



Yosemite icon and hiker's challenge, Half Dome rises above the park wilderness. Keen climbers embark in a 14–16-mile (23–26 km) round-trip to ascend the 8,836-foot (2,693-m) monolith and are rewarded with magnificent views across the park.



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Yosemite is so iconic, it's easy to think you've already been before you ever step foot in the park. Located in the heart of the Sierra Nevada, the park boasts picture-book (or, let's say, Mac OS wallpaper) landscapes with vistas so famous they turned the park into one of the most heavily visited in the country. Established in 1890, the park is brimming with landmarks, each more legendary than the last. And countless enthusiasts, ranging from early conservationist John Muir to legendary photographer Ansel Adams, have come to document their beauty over the years, capturing its flower-filled valleys, beautiful grasslands, thundering waterfalls, ancient sequoia groves, and glacially polished granite domes.

Reports of the valley's rare beauty sparked interest as early as 1855 when the first tourists arrived. But humans had lived in the area for nearly 4,000 years. With the arrival of trappers and prospectors (the so-called Forty-Niners), the native Miwok Tribe, which used to spend the hot summer months in the cool Yosemite Valley, was pushed out. Environmentalists raised concerns that the commercial exploitation of the land would degrade the environment and advocated for its protection. The geologist,