

Yosemite Falls

Top of Yosemite Falls

Distance: 7.2 miles.

Type of trip: Out and back.

Elevation: +3172 ft., -520ft. (out).

Difficulty: Strenuous

Time: 6-8 hours round trip

Begin at: This trail starts near Camp 4 (near shuttle stop #7 and El Capitan Shuttle stop #E2), along the Valley Loop Trail.

Seasonality: The Yosemite Falls Trail is open year-round; conditions vary depending on the season. In spring, when the waterfall is at its peak, this hike is stunning, and you may even get wet from the spray of the waterfall during a section of the hike. In summer, conditions are hot and dry, and the loose decomposed granite along the trail can be slippery. Keep in mind that by August, the water levels are low and you may only see a trickle here. During winter, the lower portion of this trail gets direct sunlight, so hiking can be snow-free while other trails are icy. The upper portion of this trail, which receives little to no sunlight in winter, can be very icy and slippery, or buried beneath feet of snow, making traction difficult.

Trail notes: The trail immediately begins its climb, through oak woodland. You will begin to climb above some trees and into exposed plateaus that offer you a glimpse of what's to come: great views of Yosemite Valley and its many iconic landforms. Do not stray off of the maintained path, as you will find steep drops adjacent to the trail.

If you make the one-mile, 1,000 foot climb (via dozens of switchbacks) to Columbia Rock, you will be rewarded with spectacular views of Yosemite Valley, Half Dome, and Sentinel Rock. From there, it is worth the time and energy to hike another 0.5 miles to get a stunning view of Upper Yosemite Fall.

The upper half of the trail is steep and rocky, but the arduous climb is well worth the amazing views you will be rewarded with at the top. Here you may be surprised by the small size of Yosemite Creek, which feeds this massive waterfall. Use extreme caution when near the creek and remember you are directly above a waterfall.

<https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/yosemitefallstrail.htm>

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