

Gateway To Yosemite



VISUAL TRAVEL TOURS

Maps Show You Where...We Show You Why!

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Tour Summary

The foothills of the central Sierra Nevada region feature well-preserved gold-rush-era towns, and consequently, movie history.

We'll take a trip back in time in Columbia State Historic Park, Sonora, and Railtown 1897 State Historic Park in Jamestown.

We'll drive to the funky town of Groveland on our way to Yosemite National Park, where we'll visit the giant sequoia trees and the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir nestled in the now-flooded "Little Yosemite Valley." Lastly, we'll discovered several "locals only" waterfalls on the road into Yosemite. This is an excellent companion to the Yosemite Valley tour.

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Gateway Into Yosemite





No true history of California can be told without including the story of a certain yellow metal. Gold was discovered in Tuolumne County in 1848, and like many areas in California's Gold Country, it was suddenly teeming with thousands of prospectors. They founded such gold-rush towns as Columbia, Jamestown, and Sonora, which we will visit.



With advances in mining equipment, a second Gold Rush occurred in the 1890s, but by then the riches of the region began to extend beyond “all that glitters.” In this tour we’ll pass through several treasured historic towns and state parks on the way to world-famous Yosemite.



There is no better place to start this tour than in Columbia Historic State Park. Virtually the entire town is a preserved museum, complete with period furnishings, dry-good stores and mining instruments used by the people who inhabited Columbia during the brawling gold-rush era. We'll

even have an opportunity to take a stagecoach ride through town.



Tuolumne, a word that rhymes with “follow me,” is the name of the area in California that extends from the high country of Yosemite down to the foothills of the Central Valley. Most visitors traveling to

Yosemite pass through the heart of
Tuolumne County. Time may march
forward, but the tune of history remains...



...and so does the living history at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park in Jamestown. Visitors may take a ride through the Sierra foothills on a steam locomotive, reminiscent of the golden age of train travel in the 19th century.



In fact, many Hollywood western movies that portrayed railroad scenes were filmed here. We'll take a good look around the Railtown Park in this tour, including the part of the museum that lists all the movies that were shot here.



As we make our way higher into the Sierra Nevada Mountains on our way to Yosemite, we'll notice beautiful and varied scenery. Every 1,000 feet in elevation drastically changes the landscape we'll be passing.



With the area's colorful past, diversity of climates, and interesting activities, it would be in every visitor's interest to stop along the way and enjoy the many sights and attractions.



The last town we'll visit is Groveland, a funky little mining settlement with the distinction of being home to the oldest continuously operated bar in California. You can bet we'll pull up a barstool at the Iron Door Saloon!



Tuolumne County and surroundings, otherwise known as the "Gateway to Yosemite," feature outdoor splendors such as Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and the giant sequoias, the largest trees on the planet. A major section of Tuolumne County is within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park.



We will also visit some of the lesser-known attractions within Yosemite National Park, including the Tuolumne Grove of sequoia trees and the most controversial water reservoir in California. We'll see a sequoia that was hollowed out for cars to drive through, and we'll explore around Hetch Hetchy in the Yosemite chapter.



We'll also take you to some little-known waterfalls just outside the park boundary of Yosemite. This is a local's secret, complete with directions, that you will only find here! We hope you will enjoy this tour of alternative attractions in and around the Yosemite region.

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