



# Yosemite, Sequoia & Kings Canyon

## NATIONAL PARKS

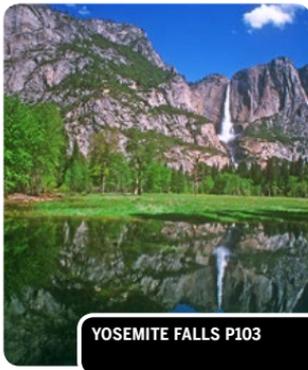


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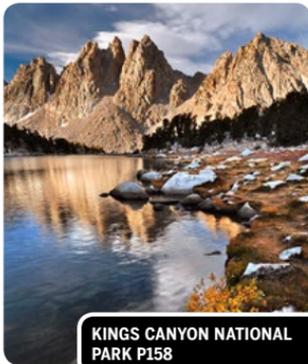
**Beth Kohn, Sara Benson**

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# Itineraries



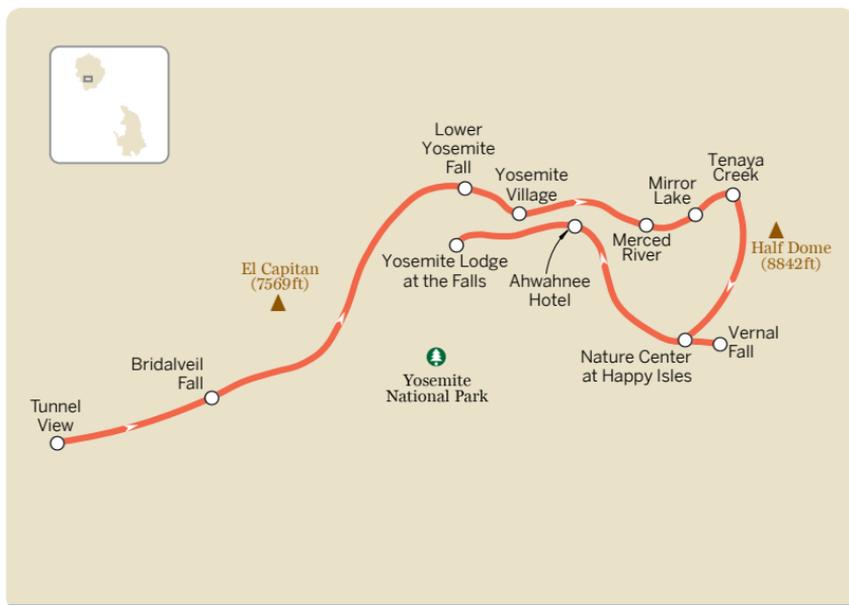
14  
DAYS

## Grand Tour – Sequoia to Alabama Hills

Hikes, hot springs and spectacular geology show off the best of the Eastern Sierra and the national parks.

Kick off the trip with three to four days in the **Sequoia** and **Kings Canyon National Parks**, touring the ancient trees, ethereal caves and show-stopping river canyon. Heading north, camp at **Wawona** and budget a day for the southern reaches of **Yosemite National Park**. Spend *at least* three days exploring the miraculous falls and granite monoliths of **Yosemite Valley**, then hike the trails of Yosemite's high country while camped at **Tuolumne Meadows**.

East of the park, take a full day to explore the surreal countryside around **Saddlebag Lake**, then journey over to **Mono Lake**. Detour north to the ghost-town ruins of **Bodie State Historic Park**, and then south for the mountain vistas buffering the **June Lake Loop**. From **Mammoth Lakes**, hike to the bizarre formation of the **Devils Postpile National Monument** before heading to **hot springs** at sunset. Next, wind up the road to the **Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest** to breathe the thin air and marvel at the gnarled time-capsule trees. On your final day tour the solemn remains of **Manzanar**, and catch a film-worthy sunset at the Alabama Hills in **Lone Pine**.

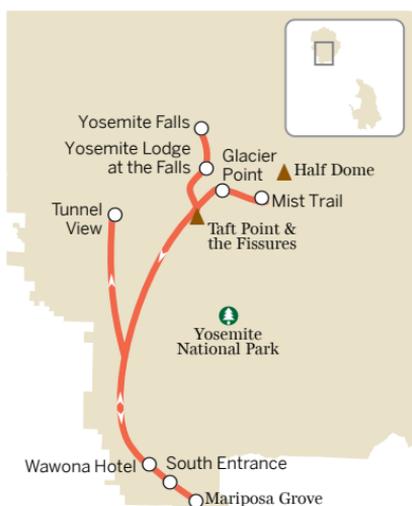
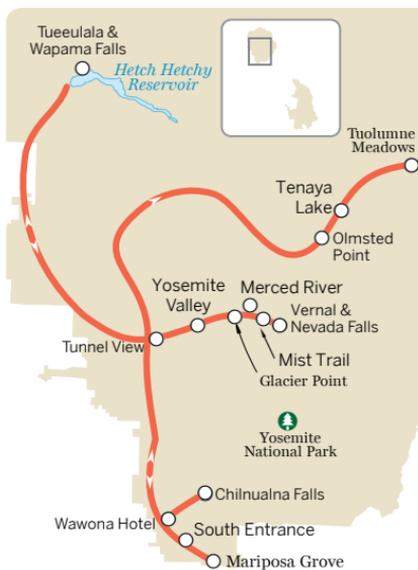


## 1 DAY Yosemite Valley in a Day

If you really, really only have one day to see Yosemite, this whirlwind tour ticks off all the must-sees.

On your way in, stop at **Tunnel View** to drink in views of the entire Valley, with the iconic Half Dome front and center and Bridalveil Fall plunging in the distance. Drive over to see heavenly **Bridalveil Fall** up close; put on some flip-flops or galoshes and pack rain gear if it's spring, because the spray turns the sidewalk into a flowing creek. Aim your camera at its misty rainbows and yell over the thundering water. Afterward, pull over just east along Southside Dr and try to spot the microscopic-sized climbers working their way up the sheer granite of El Capitan. Keep your eyes peeled for wildlife wandering about the meadows, and then park in one of the Valley's day-use parking lots. Rent a bicycle from Yosemite Lodge or Curry Village and ride to the viewing area at the base of **Lower Yosemite Fall**. Follow the bike path to **Yosemite Village**, and hitch up at Degnan's Deli for a lunch of fresh sandwiches and soup.

Saunter over to the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, explore the center's exhibits of park geology and wildlife, and peruse the Yosemite Conservancy Bookstore. Saddle up again and ride east on the dedicated bike path, crossing the **Merced River** and eluding four-wheeled traffic. Continue on to **Mirror Lake** and snap a photo of Half Dome's dignified reflection in its shallow waters, and stroll along **Tenaya Creek** to find quiet nooks to sit along its shore. Pedal south to **Nature Center at Happy Isles** to hear what sounds the park animals make, and consider a longer hike up the short but steep trail to **Vernal Fall**. If you don't have time for the 2.4-mile round-trip, you could stop at the footbridge below the fall. Zip over to the historic **Ahwahnee Hotel** for a well-deserved cocktail or coffee, and then return the bike before indulging in the excellent food and views at the Mountain Room Restaurant at **Yosemite Lodge at the Falls**.

8  
DAYS

## Yosemite Complete

Pack in all of Yosemite's major sights on a greatest hits tour of waterfalls, sequoias and high-country vistas.

Spend your first day strolling the crowd-free **Yosemite Valley** loop trails. Next day, experience mind-altering views hiking the drenched **Mist Trail** to **Vernal and Nevada Falls**. Be a lazy toad the following day, floating the **Merced River** – the best rafting views you'll ever have. Reserve day four to huff and puff the Four Mile Trail to **Glacier Point**, the park's most famous viewpoint, or take a climbing class with the Yosemite Mountaineering School.

Drive out to Hetch Hetchy for a day trip and hike to **Tueeulala and Wapama Falls**. Next morning gobble down breakfast at the historic **Wawona Hotel**, park at the **South Entrance**, and explore the ancient **Mariposa Grove**. Pack a lunch and hike to thundering **Chilnualna Falls**, near Wawona. The following day marvel at **Olmsted Point** from the Tioga Rd viewpoint, and take in the dazzling views from the sandy shores of **Tenaya Lake**. Wind up your trip with a wander around the Sierra Nevada's biggest alpine meadow while camped at **Tuolumne Meadows**.

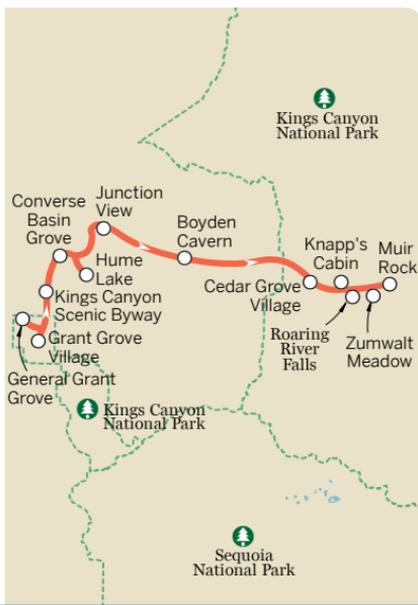
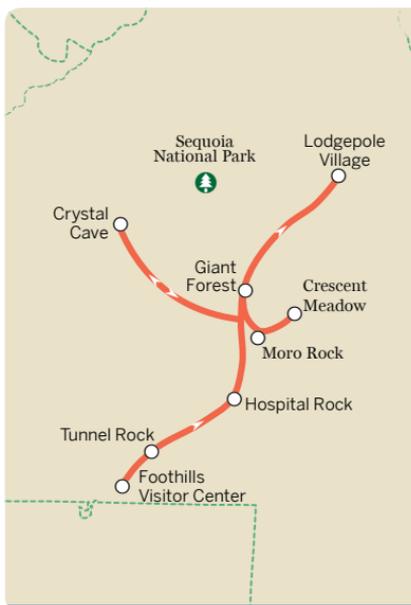
2  
DAYS

## A Weekend in Yosemite

Feast on a multi-course banquet of Valley attractions, scenic overlooks and giant sequoias.

On Saturday, pack a lunch and head out pronto to conquer the long upward climb of either the **Mist Trail** or the **Yosemite Falls** trail, giving yourself oodles of time and lots of scenic breather stops along the way. Quench your thirst post-hike with a celebratory drink at the festive Mountain Room Bar in **Yosemite Lodge at the Falls**, and in the evening, hear the rangers spin tales around the flames at a convivial Campfire Program.

On your final day, pack up and proceed to **Glacier Point**, stopping en route for a leisurely stroll to vertigo-inducing **Taft Point and the Fissures**. Save lunch for when you get to road's end, in full view of Half Dome and Vernal and Nevada Falls. Continue past Wawona to the **South Entrance**, ditching the car for the shuttle to take a gander at the giant sequoias of **Mariposa Grove**. Return to the historic **Wawona Hotel** for a dinner in its classy dining room. On your way home, catch the remains of the day at the magnificent **Tunnel View** lookout, taking in one last Valley eyeful before leaving.



1 DAY

## Sequoia National Park

Big trees, deep caves and high granite domes are all on the agenda for this day-long tour of Sequoia National Park's biggest highlights.

Start your day at the **Foothills Visitor Center** to get oriented and grab late-afternoon tour tickets for Crystal Cave. Head north on the Generals Hwy, stopping at **Tunnel Rock** – visualize squeezing through in a Tin Lizzie – and to see Native American pictographs and grinding holes at **Hospital Rock**, near riverside swimming holes.

Arriving in **Giant Forest**, let yourself be dwarfed by the majestic General Sherman Tree, the world's largest. Learn more about giant sequoias at the kid-friendly Giant Forest Museum. Snap a photo of your car driving through the Tunnel Log, or hop on the park shuttle for a wildflower walk around **Crescent Meadow** and to climb the puff-and-pant stairway up **Moro Rock** for bird's-eye canyon and peak views.

Picnic by the river at **Lodgepole Village**, then visit the chilly underground wonderland of **Crystal Cave**, where you can marvel at delicate marble formations while easing through eerie passageways.

1 DAY

## Kings Canyon National Park

From giant sequoia crowns to the depths of the Kings River canyon, this twisting scenic drive is an eye-popping revelation.

Start in **Grant Grove Village** at the northern end of the Generals Hwy. Take a walk in **General Grant Grove**, encompassing the world's third-largest living tree and the gigantic Fallen Monarch. Drive down the **Kings Canyon Scenic Byway** (Hwy 180). It passes through the Giant Sequoia National Monument, where you can bump over a dirt road to **Converse Basin Grove** and hike to the lonely Boole Tree. Cool down with a dip at **Hume Lake**. Back on the scenic byway, which starts descending precipitously, pull over to survey the canyon depths and distant peaks from lofty **Junction View** and take a tour of **Boyden Cavern**.

Cruise past **Cedar Grove Village**. Feel waves of spray from roadside **Roaring River Falls** and admire striking canyon views in verdant **Zumwalt Meadow**, a bird-watching spot with a boardwalk nature trail. At truthfully named Roads End, cool off at the beach by **Muir Rock** before turning around and driving back to catch a canyon sunset from historic **Knapp's Cabin**.

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- BART station
- Border crossing
- Boston T station
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/Muni station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/SkyTrain station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Beth Kohn

#### Yosemite National Park, Around Yosemite National Park

A lucky long-time resident of San Francisco, Beth lives to play outside or splash in big puddles of water. For this guide, she navigated late season snow on Yosemite's North Rim, tipped her hat to a trailside yearling near North Dome and saw the biggest shooting star of her life while camping in Tuolumne Meadows. When not busy at her laptop, she crosses off sections of the Pacific Crest Trail and explores the never-ending playground of the Eastern Sierra. An author of Lonely Planet's California and Mexico guides, you can see more of her work at [www.bethkohn.com](http://www.bethkohn.com). Beth also wrote the Welcome to Yosemite, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks; Yosemite, Sequoia & Kings Canyon's Top 16; Need to Know; What's New; If You Like; Month by Month; The Parks Today; Transportation and Directory A-Z chapters.

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### Sara Benson

#### Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, Around Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

After graduating from college, Sara jumped on a plane to California with just one suitcase and \$100 in her pocket. She has worked seasonally for the National Park Service as a wilderness trailhead ranger in Kings Canyon National Park. For this book, she hiked across tricky talus slopes nearly 10,000ft in elevation during a rainstorm, and sidestepped black bears and wildfires. The author of more than 65 travel and nonfiction books, Sara is the lead writer for Lonely Planet's California guide. Follow her latest adventures online at [www.indietraveler.blogspot.com](http://www.indietraveler.blogspot.com), [www.indietraveler.net](http://www.indietraveler.net), @indie\_traveler on Twitter and indietraveler on Instagram. Sara also wrote the Yosemite, Sequoia & Kings Canyon's Top 16; Activities; Travel with Children; Travel with Pets; History; Geology; Wildlife; Conservation; Clothing & Equipment; and Health & Safety chapters.

Read more about Sara at:

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