



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Valley Loop
Trail**
California



Valley Loop Trail

California

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The spectacular Valley Loop Trail is steeped in history and beauty. This easy, paved pathway takes you past some of the most beautiful spots in Yosemite National Park and follows some of Yosemite Valley's historical footpaths and wagon roads. The multiuse trail can become very crowded during peak tourist months in the summer. For a less crowded experience, visit during the shoulder seasons: after the snow has melted or just prior to the snow beginning. The National Park Service practices a simple "pedal to pavement" rule when it comes to biking in Yosemite National Park, meaning that if a trail is not paved, you are not allowed to ride it. The eastern portion of the Valley Loop Trail, described here, covers 7.5 miles. Start at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, the best place for information about current trail conditions. Pick up a map while you're there, as signage along the trail is

somewhat lacking. Just 0.1 mile east of the visitor center, you have the option of taking a scenic 0.6-mile spur following Ahwahnee Drive, ending at the iconic Ahwahnee hotel, built in 1927 and a designated National Historic Landmark.

After you return from the spur, take the trail southeast as it weaves through Yosemite Village, paralleling Northside Drive on the north side of the road. Around 0.4 mile from a roundabout at Village and Northside Drives, you can either continue southeast along Northside Drive or head east toward Mirror Lake Trail, a hiking-only path. Continuing 0.3 mile southeast along Northside Drive, you will come to Stoneman Bridge; be ready with your camera to capture its views of the Merced River.

After the bridge, turn left to head east for a 1.7-mile loop along a shared pedestrian/bicycle lane on Happy Isle Loop Road. Near the northern end of the loop is the southern trailhead of the Mirror Lake Trail. Continuing west to Southside Drive, the trail alternates between the southern and northern sides of the road.

The trail turns north at the Swinging Bridge picnic area, where there is a lovely beach for a cool swim in the Merced River. Cross the river again, following the trail north to Northside Drive. Just 0.8 mile from the picnic area is the start of a trail to Lower Yosemite Fall, part of North America's tallest waterfall, but use caution, as there may be lots of other people along this popular pathway.

After visiting the waterfall, follow the trail east along the north side of Northside Drive. In 0.2 mile, the Valley Loop Trail connects to the Cook's Meadow Loop. Continue east along the Valley Loop Trail another 0.4 mile to return to the visitor center.



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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Valley Loop Trail

California

States: California

Counties: Mariposa

Length: 7.5miles

Trail end points: Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (9035 Village Dr, Yosemite Valley) to Mirror Lake Trail, 0.4 mile north of Yosemite Shuttle Stop #17 (Yosemite Valley)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Greenway/Non-RT

Trail activities: Bike, Fishing, Inline Skating, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible

Parking & Trail Access

Parking areas are located within Yosemite Valley and are listed clockwise. Note that parking areas throughout the national park are very congested in the summer, and entrance fees apply.

There are many different parking lots along the route, but the best place to start is at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center (9035 Village Dr), so that you'll have access to detailed park information. However, if you are staying in Yosemite overnight, you may want to begin your bike journey directly from your campground.

Select parking areas for the trail in Yosemite Valley are listed below:

Village Store (9011 Village Dr)
Church Bowl Picnic Area (9000 Ahwahnee Dr)
The Ahwahnee (1 Ahwahnee Dr)
Curry Village Campground Reservation Office (9024 Southside Dr)
Yosemite Valley Trailhead (Dead end of Happy Isle Loop Road, 0.6 mile southeast of Southside Dr)
Swinging Bridge Picnic Area (Southside Dr, 2 miles northeast of El Capitan Dr)
Northside Dr (Northside Dr, 0.9 mile southwest of Village Dr)
Yosemite Valley Lodge (9006 Yosemite Lodge Dr)
Sentinel Dr (Sentinel Dr, 0.1 mile north of Southside Dr, Yosemite Shuttle Stop #11)
Yosemite Village Parking (Northside Dr, between Sentinel Dr and the roundabout at Village Dr & Northside Dr)

Visit the [TrailLink map](#) for all options and detailed directions. For information on public transportation in and around the park, visit the [National Park Service website](#).



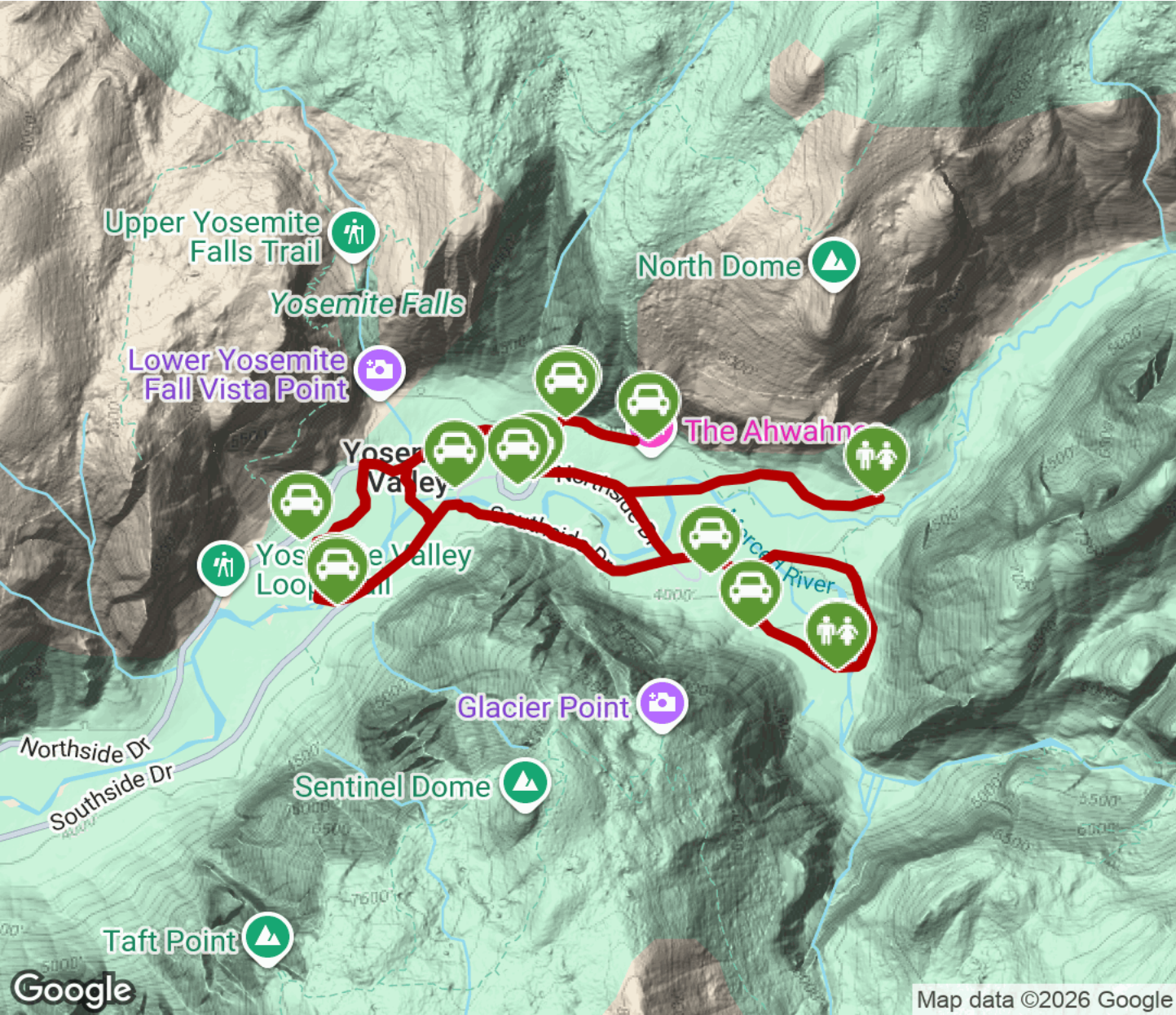
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-  Trailhead
-  Restroom
-  Parking
-  Water Fountain
-  Tunnel