



California's Gateway to Yosemite

Minutes from Yosemite National Park's southern entrance, Madera County offers four seasons of outdoor adventure in the Sierra Nevada. Explore the alpine waters of Bass Lake, perfect for boating, fishing, and swimming in the summer, or crisp fall hikes and winter snowplay in the Sierra National Forest. Spring brings wildflower-lined trails and rushing waterfalls, while summer thaws high-country lookouts and scenic byway roads.

Beyond the trails, the communities offer a welcoming mix of flavors and experiences. Savor elevated cuisine packed with ingredients from nearby farms at fine-dining restaurants, sip locally crafted beer, wine, and spirits, and end the day with sweet treats from artisan candy makers or lakeside ice cream. Relax at a spa or wellness center, catch live performances, and browse art galleries with pieces inspired by life in the southern gateway.

Mark your calendar with unique festivals throughout the year, from seasonal celebrations to cultural events that showcase the character and creativity of Yosemite's southern gateway.

There is no shortage of outdoor adventure, family fun, and memories to be made in Yosemite and Madera County.

The Adventure of a Lifetime: Fossils to Falls Roadtrip

From ancient fossils to towering waterfalls, the Fossils to Falls Road Trip is your invitation to explore the very best of Madera County and Yosemite's Southern Gateway. Begin this 10-stop, self-guided journey in California's Central Valley at the Fossil Discovery Center, home to one of North America's largest middle-Pleistocene fossil digs. Along the way, meet our "Welcoming Committee", a wild bunch of characters featured on collectable trading cards available at each stop.

Sip award-winning port and small batch wines along the Madera Wine Trail, stroll the shops and museums of Coarsegold Historic Village, and dive into the farm-to-fork dining and mountain town charm of Oakhurst. Stroll through the many art galleries in town and hear what life was like for a Grizzly Bear from The Talking Bear.

Cool off at Bass Lake, where beach picnics, paddleboards, and world-class mountain biking await. Learn about the Native history of the region at the Sierra Mono Museum & Cultural Center in North Fork and extend your visit to explore the Sierra Vista Scenic Byway.

Enjoy a scenic train ride through the forest at the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad before heading into Yosemite National Park, Mariposa Grove is waiting for you. End your road trip in Yosemite Valley, marveling at iconic rock formations including El Capitan, Half Dome, and of course, Yosemite Falls.

Every stop is packed with fun, discovery, and unforgettable memories. Collect all of the trading cards and enter to win a Yosemite Adventure Vacation!

YosemiteThisYear.com



41 Things to Do Around Highway 41



Travelers heading to Yosemite National Park often focus on seeing the icons in the park, including Half Dome, El Capitan, and Yosemite Falls, but what if the road to get there was part of the adventure?

We've curated "41 Things to Do Around Highway 41", a vibrant collection of experiences that turn the drive into destinations and reveal an entirely new way to explore the Southern Yosemite region. Along this scenic corridor from the Central Valley of California to Yosemite's southern gate, visitors can:

- Sip award-winning wines at family-owned wineries in this up-and-coming wine region.
- Visit the exact geographic center of California, a photo opportunity that literally puts you in the middle of it all.
- Shop, eat, and explore historic Gold Rush towns like Coarsegold and North Fork.
- Snap a selfie with one of the many carved bears in Oakhurst, CA, The Carved Bear Capital of the World™.
- Dig into local history at locations like Fresno Flats Historic Village & Park and The Sierra Mono Museum & Cultural Center.
- Bike world-class trails near Bass Lake or off-road in the Sierra National Forest.
- Get back on the saddle with a horseback ride in the forest or raise a glass at the Snowline Saloon.

Oakhurst, CA - The Carved Bear Capital of the World™

Located at the southern gateway to Yosemite National Park, Oakhurst proudly holds this unique title that celebrates its deep connection to the natural beauty and artistic spirit of the Sierra Nevada Foothills.

Here you'll find carved bears everywhere – from welcoming visitors at local businesses to holding friendly reminders around town, these hand-carved wooden bears are a significant part of Oakhurst's unique mountain-town identity.

The local artists who create these bears use sustainable, locally sourced wood, often from trees lost due to drought or bark beetle infestation, turning loss into legacy.

These local icons also star in seasonal events like ARTober in Oakhurst, a town-wide scavenger hunt to find your very own carved bear.



Getting Around Has Never Been Easier With The Oakhurst Trolley and Bass Lake Shoreline Shuttle



Leave the driving to the locals and forget parking stress with two FREE modes of transportation around Oakhurst and Bass Lake!

Leave your car at the hotel for the evening and hop on the Oakhurst Trolley to access dining, shopping, and entertainment around Oakhurst Fridays - Sundays all summer long.

On the third Thursday of each month, from May to October, sip local wine and stroll through stunning art pieces at the Oakhurst Art & Wine Hop! The Oakhurst Trolley runs a special route for this event, highlighting various galleries and local shops in town.

This summer, Bass Lake launched the FREE Bass Lake Shoreline Shuttle, offering visitors a convenient, car-free way to explore one of the West's Best Lakes according to Sunset Magazine. Running Fridays through Sundays, the shuttle connects all three major resorts, The Pines Resort, The Forks Resort, and Miller's Landing, popular day-use beaches and picnic areas, and full-service marinas where guests can rent boats, kayaks, Sea-Doos, and more.



Spectacular Food & Bev

Yosemite's southern gateway is where small-town charm meets seriously standout cuisine. Here, you'll find everything from fine dining to finger-licking BBQ, and artisan chocolates to local pies.

The Elderberry House is a destination in itself; this fine-dining gem offers seasonal, European-inspired tasting menus led by Culinary Director Chris Flint, Head Chef Ethan de Graaff, and Sommelier Erica Ruiz in an elegant chateau setting. The more casual Cellar Bar offers elevated bar bites and delicious craft cocktails in a rustic, brick-lined atmosphere.

Enjoy house-brewed beer, flavor-packed dishes, and great vibes at Oakhurst's flagship brewery, South Gate Brewing Company. From brick-oven pizzas and juicy burgers to fresh salads with local Kern Family Farm greens, South Gate Brewing Co. is a staple in the community.

Smokehouse 41 was recently named one of the Top 100 BBQ Spots in the U.S! This smokehouse is a must-stop for California-style BBQ, think Tri-Tip, Brisket, and Pulled pork with all of the fixings.

The Hemlock at The Inelle Hotel offers contemporary California cuisine and creative cocktails for breakfast and dinner in a sleek, lodge-inspired setting.

Just next to the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, Aroma Tavern & Buffalo Bar at The Narrow Gauge Inn is where historic charm meets warm hospitality. The restaurant serves up comfort food with a creative, modern twist, in a rustic mountain environment.

Tucked away from CA-41 is Idle Hour Winery & Kitchen, home to Mediterranean-inspired dishes packed with flavor and served family-style. This culinary treat plays with seasonal ingredients, including their own wine, to create an unforgettable experience.

Who doesn't love a sweet treat to end the day? At Reimer's Candies, you'll find over two dozen homemade ice cream flavors, artisan chocolates, fresh fudge, and nostalgic candies to take you back in time.





Be the Toast of Oakhurst

Sipping Local in
Yosemite's Southern Gateway

Experience old-world techniques and state-of-the-art technology in one day along the Toast of Oakhurst, a unique beverage trail featuring handcrafted beer, wine, and spirits, all made in Oakhurst, California.

South Gate Brewing Company serves farm-to-table fare alongside microbrews like the 1864 Amber Lager, brewed with hops from Yosemite's Wawona region. Casey and Lindsay Hawkins opened Oakhurst's flagship brewery in 2013, and celebrate the anniversary each year at their Oktoberfest party.

Idle Hour Winery & Kitchen pairs sustainable winemaking with seasonal menus and live music. This local winery is often honored by the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.

Oakhurst Spirits offers small-batch whiskey, brandy, bourbon, gin, vodka, and rum using a unique "farm-to-table and back-to-farm" process that reuses mash as livestock feed. This distillery is also home to Oakhurst Spirits Gallery, an homage to Mike Benbrook's late wife, Ally, an incredible artist.

Anniversaries in Madera County

Yosemite's southern gateway is bustling with incredible businesses with stories to tell from years of operating and serving visitors to the region.

The Madera Vinters Association, toasting its quarter-century with tastings, winemaker dinners, live music events, and countless celebrations. One of the wineries included in the Madera Vinters Association is Ficklin Vineyards, celebrating 80 years of port wine craftsmanship, special releases, and adobe cellar tours. Ficklin Vineyards earned the California State Fair's Wine Lifetime Achievement Award.



The Château du Sureau, a Relais & Chateaux property nestled in the foothills of Oakhurst, first welcomed guests in 1991, meaning 2026 will mark 35 years of fine dining, luxury accommodations, and exceptional hospitality.



Tucked on the shores of beautiful Bass Lake, The Forks Resort is gearing up to celebrate its 99th summer season in 2026, building anticipation for a centennial celebration in 2027. Generations of families have enjoyed this resort, from the cozy cabins and boat rentals to the on-site restaurant, serving up the famous Forks Burger and Mud Pie Ice Cream Pie.





Festivals, Events, and Community Fun

Welcome to the enchanting world of Madera County, California's Gateway to Yosemite, discover unforgettable experiences far beyond breathtaking landscapes and outdoor adventures. Our calendar is brimming with events that promise something for everyone, from rodeos and parades to fishing derbies and festivals.

Spring kicks off with the annual Oakhurst Woodcarvers Rendezvous, highlighting the intricate craftsmanship of the residents and visitors from as far away as Alaska! Get ready for mutton bustin' at the 73rd Coarsegold Rodeo, and cast a line at the Bass Lake Fishing Derby with over \$59,000 in cash prizes!

Summer heats up with the annual Mid-Sierra Loggers Jamboree, paying homage to Madera's deep-rooted connection with the lumber industry, followed by the Sierra Mono Indian Fair Days and Pow Wow in August.

Fall is festival season, with the Madera District Fair marking the beginning. The Oakhurst Fall Festival is a community favorite with three days of family fun, and the Sierra Art Trails Open Studio Tour brings artists and their work together, often at the artists' home studio.

Lend a hand at the second annual Oakhurst Facelift Clean Up event, hosted by Yosemite Climbing Museum and Visit Yosemite | Madera County, which occurs the first weekend of October. In 2024, the team of 56 volunteers cleaned up 1,800lbs of debris!

Get your celt on at the first annual Yosemite Celtic Festival & Highland Games, November 1 & 2! This one-of-a-kind celebration brings the traditions of Scotland to the Sierra, with bagpipes, Highland games including the ca-"bear" toss, whiskey tastings, Celtic music, vendors, and a healthy dose of kilted revelry.

