

# Yosemite

Official Map and Guide

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 northeast, 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 2,000 feet above sea level to more than 13,000 feet and offers three major features; alpine wilderness, groves of Giant Sequoias, and Yosemite Valley. The 200 miles of roads give access to all of these features either by car or by free shuttle bus 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. Millions 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.



▲ 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.



▲ 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.



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



▼ A Steller's Jay perches on a branch for a brief rest.



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



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



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



▼ Though brown in color, this mother and cub are American 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. Because of the short growing season, the plants and animals take maximum advantage of the warm days to grow, reproduce, 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, fragile 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 9,945 feet, the highest automobile pass in California.

Tuolumne Meadows (at 8,600 feet) is the largest sub-alpine meadow in the Sierra. It is 55 miles from Yosemite Valley via the Tioga Road. Along 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. Remember that Yosemite's meadows are fragile and are easily affected by foot traffic and are closed to bicycles and autos.

A trip into the high country can be rewarding. But remember that the elevation ranges from 7,000 to 13,000 feet. Even hardy visitors find that vigorous exercise can make them short of breath. Slow 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. Below your feet a sheer rock cliff, about 3,200 feet straight down, affords you a bird's eye view of the entire Yosemite Valley. Across the valley you can see the 2,425-foot drop of Yosemite Falls. Beyond, the panoramic expanse of the High Sierra stands out in awe-inspiring clarity. Signs identify major peaks. Sunset and full-moon nights are ideal times to visit the point. A full moon transforms the pastel granite landscape into a fairyland. In summer you can drive to Glacier Point (32 miles from Yosemite Valley). In winter, when the road is closed at Badger Pass Ski Area, Glacier Point is a favorite destination for cross-country skiers. But no matter how you travel or when you go,

Glacier Point offers what may be Yosemite's finest view.

### Giant Sequoia Groves

The Mariposa Grove, 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 trees, largest of all living things, have endured for thousands of years. Only in recent years, however, have we begun to understand the Giant Sequoia environment. During the last 100 years protection has sometimes been inadequate and sometimes excessive. For example, in the late 1800s tunnels were cut through two trees in the Mariposa Grove. Conversely, good intentions created another problem; protection from fire has resulted in adverse effects.

Sequoias are wonderfully adapted to fire. The 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. The tiny seeds require mineral soil for germination, and 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, intended to simulate natural fires and improve the health of the forest, are now set by the National Park Service.

As you look at these trees, keep in mind that they have been here since the beginning of history in 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 area in the Mariposa Grove. You may ride the trams through the Grove from May until October. Trails are available year-round for hiking or cross-country skiing.

### Wawona

This Indian word apparently meant "big tree." Wawona was once an Indian encampment and, later, was the site of a wayside hostel built in 1857 by Galen Clark. Known as Clark's Station, it served as an overnight stop for visitors in transit between Yosemite Valley and Mariposa. In 1864, when Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove were set aside for protection, Clark became the first guardian of the area. In 1875, the year the original Wawona road opened, the Washburn brothers purchased the area and built the Wawona

Hotel that is still in operation today. Wawona focuses on Yosemite's human history. It is the setting of the Pioneer Yosemite History Center, a collection of relocated historic buildings and horse-drawn coaches.

### Wilderness

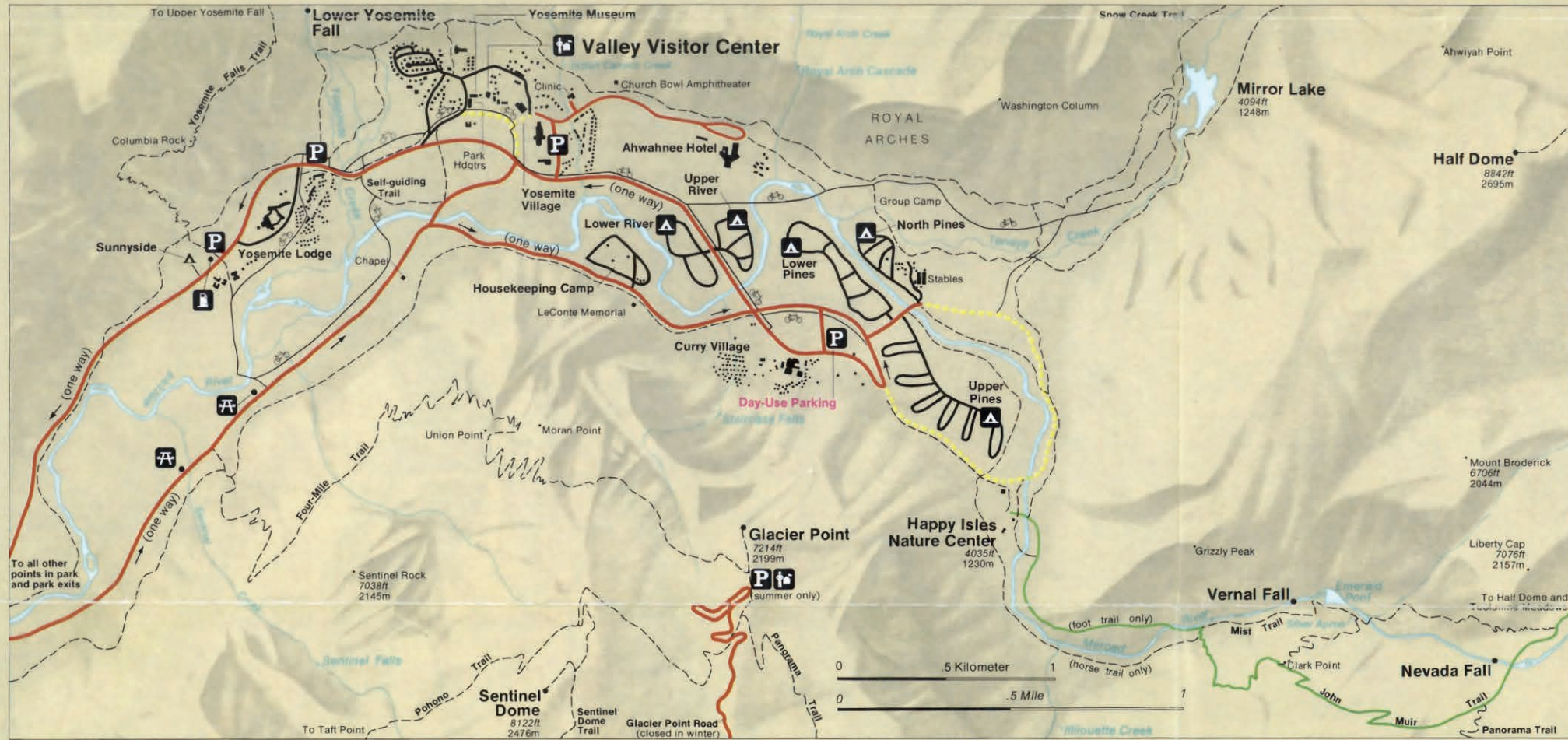
Yosemite's wilderness is varied and offers day hiking and backpacking experiences for both the seasoned hiker and the novice. About 800 miles of trails offer a variety of climate, elevation, and spectacular scenery. Near the crest of the Sierra you can take both long and short trips at elevations above 9,000 feet. The higher regions offer a cool climate, while lower elevations are warmer and drier.

To protect Yosemite's wilderness, there are quotas for overnight use. Free wilderness permits are required and are available at ranger stations and visitor centers. Be sure to read the information you receive with your permit and observe all regulations. Above all, remember to keep your impact to a minimum. Additionally, you will need appropriate equipment and good footwear.

During winter the wilderness 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 wilderness is more demanding than summer. Good equipment, warm clothing, and proper planning are essential 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 forgiving to the careless or unprepared.

When you get your wilderness permit, winter or summer, ask about trail conditions, weather forecast, campfire regulations, and special precautions you should take in the area through which you will be travelling. Double-check your equipment and food, stay on established trails, and don't shortcut switchbacks. If you hike alone, tell someone where you're going and when you will return. For stock use, check at any ranger station.



## 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.

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES CALL 911

John Muir Trail  
Bikeway and foot trail  
Shuttlebus and bicycles only  
Trail

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.

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 are available to answer questions or assist you. The Indian Cultural Exhibit and the Indian Village, located behind the visitor center, display the cultural history of the native Miwok and Paiute people from 1850 to the present. Nearby, the Museum Gallery features artwork of past and current Yosemite artists.

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 shuttle bus system that serves most of the valley. Either way, you'll save gas and frustration. If you are visiting just for the day, park your car in the day-use parking lot at Curry Village.

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

Campgrounds are located throughout the park; one in Yosemite Valley, one at Hodgdon Meadow, and one at Wawona are open all year. Utility hookups are not available, but all campgrounds have toilets and tap or stream water (treat stream water before using). Reservations must be made for most campgrounds. Campsites may be reserved through the mail by contacting Ticketron, Dept. R, 401 Hackensack Ave.,

Hackensack, NJ 07601, or in person at the park's Ticketron offices or at Ticketron outlets nationwide. Reservations should be made eight weeks in advance. For general campground information, call (209) 372-4845. Eating facilities, stores, and lodging are available in Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and El Portal year round; at Tuolumne Meadows and White Wolf during the summer season. Reservations for accommodations are recommended and may be made by contacting Yosemite Park and Curry Company Reservations, 5410 East Home, Fresno, CA 93727, (209) 252-4848. Reservations for High Sierra Camps may be made by calling (209) 454-2002.

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

Printed information in Spanish, Japanese, German, and French is also available on request.

The *Yosemite Road Guide*, a descriptive booklet keyed to numbered posts along park roads, may be purchased at most information stations and gift shops. Other publications about the park are available for purchase in the park or by writing to Yosemite Association, Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318. For road and weather information, call (209) 372-4745.

### Protecting Yourself

Each year, the vacations of many 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 the danger of what they were doing.

**Speed limits** in Yosemite nowhere exceed 45 miles per hour and are lower where posted. Most accidents occur because of excessive speed and careless driving. Drive only on the roads.

Bears are attracted to human food. In trying to obtain that food, bears cause thousands of dollars in damage to vehicles, foodstuffs, and camping equipment each year. Do not leave food in the passenger section of a car or in an unattended ice chest. Store food in an ice chest, then lock it in a trunk or recreational vehicle. In campgrounds use food storage lockers. Improper food storage is a violation subject to fine. Additional information on bears and precautions you should take is available at park entrances and campgrounds.

**Feeding wildlife**, including birds and other animals, such as coyotes, deer, and squirrels, results in injuries to

visitors and an unhealthy environment for wildlife. Disturbing or feeding wildlife is a violation subject to fine.

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

Do not drink untreated water from streams, lakes, or snow. To treat, boil for 3 minutes, use an iodine-based purifier, or use a Giardia-rated water filter.

Trails are the safest routes when travelling off roads. Straying off trails results in lost children and hikers as well as injuries caused by falls. 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.

Bicycles are allowed only on established, paved public roads, in parking areas, and on designated paved bikeways. Pedestrians should use footpaths. However, bicyclists must always exercise care to ensure the safety of pedestrians, other bicyclists, and wildlife. Keep to the right of the center line except to pass. Bicycles are not allowed on any park trails.

# Yosemite

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

John Muir Trail and Pacific Crest Trail  
Trail

Camping is permitted only in designated campgrounds. Staying overnight on roadsides or in parking areas is not permitted. You must register for campsites in accordance with the instructions posted at campground entrances. There are

camping fees and limits on length of stay.  
Firewood gathering is prohibited except in designated backcountry areas with a wilderness permit. Cutting standing trees or attached limbs, alive or dead, is prohibited.

Campfires are permitted only at designated campsites and fireplaces. 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 (by reservation only)  
Walk-in campground  
Gas station

