

Relaxed 4-Day Family Adventure in Yosemite National Park

RELAXED YOSEMITE: 4 DAYS OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY WONDERS

SUMMARY: This flexible, relaxed itinerary lets your family savor Yosemite's highlights without rushing.

You'll enjoy iconic sights, gentle walks, and downtime to explore at your own pace. Each day provides alternative options based on mood and energy, with convenient dining and kid-friendly activities. Accommodation suggestions are tailored for comfort and access.

DAY 1: ARRIVAL & GATEWAY TO YOSEMITE VALLEY

MORNING (ARRIVAL – 12:00PM):

- Arrive via the *South Entrance (Highway 41)* or *Arch Rock Entrance (Highway 140)* by late morning.
- Check-in/drop bags at your selected accommodation:
 - **Tenaya at Yosemite** (family-friendly resort, indoor pool) – 10 min from South Entrance
 - **Yosemite Valley Lodge** (inside park, great for families, prime location)
 - **Rush Creek Lodge** (west entrance, family suites, lots of kid activities)

Tip: Reserve early, especially for Yosemite Valley Lodge (on-site parking included).

LUNCH (12:00PM – 1:30PM):

- **Degnan's Kitchen** (Yosemite Village, casual sandwiches & salads, \$\$, indoor/outdoor seating, parking nearby)
- Alternative: **Jackalope's Bar & Grill** at Tenaya (if staying there, classic American, \$\$)

AFTERNOON (1:30PM – 5:30PM):

- Take an easy stroll to **Lower Yosemite Fall** (flat, paved 1-mile loop, stroller-friendly, iconic views)
- Optional: **Yosemite Valley Visitor Center** (short walk, interactive kid exhibits, bookstore)
- *Commute/Parking:* Park at Yosemite Village or use the free Valley Shuttle. Expect 5-10 min between stops.

EVENING (6:00PM – 9:00PM):

- Dinner at **Base Camp Eatery** (Yosemite Valley, varied menu, good for families, \$\$, ample parking after 6PM)
- Alternative: **Rush Creek Lodge Tavern** (if staying west, family games & fireside seating)
- Relax at your hotel; early bedtime or stargazing outside your lodge if energy permits.

DAY 2: YOSEMITE VALLEY CLASSICS & PLAYFUL EXPLORATION

MORNING (8:00AM – 12:00PM):

- Breakfast at **The Ahwahnee Dining Room** (historic, stunning views, \$\$-\$\$\$\$, reservation recommended, parking at hotel or short shuttle ride)
- Gentle walk or rent bikes (near Yosemite Village) for a loop to **Sentinel Bridge** and **Cooks Meadow** (flat, scenic, easy for kids, 2-3 miles total)

LUNCH (12:00PM – 1:30PM):

- Picnic in **Cooks Meadow** (grab sandwiches from **Degnan's Deli** or **Village Store** before you go)
- Alternative: **Village Grill Deck** (seasonal outdoor burgers, shaded seating, \$-\$\$)

AFTERNOON (1:30PM – 5:30PM):

- Visit **Yosemite Museum & Indian Village** (short visit, hands-on for kids, shaded)
- Optional: **Ansel Adams Gallery** (inspiring photography, quick browse)
- If energy is high: Shuttle to **Mirror Lake** for an easy walk (2 miles roundtrip, sandy beach area for kids to play, stroller-friendly).

EVENING (6:00PM – 9:00PM):

- Dinner at **Mountain Room Restaurant** (at Yosemite Valley Lodge, views of Yosemite Falls, \$\$-\$\$\$\$, reservations advised)
- Alternative: **Tenaya Lodge's Timberloft Pizzeria** (wood-fired pizzas, casual, \$-\$\$, kid-friendly)
- Evening stroll or marshmallow roasting at lodge (most Yosemite accommodations have fire pits or fireplaces).

DAY 3: GLACIER POINT ADVENTURE & LEISURE

MORNING (8:00AM – 12:00PM):

- Breakfast at your hotel's café or at **Sierra Restaurant** (at Tenaya, buffet, \$\$)
- Scenic drive to **Glacier Point** (approx. 60-75 min from Yosemite Valley; check road status early season; ample parking at Point)
- At Glacier Point: Stroll the paved overlooks for breathtaking views of Half Dome and waterfalls. Family photo-op!

LUNCH (12:00PM – 1:30PM):

- Picnic at Glacier Point (bring snacks from hotel or **Village Store** – limited food at Glacier Point)
- If returning to Valley: Lunch at **Yosemite Valley Lodge Food Court** (quick service, kid options, \$-\$\$)

AFTERNOON (1:30PM – 5:30PM):

- Optional: Stop at **Tunnel View** on way back (10 min photo stop, iconic valley panorama, parking available)
- Return to hotel for pool time or kids' activities (Tenaya and Rush Creek offer kid zones and organized crafts)
- Alternative: Guided nature walk (check daily schedule at Visitor Center or hotel desk)

EVENING (6:00PM – 9:00PM):

- Dinner at **Rush Creek Lodge Restaurant** (farm-to-table, games for kids, \$\$-\$\$\$\$)
- Alternative: **Jackalope's Bar & Grill** at Tenaya for casual comfort food
- Evening: Board games or movie night in your room; stargazing outside is magical!

DAY 4: MARIPOSA GROVE WONDERS & DEPARTURE

MORNING (8:00AM – 12:00PM):

- Early breakfast at hotel or **Parkside Deli** (Wawona, grab-and-go, \$)
- Head to **Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias** (30-45 min drive from Valley or 10 min from Tenaya; large parking lot at *Mariposa Grove Welcome Plaza*)
- Take the free park shuttle or walk the flat trail to the grove (0.5 miles from Welcome Plaza)
- Stroll the **Big Trees Loop Trail** (0.3 mile, accessible, giant trees, interpretive signs for kids)
- Optional: Extend to **Grizzly Giant Loop Trail** (2 miles, easy/moderate, see the famous Grizzly Giant and Tunnel Tree)

LUNCH (12:00PM – 1:30PM):

- Picnic at Mariposa Grove (tables near parking area, restrooms available)
- Alternative: **Wawona Hotel Dining Room** (historic, classic American, \$\$, reservations recommended, 10 min from Grove)

AFTERNOON (1:30PM – 4:00PM):

- Return to hotel to freshen up and pack (allow for 30-60 min based on departure location)
- Optional: Short visit to **Pioneer Yosemite History Center** in Wawona (historic wagons, covered bridge, fun for kids, open-air, 10 min from Mariposa Grove)

EVENING (DEPARTURE):

- Depart Yosemite at your leisure. If staying one more evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at your lodge or try **South Gate Brewing Company** (Oakhurst, local brews, casual, \$\$, kid menu, 20 min from South Entrance).

WHAT MAKES THIS ITINERARY SPECIAL

- Gentle pace with lots of options, so every family member can enjoy without rushing.
- Flexible activities: alternate between iconic sights, playful stops, and downtime.
- Family-friendly dining and hotel suggestions for comfort and convenience.
- Smart parking tips and use of Yosemite's free shuttles to minimize stress.

- Focus on accessible, stroller-friendly walks and hands-on experiences for kids.

Tip: Reserve hotels and any special dining as soon as possible, especially for in-park lodging and the Ahwahnee Dining Room. Pack layers for changing weather and a small cooler for picnic flexibility!