

# YOSEMITE

NATIONAL PARK TRIP PLANNER

Essential  
Tips to  
Plan Your  
Vacation

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A Park  
Map

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National Park Trips

# INSPIRATION AS FAR AS YOU CAN SEE

**When you visit Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks,  
you may not want to leave.**

And when you stay at Cedar Grove Lodge, John Muir Lodge, Wuksachi Lodge or the Grant Grove Cabins, you don't have to. It's an experience as big as the century-old giant sequoias — that will stay with you just as long. Plan your adventure now.

# 4 Road Trips

Here are four of our all-time favorite road trips to Yosemite National Park — each with its own scenic wonders, dreamy towns and one-of-a-kind attractions.



Map by Peter Sucheski

ON THE COVER: Nevada Falls in Yosemite National Park (Grant Ordeltide)

## EXPLORE THE BEST ROAD-TRIP ITINERARIES TO YOSEMITE.

Scan this code to access detailed itineraries filled with where to stay and what to do along the way to Yosemite. →



# Park Map

Get a sense for where everything is in Yosemite National Park.

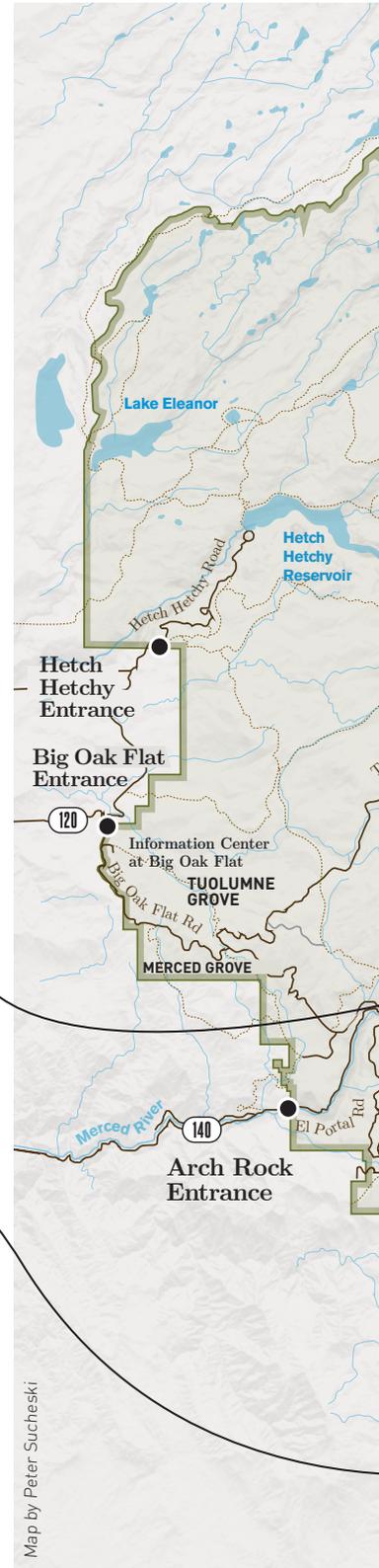


## EL CAPITAN

Revered by rock climbers and travelers alike, this 3,000-foot-high granite formation sits in the Yosemite Valley.

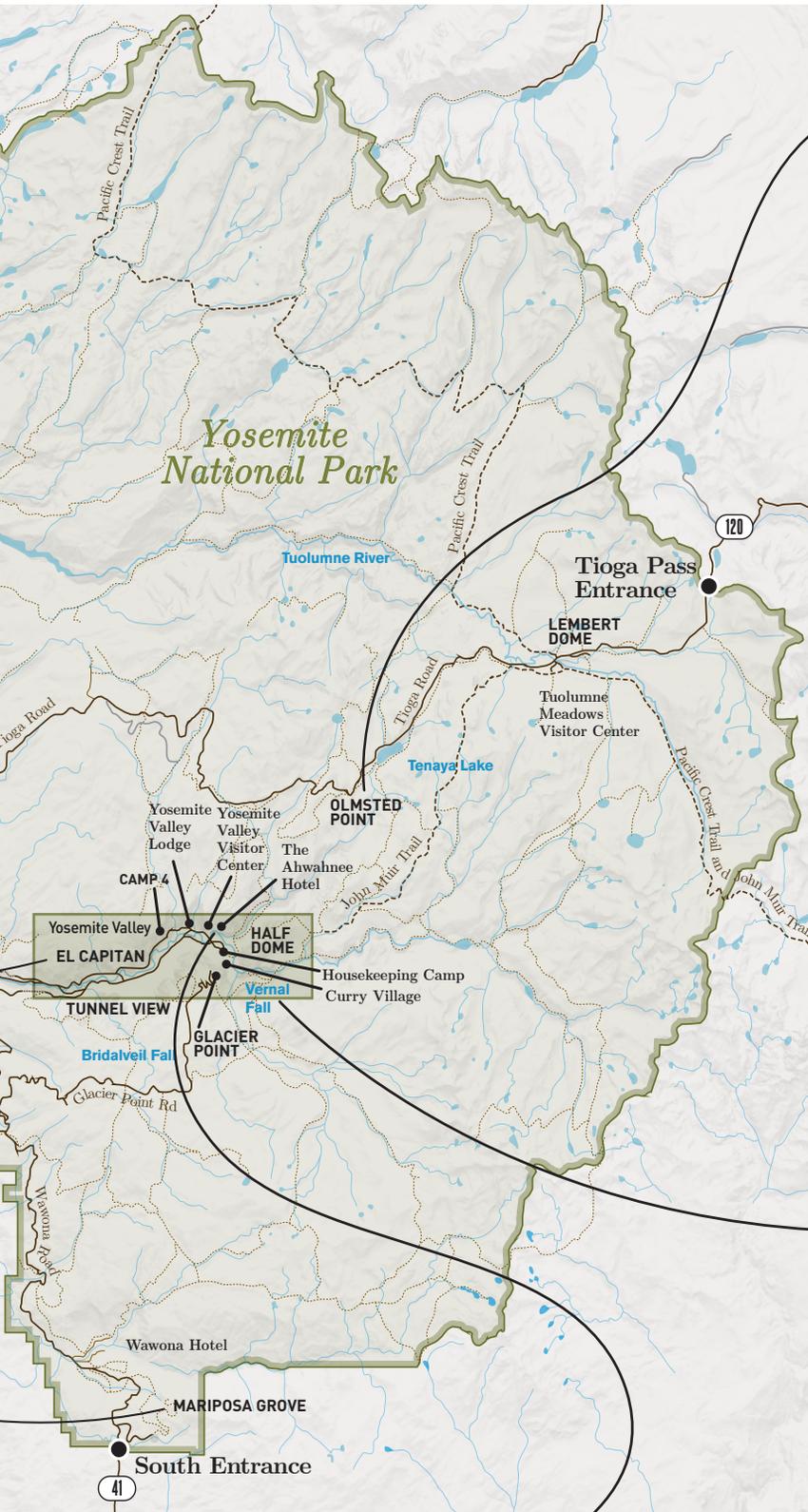
## MARIPOSA GROVE OF GIANT SEQUOIAS

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias consists of 300-foot-tall sequoias and is located above the Yosemite Valley in Wawona close to the South Entrance of the park. Walk the moderate-rated Grizzly Giant Loop Trail, a two-mile loop that circles the edge of the grove.



Map by Peter Sucheski

PHOTOS: El Capitan, Mariposa Grove, Olmstead Point (Grant Ordelheide), Vernal Fall (Laquan Franklin, Tamron Photo Contest), The Ahwahnee Hotel (Depositphotos)



## OLMSTED POINT

Pull over at the Olmsted Point parking area, and you'll see a unique view of Half Dome. With a pair of binoculars, you can often see a line of hikers, climbing up cables to the top. To the left is the northwest face of Clouds Rest at 9,926 feet above sea level.



## VERNAL FALL

A short 1.2-mile hike leads you to Vernal Fall, a gorgeous waterfall along the popular Mist Trail.

## THE AHWAHNEE HOTEL

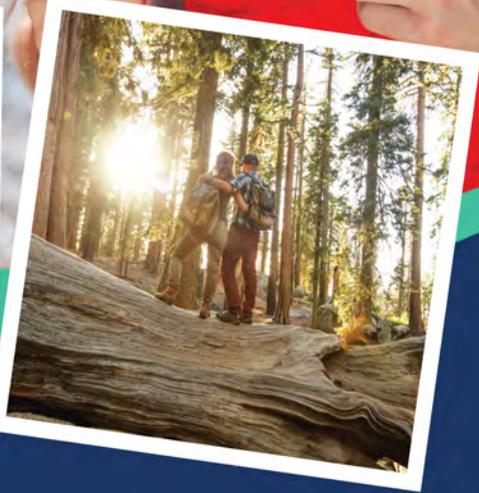
Built in 1927, the upscale historic hotel offers beautiful grounds to stroll through and a fantastic dining room where you can eat, even if you're not staying here. Rustic but elegant chandeliers hang from a 34-foot-high ceiling while floor-to-ceiling windows offer beautiful views of the park from the dining room.



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# THE FIVE YOSEMITE ENTRANCES

There are five entrances into Yosemite National Park, one of which is on the park's east side. Choose the entrance that puts you closest to what you want to see.

## 1 HETCH HETCHY ENTRANCE (Hwy. 120)

Leave the crowds behind at the farthest north of the four western entrances. Less than 1% of the park's 4 million annual visitors venture to the Hetch Hetchy Entrance. Access it via Hwy. 120 and by Evergreen Road. It's open year round but only during daylight hours, unless you have a backcountry permit.

Lower in elevation than other park areas, Hetch Hetchy has a long hiking season from early spring through fall. Two of North America's largest waterfalls are here, flowing a thousand feet down over granite. Hetch Hetchy Reservoir is a drinking water source, so it is off limits to swimming and boating.

## 2 BIG OAK FLAT ENTRANCE (Hwy. 120)

Driving from the Bay Area? One of the two direct routes is through the Big Oak Flat Entrance. To reach it, take I-580 east to I-205 east to Hwy. 120 east via Manteca, Calif.

Along the way, don't miss Groveland, a quaint town with shops, hotels and restaurants 24 miles from the park. It's the largest town between the entrance and Sonora, Calif. Stop by Iron Door Saloon, the state's oldest continuously operating saloon, which opened its doors in 1852.

## 3 ARCH ROCK ENTRANCE (Hwy. 140)

The other direct route from the San Francisco area leads you to the Arch Rock Entrance via I-580 east to I-205 east to Hwy. 140 east into the park. Hwy. 140 becomes El Portal Road, which leads you to Yosemite Valley.

The closest settlement to Yosemite is El Portal, home to a gas station, El Portal Market, a picnic area and campgrounds. Midpines and Mariposa are to the west. Mariposa with its historic downtown lined with restaurants and hotels offers the most services.

## 4 SOUTH ENTRANCE (Hwy. 41)

If you're traveling from San Diego or the Los Angeles area, your nearest entrance will be the South Entrance, accessed by Hwy. 41. Fish Camp is the last town before the park. It offers some lodging and a general store.

Thirteen miles from Fish Camp is the bustling town of Oakhurst with some national chain hotels, along with art galleries, locally owned restaurants, bookstores and gold-panning activities. On route from Oakhurst to the park, stop at Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, which offers rides on two operating steam engine train locomotives.

## 5 TIOGA PASS ENTRANCE (Hwy. 120)

Going to Yosemite from Lake Tahoe, Las Vegas or Death Valley in the summer? Take the Tioga Pass Entrance. Reno is about 140 miles from this entrance. Las Vegas is a little less than a 6-hour drive. Death Valley is 225 miles away (depending on where you are in Death Valley). The only park entrance on the east side, it's open late spring through late fall, depending on weather. Check the park website in advance to be sure it is open.



# CHOOSE YOUR HIKE



Peaceful  
River



Pounding  
Waterfall



Mountain  
Lake



Views from  
Above



Away from  
Crowds

## Difficulty:



Easy



Moderate



Difficult

## WAPAMA FALLS



Head to the Hetch Hetchy area to catch this 1,400-foot cascade careening over enormous boulders into the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. Hike 2.5 miles (one-way) to the footbridge crossing the falls. Go in late spring to see the falls at their most impressive, but be careful of high water on the bridge.

## MAY LAKE



From the trailhead on Tioga Road, you're only 1.3 miles from dipping a toe in idyllic May Lake, making this trip a great one for kids. And if the view at the lake energizes you for more, continue on to the top of 10,850-foot Mt. Hoffman for a 5.4-mile round-trip hike.

## MIST TRAIL



Yosemite's most popular path deserves every bit of attention it gets. This spectacular, rainbow-streaked trail skirts 317-foot Vernal Fall and 594-foot Nevada Fall and extends to Little Yosemite Valley. Hike 1.2 miles (one-way) and 1,000 vertical feet to the top of Vernal Fall. Going to Nevada Fall adds 1.5 miles and 1,000 feet to your trip. Start early to avoid crowds. Watch your children closely as the path can get slippery. Don't go in the water as the current is deceptively strong and has fatally swept children and adults away.

## NORTH DOME



Bag a peak without all the work of Half Dome on this moderate, 5-mile round trip to the top of 7,543-foot North Dome. From the summit perch, you'll have a close look at Half Dome, Clouds Rest and Yosemite Valley.

## VALLEY LOOP TRAIL



See all of the Yosemite Valley highlights — but fewer crowds — on this loop with views of El Capitan, Yosemite Falls, Sentinel Rock, Bridalveil Fall and the Merced River. Start the complete 11.5-mile loop at Lower Yosemite Fall and go in either direction. For the 7.2-mile half loop, take the spur trail to cross the Merced River at El Capitan Bridge.

## FOUR MILE TRAIL



The elevation change on this steep 9.6-miler from the valley to Glacier Point is a whopping 3,200 feet. Glacier Point Road will be closed in 2022, so the only way to access this trail is from the valley, hiking up to the point and then back down. As you descend, take in views of Yosemite Valley, including Half Dome.

## HALF DOME



A Yosemite rite of passage for experienced hikers, the 14-or-16-mile, round-trip up the iconic 8,839-foot granite peak is a physical and mental challenge. You do need a permit to hike it. Near the top, you'll have to conquer a very steep, exposed 400-foot section laced with metal cables.

## CATHEDRAL LAKES



One glance at the rhino-horn summit of 10,912-foot Cathedral Peak reflected in Upper Cathedral Lake, and you'll know hoofing it up this high-altitude Tuolumne Meadows trail was worth it. The round trip is 7 miles to either Upper or Lower Cathedral Lake and 8 miles for both.

## Leave No Trace

Before you hit the trail, become familiar with how to recreate responsibly.

### ✓ PLAN AHEAD & PREPARE

Research trails, campsites and weather ahead of time and plan and pack accordingly. Always carry plenty of water, snacks and layers.

### ✓ TREAD LIGHTLY

Stay on trails to help concentrate foot traffic and limit your impact on plants in the park.

### ✓ DISPOSE OF YOUR WASTE PROPERLY

Pack out everything you bring in, including fruit peels and toilet paper. Throw all your trash in garbage cans after your hike.

### ✓ LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

Leave rocks, fossils, flowers and archaeological artifacts for others to enjoy.

### ✓ MINIMIZE YOUR CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

Check fire restrictions in the area. Only light a fire in a well-built fire ring and make sure the fire is completely out before leaving or going to bed.

### ✓ RESPECT WILDLIFE

Never feed wildlife and drive slowly through the park. Stay at least 100 feet from larger animals like bears and bighorn sheep.

### ✓ WATER BOTTLE FILLING STATION

Bring your own water bottle and fill it at the park's filling stations.

### ✓ BE CONSIDERATE

Be mindful of how you're impacting other visitors' experiences. Avoid playing loud music.

# The Best Thing

TO COME OUT OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



## EXTEND

YOUR STAY IN YOSEMITE WITH  
A 1-, 2-, OR 3-DAY WHITEWATER  
RAFTING ADVENTURE ON THE WILD &  
SCENIC TUOLUMNE OR MERCED RIVERS.

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# YOSEMITE'S TOP SIX

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Have 48 hours? Here are some of our favorite things to do from hiking to exploring a giant sequoia grove.

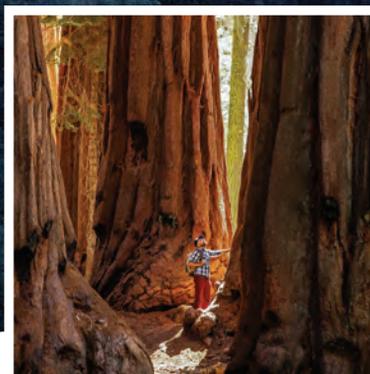


1

## EAT BREAKFAST AT WAWONA HOTEL

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This charming restaurant in a Victorian-era hotel has a great breakfast menu to fuel you for the day.

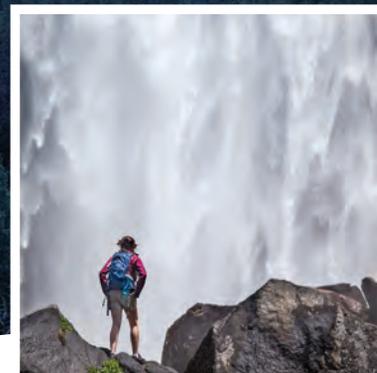


2

## EXPLORE THE MARIPOSA GROVE

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Reopened in June 2018 after a lengthy restoration project, this grove is the largest of the park's three groves and home to approximately 500 giant sequoias.

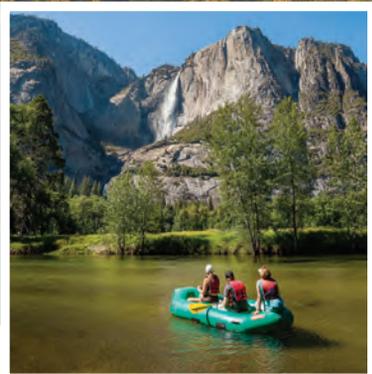


3

## HIKE MIST TRAIL

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This trail climbs 1,000 feet to reach the top of 317-foot Vernal Fall in 1.2 miles. It continues nearly 1,000 more feet to the top of 594-foot Nevada Fall. Learn the details on page 9.



4

## FLOAT ON THE MERCED RIVER

Cool off by floating down the Merced River. Go to the boat kiosk in Curry Village, formerly Half Dome Village, to rent your boat and learn the latest regulations.



5

## PICNIC AT TENAYA BEACH

Off of Tioga Road, Tenaya Lake is impossible to miss as you descend from Tuolumne Meadows. The lake offers chilly swimming and white-sand beaches. Follow the 1-mile path to the lake's south side to get away from crowds.



6

## EAT DINNER AT THE PIZZA DECK

In the heart of Curry Village, formerly Half Dome Village, enjoy hand-tossed pizza and salads on this legendary outdoor deck with views of Glacier Point.

PHOTOS: Tunnel View (Depositphotos), Pancakes at Wawona Hotel, Mariposa Grove (Depositphotos), Mist Trail, Floating on the Merced River, Tenaya Beach, Pizza Deck (Grant Ordelheide)

# WHERE TO STAY

Find your perfect lodging with our personalized guide.

-  In Yosemite Valley
-  Luxurious Accommodation
-  Rustic Accommodation
-  Canvas Tent
-  Pet-Friendly
-  House Rental
-  Pool

PHOTO: Porch view at Wawona Hotel (Courtesy of Yosemite Hospitality)

## THE AHWAHNEE HOTEL



The Ahwahnee is the most elegant hotel in the park. Its dining room is in itself a destination, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. The upscale hotel is a National Historic Landmark. Opened as a classy destination in 1927, it features pillow-top mattresses and flat-screen TVs.

## WAWONA HOTEL



Away from the hustle and bustle of the Yosemite Valley, the Wawona Hotel is your classic historic national park hotel. This gorgeous Victorian-era hotel features six buildings, all painted white and decorated with period furnishings. Fifty rooms have private bathrooms and the remainder have common shared bathrooms. A swimming pool and golf course offer recreational opportunities when you need a break from hiking. Plus it's just around the corner from the famous Mariposa Grove, which reopened in 2018 after an extensive renovation to its public facilities.

## YOSEMITE VALLEY LODGE



Great for families, the Yosemite Valley Lodge is conveniently located in the Yosemite Valley and has a swimming pool to cool down on hot days. There's 241 remodeled traditional rooms, plus four family rooms.

## TUOLUMNE MEADOWS LODGE



Up Tioga Road east of the Yosemite Valley and away from the majority of the crowds, this area sits more than 8,700 feet above sea level. You'll have an alpine experience, staying cooler than those sleeping in the valley below. There are 69 canvas tent cabins available mid-June through mid-September situated near Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows.

## HOUSEKEEPING CAMP



Opening mid-April weather-permitting, Housekeeping Camp is located along the Merced River in Yosemite Valley. It's not for people looking for a well-appointed hotel room with a door to shut. It's for people who want a camping-type experience without having to set up a tent. The structures are three-side concrete buildings with a canvas roof and a privacy curtain you can stretch across the structure. You can cook on the campfire-ring grill.

## WHITE WOLF LODGE



This lodge offers 24 canvas-tent cabins, plus four traditional cabins with private bathrooms. There's a central dining room for guests to eat in, which is housed in a rustic wooden building with a porch. Cooking inside or outside of the cabins is strictly prohibited.

## THE REDWOODS IN YOSEMITE



With many pet-friendly accommodations, The Redwoods in Yosemite offers you log-cabins and roomy homes to rent. Get away from the crowds of the valley by renting one of these homes within the entrances of Yosemite National Park.

## YOSEMITE'S SCENIC WONDERS



Tucked in a wilderness setting off the junction of Wawona Road and Glacier Point Road in Yosemite National Park are a collection of private homes, condos and cabins available to rent for even the budget-conscious. Cook your own meals but be minutes from Glacier Point, Yosemite Valley and Badger Pass Ski Area.

## CURRY VILLAGE



Choose between staying in one of 46 cabins with private baths, 14 cabins that share a bath house, 403 canvas tent cabins or 18 standard hotel rooms at Curry Village. Conveniently located steps away from the Pizza Deck, a swimming pool and a general store, Curry Village is kind of like camping with convenience and a crowd. You'll be nestled next to a ton of neighbors since the canvas tent cabins are just feet from one another.

# INTO THE WILD

You'll see more than incredible views when you visit Yosemite.

Keep an eye out for these animals on the trails and soaring in the park skies.

Compiled by Jade Lang



## SIERRA NEVADA BIGHORN SHEEP

The park's only endangered species and one of its rarest animals, about 40 bighorn sheep live in and around steep, rocky slopes above 10,000 feet. Look for them near Tioga Pass. Some wear GPS tracking collars. Rams, which are males, sport large, curving horns. Female ewes have shorter, spikier horns.



## BLACK BEAR

The name is perhaps misleading since the 500 black bears that roam Yosemite have blond, brown or black fur. In summer, the bears forage on grasses, berries, ants and insect larvae. In fall, they fill up on acorns, preparing for hibernation. They spend winter in dens, hollow trees or caves. Males can reach up to 250 pounds and females up to 150 pounds.



## LITTLE BROWN BAT

The little brown bat is one of 17 bat species found in Yosemite National Park. Adults range from 6-10 cm long and 5-14 grams in weight. Females are typically larger than males. Although they eat small aquatic insects at all elevations, they are the only bat species in Yosemite to raise its young at 8,000 feet.



## MOUNTAIN LION

These solitary and elusive cats are not frequently spotted. They stalk their favorite prey, mule deer, but prefer to slink through the forest unseen. In addition to deer, they hunt coyotes and raccoons. If you encounter a mountain lion, do not try to run. Instead, stand tall and attempt to scare it away.



## PACIFIC FISHER

Related to minks and otters, this tree-dwelling carnivore has no federal protections but is considered a sensitive species in the Sierra Nevada numbering less than 300 in Yosemite and the Sierra National Forest. Fishers are excellent climbers and prefer mid-elevation, mature forests where they den inside trees. They eat rodents and birds and weigh 4-12 pounds, which is the approximate size of a house cat. They can range in color from light blonde to dark brown.



## SIERRA NEVADA RED FOX

One of two species of fox in the park, you'll be extremely lucky to see this creature as it evaded detection by park biologists for more than 100 years. Extremely rare, this fox is smaller than the common low-elevation red foxes, weighing 4.5-9 pounds. It usually lives at elevations exceeding 7,000 feet, excelling in very cold winter temperatures. It eats small rodents and can range from reddish brown to silver or black in color.

PHOTOS: Bighorn Sheep [Depositphotos], Black bear cub [Lynn Clark, Tamron Photo Contest], Little Brown Bat [Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren/Flickr], Mountain Lion [Depositphotos/Tom Tietz], Pacific Fisher [Courtesy Pacific Southwest Forest Service USDA, Red Fox [Courtesy of Keith Slausen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service]

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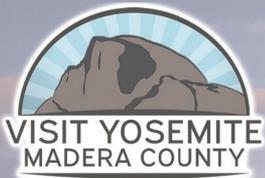
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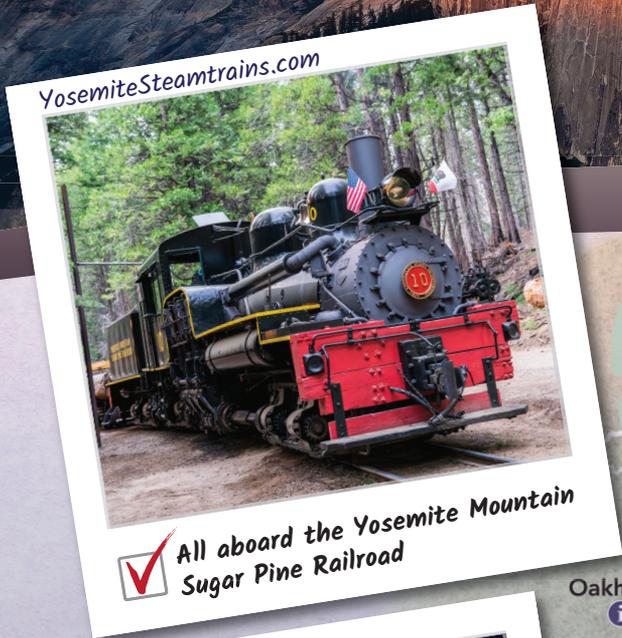


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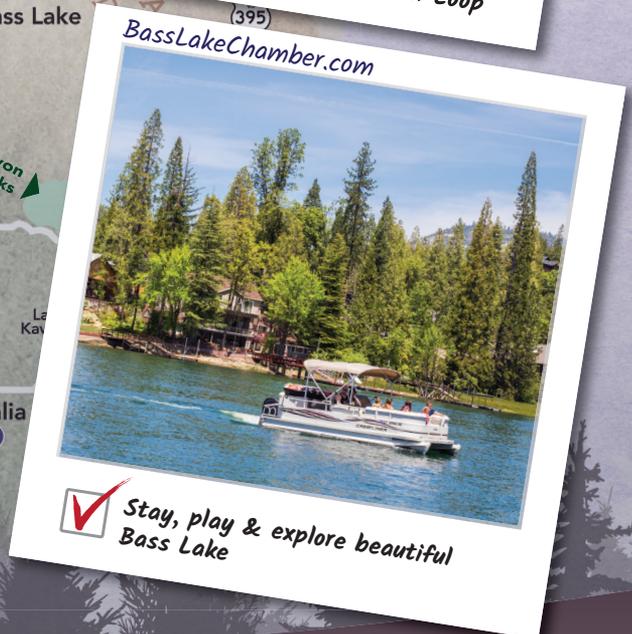
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