

Hiking in Yosemite - The Grand Traverse



Highlights

Enjoy the great outdoors, hiking in Yosemite and discovering the famous Yosemite Valley – without carrying a heavy backpack! With horse pack support to carry your loads, this 8-day trip offers stunning views and varied landscape, as well as luxurious food and an unforgettable experience.

The Yosemite area, and especially Yosemite National Park, is one of the best-known parts of the Sierra Nevada mountain Range, stretching through California. Scenic views, granite cliffs, waterfalls and streams are all parts of this UNESCO World Heritage landscape, which has gained its peculiar shape by the movements of the continental plates over millions of years. The area has a large diversity of plants and animals in 'designated wilderness' – and what better way to see it all, than to make your way on foot? The summer months are warm and sunny, and rain is rare, making it an ideal time to experience this breathtaking part of the world.

The trip will take you through what is sometimes called the heart of the Yosemite, from south to north of the Yosemite National Park. Along your way, you will see the world-famous Yosemite Valley and its landmark of the Half Dome – a granite dome dominating the landscape of the valley. With horse pack support, your back is freed of weight and your attention can instead turn to the stunning landscape and enjoyment of the hike. Driving back through the front country at the end, you also get to see both El Capitan and Yosemite Falls without having to move a centimetre!

Is it for me?

Hiking is a wonderful and relaxed way to experience the back country of the Yosemite mountains, and if you have always wanted to go, but do not feel like carrying your bags around, this trip is ideal for you. Some experience is necessary, since the area is at high altitude and covers several miles per day. It is, however, not too tiring and is also suitable for families with kids 12 years and above. As all food is provided and way above normal camping standards, this is also one for those who like their comforts even when far from home.

Accommodation

You will spend the first night in the luxurious Piccadilly Inn Hotel, right next to Yosemite International Airport in Fresno. A double room is included in the price, though you can get a single room at an additional cost. The following six nights are spent in tents at camping sites, as you stop overnight along your way in the wilderness.

Part of the luxury of horses, is not only that they carry your bags, but also that they carry your food – and with that, they carry good food. The guides will prepare culinary delights for you every day during the trip, and the dinnertimes will almost certainly be part of your memory.

Itinerary

Day 1: Check-in at Piccadilly Inn anytime after 4pm. Meeting with trip summary at 6pm in the Hotel lobby, after which you have a free night for dinner and preparation for the trip.

Day 2: The van will pick you up at 7am, for a two-and-a-half hours drive to the trailhead. From here, you will hike

Prices from

1,893 GBP (8 days) per person

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to the forested valley of Post Creek, where you will have time to go for a swim and maybe even fish whilst the guides prepare dinner, whilst you swim, relax and watch the stars.

Day 3: From Post Creek, you will hike over the Post Peak Pass, and enter the Yosemite National Park half-way through the day. After approximately 11 miles, you will reach Lake 10K, your next camping site at roughly 10,000 feet, with views to several of the park's tall peaks.

Day 4: Having climbed up yesterday, today you will go steadily downhill, dropping 2,500 feet over 11 miles. You will walk through the Merced Valley's scenic surroundings, ending up at Merced Lake, approximately 7,300 feet above sea level, where you will make your camp for the night.

Day 5: Hiking 7.5 miles of various ups and downs, the trail heads Westwards towards the Half Dome, one of the most famous places in the Yosemite National Park. The day ends with an early dinner below the Half Dome, ready for an early ascent the next day.

Day 6: To reach the top of the Half Dome, you start the day before the sun is up. At 8,836 feet the view is spectacular, offering a unique chance to see the far-reaching mountain ranges and Yosemite valley. After making your way down, you will break camp and head along the well-known John Muir trails for about three miles, before you camp for the night.

Day 7: Making your way through the Sunrise area, your 8.5 miles long hike will take you to Cathedral Lakes, with a breath-taking view of the waters at 9,288 feet.

Day 8: After breakfast in scenic surroundings, you will pack up for the last time and head to the rolling Tuolumne Meadows in the eastern part of the national park. A shuttle will pick you up and drive you through a view of the landscape, stopping for a picnic lunch. The trip ends in Fresno at 5 or 6pm in the evening.

Details

Getting there

Fly to San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles or Fresno International Airport. Hire a car and drive from there.

Price includes

Price quoted is per person for a group of 5-9 people (lower rates available for groups of 10 and more). Price is per person and includes accommodation (one night in lodge, six in tents), all backcountry meals, camping gear, shuttles to-and from pick-up points.

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

This kit list is by no means an exhaustive list. All group cooking gear, stoves, water filters, maps, matches, compasses, emergency/first aid gear, and toilet paper will be provided.

Recommended kit list

Sleeping bag (15/20 degrees F) (can be provided); sleeping mat (can be provided); 3 season tent (can be provided); day rucksack (15-20 litres); trail hiking boots; 2-3 pairs of socks, (wool/synthetic: Smartwool or Thorlo); 2/3 pairs of underwear; long underwear trousers (light/mid-weight wool/synthetic: Icebreaker and Patagonia); long underwear top; hiking trousers/shorts; 1/2 hiking shorts; insulating layer; insulating jacket; heavy fleece; waterproof trousers; warm hat.

Sun protection: sun hat, sunglasses, sun screen, etc; personal toiletries: toothbrush, toothpaste, sunscreen, lip balm, insect repellent (all soap must be biodegradable); personal medication; headlamp (rather than a hand-held torch); water bottle or bladder (2/3 litres); whistle; a medium size bag or large stuff sack to put your clothes in (examples: Columbia Freeboard, Regular; Granite Gear Large); rubbish bag (if your stuff sack if it is not waterproof).

Additional items you might want to bring

Trekking poles (highly recommended to reduce fatigue and add stability: Leki Thermolite); book; knife; camp towel; small towel (MSR Pack Towel); lightweight gloves for early or late season trips; swimming costume; camp shoes (Crocs, Teva/Chaco sandals, flip flops); fishing gear (including licence: kids under 16 fish free); camera: For posterity.