


MEDIA KIT

 Tuolumne Grove of Giant
Sequoias, Yosemite National Park

Only In Tuolumne County

A single destination with three incredible vacations. Experience iconic **Yosemite** adventures, make golden discoveries in California's **Gold Country** or explore the potential of an exciting **High Sierra** trip. Just 2 ½ hours east from the San Francisco Bay Area and 2 hours from the Sacramento area, Tuolumne County is close, affordable and uniquely amazing at creating unforgettable memories.

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Fun Facts

The **Iron Door Saloon** in Groveland is California's oldest continuously operating saloon.

Columbia State Historic Park is an authentic Gold Rush town featuring the largest single collection of existing Gold Rush-era structures in California.

Columbia was once the 2nd largest city in California and considered as a potential State Capitol.

The **Bennett Juniper** is the largest known juniper tree in the United States and is located in the Stanislaus National Forest.

The town of **Twain Harte** is named after authors, Mark Twain and Brett Harte.

Over **300** movies, television shows and commercials have been filmed in Tuolumne County.

Featured in *Wild Wild West*, *Back to the Future III*, and many more movies and TV shows, the **Sierra No. 3®**, one of the most recognizable steam locomotives, is on display and operates at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park in Jamestown.

Hurst Ranch offers a unique wine tasting experience in the railroad station from Clint Eastwood's movie, *The Unforgiven*, situated on-site, which also happens to be where Grizzly Adams once lived.

The two highest mountain passes in the Sierra Nevada are in Tuolumne County, **Highway 120** in Yosemite National Park and **Highway 108** to the north.

A 77-mile section of the **Pacific Crest Trail** traverses Tuolumne County's High Country between Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park and Sonora Pass.



GETTING HERE

Natural Wonders Well Within Reach

By car or by air, it's easy to visit Tuolumne County. The closest airports are located in San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento and Fresno with a scenic 2 – 3-hour drive that follows. Road conditions are generally favorable, however during the winter months drivers may be required to have chains on their tires – or at least packed in their car – to access certain roads, particularly those in Yosemite National Park.

Driving Distance

FROM SACRAMENTO: 95 MILES (153 KM), 1 HOUR AND 57 MINUTES

FROM DUBLIN/PLEASANTON: 98 MILES (157 KM), 1 HOUR AND 54 MINUTES

FROM OAKLAND: 124 MILES (199 KM), 2 HOURS AND 15 MINUTES

FROM SAN JOSE: 129 MILES (209 KM), 2 HOURS AND 29 MINUTES

FROM SAN FRANCISCO: 132 MILES (213 KM), 2 HOURS AND 31 MINUTES

FROM FRESNO: 148 MILES (238 KM), 3 HOURS AND 19 MINUTES



STORY IDEA

Tuolumne County, Surprisingly Sustainable

Tuolumne County is a small community with a large impact on sustainability and stewardship practices. With over half of Yosemite National Park, California Gold Country and the High Sierra, over 70% of Tuolumne County is public land. From sustainable business practices to tourism lead initiatives, Tuolumne County is leading the way to preserve the natural beauty of this Northern California outdoor destination.

Visit Tuolumne County (VTC) Stewardship and Sustainability Initiatives:

- **VTC Clean-up Days:** As a way to create a sustainable destination, VTC hosts clean-up days throughout Tuolumne County. VTC coordinates these clean up days and invites the community to come and help clean-up trash left behind. Not only is this a way to promote sustainability, it encourages the VTC staff to give back to the community.

Local Businesses Stewardship and Sustainability Initiatives:

- **Rush Creek and Evergreen Lodges:** Rush Creek and Evergreen Lodges at Yosemite are sister properties that are both B Certified Corporations. Evergreen Lodge was the first gray-water system property in Tuolumne County and Rush Creek Lodge has one of the largest gray-water systems in the state of California. They use some of their recycled water to maintain the growth of the surrounding landscape and forests.
- **Echo Adventures Cooperative:** Echo Adventures Cooperative is a local outfitter and Certified B Corporation. They offer socially and environmentally sustainable guided adventures, vacation packages and travel experiences in Yosemite National Park and throughout the Sierra. Echo was

founded in 2016 and prioritizes quality guest experiences, member empowerment, environmental sustainability and community development over profits.

- **Indigeny Hard Cider Reserve:** Nothing at this 160-acre apple orchard goes to waste. Opened to the public since 2012 by the Watson family, Indigeny Reserve uses every last apple, apple waste and wood. The building that contains the tasting room, gift shop, cidery and distillery reflects the Watson's sustainability commitment and was constructed using harvested and re-purposed cedar and oak wood that was milled on-site. And for the leftover product that is produced from the crafting the hard cider is used to make brandy and vodka.

Regional Stewardship and Sustainability Initiatives:

- **Yosemite Facelift:** Yosemite Facelift is an annual stewardship project started many years ago by Ken Yager, a Yosemite climber and guide. Yosemite Facelift is responsible for collecting over a million pounds of trash over the past decade. The week-long event brings in people of all ages and abilities from all over the world to contribute anything from one hour of simple trail or roadside trash collection to several days of major cleanups. Some local companies even offer initiatives like Rush Creek Lodge and Spa where Facelift patrons can trade trash for spa treatments. In 2022, Visit Tuolumne County and partners worked to expand Facelift into the Hetch Hetchy region of Yosemite National Park and Act Local to the Yosemite Gateway town of Groveland, which is now an annual part of Facelift. The 2023 Act Local: Groveland is September 9-10.

Fun fact: Over half of Yosemite National Park is located in Tuolumne County and it is the less crowded half. Yosemite National Park sees millions of visitors a year. As many visitors flock to the popular Yosemite Valley Floor and fight crowds to snap the perfect picture of Half Dome or El Capitan, very few will make their way to places like Hetch Hetchy, Carlon Falls, Tuolumne Meadows and the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias. These less crowded areas are just as awe-inspiring as the popular landmarks but come with many bonuses.

Another appealing factor is sustainable travel. By visiting the less crowded areas of Yosemite National Park, visitors can help to reduce their carbon footprint and preserve this natural gem for generations to come.

Lesser-known Yosemite Trails:

Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, an expansive deep blue lake, is a water source for San Francisco. It is just as awe-inspiring as the iconic Yosemite Valley, but with less crowds. The trails along Hetch Hetchy Reservoir lead to views of the tremendous granite walls, deep river canyons, and hidden waterfalls like Wapama Falls.

The Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias is another lesser-known trail in Yosemite National Park. Comparable in beauty to its famous rival the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, visitors will find this 1.5 mile trail less crowded and just as jaw dropping with ancient giants. In the winter this trek can be experienced with snowshoes.

Tuolumne Meadows in the upper region of Yosemite National Park is a large, open subalpine meadow graced by the winding Tuolumne River and surrounded by majestic peaks and domes. This area is seasonal due to its high elevation. Trails here range in difficulty from easy to strenuous and can be enjoyed in a day or multi-day backpacking trips. The views are breathtaking with crystal clear lakes like Tioga Lake, sprawling meadows, granite domes and mountain peaks.



Miller's Off Road Adventures- Miller's takes thrill seekers on guided Jeep tours via the back roads of Tuolumne County through the Stanislaus National Forest. Each tour is led by a knowledgeable and professional guide, but patrons get to drive their own rented Jeep on the tour. There are designated stops to take in the scenery and snap the perfect picture to cherish memories made.

Dodge Ridge Summer Activities- Traditionally known for its winter ski activities, Dodge Ridge Mountain Resort offers summer activities. For those who like a soft adventure, hikers can take a chair ride up to the top of the mountain and hike down, giving hikers access to breathtaking views of the Stanislaus National Forest and a truly one-of-a-kind downhill stroll. And for those looking for more thrill-seeking adventures, Dodge Ridge provides mountain biking trails. Disc golf is a trending activity and Dodge Ridge provides a mountain top disc golf course. Summer adventures are lively at the Resort, but they haven't forgotten those looking for a relaxing mountain retreat as they offer lodge Yoga sessions to complete their summer offerings.

Hatchet's Throw House- Hatchet's is where anyone, young or old can reveal their inner lumberjack. Hatchet throwing has become a craze; the thrill of flinging one at a target in hopes of a bullseye is undeniable. Not only does Hatchet's offer hatchet throwing, enjoy VR gaming, comedy shows and food, all in a fun atmosphere in the town of Twain Harte.

The Armory- The Armory is making waves in California's Gold Country. Enjoy an afternoon or evening at Sonora's hottest new spot featuring a lush beer garden, private dining, event center, elevated cocktail bar, and upscale, perfectly executed menu. Opened by two local families, the goal of The Armory is to create a place in the heart of Downtown Sonora where locals

and visitors alike can gather and enjoy the cohesiveness of being together in a trendy hangout spot.

Motherlode Escape Rooms- Experience Tuolumne County's very first escape rooms! Located in Sonora's historic downtown, Motherlode Escape Rooms' escape rooms allow groups of 2 to 8 to step into another place and time to test their skills and live a realtime adventure. Don't worry, patrons are not truly locked in the rooms, but figuring out the clues to freedom as if you are, is challenging and a lot of fun. It's perfect for a fun afternoon with friends or teambuilding.

Heart Valley Ranch Hat Bar- Heart Valley Mercantile and Ranch Wear sits in the heart of Historic Downtown Sonora. This boutique is themed after an Ol' Gritty Cowgirl whom the owner calls a dear friend and mentor. Established as a western clothing boutique, most recently Heart Valley launched a new Hat Bar. Here's how it works, pick a hat or bring your own and customize it with ribbons, feathers, charms, or burn it. You can even add a personal touch by branding sayings or emblems. To make the experience even more memorable bring a group of friends and enjoy a drink with Heart Valley Ranch as you create your hat masterpiece.

The Historic Sonora Inn Facelift- An icon of Downtown Sonora, the Sonora Inn was built in 1896 and has hosted many celebrities including Grace Kelly and Drew Barrymore. The owner, Jeff Michels, will mix the old with the new as he gives the Sonora Inn a new look. To preserve the historical feel, the architecture of the building will keep the 1920's California Mission Style while the rooms and common areas will be refreshed with new paint, furniture, and subtle modern touches. In later phases of the renovation, Michels will add a café, co-working space, and a family recreational room.



Accommodations

Waking up to breath-taking beauty is one of the many rewards waiting in Tuolumne County. There are over **80 lodging accommodations** available spanning a wide variety of comfortable places to stay. Relax in a secluded mountain resort, soak up the charm of a historic B&B, snuggle up in a cozy vacation home, camp in a covered wagon or stay under the stars at one of the convenient campgrounds. There's a welcoming place to stay for every budget.

Annual Events

Mother Lode Round-Up Parade & Rodeo – May

"Saddle up" for a tribute to the Western heritage of the Mother Lode with the Round-Up Parade and Rodeo in Downtown Sonora on Mother's Day weekend.

Columbia Diggins 1852 – May

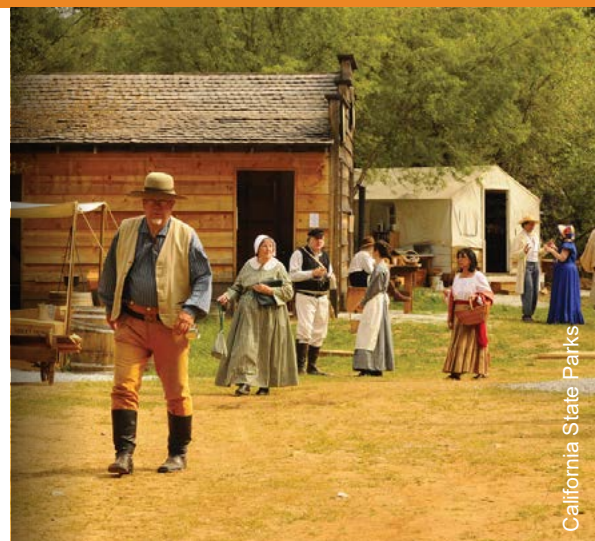
Step back in time to the year 1852 with over 150 volunteers who recreate a gold diggings encampment during the early Gold Rush period.

Groveland 49er Festival & Chili & Salsa Cookoff – September

Experience a fun small town tradition with a parade, vendors, live music and dancing, beard contest, Old West gunfights, and a chili and salsa cook-off.

The Polar Express at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park – November/December

Relive the magical journey of The Polar Express on a train ride to the North Pole with many of the story's characters. Upon reaching the North Pole, Santa himself will come on board to give each passenger a silver sleigh bell, the "first gift of Christmas."



California State Parks



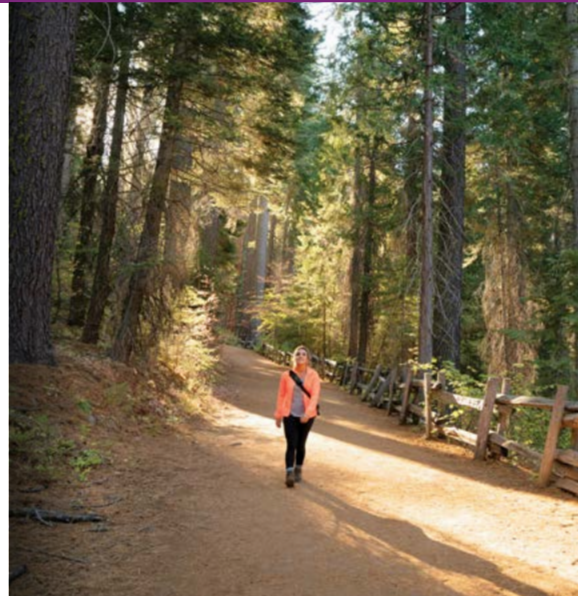
REGION

Yosemite Area

Over half of **Yosemite National Park** is in Tuolumne County, and it's the least crowded half. Walk in the splendor of ancient giant sequoias in the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias, which is located just off of Highway 120 East (also known as the Tioga Road) and is accessible year-round. Or, travel a bit further during the summer months to the incomparable expanse of the subalpine meadow, Tuolumne Meadows. At Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, visitors find the expansive deep blue lake, that is a water source for much of San Francisco, surrounded by granite peaks. Also, an uncrowded trail to uncommon waterfalls that are comparable in beauty to their more famous rivals in Yosemite Valley follows the edge of the reservoir.

The Highway 120 corridor, the most direct highway into Yosemite from the San Francisco Bay Area, does not fall short of recreation, history and culture. In the town of Groveland, the **Groveland Yosemite Gateway Museum** provides a vast look at the natural and cultural history of the area. While in Groveland, wander through town to discover unique shops and stop by the Iron Door Saloon, California's longest continuously operating saloon.

On the **Stanislaus National Forest**, which is adjacent to Yosemite, whitewater rafting with one of several renowned outfitters on the Wild and Scenic Tuolumne River is an adventure like no other. Horseback riding, golfing, hiking, mountain biking, exciting off-road Jeep tours, and more fill up days easily. There are several restaurants to relax in at the end of a full day, and call it a night at one of the historic lodging properties such as the **Groveland Hotel** or **Hotel Charlotte**.



Miller's Off-Road Adventures



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Tuolumne County's Gold Country offers an authentic Gold Rush experience with its rich, lively and thriving historic towns such as Jamestown, Sonora, and Columbia. Your treasure, new or old, is waiting to be discovered in unique specialty shops or fine art galleries that line the streets. Enjoy food and drink in an historic inn, take in a superior live theatre performance in a venue where shows have entertained for over a century, or try your luck with 24-hour gaming action. Springtime offers massive wildflower displays along several popular trails. Wineries, craft breweries and a hard apple cider distillery enthusiastically share their local beverage creations in unique locations.

Two California State Historic Parks, Railtown 1897 and Columbia, export visitors to a past era when the West was bustling with those searching for gold or a new way of life.

Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, located just a few blocks from Main Street in Jamestown, is a must-see with one of the few remaining working railroad roundhouses in the U.S., steam locomotives and railroad cars of the historic Sierra Railway. The highlight of this state park is truly a movie star—Sierra No. 3®, known as the movie star locomotive, has been seen in hundreds of movies, television shows and commercials.

There's no place better to get immersed in California's Gold Rush history than in **Columbia State Historic Park** where visitors stroll along wooden sidewalks, ride an authentic stage, pan for gold and chat with knowledgeable and friendly townspeople dressed in period attire. Historic inns, restaurants, working blacksmith shop, old-fashioned bowling alley, theatre and shops supplied with treats and trinkets add to the ambiance of the town where a new surprise is around every corner.



Explore the town of Twain Harte and try your hand at the retro **Twain Harte Miniature Golf**, California's oldest mini golf course, then gear up for an adventurous day in the High Sierra. **The Summit Ranger Station** is an ideal place to start, and to get information on hiking trails, fishing spots and more. Across the street from the Ranger Station, the Shadow of the Mi-Wok Trail offers an easy ¼ mile walk through an outdoor exhibit showing the Me-Wuk Indians' way of life. Down the street, **Pinecrest Lake** is popular for summertime camping, swimming, fishing (ADA fishing dock available), boating, hiking, horseback riding and paddle boarding.

Nearby **Dodge Ridge Mountain Resort** is a year-round attraction and is the closest downhill skiing and snowboarding mountain to the Bay Area. It's known for its old-school vibe with uncrowded slopes and is the kind of place where devotees learned how to ski as kids and then return with their own kids. As part of the Powder Alliance passholders have access 16 resorts around the globe.

Along Upper Highway 108, the Trail of the Gargoyles features some interesting volcanic features that resemble gargoyles on an easy hike. The views look like those on another planet. Donnell Vista provides a short, easy walk to a dramatic scenic overlook safely perched high above Donnell Reservoir. Sweeping views of the reservoir below and the peculiar rock formations off in the distance, the Dardanelles, are mesmerizing. **Kennedy Meadows** is a great spot for fly-fishing and horseback riding, while Clark Fork Meadow is ideal for a relaxing picnic, hiking, camping and fishing as well.

