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Highlights

SEQUOIA PARK

Review safety advice on page 5. Carry a map, warm clothes, and water. Orient yourself before heading out and tell someone where you are going. You are on your own in the winter woods — be safe!

Walkers & snowshoers: Avoid walking in ski tracks; it makes them dangerous for skiers. Watch for ice.

Watch for wildlife tracks in the snow. Bear, deer, mountain lions, martens, weasels, coyotes, and squirrels may be active all winter. Remove coolers and odorous items from cars before you leave them.

Get to know the snow forest:



This forest was designed for snow. Conical-shaped trees minimize the amount of snow that catches and weighs them down. Their branches are flexible, so that

they bend to dump what snow does stick when it gets too heavy. Conifer needles are tough and slippery, so snow tends to slide off easily.

GIANT FOREST

There is plenty to see from wintry roadsides, but consider trying skis or snowshoes. You don't need to go far or fast, and it's a great way to enjoy snowy sequoia forests. Rent them downstairs at Wuksachi Lodge, and purchase a ski-trail map. Ask a ranger for details, and carefully follow the yellow triangular markers on the trees. Enjoy the adventure!

GIANT FOREST MUSEUM: The best place to start your visit and learn about the Big Trees.

BIG TREES TRAIL: This 2/3-mile (1 km) trail circles Round Meadow. Colorful trailside panels describe sequoia ecology. Park at Giant Forest Museum and ski or snowshoe along the trails on either side of the road (not *in* the road). If there's no snow, it is wheelchair-accessible all the way from the north end of the museum plaza, around the meadow, and back via the other side of the road.

GENERAL SHERMAN TREE: Once much snow flies, access to the world's largest tree is from the

parking area along the Generals Highway. The trail from there is not plowed, but the snow is usually packed down enough to walk on it. Through late November, if conditions permit, the new upper trail and parking stay open (take the Wolverton Road between the Sherman Tree and Lodgepole and follow signs). From there you walk down to the tree. While this upper option is open, the lower parking area along the Generals Highway requires a permit for parking. If the upper trail is too steep and you don't have an official placard, just ask at any visitor center for a permit. If you can walk down but not back up, have the driver of your vehicle pick you up at the lower parking area on the Generals Highway after you've had time to visit the tree.

ALONG MORO ROCK - CRESCENT MEADOW ROAD

This 3-mile (5 km), dead-end road closes in winter to become a ski and snowshoe trail. It begins at the Giant Forest Museum on the Generals Highway, explores the southwest portions of the sequoia grove, and ends at Crescent Meadow. Some highlights include:

MORO ROCK: A granite dome with a steep 1/4-mile (.4 km) staircase to the summit (300 foot / 91 m elevation gain). Don't climb if there is any ice or snow on the stairs; it is very dangerous. A spectacular view of the Great Western Divide and the western half of the park. 2 miles (3.2 km) from the Generals Highway.

TUNNEL LOG: A fallen sequoia that was tunneled through. The only "tree you can ski through" in these parks. 2.7 miles (4.3 km) from the Generals Highway.

CRESCENT MEADOW: Several trails connect here. It is 1 mile (1.6 km) from here to Tharp's Log, the hollow fallen sequoia lived in by Giant Forest's first settler. The summer High Sierra Trail runs 71 miles (114 km) to Mt. Whitney (highest peak in the lower 48 states - 14,494 feet / 4417 m).

MINERAL KING CLOSED IN WINTER



The winding, steep road to this valley, is closed November to late May, ends at 7800' (2380m), the park's highest road. Skis or snowshoes are required to visit in winter.

THE FOOTHILLS

The Sierra's lower elevations offer wonderful winter visits — green and usually snowless! They have more biological diversity — different kinds of plants and animals — than the conifer forests or highcountry. Flowers appear by late January. Watch for ticks and poison oak on foothills trails.



HOSPITAL ROCK PICNIC

AREA: Western Mono people once lived here; exhibits offer insight into their lifestyle. A trail built by the Civilian Conservation Corps leads to a waterfall; 1/4-mile round-trip. Be careful! Drownings have occurred here.

MARBLE FALLS: This trail climbs 3.9 miles (6 km) through chaparral to a lovely cascade. Park near site #14 at Potwisha Campground. Follow the dirt road across the concrete ditch. The trail starts along the steep bank to the right.

PARADISE CREEK: Park at Hospital Rock and walk to Buckeye Flat Campground. Follow the footpath across from site #26 & cross the footbridge over the Middle Fork. The trail then follows Paradise Creek, not the Middle Fork, for just over 1-1/2 mile (1.6 km) before growing faint.

MIDDLE FORK: Leading through chapparal to highcountry, the first miles offer views of Moro Rock and Castle Rocks. Park at Hospital Rock. Walk toward Buckeye Flat Campground and turn left on the dirt road before the campground. Go 1.3 miles (2 km) to a parking area. Panther Creek Falls is 3 miles (5 km) beyond that.

SOUTH FORK

These trails start at tiny South Fork Campground, at the end of a 13-mile road that leaves Hwy 198 at the west end of Three Rivers. This partly unpaved road can be very slippery when wet.

LADYBUG: Hike along the South Fork of the Kaweah River in the upper foothills (moderately steep). From the campground, cross the river via footbridge. The trail ends 3 miles (5 km) up at one of the lowest-elevation sequoia groves.

GARFIELD: A steep 5-mile (8.3 km) one-way climb to Garfield sequoia grove. Start on the south side of the river in the campground.