



Ultimate Gold Rush Tour

Sample Itinerary-8 Day Tour



Filled with colorful history, humor, ghosts, heroes, villains and tall tales, the California Gold Rush was one of the most intriguing and entertaining times in our history. On this tour you will follow the footsteps of California's early pioneers from San Francisco through Sacramento, the foothills, Lake Tahoe and Yosemite. Along the way you'll enjoy some of Northern California's present-day bounty of entertainment, adventure and world-famous cuisine.

DAY 1 - Arrive in San Francisco

Just like the famous 49ers of the Gold Rush, you'll start your trip in the City by the Bay. Meet your fellow travelers at a welcome reception and explore the city on your own



After fending off the bandits, you'll enjoy the Old Sacramento historic waterfront district where prospectors once stocked up on mining supplies and blew their riches in the saloons. Today, the wooden boardwalks and historic buildings are filled with museums, restaurants and an assortment of shopping options.

This is also the spot where the Pony Express Trail meets its western end.

DAY 2 - San Francisco - Sacramento

See the sights in SF including Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39, cable cars and more. Enjoy an early dinner in S.F. before heading - like so many 49ers did - to Sacramento for the evening.

Old Sacramento is anchored by California State Railroad Museum at the western end of the Transcontinental Railroad. Step inside and see the original Golden Spike, locomotives and railroad cars from throughout the history of the rails.

DAY 3 - Sacramento

After the discovery of gold, Sacramento developed quickly as the commerce center of the region.

You'll also visit the California State Capitol building and its historic grounds. Sacramento has been the capital of California since 1854 and the building dates back to the 1860s.

Guard your valuables as your group will be welcomed to Sacramento by a rowdy group of period-costumed gunfighters. Though grizzled and dusty, they are a harmless bunch.

Sutter's Fort is one of the most important locations tied to the Gold Rush. This is where John Sutter originally set up shop to provide rest and accommodations to weary pioneers (famously, the Donner Party). After the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848, the fort was all but abandoned, but its place in history is forever intact.

The Gold Rush is also responsible for creating the earliest forms of California Cuisine. Some of the finest chefs of the time worked their way west to cater to the wealthy businessmen



and lucky prospectors of the region. This evening you'll be treated like the "Big 4" railroad barons as you dine at [Mulvaney's Building & Loan](#) which focuses on the fresh produce of our rich agricultural region.

DAY 4 - Sacramento - Truckee - North Lake Tahoe

Trace the footsteps of the 49ers as you depart Sacramento for the foothills.

[Empire Mine](#) in Grass Valley was the richest hard rock mine in California's history. You'll get to tour this amazing operation and learn the ins and outs of hard rock mining.

In the town of Truckee, you'll enjoy shopping, restaurants and more Donner Party history as you visit the Emigrant Trail Museum at [Donner Memorial State Park](#). This is the infamous spot where the Donners were trapped in an unexpectedly early snowstorm in the autumn of 1846.

From there, you'll travel to Crystal Bay on the border between California and Nevada where you'll enjoy the scenic beauty of [Lake Tahoe](#) and the [casinos](#) of Nevada.

DAY 5 - North Lake Tahoe - South Lake Tahoe

Cruise along the Western shore of Lake Tahoe past famous locations such as Emerald Bay and [Vikingsholm](#), the

historic castle-like former home of the wealthy Knight family.

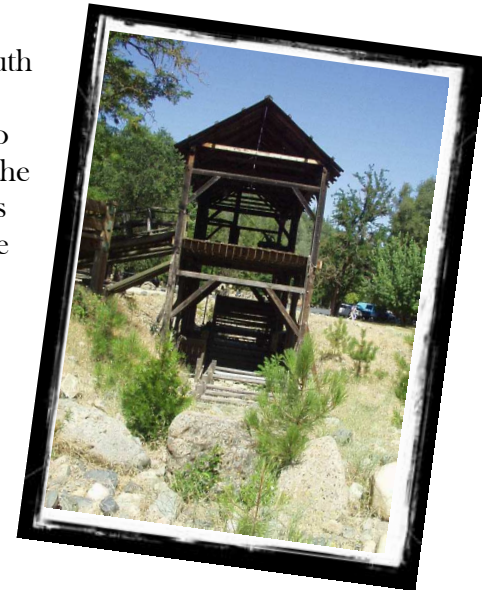
In South Lake Tahoe, glitzy in comparison to the North side, you'll experience upscale shopping and a great variety of

large casinos. To see some of the most awe-inspiring views in the world, you'll take a trip on the gondola to the top of the mountain at [Heavenly Ski Resort](#).

In the evening you'll enjoy a dinner/dance cruise on the [MS Dixie](#) paddle wheeler.

DAY 6 - South Lake Tahoe - Placerville - Sutter Creek

As you cruise down highway 50 from South Lake Tahoe to Placerville, be sure to keep an eye out for the historic mile markers along the road. Made of granite and originally carved by inmates at Folsom Prison, these markers were placed when Highway 50 was still a wagon trail.



A trip up to Coloma will take you to [Marshall Gold Discovery State Park](#) and the exact spot where the Gold Rush started. This is the home to Sutter's Mill where James Marshall first saw that glimmer in the river back in 1848.

[Historic downtown Placerville](#), known as Hangtown during the Gold Rush for its particular brand of frontier justice, today provides antique shops, cafes and the oldest hardware store west of the Mississippi.

Drive through the picturesque rolling foothills to the town of Sutter Creek to get a true gold mining experience. At [Sutter Gold Mine](#) you'll enjoy a mine tour and take your shot at panning for gems and gold.

The foothills of Amador County are a well-known wine producing region and home to over 50 wineries. This evening you'll get your first sip of regional flavors as you head to Plymouth for dinner at [Taste Restaurant](#).

DAY 7 - Sutter Creek - Calaveras Big Trees - Columbia - Sonora

This morning you'll see some of the best preserved Gold Rush era main streets, including Sutter Creek, Amador City, Jackson and Angels Camp, the town made famous by Mark Twain in his story "[The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County](#)."



From there, you'll head to the town of Murphys where you'll visit the historic [Murphys Hotel](#). Check the guest registry for familiar names like Ulysses S. Grant and Mark Twain.

For lunch, you'll experience another fine wine of the foothills as you tour the home of [Ironstone Vineyards](#).

Just a short drive up Highway 4 will take you to the appropriately named [Calaveras Big Trees State Park](#). The giant Sequoias in the groves here are some of the largest in the world.

Just a bit down the road is the town of [Columbia](#). During the Gold Rush, this small town quickly grew to become California's 3rd largest city. Today, it is the best preserved original Gold Rush town in California with most of its 30-something buildings dating back to the early 1850s.

Continue on to another Gold Rush era gem, the town of Sonora where you'll enjoy dinner and stay for the night.

DAY 8 - Sonora - Yosemite - Sacramento

The time of the Gold Rush was also the time that preservationists began the push to protect the natural beauty of our land. Today, a trip to [Yosemite](#) is just as stunning as it was 150 years ago. Spend the afternoon exploring this natural wonder and imagine what early pioneers must have thought as they crossed the Sierra Nevada Range and stumbled upon this majestic place.



Then it's back to Sacramento for one final dinner with your peers aboard the Sacramento Hornblower river cruise ship. In the days before automobiles, travel on the Sacramento River between SF and

Sacramento was a popular option and tonight you'll get to experience it for yourself as part of your closing night festivities.

DAY 9 - Depart OPTIONS

- If tours can be scheduled accordingly, DAY 3 can be highlighted by Sacramento's hugely popular Second Saturday Celebration which brings art, music, food and entertainment to the streets of midtown on the second Saturday of each month.

This is a sample itinerary to use as a guideline when you plan your own tour. When you're ready to personalize a tour for your group please contact:

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