

Fall & Winter Activities in Yosemite

Yosemite National Park offers visitors unparalleled access to some of the most beautiful vistas on earth. Breathtaking seasonal landscapes, discounted lodging rates and a wide variety of recreational activities make Yosemite a spectacular fall and winter getaway destination.

Winter visitors should be aware that automobile tire chains may be required from October through March due to weather and road conditions. For 24-hour ski conditions, call 209-372-1000. For road and weather information, call 209-372-0200, or visit www.BadgerPass.com.

Fall Activities

Art Activity Center – Free and informal outdoor art classes are offered by the Art Activity Center from early spring through late autumn in various art media, including watercolor and pen and ink. Sponsored by DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite (DNC), the National Park Service and the Yosemite Association, the Center invites talented professional artists to spend one week as artists in residence in Yosemite.

Interpretive Programs – The number of free and fee-based interpretive programs offered by DNC has doubled since the company created an interpretive services department in 1999. Fall programs include an hour-long natural history Twilight Stroll, Discover Yosemite Family Program, Starry Skies astrological program, Historic Ahwahnee tour and a number of wildlife and ecology-based talks.

Bicycling – See the beauty of the season on two wheels via Yosemite's 12 miles of paved trails, which give riders access to lush meadows, picturesque bridges and the fiery Fall foliage. Bike rentals and helmets are available for riders of all ages and abilities at Curry Village and the Yosemite Lodge.

Trail Rides – The Yosemite Stables offer the opportunity to see Yosemite's beauty in a unique way. No riding experience is required for any of the regularly scheduled, two-hour guided rides originating from the Yosemite Valley, Wawona or Tuolumne Meadows stables. There are also half-day and all-day rides to special scenic vistas.

Two-hour, four-hour, and all-day rides are typically offered at the stables in Yosemite Valley late-April through late-September. No reservations are required for the two-hour rides, as they depart several times a day. Call the Valley Stables at 209-372-8348 for reservations.

Rock Climbing – Yosemite is considered the world's premiere rock climbing destination with a climbing school to match this reputation. The Yosemite Mountaineering School provides expert instruction for beginning, intermediate and advanced rock climbers. No personal equipment is necessary to learn how to "Go Climb a Rock." They have it all! Call 209-372-8344 to make a reservation or for more information.

Guided Sightseeing Tours – The best way to see and learn about Yosemite's spectacular sights is by guided sightseeing tour. Five tours are offered, featuring interpretive park rangers who recount the fascinating history of the Park. The two-hour Valley Tour, conducted on an open-air tram (weather permitting), stops frequently at picturesque locations. Twilight tours, similar to Valley Tours but in the cool hours near sunset, are a popular family activity. The four-hour Glacier Point Tour travels to a breathtaking panoramic view of Yosemite and the Sierras beyond. The one-hour Big Trees tour features a ride through the famous Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. And the Grand Tour combines the Valley, Big Trees and Glacier Point Tours for a full-day outing. For pricing and reservations, call the Tour & Activity Desk at 209-372-1240.

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Photography Walks – Spend time with a professional photographer and learn how to capture memories of your Yosemite vacation on film. The guide can discuss photo tips at all levels of competency. Content often includes lighting, composition, effects and technique. Programs range from approximately 90 minutes to two hours. The walks leave from different areas in Yosemite Valley, Glacier Point and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. A distance of one mile on flat or slightly elevated walking is the norm. Locations and times for this activity are listed in the park newspaper, *Yosemite Today* (located online at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/trip/guide/>).

Winter Activities

Since opening in 1935, Yosemite's Badger Pass Ski Area has been a favorite ski destination for generations of winter adventurers. Fewer crowds, family-friendly activities and a dedicated and skilled staff combine to make your time at Badger Pass fun and fulfilling. Open daily 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. mid-December through late-March (weather permitting), Badger Pass Ski Area is accessible via free shuttle bus from all Yosemite Valley hotel units.

- **Downhill Skiing** – With five lifts, spacious groomed runs and quick access to the slopes, Badger Pass has been the learning ground for generations of skiers. Eighty-five percent of Badger's slopes are beginner and intermediate level, including several runs that are perfect for the first-time skier. Lift tickets and rentals are available at Badger Pass.
 - The **Yosemite Ski School**, recognized as one of the best for 70 years, teaches both beginner's basics and refresher courses with a staff of 25 American and international instructors – all members of the Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA.) A variety of learn-to-ski packages are available daily for both children and adults. For more information, contact Yosemite's Badger Pass Ski & Snowboard School Desk at 209-372-8430.
 - The **Badger Pups Program** for children ages four to six is designed to accommodate the needs of preschool students and introduce them to downhill skiing. The Pups program includes group ski lessons, rental equipment and admission to the Badger Pups Den, where certified babysitters/ski instructors provide a range of activities and games for children to enjoy while their parents are out on the slopes. Parents are required to lunch with their child.
- **Snowboarding** – Badger Pass is a great place to learn the secrets of snowboarding. You'll find enhanced terrain, plenty of room to practice new maneuvers and up-to-date rental equipment and instruction. Beginning, intermediate and advanced instruction is available from qualified instructors who make learning and improvement fun and easy. Snowboarding equipment rental is available in the Badger Pass rental shop. For more information, call 209-372-8430.
- **Snow Tubing** – Snow tubing combines the thrill of a roller coaster with the childhood joy of sledding, making it ideal for snow enthusiasts of all ages. One of Badger Pass' newest offerings, snow tubing was introduced in the 2002 season and has proved to be a fun and affordable activity for people of all ages. Tube rental is available at the Badger Pass cross-country center.
- **Snowshoeing** – With snowshoes and powder snow, you're set for some great hiking in Yosemite's winter wonderland. National Park Service naturalists lead snowshoe walks several days a week from the Badger Pass ranger station. Each walk takes approximately two hours and participants learn about snow physics and plant and wildlife adaptations in winter. There is no rental fee for these walks, but there is a small maintenance fee. For those interested in exploring on their own, snowshoes may be rented from the Yosemite Cross-Country Ski School Center, or from the Yosemite Mountaineering Center at Curry Village when conditions permit.

Cross-country Skiing – Beginning cross-country skiers find the 25 miles (40 km) of machine-set track at Badger a great way to start, and 90 miles of marked trails leave plenty of room for exploration and improvement. Founded in 1970, Yosemite's Cross-Country Ski School is manned by PSIA-certified instructors who teach all ski levels and also lead ski tours into the Yosemite backcountry and overnight excursions to Glacier Point. Skiers may rent striding, skating and Telemark equipment at the school. For more information and equipment-specific rates, call 209-372-8444.

- **Overnight Cross-Country Ski to Glacier Point Ski Hut** – A guided ski trip on intermediate groomed terrain through Yosemite's magnificent snow-country takes you to the rustic accommodations of the beautiful stone-and-log Glacier Point Ski Hut. Overlooking Yosemite Valley, Half Dome and the Yosemite High Country, this newly renovated ski hut is located 10½ miles beyond Badger Pass Ski Area along Glacier Point Road. The Alpine-inspired hut has wood heat, indoor lavatory facilities and sleeps up to 20 skiers dormitory style. Meals are included on both one-night and two-night trips.
- **Nordic Holiday Race** – One of Yosemite's favorite cold weather traditions, the Nordic Holiday Race is the longest-running citizen's cross-country race in California. This 16-kilometer event, held every February, features a morning Nordic ski race, an afternoon Telemark race and a fun-filled awards party in the early evening. Call the Yosemite Cross-Country Ski School at 209-372-8444 for event registration details and fees.
- **Ice Skating** – Curry Village's outdoor skating rink offers guests the pleasure of ice-skating under the shadow of two of Yosemite's most dramatic sites – Half Dome and Glacier Point. First established in 1928 when the Yosemite Winter Club flooded a parking lot, the rink is located in the western part of Curry Village and offers all the amenities of a modern skating surface. A large supply of rental skates is maintained and skaters may take advantage of the warming hut, cubbies for shoe storage and hot drinks and snacks. Helmets are available for use at no charge. For those not skating, a large open area adjacent to the rink offers a warm fire pit where guests can gather, watch the activities, sip hot chocolate and revel in the beauty of Yosemite in winter. Subject to conditions, skating sessions are from 3:30 to 6 p.m., and 7 to 9:30 p.m. early November through March. The rink is open for an additional morning (8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.) and afternoon session (noon to 2:30 p.m.) on weekends. For ice conditions and more information, call 209-372-8341.

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