



Yosemite National Park – Winter-Spring Itinerary

Winter is a special time to visit Yosemite, perhaps the very best of all seasons because it will seem as though you have the park to yourself! Blankets of snow and free flowing waterfalls make it magical.

Winter Weather and Driving in Yosemite:

The Tioga, Glacier Point, and Mariposa Grove Roads are closed each year from after the first significant snowfall to about late May or early June. Other roads are generally plowed and maintained, but can close or present delays during storm periods. Motorists are advised to always carry chains and check weather and road conditions before travel. Icy and wet roadways can exist throughout the Park! To check conditions, call 209-372-0200 for roads inside the park and 800-427-7623 or visit www.dot.ca.gov for highways connecting to Yosemite.

YOSEMITE IN A DAY:

STOP 1: MARIPOSA GROVE

Meet the star of Mariposa Grove—the Grizzly Giant—the largest giant sequoia in the grove, with a diameter of 31 feet and a circumference of nearly 100 feet. Mariposa Grove has 470 of these behemoths, many of which are nearly 2,000 years old. Several trees stand nearly 300 feet tall with a diameter of 15 feet or more. The road into Mariposa Grove remains open as long as conditions permit. After the gate closes, you can access the Grove on foot. It’s a two-mile walk from the park entrance to the Grove parking lot and then .8 miles to the Grizzly Giant. You can continue your hike or snowshoe journey up to 8 miles throughout the Grove.



STOP 2: TUNNEL VIEW

On Hwy 41 is one of the most photographed vistas in the world. It provides a panoramic view of Yosemite Valley, including El Capitan, Half Dome, Sentinel Rock, Cathedral Rocks, and Bridalveil Falls. Be prepared to pull into the parking area to the right or left immediately past the tunnel.

STOP 3: BRIDALVEIL FALL

Experience the place the Yosemite Indians (Ahwahneechee) called “Pohono”, or spirit of the puffing wind. Take the easy walk and see windy swirls blow Bridalveil Falls sideways. Although small in comparison to the surrounding canyon walls, Bridalveil Falls is the height of a 62-story building.





STOP 4: YOSEMITE VALLEY

An unlimited array of possibilities awaits you in Yosemite Valley. Most involve sightseeing and learning about the scenery before you. Tip: Park your vehicle in the Day Use parking area and hop on the FREE Valley Shuttle for the opportunity to see the many sites of Yosemite Valley.

YOSEMITE FALLS - Feast your eyes on the highest waterfall in North America. It is among the top 10 highest waterfalls in the world (Sentinel Falls is also in that group). A spectacular view awaits you from a short footpath to Yosemite Falls, which plunges 2,425 feet. This hike features educational exhibits and a picnic area, and is accessible to the mobility impaired. (Shuttle Stop #6)

HALF DOME - At the far end of the Valley is one of the most photographed scenes in Yosemite, the world-famous Half Dome. Forces of uplift, erosion from rivers and glaciers, and rockfall all shaped this famous feature into what we see today. Cook's Meadow, Sentinel Bridge, Tunnel View, Glacier Point and Olmsted Point are just a few locations with stunning views of Half Dome.



YOSEMITE VALLEY: ARTS AND CULTURE (Shuttle Stop #5)

Yosemite Museum - Next door to the Valley Visitor Center, the Indian Cultural Exhibit displays the cultural history of the Miwok and Paiute people from 1850 to the present. An Indian Cultural Demonstrator is on site. Rotating exhibits in the Museum Gallery continue to foster the arts in Yosemite. The Museum Store, operated by the Yosemite Conservancy, features traditional American Indian crafts.

Indian Village of Ahwahnee - Behind the Valley Visitor Center, this outdoor exhibit, open year-round, is where traditional cultural presentations come to life.

Ansel Adams Gallery - The gallery is located in Yosemite Village next to the Valley Visitor Center and is open daily from 9 to 5 pm. The gallery offers the work of Ansel Adams, contemporary photographers, and other fine artists.

THE AHWAHNEE - Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987, The Ahwahnee opened in 1927, it is lauded even by today's architects as "masterful". Tour the grounds with breathtaking views, dine in the majestic dining room, shop in the gift store or sweet shop, and sip hot beverages by the fireplace. (Shuttle Stop #3)



HAPPY ISLES - is the place to see dramatic natural processes at work. Cross the footbridges onto the Isles or wander through outdoor exhibits detailing Yosemite's Geologic story. (Shuttle stop #16)



STOP 5: EL CAPITAN

Rising nearly 4,000 feet from the base to the summit, El Capitan is the largest single granite rock on earth. Rock climbers from around the world converge to face the challenge of this massive monolith. From spring to fall, they can be seen inching their way up the sheer wall. Be sure to bring binoculars! Please park on the paved road shoulder next to El Capitan Meadow. Delicate meadows are easily damaged by trampling, so please stay on footpaths.

OTHER THINGS TO SEE AND DO IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME:



ICE SKATING RINK AT CURRY VILLAGE – At Yosemite, ice skating has been a tradition since the 1930s. Tucked beneath the majestic forms of Half Dome and Glacier Point, this one-of-a-kind Northern California skating rink offers breathtaking views, family-friendly fun and even just a hint of romance. After a little skating, guests can enjoy the warmth of an outdoor fire ring – or buy supplies for making s’mores and hot drinks at the nearby store.

BADGER PASS SKI RESORT - The original Northern California ski area, Badger Pass has been a favorite for generations of families. This full service ski resort offers ski and snowboard instruction, rental equipment, a ski shop, childcare, and a cafeteria and lounge. Conditions permitting, you can enjoy skiing at Badger Pass from Mid-December through mid-March.

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING TO GLACIER POINT - Yosemite cross-country skiing offers visitors access to some of the most beautiful vistas on earth! Badger Pass Ski Resort offers over 90 miles of market trails and 25 miles of machine-groomed track. Cross-country track and skating lanes are groomed from Badger Pass to Glacier Point – a 21-mile round trip.



YOSEMITE CHAPEL - Located in Yosemite Valley, the Yosemite Chapel became listed on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The chapel, which is the oldest structure in Yosemite Valley began services June 7, 1879.

SOUTHERN GATEWAY ATTRACTIONS - Visit the many attractions that make the southern gateway the most popular entrance to Yosemite National Park. Family owned wineries on the Madera Wine Trail, Bass Lake, museums, art galleries, Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad (check seasonal schedule), casino, events and more. See www.YosemiteThisYear.com for more information.



For Lodging, Tours & more information visit:

YOSEMITE SIERRA VISITORS BUREAU

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(Photos courtesy of: Annie Starkey, Kristal Leonard, Nancy Robbins, and Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts)