

The Smith's Californian Road Trip



7 Days



1 Iconic State



2 Amazing Cities



3 Famous NPs

— 04/06/22-12/06/22 —

The Smith's
Californian Road Trip

Your trip overview



Schedule

- Day 1 - Settling in San Francisco
- Day 2 - Driving to Yosemite NP
- Day 3 - Exploring Yosemite NP
- Day 4 - Sunrise & driving to Fresno
- Day 5 - Day trip to Sequoia & KC NPs
- Day 6 - Driving to Los Angeles
- Day 7 - Enjoying the sights & sun of LA

How to use this guide

Thank you for partnering with National Parks Planner to produce your custom itinerary. We have combined your information from our google form with our experience to create this awesome trip for you!

Throughout the itinerary are hotel, restaurant & activity recommendations, many of which are clickable, to allow you to explore each option in full detail. The map below is also clickable to allow you to quickly jump through the guide!



Your itinerary highlights



Moro rock - Sequoia NP

Climb to one of the parks best views atop a granite dome via narrow, winding stairs, & stare out to the snow capped peaks of the Sierra Nevada



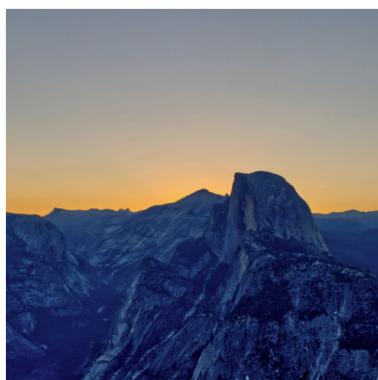
Tunnel view - Yosemite NP

An iconic view that's one of the best ways to first see Yosemite! From here, you get a cracking view of El Capitan, Half-dome & Bridalveil Fall



Santa Monica - Los Angeles

West of downtown LA, one of the cities best beaches has a pier with amusements, restaurants, and a free weekly music festival! Route 66 also ends here - pretty cool!



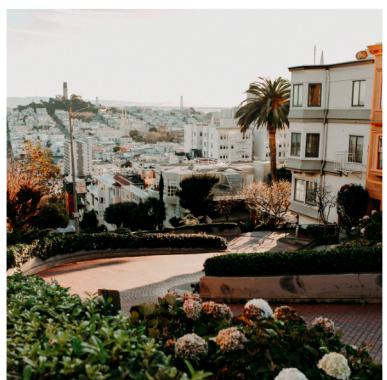
Glacier Point - Yosemite NP

Always a popular recommendation & a personal life highlight, watching the rays of sun cut through the valleys either side of Half Dome really is a must!



In-N-Out Burger - California

Dotted throughout the state, this fast-food chain is built upon the idea of serving fresh produce for nearly 75 years! Intrigued? Why not research their *secret menu*...?



Lombard St - San Francisco

Got some free time to explore the city after arriving? Catch trams, walk around, & stop off at Lombard Street, one of the coolest roads in the US, & a great photo opportunity

Day 1 - San Francisco



Welcome to California! The Golden State is full to the brim with sights, and you've picked a great time of year to visit! Get ready for the warmth and sun as you travel south later in the week! If you're lucky, 'San Fran' will also greet you with some mild weather and a gentle breeze! If not, then you might get the chance to see the cloud and fog roll through the bay - a famous sight!

Itinerary

9am - Grab breakfast at the hotel or head out to Home Plate for a savoury or sweet way to start the day

11am - Head to Pier 33 and begin your pre-booked tour of **Alcatraz Island**, former home to some of America's most dangerous criminals. One of the highlights of San Fran!

3pm - After returning from the prison, explore **Fishermans Wharf**, and if you have the energy, climb up to **Coit Tower** in Pioneer Park for great panoramic views of the city

5pm - Take a tram or taxi for an early dinner at one of our restaurant picks! Stop off at **Lombard Street** on the way if you can and see its 8 hairpin turns!

7pm - Head back over to docks to **Pier 39** this time, and jump onboard the **catamaran** to view **San Francisco Bay** & the **Golden Gate Bridge** as the sun sets - a pretty special way to end just the first day of your trip!



Our Hotel Picks



1906 Mission



Hotel Abri



Galleria Park



Our Restaurant Picks



Za Pizza



Fino



Kokkari Estiatorio



Our Activity Picks



Alcatraz



Sunset Catamaran Cruise



Golden Gate Park

Day 2 - Up to Yosemite



After one of **America's most famous cities**, it's only right to follow it up with one of **America's most famous national parks!** There are so many ways to spend a couple of days here, but **no trip's complete without stopping off at Tunnel View & Glacier Point.** But we've got to get you there first! Take your time driving up - grabbing snacks & food on the way - before venturing out in the afternoon!

Itinerary

10am - Check out of your hotel and head east, stopping off at your choice of coffee shop to collect a drink & pastries for the journey

2pm - Arrive at the gates of **Yosemite NP** and get ready to descend into **Yosemite Valley**, a beautiful winding route following the Merced River

3pm - Check into your accommodation, drop off the bags and get ready to explore!

4pm - Drive up to **Tunnel View** to orientate yourself with the major landmarks of this incredible park and grab plenty of photos while you're there!

5pm - After seeing **Bridalveil Fall** from Tunnel View, get up close with a short 1.2 mile round trip hike. With the winter snow finishing melting, the waterfall will surely be powerful and offer a refreshing mist!

7pm - Grab dinner at your hotel, or if you fancy venturing out, the **Mountain Room Restaurant** offers surprisingly good food considering you are well within a national park!



Our Hotel Picks



Lake Front Cabins



Wawona Hotel



The Ahwahnee



Our Restaurant Picks



Base Camp Eatery



Mountain Room Restaurant



The Ahwahnee Dining Room



Our Landmark Picks



Tunnel View



Bridalveil Fall



Mirror Lake

Day 3 - Yosemite NP



We think it's best for you to choose how you want to adventure in Yosemite! But you did say you were looking for a challenge, so we've picked multiple trails for you to choose from - it's your vacation after all! **We would love to recommend the hike to the top of Yosemite Falls** - tough, demanding, thirst inducing. Yet getting up close to the raging water & looking out above the valley is worth it!

Yosemite NP Fact Sheet

Regularly a top-10 visited park & one of the most famous, it was the 3rd US national park formed!

Yosemite is about the size of Rhode Island! Around 95% of the park is designated wilderness to protect native species!

The park has been carved by glaciers following volcanic eruptions, creating the iconic granite landmarks of El Capitan & Half-Dome.

Over 25 waterfalls exist in the park, including Yosemite Falls, the 3rd tallest waterfall in the mainland US!

More than 400 species of animals & plants can be found in Yosemite, ranging from bears & otters to bats & snakes.



Our Trail Picks

1

Yosemite Falls

One of the **hardest hikes** in **Yosemite Valley**, make sure to bring plenty of water! Start early to beat the crowds of this **7.6 mile out & back hike**. The views of the waterfalls are excellent, making the relentless switchbacks at the beginning & end of the hike worth it!

2

Panorama Trail

8.5 miles best taken downhill, **catch the bus** to **Glacier Point** & witness some of the best known & hidden sights of Yosemite. **Panorama Point** & **Illilouette Falls** are both worth stopping at before joining onto the Mist Trail for the final part of the hike.

3

Mist Trail

A popular & well known hike, start early or late but come prepared either way with flashlights just incase. Beautiful views are found along the whole **7 miles round trip** up to **Nevada Fall**, climbing stone steps past beautiful **Vernal Fall** on the way!

Day 4 - Yosemite & Fresno



Sadly the Yosemite adventure has to come to an end, but not before heading out to **Glacier Point** for **sunrise** if the weather's fine! Then it's an easy drive down to **Fresno**, taking the afternoon to enjoy one of the many wine tours located close to the city! After the tiring few days hiking through Yosemite, a quieter evening will be exactly what's needed before your next national park exploration!

Itinerary

4am - An early start but with more than enough potential to be worth it! If the weather's forecast to be good, head up to **Glacier Point**, aiming to be there around **5am**. Find a good spot and enjoy the sunlight cutting across the Sierra Nevada before it illuminates Half-Dome!

7am - Grab any last photos in front of **El Capitan**, **Mirror Lake** or **Bridalveil Fall**, & then head down towards **Fresno**, the 5th biggest city in California & a great stop off point between Yosemite & Sequoia. Take your time getting down there, today's mostly about recovering!

11am - Take your pick of **Fresno Zoo**, **Fresno Art Museum** or **River Park Shopping Centre**

1pm - Grab burgers at **In-n-Out**, a fast food chain that's renowned in California & prides itself on using yummy fresh regional produce

3pm - Fancy some **wine tasting**? Fresno and the Central Valley is famous for its wineries, with a host of tours and tasting sessions available!

6pm - Check into your hotel & settle in for the evening before more NP exploration tomorrow!



Our Airbnb Picks



Fresno Flat



Central Fresno



North Fresno



Our Restaurant Picks



In-n-Out



House of JuJu



The Annex Kitchen



Our Activity Picks



Glacier Point



Wine Tasting



Fresno Zoo

Day 5 - Sequoia & KC NPs



Towering trees will make you feel tiny while exploring **Sequoia**! The second US national park to be established, some of the trees here are **over 2,500 years old!** Explore the park through a scenic drive & a series of small hikes, including up **Moro Rock** where you can view much of the park! Keep an eye out for **Mt. Whitney, General Sherman** & 315 animal species during your day here!

Sequoia & KC Fact Sheet

General Sherman lives in Sequoia, the largest tree on earth by volume!

Kings Canyon was formerly known as General Grant NP after the 2nd biggest tree on earth, General Grant.

90% of the park is designated wilderness, preserving the landscape in the state it was originally created! The Pacific Crest Trail & John Muir Trail cut through this wilderness but is rarely explored by most visitors.

The tallest point in the contiguous US borders the park - Mt. Whitney, standing at a massive 14,491 ft!

The NP service uses small controlled fires to maintain the life cycle of Sequoias & protect them from larger fires during the dry summers.



Itinerary

7am - Grab breakfast & leave Fresno early, driving a little over an hour to Grant Grove Village.

8:30am - Explore **Grant Grove** & stop off at **Kings Canyon Panoramic Point**, then drive to **General Sherman** before tackling **Moro Rock**!

12-noon - Spend a few hours on **guided horseback** to appreciate the wilderness & beauty of these parks!



Our Trail Pick

Moro Rock

Steps have been carved into this granite dome so that adventurers like you can view the panoramic beauty of Sequoia & Kings Canyon! It's short but sweet, at 0.5 miles out and back!



Our Activity Pick

Horseback riding

Take your pick of stables & routes, with guided tours available for riders of all abilities & experiences. Having already explored plenty of California by foot this point, it might be nice to let someone else do the hard work!

Day 6 - Down to LA



Welcome to LA! An iconic city in an iconic state, the only city bigger in the US is New York. Famous for its **Hollywood stars**, **warm weather** & **laid-back lifestyle**, we think its best to spend the afternoon on the coast. Take your pick of restaurants or bars as you stroll around **Santa Monica**. And for the evening, take in a quintessential staple of American culture: **Major League Baseball!**

Itinerary

9am - Check out of Fresno and head south towards I-5, where you'll breeze into northern LA

2pm - Head over to **Santa Monica**, one of the most famous coastal stretches in the country. Here you can explore the **pier**, **bars**, one of our suggested **restaurants**, or just chill on the warm Californian sand! Driving in LA can be a bit of a nightmare, so drop off your bags and car at the hotel. We recommend taking the **metro**, costing just \$3.50 each for a return ticket!

If you want to be inside, surrounded by arts rather than the beach, then visit the nearby **Getty Center**, with pre-20th Century European artwork the focus.

6pm - The LA Dodgers are hosting! Head over to **Dodger Stadium**, just over 15 miles across town from Santa Monica, for an evening of baseball, snacks & good energy. The sky changing colour as the sun sets around you is just an added bonus!



Our Hotel Picks



The LINE LA



The Prospect Hollywood



Santa Monica Proper Hotel



Our Restaurant Picks



Shaka Shack Burgers



The Curious Palate



FIG



Our Activity Picks



1 Santa Monica Pier



2 Dodger Stadium



3 Getty Centre

Day 7 - Los Angeles



Sadly, it's the last day of your trip. Between **one coastal city & another**, you've seen **three national parks** & a lot of **Californian beauty**! This last day is largely yours - pick from a host of suggested activities and sights, after a delicious breakfast. And for dinner, we think it's best to pick one of our two, reasonably priced, Michelin star recommended restaurants to round off this awesome trip!

Itinerary

9am - Enjoy breakfast at **Salt's Cure** in **West Hollywood**, and try their famous **Griddle cakes**!

10am - Head throughout LA for a day made up of whatever combination of activities you wish! See the stars of film at the **Warner Bros. Studio** or on a **Beverly Hills tour**! After, explore **Hollywood**! Get a glimpse of the famous sign while strolling along **Hollywood Walk of Fame**, home to more than 2,700 five-pointed red & gold stars.

If the glitz and glamour of the movie industry isn't what you're looking for, then see the other sights of LA! **Rodeo Drive** is one of the most fashionable places to shop in America. Then head downtown to **Aquarium of the Pacific**, celebrating the awesome creatures of the world's biggest ocean, just a stone's throw away.

4pm - Start to make your way to **Griffith Observatory** on the side of Mount Hollywood. Here you can learn about outer space, listen to various talks, or have a stroll around the grounds. After a couple of hours, find a good spot to watch what will hopefully be a **cracking final sunset**!

9pm - It's the last dinner of an amazing trip! Lets make it one to remember!



Our Restaurant Picks



Venice Ale House



Maccheroni Republic



Parkway Grill



Our Activity Picks



Warner Bros Studio Tour



Beverly Hills Tour



Aquarium of the Pacific



Our Landmark Picks



Griffith Observatory



Hollywood



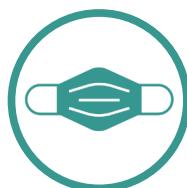
Rodeo Drive

Things to know!



ESTAs

To enter the USA, you'll need to apply for an ESTA for each individual traveller, which allows you to stay in the country for up to 90 days. The form requires passport and address information, so it takes a little bit of time to fill out. The current cost for each ESTA is \$21.



Covid requirements

Currently, you must be vaccinated to enter the USA for those aged 18 or over. Those under 18 must present a negative pre-departure covid test taken within 24 hours of departure. In California, masks are not required but are recommended indoors & on public transport.



Tipping

Tipping culture is BIG in America! Many employees work for below minimum wage and rely on tips for their main pay. Typically 15% is the minimum tip, and usually 20-25% is given for good service. This includes bars, restaurants, & any tours & activities.



Driving

Vehicles are left-hand drive, driving on the right side of the road. Try to stay in the right lane on freeways unless overtaking. You can turn right on red lights unless signposted otherwise, & make sure to come to a full stop at stop signs!



Wildlife

Ensure not to drop food or trash, & NEVER approach animals. Try to avoid hiking as an individual, & make a respectful amount of noise on the trails to avoid surprising any bears. If you do encounter one, make noise, & walk backwards slowly.

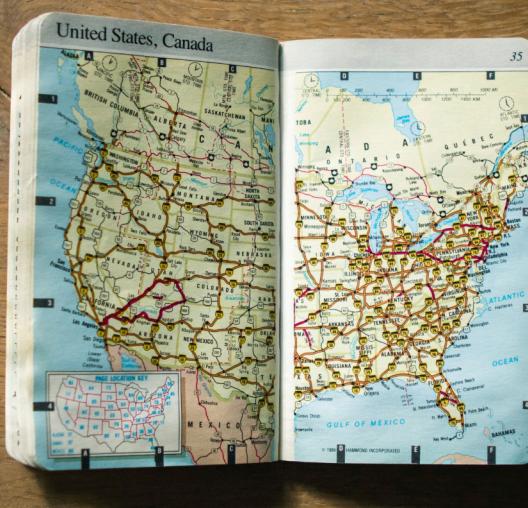


'Leave no trace'

Make sure to take home everything you entered a national park with, including trash. Avoid wildlife, only hike on designated trails, & do not touch or take home plants, rocks or any 'souvenirs' to preserve nature for others & the planet.



Terms & conditions



Itinerary changes

We only want to make an itinerary that you're in love with, which is why we include a review & one large set of changes to the itinerary! However, this is the most major changes we can offer given the amount of time we dedicate to each personalised itinerary.



Trip bookings

Numerous hotels, restaurants & activities are recommended in your itinerary, which we have done our best to research & correlate with your ideal dates! However, it is down to you to make all the bookings for the tour, as we are not financially or logically in a position to do so ourselves. Maybe one day...?



Itinerary accuracy

While we have used our experiences & research to plan your days as accurately as possible, naturally many factors can influence how a day plays out. We think it's best to use the timeline as a rough way to plan your day. Use your judgement to enjoy what matters most for you if one of your awesome days feels like its flying by! Timings of events are also subject to change so we recommend checking beforehand to make sure nothing is missed!



Refunds

We spend hours plotting, researching & writing each personalised itinerary, which combined with the information you've provided for us, means we've put together an itinerary we're sure you'll love! Unfortunately given the amount of time that goes into each itinerary, we're unable to offer refunds.



Problems on your trip

Unfortunately things can go wrong, whether that be events being cancelled, weather impacting national parks, or passports getting lost. Nearly all of this is out of our control, so as much as we'd like to help, better, timely, local support can be found. We think its important to familiarise your group with the following emergency information, just in case:

Emergency information

USA area code: +1

Police/Fire/Ambulance: 911

British Consulate General, LA:
2029 Century Park East, Suite 1350
Los Angeles, CA
90067
+1 310-789-0031

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