ROAD TRIP · UNITED STATES

Sequoia, Yosemite and Lake Tahoe

From Los Angeles through the giant sequoias and Yosemite to San Francisco.

Length	13 days, 12 nights
Distance	1,180 km, 6 driving days
Behind the wheel	16 h 10 min
Travellers	2, 1 room, 1 car
Hotels	Comfort: a good hotel (3 stars)
Flights	Amsterdam – Los Angeles (LAX), San Francisco (SFO) – Amsterdam

CONTENTS

Los Angeles	Days 1–2	**8**
Three Rivers	Days 3–4	**10**
Mariposa	Days 5–7	**12**
South Lake Tahoe	Days 8–9	**14**
San Francisco	Days 10–12	**16**

Day by day

DAY	DATE	NIGHT	KM	DRIVE	°C
1		Los Angeles	30	30 min	
2		Los Angeles			
3		Three Rivers	320	4 h	
4		Three Rivers			
5		Mariposa	230	3 h 10 min	
6		Mariposa			
7		Mariposa			
8		South Lake Tahoe	290	4 h 20 min	
9		South Lake Tahoe			
10		San Francisco	300	4 h	
11		San Francisco			
12		San Francisco			
13		Flight home from SFO	20	20 min	

1,180 km · 16 h 10 min behind the wheel · on average 200 km a driving day

Kilometres and drive times by road (OSRM, OpenStreetMap), without stops: plan generously.

The route



Map: US Census Bureau (public domain) · roads © OpenStreetMap contributors

ON THE ROAD

Day 1	Land at Los Angeles (LAX), drive to Los Angeles · About 30 km (20 mi), 30 min
Day 3	Los Angeles, drive to Three Rivers · About 320 km (200 mi), 4 h
Day 5	Three Rivers, drive to Mariposa · About 230 km (140 mi), 3 h 10 min
Day 8	Mariposa, drive to South Lake Tahoe · About 290 km (180 mi), 4 h 20 min
Day 10	South Lake Tahoe, drive to San Francisco · About 300 km (190 mi), 4 h
Day 13	San Francisco to San Francisco airport (SFO), fly home to Amsterdam · About 20 km (10 mi), 20 min

Well prepared

ESTA

Dutch and Belgian travellers need no visa for a holiday of up to 90 days, but do need an approved ESTA before boarding. It costs about $40, is valid for two years (or until your passport expires) and is applied for online. Apply at least 72 hours before you fly, and only on the official site.

esta.cbp.dhs.gov

Passport

An electronic passport (with the chip symbol), valid for the whole stay. Children need their own passport and ESTA.

nl.usembassy.gov

Driving licence

Your Dutch driving licence is accepted for renting and driving a car as a visitor. An international driving permit next to it helps with police and some rental desks.

anwb.nl

Renting a car

The renter is the main driver and pays with a credit card in their own name (no debit or prepaid card); the deposit is held on it. Usually from 21, and from 21 to 24 you pay a young-driver fee of about $25 a day. Book from home with insurance included (CDW/LDW and extra liability, SLI) and an extra driver if you want to take turns. Returning the car elsewhere (a one-way trip) costs extra. Fuel is sold by the gallon (3.8 litres); fill it up yourself before you bring it back.

Driving in the USA

Keep right; speeds are in miles an hour (65 mph is 105 km/h). Turning right on red is allowed after stopping, unless a sign says no. At a 4-way stop, whoever stopped first goes first. For a stopped yellow school bus with flashing lights you stop in both directions. Toll roads are often electronic only: ask your rental company about its toll pass. On remote stretches (parks, desert) there's little signal and a long way to the next pump: fill up at half and download the map.

Renting an RV

You can rent an RV from about 21 with an ordinary car licence. On top of the rent, count on mileage (often per mile), a kit with bedding and kitchen things, cleaning and the campsite: in the popular parks you book those months ahead on recreation.gov. Big RVs aren't allowed on every park road. Take photos of the RV when you pick it up: damage and missing items are the most heard complaint.

recreation.gov

National parks

Most big parks charge per car. Visitors from abroad pay $100 a person extra at 11 popular parks; the annual pass for non-residents is $250. Some parks need a timed-entry reservation in high season.

nps.gov

Money and tipping

Prices are without sales tax, which is added at the till. In restaurants a tip of 15 to 20% is usual. Cards are accepted almost everywhere; at the pump you may be asked for a ZIP code, so pay inside.

Travel insurance and health

Care in the USA is very expensive: take travel insurance with worldwide medical cover, and check whether your health insurance covers the USA. Cancellation insurance covers the trip if you can't go; insure the rental car with the rental company (see Renting a car). Take medicines in their original packaging, with a prescription in English. Emergency number: 911.

Power, phone and time

110 volt with flat two-pin plugs (type A/B): bring an adapter. A US eSIM is cheaper than roaming. The mainland has four time zones, Arizona mostly without daylight saving time.

Customs

Fresh food, meat and fruit may not be brought in. Declare food you carry.

Packing list

- [ ] Passport (valid for the whole trip)
- [ ] ESTA, printed
- [ ] Driving licence (and an international one)
- [ ] Credit card in the driver's name
- [ ] Travel and cancellation insurance
- [ ] Confirmations: flights, car, hotels
- [ ] America the Beautiful pass for the parks
- [ ] Plug adapter for type A/B (110 volt)
- [ ] Car charger and phone holder
- [ ] eSIM or offline maps
- [ ] Sunscreen, sunglasses and a cap
- [ ] Water bottles for the desert
- [ ] Hiking shoes
- [ ] Layers: the coast and the nights get cold
- [ ] Medicines, in your hand luggage
- [ ] A pen, for this booklet

DON'T FORGET

Notes



DAYS 1–2

Los Angeles CA

Hollywood and Santa Monica

Land at Los Angeles (LAX), drive to Los Angeles: about 30 km (20 mi), 30 min

2 nights

LOS ANGELES · DAYS 1–2

HOTEL

- [ ] FOUND Hotels, Santa Monica, Series by Marriott · 3★ — roughly €200
  12311 Santa Monica Blvd
- [ ] Residence Inn by Marriott Los Angeles LAX/Century Boulevard · 3★ — roughly €150
  5933 W Century Blvd
- [ ] Holiday Inn Express Hollywood Walk of Fame by IHG · 3★ — roughly €220
  1921 N Highland Avenue
- [ ] Holiday Inn Express West Los Angeles by IHG · 3★ — roughly €350
  11250 Santa Monica Blvd
- [ ] Residence Inn by Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE · 3★ — roughly €190
  901 W Olympic Blvd

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DAYS 3–4

Three Rivers CA

Sequoia National Park

Los Angeles, drive to Three Rivers: about 320 km (200 mi), 4 h

2 nights

HOTEL

- [ ] Beautiful Retreat 4 Miles to Park Entrance Steps to Dining · 3★
  43635 Encina Dr
- [ ] Cozy Condo 4 Miles to Park Entrance with BBQ and Steps to Dining · 3★
  43653 Encina Dr
- [ ] Tranquil Retreat 4 Miles to Sequoia Park Entrance with BBQ and Balcony · 3★
  43647 Encina Dr
- [ ] Spacious sequoia Park retreat, best panoramic views · 3★
  40613 Crystal Dr
- [ ] Muniz Village · 3★
  40981 Old Three Rivers Road

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DAYS 5–7

Mariposa CA

Yosemite Valley

Three Rivers, drive to Mariposa: about 230 km (140 mi), 3 h 10 min

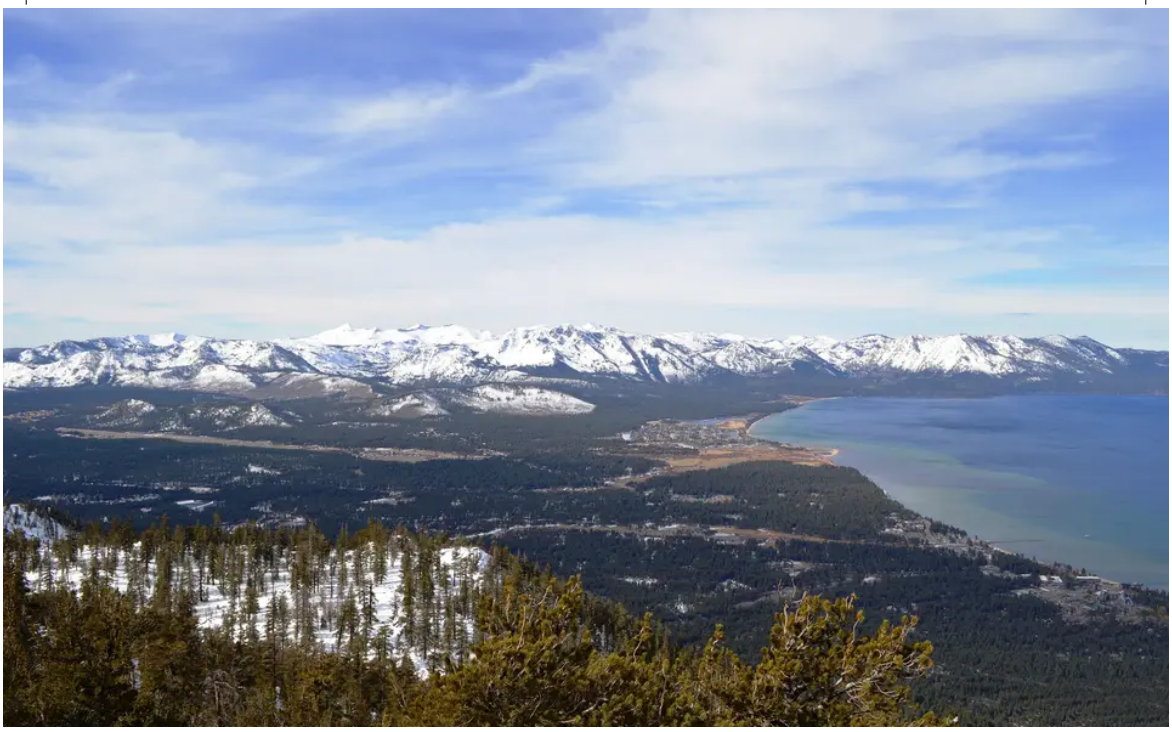
3 nights

MARIPOSA · DAYS 5–7

HOTEL

- [ ] Historic Mariposa Stagecoach Stop w/ Gas Fire Pit! · 3★
  3086 Wass Rd
- [ ] Oak Meadows House - A unique home near Yosemite · 3★
  5465 Oak Meadows Road
- [ ] Peaceful + Private Mariposa Cabin on 2 Acres! · 3★
  3502 Comet Mine Ln
- [ ] Private Hot Tub! Pet-friendly Mariposa Retreat · 3★
  5313 Carleton Rd
- [ ] Waterfront Mariposa Hideaway: Hot Tub & Mtn Views! · 3★
  4872-A Usona Rd

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DAYS 8–9

South Lake Tahoe CA

The lake and the mountains

Mariposa, drive to South Lake Tahoe: about 290 km (180 mi), 4 h 20 min

2 nights

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE · DAYS 8–9

HOTEL

- [ ] The Coachman Hotel · 3★ — roughly €320
  4100 Pine Boulevard
- [ ] Resthaven Tahoe · 3★
  4145 Manzanita Ave
- [ ] Postmarc Hotel and Spa Suites · 3★ — roughly €150
  3696 Lake Tahoe Blvd
- [ ] Station House Inn - Near Heavenly Gondola · 3★
  901 Park Avenue
- [ ] The Elet Hotel · 3★ — roughly €240
  954 Park Ave

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DAYS 10–12

San Francisco CA

The city by the bay

South Lake Tahoe, drive to San Francisco: about 300 km (190 mi), 4 h

3 nights

SAN FRANCISCO · DAYS 10–12

HOTEL

- [ ] Inn at Union Square · 3★
  440 Post St
- [ ] Chancellor Hotel on Union Square · 3★ — roughly €120
  433 Powell St
- [ ] White Swan Inn · 3★ — roughly €150
  845 Bush St
- [ ] Petite Auberge · 3★ — roughly €190
  863 Bush St
- [ ] Hyatt Place San Francisco/Downtown · 3★ — roughly €190
  701 3rd St

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What it costs

DAY	PLACE	HOTEL	TOURS	CAR	TOTAL
1	Los Angeles	€160	–	€60	**€220**
2	Los Angeles	€160	–	€60	**€220**
3	Three Rivers	€160	–	€60	**€220**
4	Three Rivers	€160	–	€60	**€220**
5	Mariposa	€160	–	€60	**€220**
6	Mariposa	€160	–	€60	**€220**
7	Mariposa	€160	–	€60	**€220**
8	South Lake Tahoe	€160	–	€60	**€220**
9	South Lake Tahoe	€160	–	€60	**€220**
10	San Francisco	€160	–	€60	**€220**
11	San Francisco	€160	–	€60	**€220**
12	San Francisco	€160	–	€60	**€220**
13	Flight home from SFO	–	–	€60	**€60**

Flights	€1,700
Hotels	€1,920
Excursions	€0
Car hire	€780
Total	**€4,400**
	€2,200 a person

An estimate to plan with (prices of 2026-10): hotels, the ticked excursions, car hire and flights. No fuel or meals.

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About this booklet

Made on rondreis.expert. Your trip is still there, to change and print again: usa.roundtrip.expert/tours/sierra-nevada/

PHOTOS

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Los Angeles	Aerial views of residential Los Angeles, California LCCN2013632611.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain
Three Rivers	Generals Highway, Clover Creek Bridge, Spanning Clover Creek on Generals Highway, approxi, Three Rivers vicinity (Tulare County, California).jpg · Brian C. Grogan, Photographer, Public domain
Mariposa	Mariposa County Courthouse January 2025.jpg · Guywelch2000, CC0
South Lake Tahoe	Lake Tahoe, California 02.jpg · Blake Everett, CC0
San Francisco	Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, California LCCN2013633353.tif · Carol M. Highsmith, Public domain

MAP AND TYPE

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