



Majestic Mountain Loop Must See Spots

Towering peaks. The deepest canyon in North America. Jaw-dropping vistas. Trails with plenty of elbow room and the world's largest trees. Superlatives can't begin to describe the sights and sounds you'll experience on the Majestic Mountain Loop. To make sure you set out on the right foot, here are the must-see spots when visiting these three national parks.

Yosemite National Park Attractions

Yosemite Falls

It shouldn't come as a surprise that near the top of the must-see spots within Yosemite, it would share its name. At a whopping 2,425 feet tall, it's one of the most iconic cliffside falls in the world. Made up of three segments (Upper, Middle, and Lower), these falls are visible throughout the valley, but to really take in the magnitude, you must go to its base. The half-mile journey to the bottom of the Yosemite Falls showcases just how much water is flowing as it overwhelms all your senses.

Tip: To really appreciate it in all its glory, we suggest visiting between March and May. This is when the snow melt is greatest, showcasing the unfathomable amount of water flowing over the cliff's edge.



Glacier Point photo by Emily Taylor

Glacier Point

Words and pictures cannot do the views from Glacier Point justice. From its lofty perch 3,000 feet above Yosemite Valley, you're rewarded with a 270-degree panoramic view of the National Park. It includes three of the gargantuan falls, dozens of High Sierra peaks as well as the iconic attractions within the valley such as Half Dome.

Tip: The best way to experience it is via the Four-Mile trail. If you do want to drive up to the lookout, be sure to visit during less peak times like dawn or dusk. The short drive can take hours during peak summer periods.

Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias

Along with the gigantic views and falls, this park is also home to the largest living things by volume in the world – The Giant Sequoia. Located in the southern portion of Yosemite, you'll find Mariposa Grove - the largest one in the park. Although there are 500 mature Sequoias within it, only the largest are given names. Two of the key attractions are the Fallen Monarch and the Grizzly Giant. The Fallen Monarch is a giant tree that fell hundreds of years ago giving you an idea of just how big these are. The Grizzly Giant, on the other hand, is estimated to be around 1,800 years old and is the most photographed tree in the park. At over 90 feet in circumference, no wonder it's the most photographed.

Sequoia National Park Attractions

Generals Highway

Like two siblings, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks are mentioned together. They share a border and jointly administered since 1943. When people visit one, they also experience the other. Luckily, they're connected by the Generals Highway. Built in 1935, the idea was to connect the General Grant Tree in Kings Canyon to the General Sherman Tree in Sequoia National Park – hence the name. Along this engineering marvel, the scenic drive provides plenty of jaw-dropping vistas including the Redwood Mountain Overlook. From here, you enjoy a bird's eye view of the world's largest remaining stand of Sequoias.



Moro Rock photo by Emily Taylor

Moro Rock

Speaking of vistas, the most famous within these two parks is Moro Rock and rightly so. While only ½ mile to the top, it does contain a 350-step stairway. Take your time to acclimate to the elevation. From this monolithic dome of granite, you can see most of the park including the [Great Western Divide](#) which contains the tallest peak in the lower 48 – Mt. Whitney.

Tip: In summer, parking can be a bit challenging. Free shuttles run from the Giant Forest Museum to the Moro Rock parking area.

General Sherman

Standing at 275 feet tall and over 36 feet in diameter, General Sherman is the largest tree by volume in the world and among one of the tallest. Its sheer immensity will make you feel like you're Jack and this is your beanstalk. Estimated to be 2,300-2,700 years of age, to put that into perspective, this tree is hundreds of years older than the Roman Colosseum.

Tip: While General Sherman is impressive by himself, to really experience the majesty of these giant trees, set off on the Congress Trail which starts near the tree and winds its way through the grove of monarchs.

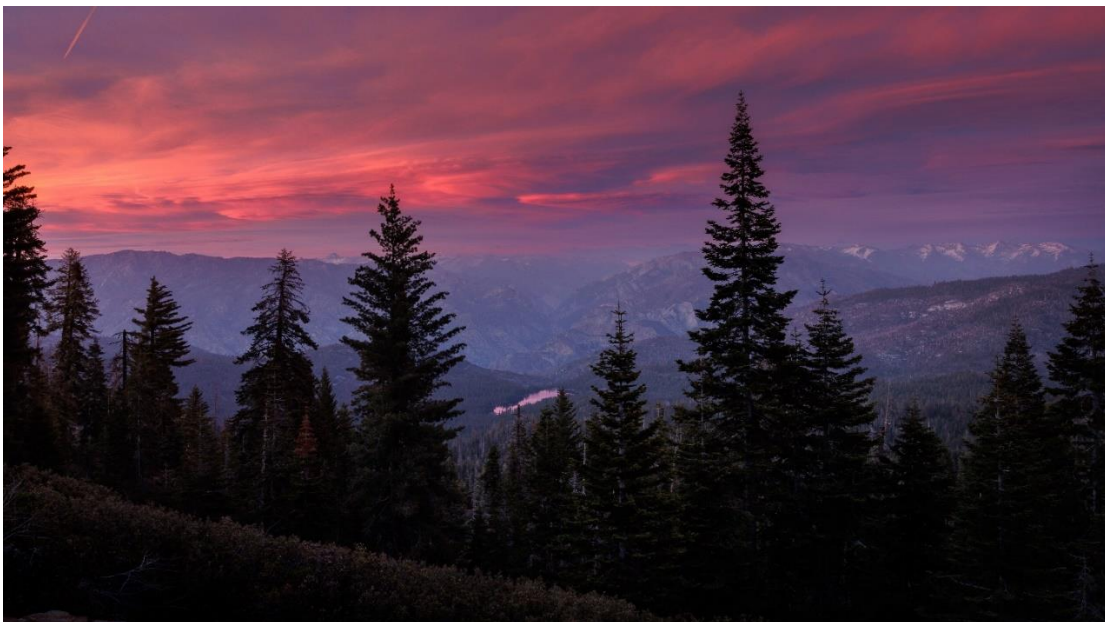
Crystal Cave

Sequoia and Kings Canyon aren't just beautiful above ground but also under. The Crystal Cave is a shining, or should we say polished example of the 275 caverns found within these parks. The ornate marble cave features icicle-like stalactites and stalagmites along with other wondrous cavernous sights.

Kings Canyon National Park Attractions

General Grant

Although it's ranked as the second largest Giant Sequoia by volume, its claim to fame is that it's the widest tree ever discovered. This "young" 1,700-year-old by Giant Sequoia standards has a diameter of 40-feet. It was declared the "Nation's Christmas Tree" by President Calvin Coolidge in 1926. It's also the nation's only living war memorial, as declared by President Dwight Eisenhower who made it a national shrine in 1956.



Panoramic Point – photo by Daniel Chui

Panoramic Point

If you guessed that the Grand Canyon was the deepest on the continent, you'd be wrong. That distinction is held by Kings Canyon. The glacial carved canyon reaches a maximum depth of 8,200 feet. To get an impression at its depth, head to Panoramic Point, just a few miles from the Grant Grove. Normally to get views like this, it takes a great hike. Not here. A 0.5-mile round-trip stroll gives you a glimpse at this canyon as well as the snowy peaks of the Sierra.

Kings Canyon Scenic Byway

Out of the sibling parks, Sequoia National Park gets more than one million visitors per year while Kings Canyon is half of that. And the majority of those 500,000 visitors going to Kings Canyon National Park head to only the area surrounding Grant Grove and the iconic General Grant tree. These people are missing out. The 50-mile Kings Canyon Scenic Byway that snakes its way through the landscape can arguably be called one of the MOST scenic drives in America. Throughout the journey, you'll traverse massive colorful canyons, countless falls, and follow the whitewater filled river named the Kings River. The further you descend into the canyon, the more spectacular and stunning the scenery gets.

Roaring River Falls

Once you finally arrive in the valley of Kings Canyon, a must-see attraction is Roaring River Falls. To say that this 40-foot-tall cascade is a ferocious example of a waterfall isn't giving it justice. A huge volume of water shoots in between two gigantic granite wedges churning a frothy mist into the air and bellowing loudly, overpowering all your senses. All you can do is stand there in awe at this natural sight.

Roads End & Muir Rock

As the name dictates, this is where the Kings Canyon Scenic Byway ends. It isn't really an end but rather the beginning of wilderness. Where many set off on a multi-day excursion into the backcountry, it's here you'll find Muir Rock. A massive stage-like boulder where John Muir himself preached the importance of saving Kings Canyon for future generations. Standing on it with the shimmering waters of the Kings River and only the sound of Aspen's quaking in the breeze, if you listen closely, you may still hear his words through time, "Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt."

For more information go to www.MajesticMountainLoop.com

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Alex founded localfreshies.com® in 2014 to be the #1 website providing the "local scoop" on where to eat, drink & play in mountain towns throughout North America. When he's not writing and executing marketing strategies for small businesses & agencies, he's in search of the deepest snow in the winter and tackiest dirt in the summer.