

OUTSIDE

The world beyond your front door

LIVING LARGE AMONG GIANTS

TENAYA LODGE PROVIDES A RELAXING BASE CAMP
FOR EXPLORING ICONIC YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

STORY **DARLA WORDEN**

Yosemite Falls (2,425 ft) is one of the world's tallest waterfalls, and is actually comprised of three separate falls: Upper Yosemite Fall the middle cascades, and Lower Yosemite Fall. Depending on snow-pack, it generally flows through July.

If there's a place that can make a person feel Lilliputian, it's Yosemite. This land of giants—

the 2,425-foot-high Yosemite Falls is one of the world's tallest waterfalls, El Capitan is the largest granite monolith in the U.S., and the three groves of giant sequoias are the world's biggest trees—annually attracts over five million visitors who crane their necks to look up at its mammoth natural wonders. And like so many national parks, summer can be particularly crowded as visitors from around the world flock to take in the sights. But by planning ahead, they can avoid crowds and maximize their exploring time.

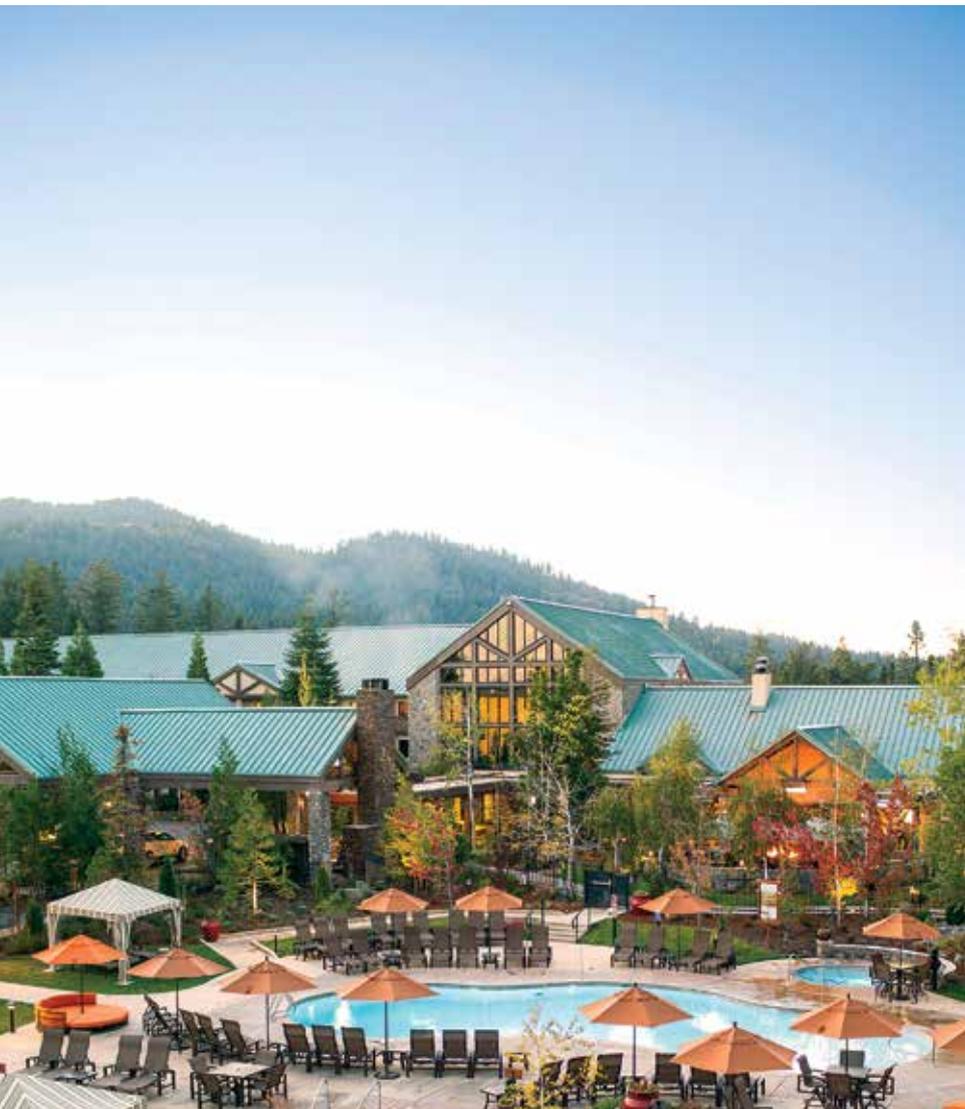
Sylvia Harmon grew up in nearby Whittier, California, and has visited the park more than 15 times. One of her insider tips is to visit in spring, when waterfalls bloated from snowmelt thunder to the ground, or autumn—also less crowded and a gorgeous time of year (though rivers

and waterfalls may be low by then). But if you are visiting in summer, she recommends “arriving at the gate early—very early, like 6 a.m.—to miss the crowds.”

Guided tours are another way for guests to spend more time enjoying the view and less time behind the wheel. Myriad companies provide tours ranging from four-hour to multi-day outings. These companies know the lay of the land and can offer educational commentary along the way.

Or guests may consider staying near the park: Close to Yosemite's south entrance, Tenaya Lodge is the ideal base camp for park exploration. Built in 1990, Tenaya sits at >>

BELOW, LEFT: An oasis on the perimeter of Yosemite National Park, Tenaya Lodge amenities include three outdoor swimming pools. BELOW, RIGHT: One of the lodge's signature activities is a stargazer flashlight hike where, far from city lights at an elevation of over 5,000 feet, there's a clear view of the Milky Way.



PHOTOS COURTESY TENAYA LODGE



5,288 feet above the valley floor on 48 acres bordering the Sierra Nevada for a stunning view. With 240 guest rooms and suites in the main lodge, 57 cottages and, new in July 2019, 50 two-bedroom cabins, the lodge can accommodate groups from large to small.

It also offers one-stop shopping for activities with a fully staffed activities department providing an extensive menu of on-property activities including stargazing and geocaching—as well as Yosemite outings with horseback rides, jeep tours and guided nature hikes. The resort's very own luxurious convertible Mercedes-Benz Sprinter is available to whisk guests into the park, stopping at the historic village and delivering them to the Mariposa

Grove shuttle. For guests lucky enough to visit during August, the resort offers “Wine in the Woods”—a magical night of dining amid the sugar pines and incense cedars, with a farm-to-table menu and wine by local winemaker Idle Hour. The event sells out every year, so guests will want to buy tickets in advance.

According to Harmon, it may take many visits before a tourist has fully explored Yosemite's nearly 750,000 acres. But one thing is for sure: The undisputed best way to see the magnificent park is with the top down. >>

ABOVE, LEFT: “Wine in the Woods” is a popular event each August featuring farm-to-table fare and wine from local winemaker Idle Hour. ABOVE, RIGHT: New in 2019, 50 two-bedroom Explorer Cabins provide guests with a glamping experience.

PHOTOS COURTESY TENAYA LODGE



THE SCOOP

GETTING THERE

An hour-and-15-minute drive from Fresno airport. Plan your visit, check park hours: nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/hours

GUIDED TOURS

Discover Yosemite, discoveryosemite.com
My Yosemite Park, myyosemitepark.com
Extranomical, extranomical.com
Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite, tenyalodge.com

ACCOMMODATIONS

Yosemite National Park, travelyosemite.com
Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite, tenyalodge.com

A SELECTION OF TENAYA LODGE ACTIVITIES

Archery
Climbing wall
Fly-fishing
Jeep tours
Horseback riding
Mountain biking—bike rentals available
Rock-climbing excursions
Whitewater rafting
Yosemite Valley tours—including the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias in Tenaya's luxury Mercedes-Benz Sprinter convertible bus

Guided hikes, including the Waterfall Nature Hike: 5.5 miles of stunning hiking trails in the Sierra National Forest to a gorgeous waterfall.

SPA

For the weary adventurer after a day exploring the park, the LEED Silver-certified 10,000-square-foot Ascent spa using indigenous plants in its luxurious treatments.

DINING

Options include five restaurants ranging from the Embers, with Sierra alpine cuisine prepared by an award-winning culinary team, and the Sierra Restaurant—offering a locally grown, sustainable organic menu—to three casual dining establishments on the property. ○

For more information on the new Explorer Cabins visit mountainliving.com/explorer

TENAYA LODGE AT YOSEMITE
tenyalodge.com

TOP: A guided jeep tour gives guests an open-air experience while touring Yosemite's sights. BOTTOM: Cottages at Tenaya Lodge are nestled in the forest offering rustic charm among the evergreens with easy access to the main lodge.