



## CALIFORNIA FALL FOLIAGE

### SACRAMENTO~ GOLD COUNTRY~YOSEMITE~CENTRAL VALLEY

*The Fall Foliage in Northern California is a sight to be seen. From the bright hues of reds, yellows, and oranges in downtown Sacramento, the peaceful meadows along historic Highway 49, and the beauty of Yosemite National Park, this itinerary features California's Gold Country and one of our nation's most beautiful National Parks.*

#### ◆DAY 1 ~ ARRIVE SACRAMENTO◆

Welcome to Sacramento, the cosmopolitan capital of California. This afternoon, time to explore **Old Sacramento**, the waterfront district that sprang up overnight during the early days of “gold fever.” Today Old Sacramento is a 28-acre national historic landmark and state historic park. With more than 50 Gold Rush-era buildings, it holds the largest concentration of buildings of historic value than any area of similar size in the West. Stroll along wooden sidewalks, hear the clippity-clop of horses and carriages, and explore the many unique shops.

Visit the **California State Railroad Museum**, the largest interpretive and most visited museum of its kind in North America with 21 restored locomotives, cars and fascinating exhibits. The newest exhibit is “Toy Trains on Parade,” the highly regarded Thomas W. Sefton collection valued at over \$1 million! The **Discovery Museum History Center's** exhibits showcase Sacramento's history, and in the “Lure of Gold” gallery you'll see one of the finest gold collections in the world. Meet some new friends at a memorable **Welcome Dinner** this evening at one of several group-friendly restaurants in Old Sacramento. Your fabulous meal will be a great kick-off to a spectacular tour. Begin a three-night stay in Sacramento.

#### ◆DAY 2 ~ SACRAMENTO, GOLD COUNTRY◆

It's a celebration of trees today as you embark on a guided tour of Sacramento and the surrounding region. One of the things visitors are surprised to discover in Sacramento is the enormous wealth of trees –hence the name “**City of Trees.**” In fact *there are more trees in Sacramento per capita than any other city in the world including Paris!* Throughout the day you'll see the many deciduous, evergreen, fruit, flowering, and palm trees that make up the more than six million trees in Sacramento

County. This morning, enjoy a **city tour** with a **local guide** that includes a tour of the stunning **California State Capitol Museum**, a working building where legislators pass laws for the 5th largest economy in the world. It is here that **Arnold Schwarzenegger** governs the state of California, and you'll have an opportunity see his office. In **Capitol Park** you'll find all shades of green in the trees and plants that cover these lush 40 acres. From the deodor cedars from high in the Himalayas to the bunya-bunyas from Australia, trees from every continent and climate seem to thrive side by side. Even the “orbit tree,” a beautiful redwood whose seedling circled the moon aboard the Apollo 13 space vehicle in 1970 seems no worse for the wear! **Memorial Grove** includes trees acquired as saplings from famous battlefields of the Civil War. Stirring monuments of people and events of historic interest are scattered throughout the park including the moving **Vietnam Memorial**. The **World Peace Rose Garden**, one of only five in the world, is the park's newest garden.



Continue on to **Sutter's Fort**, established in 1839. John Sutter was a complex, but visionary Swiss immigrant whose adobe fort was the western destination of early pioneers. Then, driving past the splendid **Stanford Mansion**, hear the story of the fascinating railroad baron and California governor, Leland Stanford. Sacramento's eclectic midtown district is a lovely residential and business neighborhood where palm trees three stories high sway above rows of quaint Victorian homes alongside giant oaks and elms that were planted by homesick easterners years ago. Pause in front of the historic **Governors**

**Mansion** built in 1877 as the home of hardware merchant Albert Gallatin. It is a beautiful example of one of Sacramento's Victorian-era homes with elegant architectural detail and an occupancy list that is a primer of California history. Sold to the State of California in 1903, it was the state executive residence until 1967, with the last of 13 California's governors to occupy it being Ronald Reagan.

This afternoon head to **California Gold Country** and the town of **Auburn**, tucked into the Sierra Nevada foothills. Heading north on **Historic Highway 49**, you'll soon arrive in the towns of **Grass Valley** and **Nevada City**. This area boasts some of the most spectacular fall foliage to be found anywhere in the region. Brilliant red and yellow tones of maples, pistachios and liquid ambers further enhance the beauty of these Gold Rush towns. At the **Nevada County Traction Company** hop aboard and take a 90-minute narrated train ride through 15 acres of tall pines, ciders, and sugar pine trees to History Hill. Also view vintage railroad rolling stock, the Mohawk Mine and visit an authentic Chinese Cemetery.

Return to Sacramento this evening with time to freshen up before enjoying dinner at one of the city's many culturally diverse and group-friendly restaurants. From a murder-mystery dinner on an historic paddlewheeler to modern day restaurants in the heart of downtown, the diversity in tastes and ambience of Sacramento's restaurants is overwhelming.

#### ◆DAY 3 ~ GOLD COUNTRY◆

The entire historic **Gold Country** has its fair share of fall colors and spectacular trees –from mighty oaks to lush evergreens. Step back in time to another era in **Coloma** –the birthplace of the California Gold Rush. Today, most of the town is within **Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park**. Visit **Sutter's Mill**, where James Marshall spotted yellow flecks while inspecting the tailrace of the mill, and the **Gold Discovery Museum** has excellent exhibits concerning gold and its discovery. The Chinese were among the multitudes seeking their fortunes. By 1855 one of every five miners was Chinese and Coloma's Chinatown was the largest Chinese community in California.

Today, only two of their buildings remain, but the fabulous exhibits are reminders of the important Chinese legacy in Mother Lode history.



Continue on to **Placerville** to have lunch at **Sequoia** in the charming and historic 1853 Bee-Bennett House. Formerly known as “Hangtown” due to the grisly hangings that once took place there, Placerville got an early start thanks to its proximity to the original gold discovery site. As the gateway to the mines and important supply point for overland travelers, Placerville became California’s third largest city. Philip Armour of meat-packing fame and John Studebaker who worked in a wheelbarrow shop and later graduated to automobiles, both got their starts here selling to the miners. After lunch, tour **Gold Bug Park & Mine** which operated from 1888 until World War II. Also on site is a stamp mill and a visitor center with gift shop.

On your way back to Sacramento, stop in Old Town Folsom, a collector’s paradise, to stroll through the many unique specialty shops and antique stores on historic Sutter Street.

#### ◆DAY 4 – MOTHER LODE COUNTRY◆

Continue your exploration of the gold country today, stopping in some of the historic Gold Rush towns that dot historic Highway 49, also known as the **Mother Lode Road**. **Sutter Creek** is one of the most beautifully preserved of the Mother Lode towns. Nestled in a small valley among rolling hills, this picture-postcard community still maintains its Gold Rush heritage and evokes a sense of peace and tranquility. Shopping opportunities abound on Main Street where Gold Rush-era buildings with overhanging balconies house antique shops, galleries and boutiques.

Further south is **Jackson** where water, not gold, was initially the reason for the town’s existence. A dependable spring made it a natural way station for thirsty travelers, and soon it became a trading center and transportation depot. Rich quartz deposits were discovered in the 1850s, and two mines here became the deepest and most productive gold mines in the United States. A walking tour of the town showcases many historic buildings from the

1860s, including the Oddfellows Building that was reputedly the tallest three-story building in the U.S. in 1863.

After a brief stop in **Angels Camp**, the setting for Mark Twain’s famous “Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” arrive in **Murphys**, a town that seems frozen in time and where Gingerbread Victorians peek shyly from behind white picket fences. The history of gold will come alive during a **tour and tasting at Ironstone Vineyards**. View a fascinating display depicting the rich history of gold and viticulture in the region and “Ironstone’s Crown Jewel,” a 44-pound crystalline gold specimen. Modeled after a 19<sup>th</sup> century gold stamp mill, the magnificent three-story building houses The Ironstone Heritage Museum and Gallery and a gorgeous tasting room complete with the original A.J. Bump antique Brunswick Bar brought around the Horn from New York in 1907.

In the late afternoon arrive at your destination for the next two nights, **Sonora** – a town first settled during the gold rush by miners from Sonora, Mexico, and quickly became one of the wickedest towns in the Mother Lode.

#### ◆DAY 5 – YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK◆

**Yosemite National Park** embraces a spectacular tract of mountain-and-valley scenery in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Set aside as a national park in 1890, at this time of year it harbors a grand collection of colorful maples, dogwoods, oaks and aspens dominating an already awesome landscape.



On a **guided tour** you’ll be witness to these spectacular colors as well as some of the most majestic sights in the world, due in part to Yosemite’s unique, glacier-shaped cliffs and rock faces. Your day of sightseeing will be highlighted by such miraculously beautiful sights as **El Capitan**, **Half Dome**, and **Yosemite Falls**. Browse in Yosemite Village and visit the **Ansel Adams Photography studio** before lunch at the renowned and beautiful **Ahwahnee Hotel** in their Grand Dining Room. After a full day of sightseeing, the remainder of the evening is yours to explore Sonora at your leisure.

#### ◆DAY 6 – CENTRAL VALLEY, FAREWELL◆

After the Gold Rush, the gold country hit its second hey day in the late 1800’s with the romantic era of steam trains. This morning visit **Railtown 1897 State Historical Park** in **Jamestown**, home to the Historic Sierra Railroad Shops and Roundhouse (one of the last authentic, operating roundhouses in the country). This one-of-a-kind attraction combines industrial heritage and railroad history with the lore of Hollywood’s film industry. Known as the “movie railroad,” it’s been featured in more than 200 movies, TV shows and commercials including *High Noon*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and *Back to the Future III*. Take a guided tour of the roundhouse complete with Hollywood “props” and then take a ride on the vintage steam-powered train through the picturesque countryside. **Jamestown**, or “Jimtown” as it was once called, was also the site of the first gold discovery in Tuolumne County.

As you head west into California’s Great Central Valley, make a stop at **Hilmar Cheese Company** where over one million pounds of cheese are produced daily! It is the largest cheese and whey products manufacturer in the world. On a **guided tour** learn how cheese is made and sample several varieties of cheese. Then, in the **Over the Moon Deli** enjoy one of their signature sandwiches, salads or their famous cheese chowder before making your return trip home with many pleasant memories of your time celebrating trees and their spectacular colors during California’s Fall Foliage.



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