

2026 YOSEMITE CHINESE HISTORY PILGRIMAGE ITINERARY

The 2026 Yosemite Chinese History Pilgrimage will be on Wednesday, July 29 and Thursday, July 30 – with retired National Park Ranger Yenyen Chan, meeting each morning in Lee Vining’s Gus Hess Park Solar Pavillion (parking along the street). Lee Vining is located next to Yosemite National Park’s eastern entrance at the intersection of Hwy 395 and Hwy 120. It is a 30-minute drive to and from Yosemite’s Tuolumne Meadows. Attendees may choose to drive up on Tuesday, July 28, or one day earlier on Monday, July 27. (See optional places to visit before and after the pilgrimage on pages 6-9). The Yosemite pilgrimage will end by mid-afternoon on Thursday.



Tuolumne Meadows Bridge near Soda Springs and Parsons Memorial Lodge



Ranger Yenyen Chan at the Bennettville Mining Cabins



Restored Historic Chinese Laundry Building in Yosemite’s Wawona Area

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

OPTIONAL Monday 7/27 Drive Up	Tuesday 7/28 Drive Up	Wednesday 7/29 Day 1 w/ Yenyen	Thursday 7/30 Day 2 w/ Yenyen	OPTIONAL Friday 7/31
Optional stop along the way from LA to Lee Vining Manzanar Visitor Center Manzanar Block 14 Manzanar Driving Tour & Grounds	Optional stop along the way from LA to Lee Vining Manzanar Block 14 Manzanar Driving Tour & Grounds 6-8pm Optional picnic dinner at Gus Hess Park's Solar Pavillion or dinner at local restaurants	8:15am meet in Lee Vining to carpool 9am-11:30am Yosemite's Tuolumne Meadows Soda Springs Chinese history walk (Easy 2 miles roundtrip walk) 1:00pm-4:30pm Bennettville and role of Chinese in logging and mining history (Moderately strenuous 4 miles roundtrip hike) 7:30pm Meet in Lee Vining Community Center to carpool. 8-9pm Sunset, Stars & Stories talk at Mono Lake's South Tufa (Easy ½ mile roundtrip)	8:15am meet in Lee Vining for driving/caravan tour of Yosemite with stops at: 9:30am-9:45am Olmsted Point (Easy) 11am-1:15pm Yosemite Valley (Easy 1 mile roundtrip walk) 2:15pm-3pm Wawona's Chinese Laundry (Easy) (See pages 5-6 for options for driving home or dinner in town if staying overnight)	Optional stops along the way from Yosemite's Wawona to Los Angeles Fresno Flats, Oakhurst Fresno Hanford Visalia Bakersfield
	OPTIONAL If You Drove Up Monday then on Tuesday explore Bodie/Bridgeport/Lundy Canyon OR Tuolumne Visitor Center for information on Tuesday's Ranger walks or self-guided walks/trails		OPTIONAL Drive back home or stay in Oakhurst Thursday night before driving home on Friday	

In 2013, National Park Ranger Yenyen Chan, CA State Park Superintendent Jack Shu, and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California initiated the annual Yosemite Pilgrimage based on Yenyen's ongoing research on the many contributions made by early Chinese in Yosemite National Park. See articles below for background.

<http://www.georgewright.org/343.pdf>

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/chinesehistory.htm>

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026

EXPLORING TUOLUMNE MEADOWS SODA SPRINGS, BENNETTVILLE, AND NIGHT SKY OVER MONO LAKE WITH YENYEN CHAN

NOTE: Part of this day may include filming for a project highlighting the Yosemite Pilgrimage and Sing Peak Backpack (which follows this pilgrimage). The filmmaker would like to ask you to sign a waiver for permission. If you do not want to be filmed, please let the filmmaker know when you see her in the morning.

Pick up lunch at any of the suggested places in Lee Vining. Pack 1-2 liters of water, light weight jacket, hat, and sunscreen before meeting at Gus Hess Park at 8:15am. Trekking poles and sturdy hiking shoes recommended for afternoon walk.

Breakfast and Lunch to go, and dinner options:

Latte Da, El Mono Motel 7 am-6 pm (breakfast and order to-go sandwiches, plan on 8 minutes for sandwiches)

Mono Market 7 am-9 pm (breakfast burritos, croissants under the heat lamp, and ready-made sandwiches)

Tioga Gas Mart & Whoa Nellie Deli 6:30 am-9 pm (breakfast and ready-made lunch sandwiches, dinner)

Nicely's, Basin Café, Tierra Antigua Café, Mono Cone, and Bodie Mike's are other Lee Vining food options

8:15 am Meet at Gus Hess Park in Lee Vining to Carpool/Caravan (address: 129 Mattly Ave, Lee Vining);

Film waiver forms will be handed out at the parking lot.

8:20-8:50am Caravan/Carpool drive to Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center/Cathedral Lakes Parking Lot.

At Tioga Pass Entrance Station, purchase a National Park Pass, Senior Pass, or Yosemite pass (credit card only). Or pre-purchase a pass online before the trip here: <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>

9:00-11:30am Meet Yenyen at Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center parking lot for a 2-mile roundtrip easy walk to Soda Springs and Parson's Memorial Lodge

11:30-12:30 Picnic lunch at Parson's Memorial Lodge area. (Refill your water bottles at water spigot located in front of Parson's Lodge front door.).

12:30-1:00 Walk back to parking lot at Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center (If needed, use restrooms here).

1:00pm Meet at cars in Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center/Cathedral lakes Parking Lot

1:00-1:30pm Carpool drive to first Tioga Lake first overlook parking lot located east of the Tioga Pass entrance (after you exit past Tioga Pass station, the Tioga Lake parking will be on your right side after a minute of driving downhill. You will see some exhibit signage and a small restroom at this parking turn-out that overlooks Tioga Lake). OR choose own walk or Ranger program. The Visitor Center/Bookstore will have options available.

1:30-4:30pm Bennettville Hike: 4 miles moderately strenuous hike, 300' gradual to moderate elevation gain. Trekking poles and hiking shoes recommended.

4:30-4:45pm Drive back to Lee Vining. (Or 4:30-5pm drive back to Mammoth)

Self-guided afternoon options (in Yosemite, if not attending Bennettville Hike)

Ranger programs (1-2 hrs each), visit Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center for daily programs and times

Tenaya Lake beach option (Drive 10 mins west on Tioga Road from Visitor Center Parking lot)

Self-guided afternoon options (outside Yosemite, if not attending Bennettville Hike):

Bodie (1 hr. from Lee Vining)

1:00pm Meet at Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center

1:00-2:30pm Drive to Bodie

2:30-3:30pm Bodie State Historic Park

3:30-4:30pm drive back to Lee Vining (3:30-5:00 drive back to Mammoth)

5:30-7:00pm Dinner on your own in town such as Lee Vining's Whoa Nellie Deli or Nicely's Café or picnic dinner at Gus Hess Park's Solar Pavillion. Afterwards, welcome to bring own chairs and enjoy views of Mono Lake from the back porch of the Lee Vining Community Center which is only open in the evenings for our use between 5pm-9pm.

(Note: Don't bring food or leave anything behind at the Lee Vining Community Center as it is being used during the daytime by another group. We will not have access to indoor space. Nearest restrooms are across the street at the park's Solar Pavillion.)

7:30pm Meet at Lee Vining Community Center Parking lot to carpool together to South Tufa State Park for Night Sky with Yenyen (Note: We will not have access to indoor space. Nearest restrooms are across the street at Gus Hess Park's Solar Pavillion).

7:30-8:00pm Carpool drive to South Tufa State Park

8:00-9pm Sunset and Night Sky with Yenyen. Bring a sitting chair or blanket to sit on the sandy beach at South Tufa Mono Lake. Dress warmly. Bring a flashlight for returning to car at night. It is a 3-5 minute flat walk on a wooden boardwalk between beach and parking lot. (Please remember to point your flashlight downwards towards the boardwalk to avoid blinding people's vision.)

9:15-9:30pm Drive back to Lee Vining, June Lake or Mammoth Lakes



Mono Lake at sunset from South Tufa beach

DAY 2: THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2026

TOURING YOSEMITE'S OLMSTED POINT, YOSEMITE VALLEY & CHINESE LAUNDRY WITH YENYEN

Pick up lunch and water before meeting at Gus Hess Park:

See page 4 for food to-go and dine-in options in Lee Vining

8:15am Meet at Gus Hess Park in Lee Vining (129 Mattly Ave, Lee Vining) to caravan/carpool

8:20-9:20am Drive to Olmsted Point

9:30-9:45am Group photo and short program on Yosemite's geologic history with dramatic view of Half Dome and Tenaya Canyon

9:45-11:00am Drive to Yosemite Valley's Yosemite Lodge at the Falls Visitor Parking Lot

11:00-1:15pm Short walk around Cooks Meadow & lunch in Yosemite Valley with view of Yosemite Falls

1:15-2:15pm Drive to Wawona's Yosemite History Center Parking lot. Look for the sign for the History Center which is located along Forest Drive. Take a left turn on Forest Drive and drive and park next to the History Center Parking lot. There are two small restrooms (brown buildings) next to the end of parking lot. (If you accidentally go past Forest Drive, you will see Wawona's gas station and a road for the Wawona Hotel and Visitor Information. Turn left and take the full roundabout and return to the main road and backtrack to Forest Drive).

2:15-3:00pm Visit Wawona's Chinese Laundry located next to Yosemite's History Center. Learn more about the Chinese in Yosemite at this exhibit which opened in 2021.

Option 1 (drive back to LA; dinner in Fresno)

4:00-5:30	Drive to Fresno
5:30-6:00	Gas Costco
6:00-7:00	Dinner Vai Vai Lao Thai Food
7:00-8:30	Drive to Bakersfield
8:30-10:30	Drive to LA

Option 2 (drive back to LA; dinner in Bakersfield)

4:00-7:00	Drive to Bakersfield
7:00-7:30	Gas Fastrip
7:30-8:30	Dinner Punjabi Dhaba, All India Sweets & Spices
8:30-10:30	Drive to LA

Option 3 (stay in Oakhurst; drive back to LA Friday)

4:00-5:00	Drive to Oakhurst
5:00-6:00	Check in
6:00-7:00	Dinner Tandoori Express

Option 4 (stay in Fish Camp): drive back to LA Friday)

4:30-5:10	Drive to Fish Camp
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5:10-5:40	Check in
5:40-6:15	Drive to Oakhurst for Dinner or have dinner at Fish Camp's Tenaya Lodge
6:15-7:15	Dinner Tandoori Express



Olmsted Point



Yosemite Falls from Cooks Meadow



Interior of Yosemite's Chinese Laundry in Wawona

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLACES TO VISIT BEFORE AND AFTER YOSEMITE PILGRIMAGE

This year's pilgrimage offers an opportunity to visit Manzanar because it is on the way to Lee Vining. Next year's Yosemite Pilgrimage is expected to return to Wawona, so visiting Manzanar will not be an option. If you are planning to visit Manzanar, please note that the Visitor Center is only open on Monday. Although the Manzanar Visitor Center is closed on Tuesday, you will still be able to visit the Block 14 exhibits and drive the self-guided auto tour and grounds.

Monday, July 27, 2026, Optional driving up one day early to visit Manzanar National Historic Site

Stop/lunch options depending on LA departure time:

Option 1

9:00-10:00	Vista Canyon Metro Station
10:00-10:30	Lang Station markers
10:30-12:00	Tehachapi (1.5 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Manzanar (2 hrs)

Option 2

9:30-12:00	Ridgecrest (2.5 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Manzanar (1.5 hrs)

Option 3

10:15-12:00	Mojave (1.75 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Manzanar (2 hrs)

Option 4

10:45-12:00	Palmdale/Lancaster (1.25 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:30	Manzanar (2.5 hrs)

Manzanar Block 14 9 am-4:15 pm

Manzanar Visitor Center 9 am-4:30 pm (open Monday 7/27 only; closed Tuesday 7/28)

Manzanar Driving Tour & Grounds sunrise-sunset

<https://www.nps.gov/manz/index.htm>

Lodging/dinner options after Manzanar:

Option 1

Lee Vining (2 hrs)
See Page 4 for Lee Vining dinner options

Option 2

Bishop (1 hr) Erick Schat's Bakery 6 am-6 pm
Lee Vining (1 hr)

Option 3

Mammoth Lakes (1.5 hrs)

Lee Vining (30 mins)

Option 4

June Lake (1.75 hrs)

Lee Vining (15 mins)

Tuesday, July 28, 2026 (Optional if you drove up Monday, Touring Eastern Sierra Chinese History)

Pick up lunch and water before meeting at Guss Hess Park:

See Page 4 for Lee Vining food options

Gus Hess Park 129 Mattly Ave, Lee Vining

Self-guided options inside Yosemite National Park:

Park Pass \$35 (valid 7 days; credit card only)

Ranger programs (1-2 hrs each), visit Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center for that day's programs
(30 mins from Lee Vining)

Twin Lakes Trailhead (30 mins from Lee Vining, located along side road by Wilderness Center. Follow road to John Muir Trailhead and Dog Lake Parking lot)

Lembert Dome trailhead (30 mins from Lee Vining, same as Twin Lakes)

Tioga Road/Tenaya Lake (45 mins from Lee Vining; parking lots on either side of lake. Short walk to beach)

May Lake trailhead (1 hr from Lee Vining, 3 miles roundtrip, moderately strenuous hike, parking lot limited space)

Self-guided options outside Yosemite National Park:

Lundy Canyon (15 mins from Lee Vining) – Easy short walk. But beyond the aspen forest, the trail becomes steep.
Bridgeport

Bodie (45 mins from Lee Vining; 1 hr from June Lake; 1.25 hrs from Mammoth)

https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=509

Carson City (2 hrs from Lee Vining)

Pick up dinner before meeting at Solar Pavilion:

See page 4 for Lee Vining food options

6:00-8:00pm Pick up dinner and meet at Gus Hess Park's Solar Pavilion or have dinner in town and then meet up at Solar Pavillion at 129 Mattly Ave, Lee Vining.

Tuesday, July 28, 2026, (Optional if driving up Tuesday to Lee Vining)

Stop/lunch options depending on LA departure time:

Option 1

9:00-10:00	Vista Canyon Metro Station
10:00-10:30	Lang Station markers
10:30-12:00	Tehachapi (1.5 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Manzanar (2 hrs)

Option 2

9:30-12:00	Ridgecrest (2.5 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
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Option 3

10:15-12:00	Mojave (1.75 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Manzanar (2 hrs)

Option 4

10:45-12:00	Palmdale/Lancaster (1.25 hrs)
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:30	Manzanar (2.5 hrs)

Manzanar Block 14 9 am-4:15 pm; Manzanar Driving Tour & Grounds sunrise-sunset

<https://www.nps.gov/manz/index.htm>

(Note: Manzanar Visitor Center will be closed on Tuesday 7/28, but Block 14 and the driving tour & grounds will be open; you need to drive up Monday 7/27 to see the Visitor Center)

Lodging/dinner options after Manzanar:

Option 1

Lee Vining (2 hrs)
Whoa Nellie Deli 6:30am-9pm (popular restaurant located in same parking lot as Mobile Gas Station Market on corner of Hwy 395 and Hwy 120); option to pick up dinner and meet at Gus Hess Park's Solar Pavillion located at 129 Mattly Ave, Lee Vining

Option 2

Bishop (1 hr) Erick Schat's Bakery 6 am-6 pm
Lee Vining (1 hr)

Option 3

Mammoth Lakes (1.5 hrs)
Lee Vining (30 mins)

Option 4

June Lake (1.75 hrs)

Lee Vining (15 mins)

Friday, July 31, 2026 (Optional if driving to LA Friday morning)

Clouds Rest Coffee, Oakhurst 7 am-2 pm

Clash Coffee & Boba 7 am-6 pm

Judy's Donuts, Oakhurst

Fresno Flats, Oakhurst 10 am-4 pm

<https://fresnoflats.org/history-of-fresno-flats/>

Chinatown, Fresno (1 hr from Oakhurst)

China Alley, Hanford (40 mins from Fresno)

Chinatown, Visalia (40 mins from Fresno)

Bakersfield (1 hr 40 mins from Fresno)

Kern County Museum (Pioneer Village/Joss House/Sing Gong Temple) 9 am-4 pm

<https://kerncountymuseum.org/>

China Alley/Chinatown