

Yosemite Valley Day Hikes

Starts at:

Hike

#7 - Lower Yosemite Fall shuttle bus stop, behind the bathroom

Lower Yosemite Falls - *Easy. 20 minutes* - This short walk up a paved trail to the bottom of Lower Yosemite Fall provides great views of all of Yosemite Falls, plus a close-up view of the lower fall. (Note: this waterfall is often dry from August through October.) Encourage people to check this one out.

#17 - Mirror Lake trailhead shuttle bus stop (just east of the Valley Stables, about half mile from Curry Village)

Mirror Lake/Meadow - *Easy. 1 hour. 2 miles r/t. 100 foot elevation gain* - The walk to Mirror Lake/Meadow is a leisurely walk either along an old, paved road or along a slightly longer dirt trail. The "lake" is really a large pond in spring and a meadow the rest of the year. Despite this, you're still right at the bottom of Half Dome, and you have a great view of it from Mirror Lake/Meadow.

You can also hike all the way around the lake (about 5 miles).

#7 - Lower Yosemite Fall shuttle bus stop, behind the bathroom

Valley Floor Loop - *Easy. times vary. 330 foot elevation gain* - Walking along the valley floor is a great way to see Yosemite Valley in slow motion (compared to driving around it). While this trail remains close to the road for parts of the hike, you will not see very many hikers on the trail.

To take the short version of this hike, be sure to cross the bridge just east of El Capitan Meadow (the large meadow at the base of El Capitan).

#16 - Happy Isles shuttle bus stop (about a half mile south of Curry Village)

Vernal Falls (Mist Trail) - *Strenuous. 1.5 hours to bridge (1.6 miles r/t). 3 hours to the top (3 miles r/t). 1,000 foot elevation gain* - This hike offers the most scenic diversity of the Yosemite Valley day hikes. It's nearly all uphill, but once you get to the Vernal Fall footbridge, you get a view of 317 foot (97 m) high Vernal Fall. The further you go on this trail the better the views become.

If you continue past the footbridge, you can go all the way to the top of this waterfall. The trail becomes so steep that it takes a staircase of 600 granite steps to get to the top. In spring and early summer, expect to get wet. Watch for slippery surfaces.

Glacier Point

Panorama Trail - *6 hours!!! 8.5 miles r/t. 800 foot elevation gain. 4,000 foot elevation drop* - The Panorama Trail is full of panoramic views and includes close-up views of three waterfalls (including lesser known Illilouette Fall). The trail continues down the Mist Trail and ends at Happy Isles (shuttle stop #16).

From late May or early June through October, a fee-based (\$15 in 2005) hiker bus will take you up to Glacier Point. Shuttle takes 1.5 hours and departs from Yosemite Lodge (shuttle stop #8)

Four Mile Trailhead, just west of Swinging Bridge picnic area.

Four Mile Trail (to Glacier Point) - 6 hours. 9.6 miles r/t. 3,200 foot elevation gain - This trail takes you up switchbacks to the Glacier Point, along the rim of Yosemite Valley. The trail offers spectacular views up and down Yosemite Valley (not to mention what you get to see when you get to Glacier Point). There's a store, geology exhibit, and running-water restrooms at Glacier Point, as well as the gravity-defying "overhanging rock."

Coming down the trail, be careful not to lose your footing on the broken asphalt surface.

#7 - Lower Yosemite Fall shuttle bus stop, behind Camp 4

Upper Yosemite Fall - 6 to 8 hours to the top. 7.2 miles r/t. 2,400 ft elevation gain - This switchbacking trail takes you to the top of 2,425 foot (739 meter) high Yosemite Falls. The trail provides great views of Half Dome and eastern Yosemite Valley.

If you do not have the time (or energy) to make it to the top, you can hike about one mile to railed-in Columbia Rock, which itself has great views. If you continue about a half-mile beyond Columbia Rock, along a relatively easy section of the trail, you can get spectacular views of Upper Yosemite Fall.

Do Not Attempt . . .

Half dome - 10 to 12 hours, 17 miles, very difficult. No time!

Remember . . .

- **Stay on Trails.** Shortcuts are dangerous and cause erosion.
- **Carry and drink plenty of water.** 1 liter minimum! A leading cause of injuries on trails is dehydration.
- **Use sunscreen** and protect yourself from the sun. It's going to get hot, especially at higher elevations.
- **Smoking** on Trails is prohibited while in motion. Stop to smoke; crush-out butts and pack out.
- Consider **shuttle bus times** into your day planning. It can take 45 minutes to get from one end of the valley loop to the other when traffic is heavy.
- **Drop-off and Pick-up are at shuttle stop #8 - Yosemite Lodge.** Passengers are not allowed to visit the bus when it's parked. Emphasize the importance of being on time!
- **Horses and mules** have the right of way.
- **Pack out everything** you pack in.
- **Trails are not patrolled.** Travel at your own risk.

