



YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY®

YOSEMITE OUTDOOR ADVENTURES Frequently Asked Questions

How do I register?

Register through our website or by phone at 209-379-2317, ext. 10

- <https://yosemite.org/experience/outdoor-adventures/>

What if I have to cancel?

We understand that you may need to cancel your registration or miss your adventure. Our cancellation policy enables us to issue some refunds within our limited budget as a nonprofit organization.

- **If you cancel 30 or more days in advance**, we will refund your registration. All refunds incur a \$25 cancellation fee.
- **If you cancel fewer than 30 days in advance**, there are no refunds.
- **If you are cancelling within 30 days due to COVID-19 symptoms**, we will issue you a refund. If you become symptomatic for COVID-19 during a trip and need to leave, we will prorate your refund. This is to help protect the health and safety of the group and instructor.
- ***We strongly suggest purchasing trip-cancellation insurance through an online provider or your local travel agent.***

If we cancel your program, we will refund your registration in full. Note that the refund will cover your registration fee. You will still be responsible for the costs of any other travel or lodging you've arranged.

Are there additional forms I need to register for a program?

Every participant is required to complete a liability release form before attending a program. In addition, participants in backpacking trips will require a medical form.

**Use your registration email to access your private portal to fill out all necessary forms.

The email looks like this:

AD408A

For your privacy,

enter PIN to access reservation

Pin: 8199

View/Manage Reservation

****Follow the View/Manage Reservation link to fill out your necessary forms and answer a few questions about yourself. Additional participants must answer these questions and a liability form. **Be sure to forward this email to additional participants if you registered other people.****

What is included in the fees?

- Your fee covers instruction with an expert naturalist-guide
- Park entrance fees (if needed, no discount if you already have a pass)
 - Be sure to print out your entrance fee waiver that will be attached to the information packet you'll receive after you register
 - If you don't have a physical copy, you will have to pay the regular fee of \$35.00 per car.
- Shared campsites - a value of up to \$26 per night
 - No discount if you choose not to use our shared sites
- Wilderness and Half Dome permits (for backpack treks and Half Dome Trips)
- Bear – proof canister on all backpacking trips when needed

Please check specific programs for other items covered by your fees.

Are meals, transportation or equipment included?

Meals are not included in any programs unless specified in the program description. Only our Dine and Discover programs offer food and beverages. For all other programs, participants are responsible for their own gear, food and water. Please be prepared to be self-sufficient out on the trail.

- No transportation is included on any programs. We help to arrange carpools among the participants.
- Bear canister rentals are required and provided. A coupon is included in the information packet, you must pick up your own canister

- Pick up canisters at any Wilderness Center in Yosemite
 - Wilderness Centers are in Yosemite Valley, Thomas Hill Studio in Wawona, The Big Oak Flat Entrance Gate and Tuolumne Meadows.
 - We recommend avoiding the Yosemite Valley Wilderness Center when possible since traffic in Yosemite Valley can be difficult

How does camping that comes with the program work?

Our campsites are shared between participants who have opted to camp. You will be asked during registration if you'd like to use our shared campsites. Each site can fit six people, has one bear locker, one table, one fire pit and two parking spaces.

- Tent camping only
- Our sites are for participants only, no guests/spouses can be permitted
- We ask everyone to leave the parking spaces open until everyone has arrived to unload their gear. It's up to the group who uses those parking spots unless directed by the office staff
- Space in the bear lockers can be tight so be ready to combine food and work together to store your food properly.
- Please let the office staff know right away if your camping request changes
- Check specific programs for which campground the group will be in
- If you'd like your own site, you can make your own reservation at recreation.gov (campsites are difficult to reserve)
- The National Park Service campgrounds have cold running water and flush toilets, and there are no showers or electricity (except in the bathrooms).
 - Showers may be purchased through the concessionaire at Curry Village
- Pets are not allowed on programs or in Yosemite Conservancy reserved campsites.

What if I don't want to camp? Are there lodging options?

There is a lodging block for most programs, these rooms are booked through a Group Code for an additional fee. Check the specific program for lodging info.

- All lodging reservation must be made 30 days before the start of the program
 - These rooms are released 30 days prior to the program.
- Once you register for a program, you'll get an automatic email with the Group Code
- If you register with the intent to use the lodging and our room block is full, we will give a full refund if you tell us right away

What information will I receive once I register?

You will receive an automatic email confirmation with your receipt. Within this email will be the Group Code to book lodging and general information. Approximately two months or earlier you will be emailed a complete information packet, which contains your fee waiver pass, detailed class schedule, reading and material list, and park information.

What do you mean by the Experience Level Rating?

For Day programs, all programs that are not backpack treks:

- *Easy*: Involves walks on fairly flat trails, and moving at a slow-pace. Stopping often to discuss the surroundings. Traveling 1-5 miles throughout the day without much elevation gain. Carpooling when needed to higher elevations.
- *Moderate*: (Generally) hiking 6-9 miles per day with elevation gain of 200-900 feet. Could have some off-trail travel. Check specific programs for additional mileage and elevation change information.
- *Strenuous*: (Generally) difficult hiking with intense physical activity; hikes are over 8 miles per day with elevation gain over 1,000 feet. Usually hiking in Tuolumne to high elevations over 9,000'.

For backpack Treks:

- *Easy*: For people with no or limited backpacking experience. Hikes (usually) limited to less than five miles per day with daily elevation gain of less than 1,000 feet.
- *Moderate*: For people who have prior backpacking experience. Hikes (mostly) between 6-10 miles a day with daily elevation gain of over 1,000 feet.
- *Strenuous*: Participants must have extensive prior backpacking experience. Hikes (generally) over 10 miles a day with daily elevation gain of over 1,000 feet.

Consider the following factors when choosing a program that involves hiking

- Your personal level of fitness.
- The overall elevation of the hiking area: Tuolumne Meadows hikes start at 8,600 feet elevation; Tioga Pass 9,940 feet; Yosemite Valley and Wawona at 4,000 feet.
- Each hike's round-trip mileage per day.
- The overall elevation gain or loss of a hike: If it is over 1,200 feet, the hike will be demanding.
- Winter courses can become more challenging than usual when there is a lot of fresh snow.

I don't see a program that fits my schedule or interest. Can Yosemite Conservancy arrange a private guided hike for my group?

We love doing this! We regularly plan and lead Custom Adventures for corporate groups, tour companies, churches, universities, friends, families or individuals looking for a companion to hike with and learn from.

- Check out our website <https://yosemite.org/experience/custom-adventures/>
- Or call 209-379-2317, x10 if you would like us to arrange a special adventure for your group with one of our topnotch naturalists

Do I need to donate to Yosemite Conservancy to take a program?

No, but members of Yosemite Conservancy do receive a 15% discount on all course fees (along with a range of other benefits).

Please consider joining Yosemite Conservancy. For more information check out our website: <https://yosemite.org/giving/> or email info@yosemite.org

What is the typical class size?

To ensure a quality experience, we limit most classes to 12-15 students. Programs that require a more focused level of instruction may be even smaller in size. We allow groups of 20 when there is more than one instructor leading, for the Autumn Light Photography and the Miwok-Paiute Basketry Workshops.

Where should I stay?

For registered participants, fees cover the cost of camping (a value of up to \$26 per night where applicable) at shared campsites.

Additionally, a limited number of hotel rooms or tent cabins are available for participants at an additional cost through Yosemite Hospitality (the concessionaire that manages the park's lodging, food, and retail operations). Check the specific program for lodging info.

Other accommodation options are also available. A list is included in the information packet sent after you register.

How do I get to Yosemite?

Most participants drive to Yosemite since it is some distance from urban areas.

- Major airports near Yosemite include Fresno, San Francisco, Sacramento, and Reno (in summer)

Please note that not all class meeting sites are accessible by public transportation. Feel free to contact the office to see if your program is accessible by public transportation 209-379-2317 x10

We encourage public transit when at all possible. Here are some options:

- San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC)
 - Take the tracks to the trails for the ultimate relaxation (train) station. It's when you take the train to our Merced train station and then hop on our thruway bus partner, YARTS, for a seamless ride into the beauty of Yosemite. Book your ride into Yosemite National Park via Amtrak San Joaquins and our thruway bus partner, YARTS, to help reduce your carbon footprint and reduce the emissions in the park.
 - Visit amtraksanjoaquins.com to book your ride all in one place
- Or there are several other YARTS options to arrive on any of the gateways to Yosemite. Check yarts.com
- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-to-get-from-san-franc_b_6432894?guccounter=1

What should I expect from the weather?

Expect the unexpected! Weather conditions vary greatly in the Sierra Nevada, so be prepared for all conditions in all seasons.

- Programs are conducted rain or shine
- For road and weather information call the NPS 24-hour updated recording at 209-372-0200 or visit forecast.weather.gov

Here are some general weather overviews:

Yosemite Valley: The weather here can shift suddenly. In May for example, days can be warm and sunny one day, and cold, wet, and stormy the next. Temperatures range in the 70s, June temperatures are in the 80s. July and August are in the 90s and occasionally they reach 100°. In September the temperature returns to the 80s.

Wawona: May temperatures are in the 60s, June and September they are in the low 70s. July and August they are in the high 80s.

Tuolumne Meadows: Temperatures in mid-summer are usually in the 70s in the daytime and in the 30s at night. Though skies are usually clear, thunderstorms can be a daily occurrence in summer afternoons.

Usually developing at higher elevations, thunderstorms form suddenly and can provide intense but brief downpours, lightning, thunder, hail, and gusty winds. Typically, by nightfall skies are clear once again.

How difficult will the hiking be?

- Hiking is an integral part of practically every course, so you must be in good physical condition to attend.
- All programs in Tuolumne Meadows are at high elevations starting at 8,600' going as high as 10,000'. Elevation affects everyone differently, please do practice hikes in similar elevations, be well hydrated and eat plenty of food while exercising.
- Backpacking program require an even higher level of fitness, and if you wish to participate you will be required to complete a medical questionnaire before your space in the class can be confirmed. The health and safety of all our participants is our priority, therefore, for any program if you are unprepared or appear physically unable to complete the required activities, trip leaders reserve the right and responsibility to ask that you do not take part in the program in order to ensure the safety of the group.

All courses have been rated according to the difficulty of the hiking. Daily hiking miles are listed in the description of all classes. If you have questions regarding the demands of any course, please call the office and we will be happy to help you decide whether the course is a good fit. 209-379-2317 x10

Are there bears in Yosemite?

Yes! Black bears have called Yosemite home for centuries. They are an essential part of the total ecosystem and it is very important that we do not interfere with their natural state. To preserve bears and keep visitors safe we need to keep bears wild.

Bears that are encouraged to interact with humans through feeding can cause damage to automobiles and personal property by trying to access human food. To prevent this, please be sure to follow federal requirements for food storage while visiting the park campgrounds or room accommodations.

Never store food in your car. Each visitor plays an important role in keeping human food away from bears!

What's involved in backpacking trips?

The most important first step in your backpacking program is that you are well prepared. If you are backpacking for the first time we highly recommend that you

read a backpacking book and/or find some informational videos online in advance. You should be very comfortable with all aspects of backpacking, from basic first aid to training needed to prepare for a hike.

Participants provide all their own food and equipment, other than a bear-proof canister, which are mandatory and are provided. (You will receive a complete information packet, which contains your fee waiver pass, detailed class schedule, reading and a materials list, and park information after registration.)

Backpacking trips are planned for all levels of skill ranging from introductory programs for beginners who are physically fit (or for those wanting to refresh their skills) to advanced hikers who are in excellent physical condition and have previous multi-day backpacking experience.

Even introductory trips involve hiking at high elevations and are very physically demanding. Each participant must be in excellent physical condition and prepared with proper gear in order to attend.

The health and safety of all our participants is our priority, therefore, for any program if you are unprepared or appear physically unable to complete the required activities, trip leaders reserve the right and responsibility to ask that you do not participate in the program in order to ensure the safety of the group.

Are there alcohol or marijuana restrictions?

We don't encourage drinking alcohol on our programs although there are no restrictions. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted for those under 21 years of age. Responsible, polite behavior is expected of everyone when alcohol is consumed. The Conservancy expects those who drink alcohol to act responsibly, and not drink and drive.

Although marijuana is legal in California as of January 1, 2018, it is still illegal to use or possess in Yosemite National Park due to the park's federal jurisdiction 36CFR 2.35

What are the roads like in the winter?

For road and weather information call the NPS 24-hour updated recording at (209) 372-0200 1,1.

Your vehicle should be prepared for winter conditions. This includes:

- Having a good ice scraper/snow brush and snow shovel in your car
- Making sure your radiator has fresh antifreeze
- Checking your tire chains for fit and making certain your battery is in good condition.
- Most of the time, chains are not required if you have a 4-wheel drive vehicle running M&S rated tires, however park officials do require even 4-wheel drive vehicles to carry tire chains in case the roads get really icy.
- Also, do not forget to fill your gas tank BEFORE you reach the park, as there is no gas available in Yosemite Valley. There is gas in Wawona and Crane Flat.
- You can also check the Hwy's on your way to the park on this website. Since numerous wildfires, the Hwy's surrounding Yosemite may be affected by mud and rock slides: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi>

Do cell phones work in Yosemite?

Reception is unreliable in the park. Verizon and AT&T work more than other carriers. You can get service with these two carriers in Yosemite Valley but on the highways entering Yosemite Valley, there is usually not service.

- We ask phones are on silent during our programs

General Yosemite Information:

It's highly recommended to see the [Yosemite Guide](#) to get the most updated information for restaurants, stores, ATM, and public shower information.

- There is no gas for sale in Yosemite Valley.
- Camping and sleeping in vehicles is permitted only in designated campsites
- You cannot remove any objects from the park, including pinecones, rocks, leaves, obsidian, etc. The feeding of wildlife is prohibited
- Pets are not allowed on trails or on any Yosemite Conservancy courses.

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Yosemite Conservancy	yosemite.org
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See current conditions in Yosemite from our four live webcams

National Park Service	nps.gov/yose/
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Camping reservations	reservations.nps.gov
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Yosemite Hospitality (park lodging)	travelyosemite.com
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Regional information	yosemite.com
Mariposa Visitor Center	yosemiteexperience.com
Yosemite Sierra Visitor Bureau	yosemitethisyear.com
Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau	mlode.com/-sierra/visitor
Yosemite Area Regional Trans. System	yarts.com

LEAVE NO TRACE

We want to Leave No Trace during our time in Yosemite, to contribute to the care of the park and respect others who will want to enjoy it as well. Please stay on trails, pack out all litter (including toilet paper), leave what belongs in Yosemite, don't feed animals, and please be considerate of other visitors.

RISKS

Yosemite is a paradise to many but it does have its dangers, and unfortunate things befall visitors here every year. Among the challenges you might encounter on some of our Yosemite Outdoor Adventure programs are: stream crossings, exertion at elevation, continuous ascents or descents on trails, strong sun, lightning, and the general elements that make Yosemite wild: uneven terrain, steep slopes, rough trails, swift streams, mountain weather, wild animals, etc. It's also a reality that Yosemite's popularity makes traffic and driving a hazard; winter conditions add more challenge. Snowshoeing is harder than walking and if we have fresh, deep snow, it'll be hard work. Some of the issues we worry about most on our courses include: dehydration, knee or ankle problems, getting lost, and getting sunburned. All of these are preventable with prudent attention. Please pay attention to your instructors and alert them to any problems you're having, eat and drink adequately, use sun protection, pace yourself, and don't stray from the group.