trail. You must be four miles from any populated area and one mile from any road before camping.
- To minimize trampling of vegetation, bring a container to carry water to your camp from lakes or streams.
- Maximum group size is 15 people for trail travel and eight people for off-trail travel.
- Yosemite is a wildlife preserve. Pets, weapons, bicycles, strollers, and motor vehicles are never allowed on Yosemite's wilderness trails.

weapons, bicycles, strollers, and motor vehicles are never allowed on Yosemite's wilderness trails.

Wilderness Permits

Free wilderness permits are required for all overnight trips into the Yosemite Wilderness. A limited number of overnight users are permitted to enter the wilderness for each day on each trail. Sixty percent of each daily trailhead quota is available by reservation, and 40% of trailhead quotas are available on a first-come, first-served basis the day of or one day in advance of departure. Maximum group size is 15 people, 8 for cross-country travel. Trailhead quotas for popular trails often fill, but there is always space available at trailheads elsewhere in the park. No permit is required for day hiking. Permits are issued at wilderness centers located in Yosemite Valley, Tuolumne Meadows, Big Oak Flat, Wawona, and the Hetch Hetchy Entrance Station. For general hiking information or for information on making a wilderness permit reservation, visit any park wilderness center.

Backpackers who plan to visit during from May through September are encouraged to make a permit reservation. Reservations are taken from 24 weeks to two days in advance of the start of your trip. There is a \$5 per person reservation fee. To make a permit reservation, check the park's website for trailhead availability, plan an itinerary, and then 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.friendofyosar.org

Fire Safety

Each year campfires, cigarettes, and human carelessness cause unwanted fires in Yosemite. You can help prevent these fires by following a few fire safety tips.

Campfires

- Build small campfires in established campfire rings.
- Never leave a campfire unattended.
- Extinguish campfires by stirring with water a half hour before leaving the site. Carefully feel charred material to make certain the fire is cold and out.

Cigarettes

- Never throw lighted cigarettes on the ground or out of a car window.
- Crush cigarette butts dead and out before discarding them in an ashtray or trash can.
- Do not smoke while walking on trails. Stop, smoke, and properly discard the cigarette butt before resuming your walk.

Charcoal Briquettes

- Never burn charcoal briquettes in a tent or vehicle. The carbon monoxide produced by burning charcoal is deadly in a confined space.
- After use, dunk burning briquettes in water until cold. Carefully check them to make sure the fire is out.
- Never throw burning or warm briquettes into trashcans or dumpsters.

Camping Stoves and Lanterns

- Refuel stoves or lanterns only when they are cold and in a well-ventilated area.
- Never use gas-fueled lanterns and stoves in tents, vehicles, or other confined spaces. These devices produce carbon monoxide gas which can be deadly.

Top Left: Wilderness Exploration. Photo by Bob Roney

Top Right: El Capitan. NPS Photo

Just for Kids

Yosemite offers a variety of walks, presentations, and storytimes in the park. **Wee Wild Ones** is a 45-minute program packed with stories, games, and fun surprises specifically for pre-schoolers. LeConte Memorial Lodge offers family programs and walks geared for kids. **Children's Storytime** includes a 30-minute tale for children 7 and under. **Children's Theatre** offers a fun way for kids to connect through live performances. Here are just a few examples of the possibilities.

Join a National Park Ranger for a **Junior Ranger Hike or Campfire** program. These hands-on programs explore Yosemite's natural world.

Spend an evening lying in a meadow looking up at a brilliant sky at the **Starry Skies over Yosemite** program. This program is offered for a fee in Wawona and Yosemite Valley.

Visit the **Nature Center at Happy Isles**. See wildlife exhibits and a display of Yosemite at night or play in the children's corner. Open daily from late spring to September. Take the shuttle to stop #16.

Go into the Field! Join the **Yosemite Institute** on their fun and challenging residential field science program, a five-day introduction to Yosemite's outdoor classroom. Other custom programs for all ages are available. Contact the Yosemite Institute (for more information, see page 23).

Discover Yosemite Books. Learn about the park with *Two Bear Cubs*, an American Indian legend about El Capitan or *The World of Small*, which comes with a magnifying glass. To order these and other titles, call the Yosemite Association at 209/379-2648 or visit www.YosemiteStore.com. For additional selections, shop Yosemite online at www.YosemiteGifts.com.

Kids Corner

Featuring Children and Family Programming

Junior Rangers and Little Cubs Wanted!

Kids ages 3-13 are invited to become a Little Cub or Junior Ranger. **If you are 7-13, you can become a Yosemite Junior Ranger** by purchasing a self-guided booklet published by the Yosemite Association. In order to earn a Junior Ranger patch and badge, the booklet must be completed, a bag of trash collected, and any guided program attended. See pages 14-19 for a complete schedule activities, including ranger-led Junior Ranger programs.

Between the ages of 3 and 6? Yosemite has a program for YOU! Little Cubs is a self-guided booklet that encourages our young visitors and their families to discover Yosemite's wonders and to earn a Little Cubs button. This booklet (published by the Yosemite Association) is sold at park visitor center bookstores.

FIND THE ANIMALS OF YOSEMITE

Find the underlined names of the animals of Yosemite in the word search.

CALIFORNIA BAT

GROUND SQUIRREL

GREAT HORNED OWL

GREY FOX

PIKA

MULE DEER

PEREGRINE FALCON

BIGHORN SHEEP

RATTLESNAKE

BLACK BEAR

PORCUPINE

Word search grid:

S	G	M	I	P	S	H	B	R	E	E	D
H	V	W	F	G	J	M	A	I	P	O	K
E	W	L	A	C	S	K	T	U	B	D	J
E	R	L	L	G	L	Y	T	U	I	C	D
P	O	R	C	U	P	I	N	E	L	G	I
S	V	H	O	W	L	N	B	T	A	R	N
Q	D	T	N	S	Q	U	I	R	R	E	L
B	E	A	R	O	Y	B	D	E	K	Y	L
L	U	B	V	K	U	H	A	A	S	F	P
S	N	A	K	E	H	K	F	E	R	O	T
U	L	F	P	I	K	A	F	E	E	X	C

Word search excerpted from Junior Ranger Handbook © Yosemite Association

Yosemite Secrets

Feature Article



Illilouette Fall. Photo by Victoria Mates

surprised, if not more so, running away as quickly as physically possible. Black bears not accustomed to humans react this way. Yosemite may be known for bears that frequent campgrounds and parking lots in search of easily obtainable food, yet most bears, like this one, would consider such close proximity to people their worst fear. Such is the nature of wildness—the non-reliance upon, and unfamiliarity with, humans. Nearly all of Yosemite is wild—and legally required to be kept that way by the Wilderness Act.

John Muir once wrote, “thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity...” You don’t need to travel far to find special places, to find wildness, or to forget the distractions of everyday life. Every place I mentioned is within a few hours’—if not a few minutes’—walk and in or near Yosemite Valley, just one small part of the park. The other 90 percent of Yosemite is also waiting for your discovery. You don’t need to seek these experiences; you just need an open mind. And then, you will discover your own Yosemite secrets.

Have you ever wondered about a ranger’s favorite Yosemite spot?

Deep in the heart of Yosemite Valley lies an expansive meadow with perfect views of Yosemite Falls, Half Dome, and Cathedral Rocks—a place where one can see immense granite cliffs and delicate wildflowers. This place, called Cook’s Meadow, is one of my favorite spots.

Yosemite Secrets

by Ranger Jeffrey Trust

Visitors often ask where rangers’ favorite haunts are, believing they are precious secrets. However, the truth is that many “secret” spots are simply hidden in plain view.

Consider Cook’s Meadow. Many people make pilgrimages to Lower Yosemite Fall—just across the street—yet surprisingly few take the quick stroll around this beautiful meadow. Meadows are home to so much life. In fact, nowhere in Yosemite will you find greater diversity of plants and animals. Deer, bears, numerous birds, and an unbelievable number of smaller creatures all depend upon the amazing variety of plants found there.

Upriver you can find another, and perhaps my original, favorite place. It has no waterfall, no grand vista. Yet, if

I could visit Yosemite and spend only a few minutes at one place, I might spend it away from Yosemite’s most famous scenery. I might sit at Happy Isles. This obscure spot on the map inspired W. E. Dennison, one of Yosemite’s first guardians, to write:

“There are three islets just above the bridge which have never been given a place in Yosemite geography, so far as I am able to learn, and, commemorative of the emotions which I enjoyed when exploring them, I have named them the Happy Isles, for no one can visit them without for the while forgetting the grinding strife of his world and being happy.”

Perhaps it was at Happy Isles that I learned about rest. There, I could hear nothing but the roar of water and the chirping of birds. There, I could gaze up at a dark, yet brilliant, night sky. I could spend hours there; indeed, I have.

Another favorite: Illilouette Fall. At 370 feet tall, this striking waterfall stands testament to the power of glaciers. An example of a hanging valley, a small glacier carved Illilouette Canyon while a larger, more effective, glacier flowed through the Merced River Canyon. The larger glacier out-carved the smaller one, leaving Illilouette Canyon at a higher elevation. This fortunate inequality left its legacy in the form of Illilouette Fall. It is visible from the trail from Happy Isles to Vernal Fall; however, it is best seen from a few miles below Glacier Point from along Panorama Trail.

Also not far from Glacier Point lies Dewey Point. Aside from the undeniably stunning view from the point, the hike there conveys the nature of Wilderness. Once while hiking along the trail, I heard branches crashing. Startled, I saw a large bear who was equally



Far Above: Cook’s Meadow. Photo by Jeffrey Trust

Above: Happy Isles. NPS Photo

