Yosemite National Park — 3 Days

Relaxed Yosemite Valley, Tioga Road & Mono Lake Road Trip

BY RANJIT | RANJIT'S NATURE QUEST | ranjitsnq.com



The three-day journey

Day	Route	Night
1	Mariposa → Yosemite Valley → Glacier Point	Yosemite Valley / near park
2	Yosemite Valley → Tioga Road → Lee Vining	Lee Vining
3	Mono Lake → Tioga Road westbound → Big Oak Flat Exit	Groveland / onward

Timing and distance are planning estimates, not guarantees. Check current park road status before traveling.

Start here: how to use this itinerary

The route makes best sense when Tioga Road and Glacier Point Road are open. Allow extra time for traffic, parking, wildlife, stops and slow mountain driving. Start early and keep meals flexible: substantial breakfast, packed picnic/snacks and dinner after exploring.





Day 1 / Mariposa → Yosemite Valley → Glacier Point

Suggested night: Yosemite Valley / near park



Timing and stop order

Time	Stop / activity	Travel
7:30 AM	Leave Mariposa via Highway 140	Drive
8:00–9:10	Briceburg and Merced River Canyon scenic stops	Drive / view
~9:25	Arch Rock Entrance via El Portal	Drive
9:40–10:20	Bridalveil Fall	Easy walk
10:40–11:30	Cook's Meadow and Sentinel Bridge	Walk / view
11:30–12:30	Picnic lunch and relax	Picnic
12:45–1:35	El Capitan Meadow	View
1:45–2:20	Valley View	View
2:35–3:20	Tunnel View	View
3:20–4:15	Drive via Chinquapin toward Glacier Point	Drive
4:15–4:45	Washburn Point	View
4:50–6:20	Glacier Point	View / relax
Evening	Return to accommodation; dinner and rest	Drive

Important note for the day

Focus on the Merced River, iconic Yosemite Valley stops and an unhurried finish at Glacier Point. Check valley traffic and Glacier Point Road access.

Distance / driving time on the original day-plan graphic are approximate; actual driving varies with stops and road conditions.

Day 2 / Yosemite Valley → Tioga Road → Lee Vining

Suggested night: Lee Vining



Timing and stop order

Time	Stop / activity	Travel
7:30 AM	Leave Yosemite Valley via Big Oak Flat Road	Drive
~8:15	Crane Flat	Drive
9:30–10:15	Olmsted Point	View
10:25–11:40	Tenaya Lake	Lake / relax
11:55–1:45	Tuolumne Meadows	Walk / picnic
1:45–2:30	Picnic lunch	Lunch
2:30–3:10	Tuolumne River / meadow time	Walk
3:20–3:45	Tioga Pass	View
3:50–4:20	Tioga Lake	View
~4:25	Ellery Lake — optional	Optional
4:30–5:15	Lee Vining Canyon scenic descent	Drive
~5:15	Lee Vining — dinner and overnight	Stay

Important note for the day

The journey along Tioga Road is the highlight. Spend meaningful time at Tenaya Lake and Tuolumne Meadows. This road is seasonal.

Distance / driving time on the original day-plan graphic are approximate; actual driving varies with stops and road conditions.

Day 3 / Mono Lake → Tioga Road westbound → Big Oak Flat Exit

Suggested night: Groveland / onward



Timing and stop order

Time	Stop / activity	Travel
6:30–8:00 AM	Mono Lake South Tufa	Walk / view
8:00–9:00	Breakfast in Lee Vining	Breakfast
9:10–9:45	Mono Basin Visitor Center — optional	Optional
10:00	Depart Lee Vining on Highway 120 west	Drive
~10:50	Tioga Pass	Drive / view
11:10–11:50	Tuolumne Meadows — optional revisit	Optional
12:10–1:00	Tenaya Lake picnic / second visit	Lake / picnic
~1:10	Olmsted Point — optional repeat	Optional
1:15–2:45	Tioga Road westbound via Crane Flat	Drive
~3:30	Big Oak Flat Entrance; continue west	Exit

Important note for the day

After Mono Lake, do not repeat every stop. Prioritize a possible second visit to Tenaya Lake and enjoy the scenic return west.

Distance / driving time on the original day-plan graphic are approximate; actual driving varies with stops and road conditions.

Essential road, weather and accommodation checks

Verify opening of Tioga Road and Glacier Point Road at the official National Park Service Yosemite website. Recheck wildfires, smoke, snow, chain controls, roadwork, parking and reservation rules. If Tioga Road is closed, do not attempt the illustrated eastbound/westbound route; plan a different Yosemite Valley and foothills itinerary.

Park information: https://www.nps.gov/yose/ | Travel guide: ranjitsnq.com