

STORY IDEAS



FOR 2024 AND BEYOND

FIND YOUR MOMENT

GET TO THE HEART OF CALIFORNIA

Step outside and reconnect with nature in the farmlands and mountains called Madera County. The opportunities for wellness travel experiences are endless. Outfitters are ready to guide travelers in forest bathing, backpacking, mountain biking, fly fishing and rock climbing. Returning to basecamp is a treat when pomegranates, figs, grapes, and lavender are part of the local bounty available to chefs.

Madera County is one of the richest agriculture hubs in the United States. The food scene at Yosemite's southern entrance is elevated above the rest. In this global food basket, it's second nature for restaurateurs to purchase quality local ingredients.

[Château du Sureau](#) showcases the freshest California produce in sophisticated dishes packed with flavor at their [Elderberry House Restaurant](#). Evenings at this fairytale setting can, and often should, be accompanied by the region's best wines. The establishment blends the charm of the Provençal region of France with the beauty of the Sierra Nevada on a property that includes an exclusive villa, ten guest rooms, the Spa du Sureau, yoga instruction, cooking classes, and top-rated culinary perfection. Escape for "me time" with a picnic hamper on a day trip to Yosemite Valley.



Many of those seeking wellness travel are also dedicated to traveling more sustainably. Making choices that have a smaller impact on the planet, while benefiting the local economy. For this adventurer, [Alpenglow Gear Co.](#) has skis, snowshoes, tents, jackets, climbing gear and other equipment available for a second life. Stop by the Visitor's Center to pick up a [Thrifting and Gifting Map](#) to discover more than 20 unique small shops in Bass Lake, Coarsegold and Oakhurst.

Another peaceful offering is the bike paths and walking trails of [Sierra Meadows](#) Glamping Resort. The property, located in Ahwahnee, CA, was a stunning golf course in another life, now the land is rewilding, with the natural biodiversity reclaiming the gorgeous acreage. Check in for a stay at the "Insta-worthy" Micro Cabins, then explore the artistic sculpture installations that have replaced the tees and clubs.



Melt your stress away with a massage treatment from [Mountainside Mobile Massage](#). This relaxing and restorative experience can be enjoyed in the office, or set up in the great outdoors for maximum relaxation. Nearby, make memories with Dad on a guided fishing trip up the river with [Sierra Fly Fisher](#). It's all wellness.

Gather a group for a unique forest bathing experience. [Mindful Café](#) offers guided forest bathing excursions to quiet, tucked-away locations ideal for the practice. Learn how to be more cognizant and notice sounds and scents you might have otherwise missed.

For travelers seeking adrenaline-focused expeditions, [Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides](#) is the answer. With over 30 years of backcountry experience, you are sure to have an unforgettable hiking, backpacking, rock climbing or camping trip.

Life is all about experiences, and Madera County is the ideal destination to find your moment.



ENJOY THE BEST OF MADERA COUNTY

ALONG THE FOSSILS TO FALLS ROAD TRIP.



Take the road trip, collect trading cards, and enter to win a Yosemite Adventure Vacation!

Our Welcoming Committee has been known to act like animals! Meet them along the [Fossils to Falls Road Trip](#). This is your official invitation to take a journey through tranquil farmlands and rolling foothills ending at the tallest waterfall in North America.

Your journey begins at the [Fossil Discovery Center of Madera County](#) located by the Fairmead Landfill in Madera County, the site of one of the largest middle-Pleistocene fossil excavations in North America. See Columbian Mammoths, Short-faced Bears, Giant Sloths, Saber-toothed Cats, and watch them come to life in your imagination.

The [Madera Wine Trail](#), in the heart of California, is one of the oldest wine-grape growing regions in the state. The Award-winning Ficklin Port comes from this comfortable countryside, as does wine from nine incredible small-batch wineries along the trail. Yes, wine country in central California is the laid-back experience you've been craving.

Your journey climbs through the historic foothills of California's Gold Country and onward to the High Sierra.

The [Coarsegold Historic Village](#) is the perfect lunch stop to stretch your legs along the journey. Visit the Coarsegold Museum to see what life was like in this 1800's mining town.

Discover what it means to eat locally in one of the world's food baskets. The freshest possible ingredients make the food scene in the quaint town of Oakhurst a delicious destination. Fresno Flats Historical Village& Park, art galleries, theatres and small-business shopping will fill your days and your heart.





No matter what time of year you decide to visit the region, Bass Lake awaits you. This sapphire blue lake is jaw-droppingly gorgeous in every season. With nesting bald eagles and migrating birds, historic establishments, movie memorabilia, and time-honored-cheeseburger traditions, Bass Lake is the quintessential golden state experience.

Find your happy place at a lakeside beach with a picnic and venture further on a paddleboard, canoe, or speedboat. With multiple resorts, restaurants, campsites, and cabins in the region, lake house heaven awaits. Travel Bonus: miles of world-class mountain bike trails surround this alpine gem.

Bass Lake is not only a great destination in itself, but also a wonderful base case for adventures in the region, and one that's highly recommended is to explore the Sierra Vista Scenic Byway. The byway is a nearly 100-mile journey through the Sierra National Forest with breathtaking panoramas, unique rock formations, and much, much more.

Down the road from Bass Lake is the exact geographic center of California, North Fork! Explore the region's Native American heritage at the [Sierra Mono Museum and Cultural Center](#), one of the only Native-owned-and-operated museums in the state.

Travel back in time when you ride "The Logger" at the [Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad](#). The historic steam trains ride over part of the same route that lumber was carried through the towering trees and the rugged mountainside over 100 years ago. Learn about the region, history, trees, and animals on the hour-long ride. Explore the Thornberry Museum and try gold panning, too.

Next up on the road trip adventure is [Yosemite National Park](#). Home to three major Giant Sequoia groves, and the granddaddy of them all – [Mariposa Grove](#). In the lower Mariposa Grove, explore a peaceful balance between man and Mother Nature. The raised boardwalks and wheelchair accessible trails minimize visitor impact, all the while inspiring your spirit with the grandeur and beauty of these the largest living organisms on the planet. Extend your exploration with a hike into the upper grove and find yourself mostly alone with the bulk of the grove's 500 mighty Giant Sequoias.

Onward to the scene you've dreamed of, Yosemite Valley as seen from Tunnel View. Nothing in the world can compare to the viewpoint at the end of the Wawona Tunnel. It's a place that must be experienced to be understood.

The experience doesn't end there, four hundred feet below Tunnel View lies Yosemite Valley with its towering granite walls holding amazing landmarks including El Capitan, Half Dome and last but in no way least, North America's tallest waterfall, Yosemite Falls!

Join the Fossils to Falls Road Trip to visit new places, collect the trading cards, and enter to win another epic Yosemite Adventure vacation!



GETTING AROUND HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER

THE BEST MODE OF TRANSPORTATION FOR YOUR YOSEMITE EXPEDITION.



Should you find yourself on a road trip, guided tour, or taking a YARTS (Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System) bus to Yosemite this summer, enjoy added transportation options in the area of Oakhurst, California.

The [Oakhurst Trolley](#), or O.T., as we affectionately call it, is an open-air treat and the perfect way to pop around town enjoying the many shops, bars, eateries, and attractions Oakhurst has to offer. Ride for free every weekend in the summer months.

Getting to the park is a breeze on [YARTS](#). Pickup sites along the Highway 41 corridor originate from Oakhurst and take you all the way to Yosemite Valley. Even repeat visitors to Yosemite will be surprised to learn that there's a better way to visit, and it doesn't involve your car.

Consider minimizing your footprint and your frustration by skipping the drive to Yosemite. Put away your car keys and tour with one of our many local expert [tour or adventure guide services](#). Learn about the park, leave the concerns of navigating and parking behind, and have a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, all courtesy of these Yosemite experts.

Yosemite Valley is actually quite flat and bike-able. Pedestrians share the paved trails in many places, so be aware of your surroundings. 360-degree views of Half Dome and Yosemite Falls are unrivaled on a bike unless you consider Yosemite's actual best mode of summer transportation: The raft.

River raft rentals open in the valley when the water level, flow, and temperature make the conditions just right. Then, revelers can make their in-person reservations one day in advance. Get ready for arguably the world's best day of river float access on two miles of the Merced River in Yosemite Valley.



“PEAK HOURS” PLUS RESERVATIONS

GROUNDBREAKING TOURS

FRESH ACCOMMODATIONS

Find the unexpected at Yosemite’s south entrance. Located in the geographical center of California, Madera County is easily accessed from any part of the state. That makes this special region of the world a recreational hub. Name your adventure, and you can likely find it here. Whether wake-surfing at Bass Lake, an Ales and Trails back-country mission, or rock climbing Shuteye Peak, the sky is quite literally the limit. The region is rich in adventure and filled with cultural experiences and educational moments.

Oakhurst is home to the first permanent Virtual Reality theater in the United States at [Yosemite Cinema](#), featuring "[Experience Yosemite](#)," a 15-minute virtual reality adventure narrated by Bryan Cranston that takes the viewer on a journey to experience Yosemite National Park and its history in a way never seen before. Soar over Yosemite Valley, up 3,000ft to the face of El Capitan and marvel at the view from the top of Yosemite Falls. This is a must-see for visitors on their way to Yosemite for the first time and those who are seeking a new way to experience the beauty, majesty, and wonder that is Yosemite National Park.





In 2024, Yosemite National Park will implement two reservation systems designed to protect the flora and fauna of the park and enhance the overall visitor experience.

February brings a phenomenon like no other to this breathtaking valley. The Horsetail Fall event, also known as “Firefall,” only occurs if conditions are perfect, meaning there are no clouds in the sky, enough snowpack to generate the ephemeral Horsetail Fall over El Capitan, and the sun has to set at the correct angle. If everything aligns, and you are able to snag a [Day Use Reservation](#) on the weekends, you will be treated to a few moments of pure magic as Horsetail Fall becomes illuminated by the setting sun.

For those interested in visiting Yosemite National Park this Spring - Fall, be sure to secure your [Peak Hours Plus Reservation](#), or leave the driving to the experts and book a [guided tour](#).

Reservations for Day Use and Peak Hours Plus entry are available at [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

The Glacier Point Road Restoration is complete, meaning access to incredible views from Glacier Point, numerous trailheads, the Bridalveil Creek Campground, and Badger Pass Ski Area is a simple drive away. 10.5 miles of this road, parking lots, and designated viewpoints were repaved in order to protect the fragile habitats surrounding them.

In the town of Wawona, a new sign marking the [Yosemite Chinese Laundry Building](#) hangs to commemorate the history and contributions of the Chinese to Yosemite National Park. In the 1850s Chinese immigrants faced severe hostility in the mining industry of California and found opportunities building roads around Yosemite, including Wawona Road, the Wawona Tunnel, and Tioga Road to Tuolumne Meadows. Today, walking through the Chinese Laundry Building is like stepping back to the 1800s, showcasing historical photos, Chinese-made artwork, and personal trials of what the Chinese might have faced while immigrating to California during the 19th century.

The new Yosemite Valley Welcome Center is open and will improve the visitor experience with new exhibits, resources for visitors to learn about safety and stewardship, and a self-service orientation system for continued education after hours.

Additional infrastructure repairs in Yosemite National Park were completed, including the Bridalveil Fall Rehabilitation Project. Improvements include accessible pathways leading to the base of the waterfall, a viewing platform, improved interpretation and wayfinding and flush toilets in the new parking lot. This 620ft waterfall is a must-see when visiting Yosemite National Park.



New overnight accommodations are coming to Madera County in 2024, including the much-anticipated Inelle Hotel - Tribute Portfolio by Marriott. This upscale boutique hotel will have an onsite bar and restaurant and is perfectly located near the center of Oakhurst and 16 miles from the southern gate of Yosemite.

[The Pines Resort & Conference Center](#) will debut its new Glamping accommodations in 2024 as well, adding even more variety to the Chalets, Suites, and rental houses available on-site. This is the perfect option for those looking to reconnect with nature while enjoying modern luxuries.

Why not sleep under the stars in a Geodome at [Noma Resort](#) after visiting the geographic center of California? The Noma Resort in North Fork is home to luxurious cabins, houses, and geodomes, as well as a 30-acre apple orchard and three adorable Nigerian Dwarf goats. Talk about reconnecting with nature!

Looking to add some adrenaline to your southern Yosemite vacation? Look no further than [Pedal Forward Bikes & Adventures](#) for a thrilling guided mountain biking experience in the Sierra National Forest or a perfect day hiking and biking in Yosemite National Park. No "Peak Hours Plus" Reservation is needed.

Get to know the species that call California home at [The Nature of Wildworks](#) in Coarsegold. The Nature of Wildworks acts as a permanent care facility for unreleasable animals, including a mountain lion, bobcats, gray foxes, raccoons, opossums, barn owls and more. These furry, scaly and feathered friends can be found at select local events, with the goal of educating the public on the incredible creatures we share the environment with. To make your visit to Madera County even more unforgettable, book a private tour or discover what [voluntourism](#) opportunities are available! Try your hand as a zookeeper and shadow one of the staff members, or learn about the animal's diets and assist in mealtime.

For the first time in Madera County, connect with the local community and do your part in keeping this region beautiful at the [Oakhurst Community Facelift](#) in October! The satellite locations this year are the Lewis Creek Trail and Oakhurst River Parkway, two well-loved trails in the community.



DRINK LOCAL – EAT LOCAL

GET THE DISH ON THIS GLOBAL FOOD BASKET.

In this beautiful countryside, farm-to-table isn't just a catchphrase.

Pomegranates, figs, almonds, cheeses, honey, grapes, lavender, and oranges are only a few of the incredible ingredients at the fingertips of our restaurateurs.

Madera County's agriculture industry literally provides delicious food to the entire world.

Wake up your taste buds with the fresh fusion of California cuisine. The "locavore" movement in Madera County excites visitors and locals alike. It's second nature for our restaurateurs and chefs to purchase quality ingredients from local farms and markets. Find everything from a laid-back brewery vibe to bubbly brunch bites. You can delight in delicious vegan recipes, special lakefront evenings, world-renowned European dining perfection, seriously delicious whiskeys, or even a table with a view of Yosemite Falls.

Madera County is one of the richest agriculture hubs in the United States. Taste why the food scene at Yosemite's southern entrance is elevated above the rest.



The [Elderberry House Restaurant](#) showcases the freshest California produce in sophisticated dishes that are packed with flavor. Evenings at this fairytale setting can, and often should, be accompanied by the region's best wines. This insta-worthy establishment blends the charm and beauty of the Provençal region of France with central California's verdant landscape. Experience Chef Chris Flint's artful journey to culinary perfection, reminiscent of a European escape. For a more relaxed yet equally innovative dining experience, look no further than the property's [Cellar Bar](#). Savor inventive cocktails and a light fare menu in this stone-clad and cozy environment.

The best breakfast in town can be found at the cute and cozy [Bee's Bakery Cafe](#) in Oakhurst. Try the famous all-day Crois-sandwiches, hearty breakfast burritos, or one of the daily specials! The vintage sewing machines and kitchenware decor create the perfect atmosphere for a breakfast with friends.



The veteran-owned [North Fork BBQ](#) dishes out mouth-watering tri-tip sandwiches, filling steak salads and some of the best BBQ sauces around.

At the Sierra Sky Ranch, you'll find the Cowboy Tavern, a lively public house serving elevated comfort foods, hand-crafted cocktails, craft beers, and regional wines. This new addition is located in a historic ranch house, originally used as a cattle ranch back in 1875.

[The Gnarly Carrot](#) supplies the residents of North Fork and chefs in the region with fresh, locally-grown produce, cold-pressed juices, smoothies and beautiful locally-grown flowers.

Enjoy curated wines from all over California with your four-legged friend at the dog-friendly [Yosemite Wine Tails](#).





MEET THE MAKERS

IN COWBOY COUNTRY, OUR CRAFTSPERSONS ARE RENEGADES, ARTISTS AND SELF-STARTERS.

The [Madera Wine Trail](#) winds through miles of farmland and rolling hills in central California. It is one of the oldest wine grape-producing areas in the state and perhaps the country.

From old world techniques to state-of-the-art technology, you can experience it all, all in the same day. Madera County winemakers celebrate each others' unique wine and styles and so can you (hear from the winemakers themselves in this [video](#))! This American Viticulture Area is considered by many to be the best-kept secret in California wines.

[Toast of Oakhurst](#) is a unique beverage trail featuring handcrafted beer, wine and spirits all made in Oakhurst, California. From seasonally-rotating brews to award-winning wine, and silky-smooth small-batch spirits - the Toast of Oakhurst is a beverage trail that puts the cheer in "Cheers!"

Visit [South Gate Brewing Company](#), a full-service brewery and gastropub, with farm-fresh food and incredible microbrews. Acclaimed Brewmaster Rick Boucke takes no shortcuts when it comes to creating all the beers in their

seasonal draft lineup, each one with a unique character. Take the 1864 Amber Lager, named for the year that the Yosemite Grant was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln. Brewed with hops sourced from Yosemite's Wawona region, it doesn't get more local than that.





[Idle Hour Winery & Kitchen](#) features wines produced with sustainably grown grapes, native yeasts, gravity flow, and other traditional methods. Winemaker Anna Marie Dos Remedios delights the palate with charming Petit Verdot and violet and plum aromatics of Tempranillo varietals. These incredible vintages will stop you in your tracks.

That's why the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition has repeatedly bestowed honors and medals to their library of fine wines. Chef Bethany serves up a delicious Sunday brunch each weekend, and her seasonal lunches are a special treat. Also you won't want to miss the many live music events held here.

[Oakhurst Spirits Distillery](#) is a gold nugget find in the High Sierra. Sample small-batch brandy, gin, vodka and seriously-smooth whiskeys & bourbons created by owner and distiller Michael Benbrook.

Premium grains purchased from local farmers create the mash used to produce the spirits. Once the process is complete, the discarded mash of grain and rye is then returned back to farmers for food for their animals. This process is lovingly referred to as "farm-to-table and back-to-farm again", by the mastermind behind Oakhurst Spirits.

Stop in for a tasting, and leave with an education of the finer things in life.

The passion of these makers is what makes the quality evident in their products. Experience the excellence for yourself.



BASS LAKE LAND OF BEAUTY

FOUR SEASONS OF RECREATION AWAIT!

With pristine waters and sandy shores Bass Lake, California, is nestled among tall cedars and pines at an elevation of 3,415 feet.

Known for its sparkling blue waters and scenic views, all types of lodging, various restaurants, and fantastic shopping all located moments from the water's edge. It all comes together to create the perfect spring break, summer getaway, fall romantic adventure, or winter escape. A year-round vacation destination, Bass Lake was named one of the "West's Best Lakes" by Sunset Magazine and has been a popular tourist destination since the 1930s.

Bass Lake sits in the perfect location just 17 miles from the southern gate of Yosemite National Park and 7 miles from Oakhurst, the park's largest gateway community. Visiting Bass Lake any time of the year is a treat.





Summer is especially popular due to the 80-degree water and the abundance of aquatic activities. Relax with a book on a sandy beach, have a family picnic at one of the many day-use areas, or enjoy an array of water sports from swimming, paddleboarding and kayaking, to motor-boating.

Autumn brings beautiful changing colors to the trees and cooler temperatures, perfect for hiking the many trails and vistas overlooking the lake. Winter is peaceful and popular for kayaking and canoeing. It is an incredible time of year for bird-watching. Keep a keen eye out for the nesting Bald Eagles that call the lake their home.

In winter, spin, glide and slide on the new Glice Rink at the Pines Resort. The rink opened on December 22, 2022, and has quickly become a favorite winter activity for guests and locals alike.

Spring is a favorite for many with colorful wildflowers and rushing waterfalls. Temperatures are perfect in the spring and early summer for fishing. No matter the time of year, this mountain biking mecca offers world-class trails that challenge even the most experienced riders.

Water ski, ride a wave runner, swim, fish, paddleboard, rent a boat, hike or mountain bike several beautiful trails or just sun yourself on the shore. Stay at one of the three full-service resorts: [The Pines Resort](#), [The Forks Resort](#), [Miller's Landing Resort](#), rent one of the many vacation homes or pitch your tent in one of the lakeside campsites.

Your dining options are numerous around the lake and you really won't want to miss the world-famous hamburgers, buckets of ice cream, and movie memorabilia magic.

With the Sierra National Forest's 1.3 million acres as a backyard, the lake is an excellent jumping-off point for all adventures big and small. Exploring the region's "Hidden Yosemite," the [Sierra Vista Scenic Byway](#) is one of the big and highly recommended ones!

Events form a big part of life at the lake. Starting with the [Bass Lake Fishing Derby](#) in early May through New Year's celebrations at The Pines Resort, the calendar is full of variety and fun, including live music performances, barbecues, seasonal art and craft fairs, comedy shows and sporting events. The annual Bass Lake 4th of July Fireworks (the largest in Madera County) is a highlight of the region and just one example of how we love to celebrate.



THERE IS A LOT TO LOVE ABOUT BASS LAKE.

THESE WATERFALLS WOW

THE BIGGEST, THE BEST, AND THE HIDDEN.



Yosemite is home to countless waterfalls. The best time to see them is the spring, during snowmelt.

Peak runoff typically occurs in May or June, with some (including Yosemite Falls) often only a trickle or completely dry by August. Storms in late fall rejuvenate some, and all of them with any flow accumulate frost along their edges many nights during the winter.

This is not a complete list of Yosemite's marvelous falls. While all but three in the following list are in Yosemite Valley, both Yosemite Valley and many other areas of the park have watery wonders, large and small.

And Yosemite doesn't have the monopoly on waterfalls in the region. Check out our blog ["5 Lesser Known Waterfalls To See In Or Near Yosemite"](#) for more!



Yosemite Falls in Yosemite Valley is the tallest waterfall in the United States. It is located in Yosemite National Park and has a total vertical drop of 2,425 feet.



Chilnualna Falls (Wawona area) (about 2,200 feet) is the closest waterfall to Visit Yosemite Madera County's entrance. Flows: all year, with peak in May.



Sentinel Falls (Yosemite Valley) (about 2,000 feet) Flows: approximately March through June, with peak in May.



Ribbon Fall (opposite Bridalveil Fall in Yosemite Valley) (1,612 feet) is the longest single-drop waterfall in North America. Flows: March through June, with peak in May.



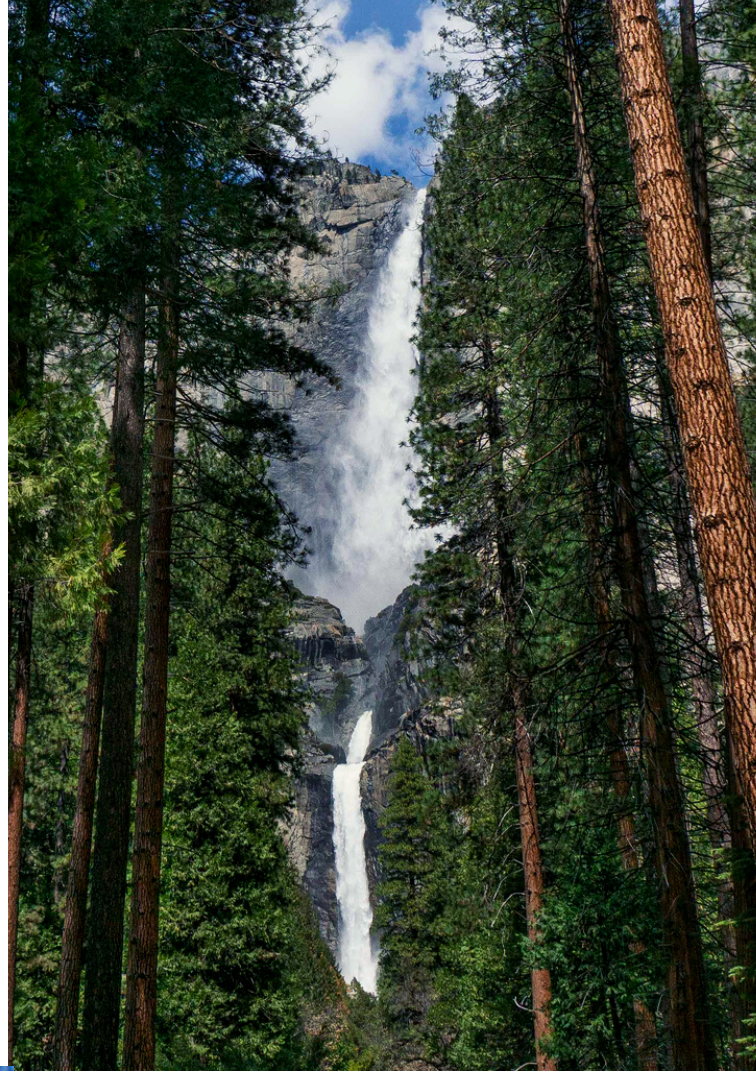
Horsetail Fall (Yosemite Valley) (1,000 feet)
Flows: approximately December through April. Horsetail Fall is widely known for appearing to be on fire when it reflects the orange glow of sunset in mid-to-late February. The known as the "fire fall" its a completely natural phenomenon, unlike the historic man-made "fire fall" from Glacier Point. When the conditions are just right, it is best viewed from the eastern side of El Capitan.



Bridalveil Fall (Yosemite Valley) (620 feet)
Flows: all year, with peak flow in May.



Nevada Fall (Yosemite Valley) (594 feet)
Flows: all year, with peak in late May. Reach the top of this marvelous wonder via the Mist Trail.



Vernal Fall (Yosemite Valley) (317 feet)
Flows: all year, though by mid to late summer water flows decrease; peaks in late May. Catch a rainbow at the base of the waterfall.



Illilouette Fall (Yosemite Valley) (370 feet) Flows: all year, with peak in late May.



Cascade Falls (Yosemite Valley) (600 feet) Flows: all year, with peak in spring. Also Known as "The Cascades," this series of tumbling waterfalls is visible from viewpoints along Wawona Road, Big Oak Flat Road, and El Portal Road.



Wapama Falls (Hetch Hetchy) (1,400 feet) Flows: all year, with peak flow in May. One of the tallest waterfalls in Yosemite. It falls into a massive man-made water reservoir that shortens its drop by nearly 400 feet.

FRESH STORIES ABOUT AN ANCIENT LANDSCAPE

Madera County invites visitors to journey from the Fossil Discovery Center to the Madera Wine Trail and onward into the High Sierra. Along the way, discover incredible dining, talented tradespersons, four seasons of water sports at Bass Lake, the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad and mighty adventures right up to massive Giant Sequoia trees. Its museums, wine country, new attractions, sustainable transportation options, and golden memories at the doorstep of a national treasure. Madera County is the gateway to so much more than Yosemite National Park.

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