

YOSEMITE STORY IDEAS

YEAR-ROUND

Yosemite's Changing Gateway – A transformation has been occurring at Yosemite National Park and it's good news for people seeking quality accommodations at a reasonable price. Old, outdated accommodations at the entrances to the Park have been replaced with amenity-rich riverfront rooms. The Yosemite View Lodge, for example, overlooks the Merced River and features fireplaces, air conditioning, double spa tubs, double showers, private balconies and kitchenettes all for \$165 per night or less, double occupancy.

Guided Fly Fishing – Knowledgeable and experienced members of the Yosemite Guides take Yosemite visitors, from their base at the Yosemite View Lodge in El Portal, to little-fished holes along the Merced River and nearby tributaries on full day or half day guided fly fishing expeditions.

Photo Walks – Free photo walks and classes are provided by professional Yosemite photographers for park visitors throughout the year. These walks leave each day from a different location: Yosemite Lodge, The Ahwahnee or The Ansel Adams Gallery.

In the Footsteps of Ansel Adams – Join a professional Yosemite photographer as you follow in the footsteps of Ansel Adams to his favorite photo locations. Hear stories of the great photographer as you take photographs.

Guided Hikes – People seeking maximum enjoyment during their Yosemite National Park visit are hiring private guides from the Yosemite Guides to take them on private rim hikes, high country trails, sunset walks and full moon walks.

Getting Married in Yosemite – Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall, couples choose Yosemite to say their vows and honeymoon. Whether standing in a gazebo with the rushing Merced River behind you or at the historic Yosemite Chapel with Half Dome as backdrop, a wedding at Yosemite is surrounded by beauty.

Vintage Mariposa – One of California's first wine countries was the Gold Country. Back during gold rush days, wines were made for '49ers. Today, there is another gold rush to the new wines of this region. Three major wineries with 125 acres in cultivation produce Merlots, Cabernets, Chardonnays and Zinfandels.

Yosemite Without A Car – You can always drive to Yosemite, but what if you didn't? How would you get there? How would you get around once there? No cause for

concern. Yosemite is a great place to leave for while you leave your car behind. Amtrak provides transportation to Yosemite daily, as well as do several bus and tour operators. Once at Yosemite, there's a free Valley Shuttle Bus, transportation to the Valley from outlying communities and sightseeing tours throughout the Park. Of course, you may prefer to walk, too, since there are 13 miles of level walking trails in the Valley.

Guided Birdwatching – The power and beauty of Yosemite's birds – from the Black Swift jetting across vertical canyon cliffs, to the wild song of the Canyon Wren – are revealed on private guided bird walks by naturalists of the Yosemite Guides. Group walks or custom walks are available.

Yosemite Transportation – How is Yosemite National Park planning for the future; what transportation programs are underway; and how will this affect visitation in the future?

The Yosemite Plan – A General Management Plan for Yosemite National Park was issued in 1984. Much was accomplished, but more is still to be done. What is the National Park Service planning relative to this plan and the Park's future? Explore the issues that face the national park with park and community officials.

The Yosemite Valley Plan – Actions are being undertaken to return nature's order to Yosemite Valley. Bridges that have changed the natural flow of the Merced River through the valley are being removed and replaced with ones that restore natural processes in the Valley. Parking, lodging and services are being relocated or reduced for the same purpose. These changes are part of a remarkable Yosemite Valley Plan that is opening the Valley floor to visitor exploration and adding to the beauty and serenity of one of the most beloved locations in our national park system.

Yosemite Falls Restoration – The base of Yosemite Falls is one of the most visited and, therefore, impacted locations in Yosemite Valley. A major restoration project is underway to redesign the visitor viewing areas and access to the lower falls, improving views, putting out of sight unsightly views of parking areas and making a visit to the lower falls live up to the experience of seeing the falls, themselves. Join a National Park Service or Yosemite Fund representative to learn what is being done to improve the visitor experience at one of the most popular places in Yosemite Valley.

Edutourism at Yosemite – Learning while on vacation has always been part of the national park experience. Today, edutourism programs are conducted by the national park service, non-profit organizations and commercial operators. They include: The Sierra Club, Yosemite Association, Yosemite Institute, Yosemite Guides and Yosemite

Concession Services, Inc. as well as many other groups. Field trips, ecotourism seminars, guided walks, hikes, backpacktrips, birdwatching expeditions are provided by several of these groups.

The Trail of the Mariposa Battalion – Follow the Mariposa Battalion's footsteps from the Merced River Canyon to Yosemite Valley. Visit the Indian Village of the Ahwahnee and hear the stories of the battalion's entry to the Valley and its consequence on the lives of Yosemite natives.

A Walk With John Muir – Meet actor Lee Stetson who has portrayed John Muir in Yosemite National Park, for years. Hear Muir's words from Stetson and learn of the great naturalist's effort to preserve the wild places and how that idea has spread from Yosemite around the world.

Pioneer Yosemite – Tour the Pioneer Yosemite History Center with a Park historian and learn of pioneer life in Yosemite prior to it becoming a National Park. Summer living history programs, announced in *The Yosemite Guide* and performed by authentically costumed reenactors, introduce visitors to people and events that shaped Yosemite history.

Yosemite's Buffalo Soldiers – Ranger Sheldon Johnson portrays one of the African-American soldiers who patrolled Yosemite National Park during its early years when managed and protected by the U.S. Army Cavalry. Join Ranger Johnson as he steps back in time and character to reenact one of the Buffalo soldiers who protected Yosemite at the turn of the century.

SPRING

Six-month Spring – Beginning in mid to late March, the green hillsides of the Merced River Canyon are painted with golden splashes of California poppies, announcing a Yosemite wildflower season that runs through August in the high country. One of the most popular and beautiful of Yosemite's great wildflower trails is the Hite's Cove Trail at Savage's Trading Post on State Route 140. This 4-mile trail has one of the most diverse collections of wildflowers found in the Sierra.

Yosemite Whitewater – All levels of whitewater adventures exist along the Wild and Scenic Merced River. In Yosemite Valley, lazy class two and three floats drift down the river as the canyon walls spin above. From El Portal at the Park's west entrance, the Merced River drops in Class III and IV rapids with some sections reaching Class V. Many whitewater companies operate on the river from spring through summer.

Capturing the Moonbow – Full moon permitting, join a Yosemite photographer for a nighttime phenomenon, a moonbow seen in the mist of lower Yosemite Fall.

WINTER

Yosemite Chefs Holidays – Each January, The Ahwahnee hotel hosts one of America's most distinguished and longest-running culinary programs, the Yosemite Chefs Holidays. A celebration of the best in American regional cooking, distinguished chefs from throughout the United States demonstrate their techniques and cook for attendees. Each session ends with a gala banquet conceived and directed by a featured chef.

California's Original Ski Area – Since 1934, Badger Pass Ski Area in Yosemite National Park has entertained families. It is the oldest continuously operating ski area in America and was the first in California. Yosemite competed with Lake Placer for the Winter Olympic Games with Lake Placid winning the bid. While there was little snow in New York for those Olympics, Yosemite dug out from a blizzard. Badger Pass sustains traditional family skiing, with an emphasis on nature and winter. From Badger you can ride five modern ski lifts to gentle slopes, and when the snow is deepest, take a 2,000 foot expert run down wild "Rail Creek" before hitching a ride back to Badger Pass. This is skiing as it used to be, touched only by nature.

Yosemite Ice Rink – Virtually in the shadow of Glacier Point, the Curry Village Ice Rink in Yosemite Valley has welcomed families since the 1920s. The views of Half Dome are breathtaking, as is the crisp Yosemite Valley air. Cuddle up around a blazing campfire or swirl on the ice to a waltz. This is ice skating that's close to nature and a natural for Yosemite in winter.

The 50-year-long Ski Lesson – Nic Fiore (Director of the Yosemite Ski School – oldest ski school in America) has been teaching skiing longer and has taught more people than anyone alive. Since 1949, Nic has skied the slopes and back country of Badger Pass and he tells some very humorous stories of the early days of skisport in America. Join Nic on the slopes of Badger Pass as he leads a ski school class, yodeling, singing "Frere Jacques" and spicing his lessons with French-Canadian accented remembrances of Badger's early days.

Yosemite's Wilderness Ski Huts – Looking for solitude... true solitude? Well, if you have the skill and daring to ski a few miles into the wilderness, rustic and romantic ski huts are at the end of the trail. The stone-flanked Glacier Point Hut overlooks spectacular Glacier Point. At Tuolumne Meadows, cross country skiers base their trips

into the High Sierra. While at Ostrander Lake, a stone hut operated by the Sierra Club is the winter retreat of cross country skiers.

Ski to the Edge – Ski to the edge of Yosemite Valley on a one day tour to Dewey Point. Join a member of the Yosemite Cross Country Ski School for a guided trip to the edge.

Snowshoeing Yosemite – One of the fastest growing winter sports is snowshoeing. And, in Yosemite, it's easy to see why. Pick up your snowshoes from Curry Village (when it's snowed in the Valley or at Badger Pass, anytime in winter, and cross snowfields to beautiful locations. Or head to Crane Flat or Wawona for a walk through the Big Trees.

Yosemite With Solitude – What makes winter so special and the favorite season of many Yosemite visitors? Perhaps because in winter, the national park seems almost to be all your own. With foliage off the trees, wildlife (coyotes, deer, bobcats and an occasional bear) are easier to see as they move across the Valley floor. The mountain light is intensified, and the ice and snow of winter create fantasy landscapes for photographers and appreciators of scenic beauty.

Winter on a Budget – There is still a winter resort that provides traditional entertainment at traditional prices. The Yosemite area offers bargain-level pricing and an abundance of things to do with budget-conscious families in mind. At the Yosemite Motels, kitchenettes are available in amenity-rich, updated rooms that don't cost a fortune.

Yosemite Renaissance Art Exhibit – The artist Thomas Ayers was among the first tourists to enter Yosemite in 1855. Later, Thomas Hill, Christian Jorgenson, Ansel Adams and many other distinguished artists have studied Yosemite and painted it. Many of these paintings are kept at the Yosemite Museum in Yosemite Valley. Others are freshly delivered each year for the Yosemite Renaissance Art Exhibit held each February at the Valley Visitor Center. Meet the curator of the museum and learn of the artistic history of Yosemite and how art helped preserve the park.

Winter Wildlife – Many believe wildlife is easier to see in winter. Tour the park with a wildlife photographer and park naturalist and learn wildlife viewing ethics as you search for winter wildlife.

Snowplay – Slip, slide and make snow angels in Yosemite Valley and at Crane Flat. Find Yosemite's snow play areas, ideal for sledding, tobogganing, tubing and making snowmen.

Junior Snow Rangers – OK, so you're not under four feet tall. We'll still let you join the Junior Snow Rangers for a day to see how the National Park Service teaches kids about the winter environment. Hey, you might even learn a thing or two, just don't throw any snowballs at the Ranger.

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