

English virtual trip to Yosemite National Park

First day 28/04/20:

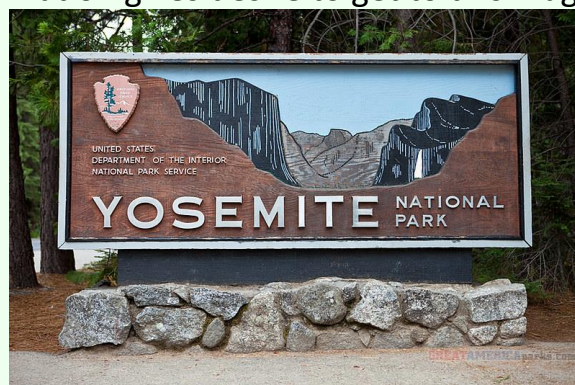
This incredible day finally started. After a long flight to the United States of America we have finally arrived at sunrise to sunny San Francisco and without wasting a minute, we left for Yosemite National Park located at approximately 165 miles.



I was so excited when I saw the Western slopes of Sierra Nevada Mountains which started to appear. This meant that we were close to this special place in the nation's soul with its greatest treasures. For this first day, I have decided once we got to the hotel, to learn more about this incredible place we came to visit and found a lot of breathtaking information about the park.



First of all, sculptured by glaciers after the Ice Age, the park covers around 1200 square miles and contains five vegetation zones offering a jaw-dropping scenery. This information gives desire to get to this magical place.



I discovered also places that must be visited by everyone who wants to feel the power of nature. The first one is *Tunnel View*, a panorama which leaves visitors of all generations in silence and speechless.



The refreshing mist of *Bridal Veil Fall* and the granite face of *El Capitan* make us feel the majesty of nature. In the background, *Half Dome* rises and takes our looks deeper in the valley.



The park's roads follow the *Merced River*, a wild and scenic waterway which thunders and tumbles while falling from the valley walls and then becomes quiet, peaceful and lined to beaches and forests.

Franklin Roosevelt described his impressions of being in this park by telling: "It was like lying in a great solemn cathedral, far vaster and more beautiful than any built by the hand of the man".

Nature is impressive and this site is full of unpredictable things and we need it to escape from the artificiality we are used to.

This park is a real chance to practice hiking to reach the most stunning places in this country. For example, *Four Mile Trail* and *Glacier Point* give amazing outlooks to see the entire valley in its glory. *Mist trail* gives the opportunity to observe the stunning spectacle of *Vernal* and *Nevada* falls.



John Muir, the naturalist who led to designation of Yosemite as one of America's national parks said: "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike".

Today, we decided to visit Yosemite Village where we explored the culture of the valley's first inhabitants and went to the Visitor's Center where I found interesting to learn about artists and miners. This helped me to get along the information from the audio guide we listened to. Interesting and necessary information to understand the importance of this park in the country.



We had an incredible chance to participate in one of the multiple activities offered by the park: a bike tour! We had access to loops along the river as well as dreamy meadows filled with wildflowers.



There are other activities such as climbing *El Capitan*, a 3000-foot high granite monolith, hiking for people of all levels and just enjoying this wonderful nature.

We only saw a small part of this wide and powerful universe but I am already filled with emotions and my spirit is getting cleaned by the fresh and unique air I breathe here.

Second day 29/04/20:

Today is a wonderful day to finally visit the park and take some incredible photos of Yosemite National Park!

We started our amazing visit with *Glacier point* where I discovered the stunning panorama of the entire valley.



We do not even realize until we get here the power of nature, its beauty that can't be found in what humans create. This place has even his own newly cool air.



While living in cities we forget how untouchable our world can be and how wonderful it is to see it like this: wild, full of surprises and even moving!!

Our next destination was *Sentinel Dome* which didn't leave us indifferent as everything we can observe here. Located on the southwest of *Glacier Point*, this granite dome amazes and surprises by the height from which we observe all the nuances of the valley and we have an impression that we are in the center of a particular universe which is Yosemite. The weather was beautiful and the colors of nature met forming a living, joyful and welcoming whole. The lightly blowing wind seemed like being the heartbeat of Earth. It is incredible and surprising how in one place forests, mountains and waterfalls can be joined.

Here are some amazing photographs I took in this gorgeous place because it is far easier to feel than to explain:



Here is this awesome panoramic view!

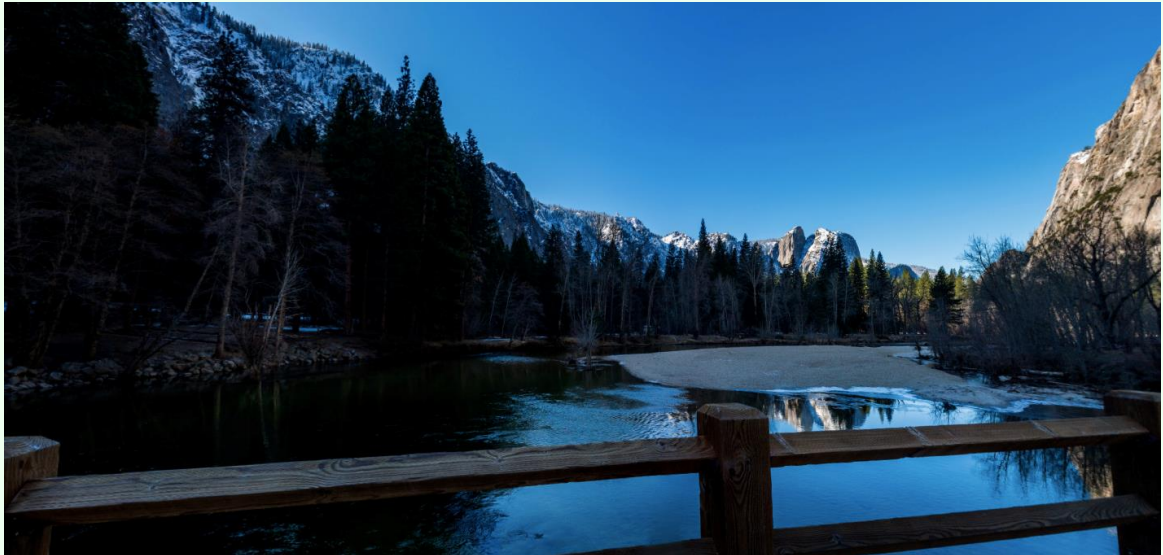


Our planet has an incredible beauty and we need to protect it at all costs.



Just look at this magnificent beauty that is present even in the deepest background on the photograph!!

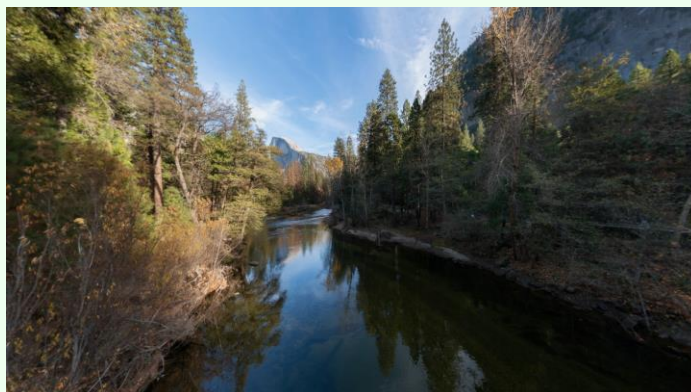
We decided as well to take a look at some other amazing locations to see the entire valley. We stopped at *Swinging Bridge* near *Merced River* which forms a wild and scenic waterway which can be calm and then start to thunder from valley walls.



Our next stop was *Yosemite Falls* views and we had a wonderful opportunity to climb on the top of one of them.



After this complicated but full of beautiful views climb, we visited *Mirror Lake* with its clear and shimmering lights in the water.



This amazing and quite busy day gave me an incredible experience of hiking and discovering our planet from different angles. The only problem was an enormous amount of people in every site of this park. Though, it is obvious because the park is visited by 4 million visitors each year from all over the world!

Third day 30/04/20:

Today, we decided to discover camping in Yosemite. First of all, I gathered some information about camping in this huge, incredible park. People have always enjoyed the tradition of camping in parks to feel the wild nature and we decided to try this experience as well. But finding a campsite is not that easy. In total, there are 13 campgrounds located in Yosemite Valley, Hodgdon Meadow and Wawona.

Each of them has bear-proof food lockers, picnic tables and fire pits with grills and obviously running or creek water and vault or flush toilets. Each campsite is made for 6 people and 2 cars and overflow parking is available. In the park, are also located 3 dump stations.

Moreover, it is very hard to get a campsite in the summer and a reservation is required for campgrounds 5 months in advance. Still, outside of Yosemite are campgrounds which don't require reservation. Their advantage is that they are more natural and less crowded: first come, first serve sites.

We made a reservation and had a campsite. I am so excited to try this wildlife experience. Our journey started with preparing everything we need and moving to the campsite. As we got there, we placed our food in lockers and organized our campsite.



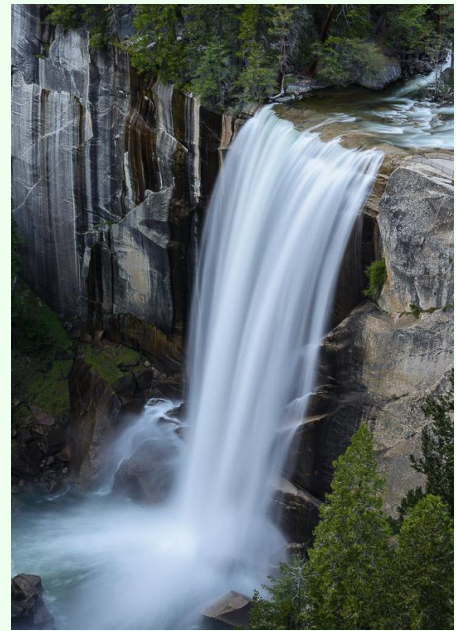
Location just near a beach gave us an opportunity to swim as the weather was perfectly calm and warm. It really changes from our everyday life when you wake up in nature and have a chance to see life in its natural state. We took some time to observe birds as one of the activities offered by the park. A multitude of birds live in this region and the forest is filled with music composed of sounds of different species. By looking more precisely we can even distinguish them and see their multiple colors. We also got a quite short but very interesting and stunning walk to see the famous *Vernal and Nevada falls*.



You feel so tiny near this amount of water falling from these high mountains!



“Water is the most perfect traveler because when it travels it becomes the path itself!”



We decided then to have diner outside and spend a wonderful time around the fire, speaking and laughing. Food prepared outside after a day of travelling is the best part of it. We became also part of a wonderful sunset. I saw a sunset like this only in this extraordinary park. As it was getting darker, it was getting colder but nothing can describe how precious moments like these are.



At this moment you really understand that Earth doesn't need people but people need nature. Everything: oceans, soil, forests, is what nature has created and our actions will determine our fate. Still, we continue to destroy what it creates.

One poem wisely said:

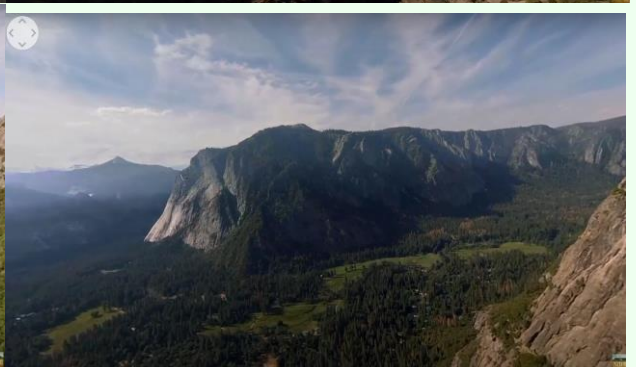
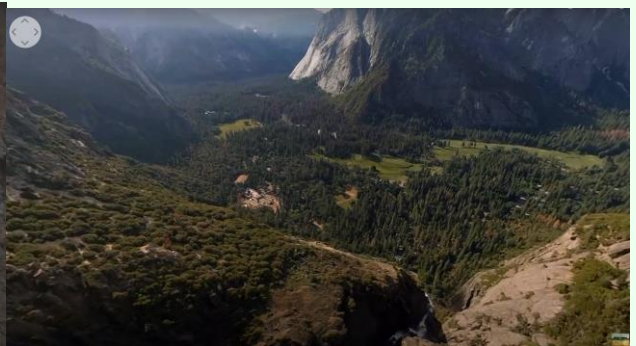
« When one tree falls you may not hear it but when one million falls you will feel it ». And it is true, I don't imagine our life without this perfect beauty I see here.



Camping at Yosemite Park is having fun, discovering its treasures, watching sunsets and feeling as part of this wild world. The only inconvenience is that there are a lot of people around you in the campgrounds and sometimes they make a lot of noise.

Fourth day 01/05/20:

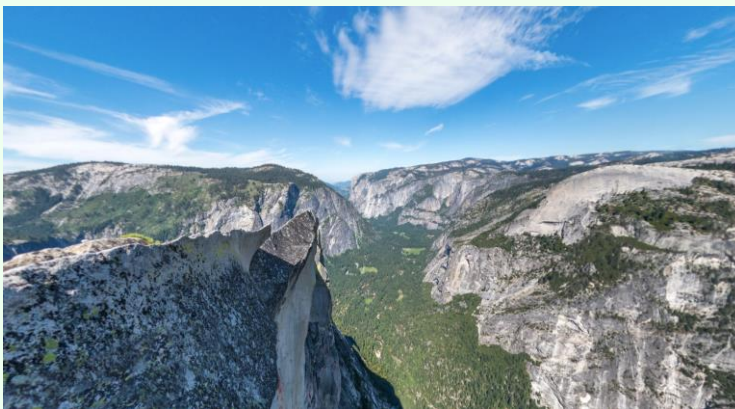
Today we have decided to try an amazing and breathtaking activity which is hang gliding. It is a sport which consists in flying in lightweight unpowered aircraft which can be carried by the pilot. Take-off, which consists in making a step into pure freedom, into the air was really scary. Far under you, you can see the Earth. Here are some views we had a chance to explore.



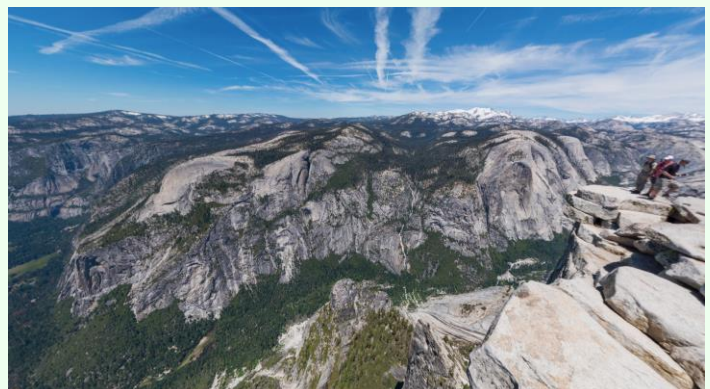
When you fly away like a bird, you discover a whole new reality which is tangibly different from anywhere on the planet. I saw one more time that this place holds magic like nowhere else. It feels very special when birds fly just near you, on the same height and you see everything what is around you. This experience was something completely new for me and I really enjoyed it. We are not meant to fly but we all wish we were. We always try to discover our sky, this warm and protective blanket wrapped around everyone on Earth.

Fifth day 02/05/20:

This day started with a visit of *Diving Board* and of *Half Dome summit* where we had a chance to see the other side of the Valley and make some photos of this incredible place. These viewpoints are also the most difficult to get to because there is no trail leading to it, but it can be reached by hiking *Muir or Mist trails* and some climber's routes up the rock.



Just have a look at these wonderful and deep colors of the sky and of forests!



In the following hours we went for small walks to discover all of the nuances of the park and to spend our time outside.



Yosemite really shows the diversity of life with its exceptional natural beauty.



As the sky was clear, we decided to try stargazing in Yosemite. We had first of all the chance to learn about this process in details. From Yosemite, we can observe 200 million stars which form an infinite amount. In cities, light pollution is so intense that it does not give a chance to feel the sense of scale by simply looking at the sky. Astronomers come from all over the world to do public programs and share their knowledge, take their equipment to share views. Photographers come to this place full of power to show the beauty of Yosemite through nighttime skies. Stargazing is therefore an important part of this park and it deserves being protected. The dark night sky team enables you to see, with digital imagery, the levels of light pollution to be able to take measures with nearby communities to help to preserve that night sky experience. Therefore, it shows that we need to reduce that pollution by taking measures.

So, we attended one of the programs and the astronomers showed amazing views such as:



This is the nearest galaxy we can see through special and precise equipment.



This is how our observations went.



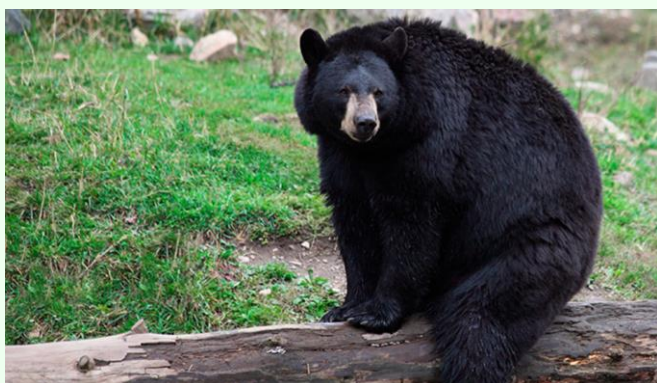
I realized that when we come from crowded cities, we can't appreciate how profound and magnificent a night sky is. In this park, once you get dark-adapted, you can see your shadow from the Milky Way. It is an experience of a lifetime which reminds us how small we are in this giant universe full of stars, nebulas and galaxies which shine as million lights. It is incredible to learn what is out there in the universe and observe the Moon and all the stars in their glory. At the same time, I was shocked how we make this magic sky sick, polluted and off balance. "I was pushed to a limit and now nature can't control itself anymore. I am not worried of myself." This is a quote from a poem which reveals the cruelty of our actions. Nature is a source, it gives but can always take back. This day amazed me by not only our planet's extraordinary beauty but also the magnificence of the whole universe. Still, it reminded me of taking measures to stop damaging our nature and be careful with our actions towards it.

Sixth day 03/05/20:

During all these days, we spent in Yosemite park, we heard that around 500 black bears are living here and that while we are camping, we can encounter one of them. For our security we learnt more about black bears and what we need to do if we see one. Actually, humans have many similarities with bears which seems incredible! They are in an unusual situation because they are roughly our size, eat the same foods and they compete with us. They spend the majority of time looking for food to get as much as they can on a daily basis to get prepared to times when they won't get any. What is very important is that they can have a very complex diet due to their mental capabilities of recording where foods are located, they have a wonderful sense of smell and good sense of sight.



When Yosemite became a national park the interaction between bears and humans were very frequent. The cause was the fact that trash and waste wasn't stored which led to bears becoming more conditioned, and used to human presence.



Dumps were located everywhere which led to the fact that bears started to come to campgrounds. Bears also understood that aggression is a powerful tool to scare people. Humans became a source of food and the only solution was to make food unavailable.

So, bear-proof lockers were installed everywhere in the park to store human food and protect therefore humans from bears who try to find food. The park's goal is as well to protect bears because this is the place where they belong and everyone has a chance to make this place wilder and more stunning.



Today, we saw a real bear coming towards our campground. They seem really well-equipped and perfectly adapted. They were very curious and tried to find something edible. They seemed to be calculating every step they make. It is such a thrill being just close to them. Life with wild bears needs constant vigilance but they are fascinating to watch. The most important is to stay calm and not run away to avoid dangerous reactions. Living with bears is an exceptional experience, frustrating and still amazing which gives you a chance to see animals in their real nature.



Yosemite is a chance to discover another world, their world!



After this breathtaking experience we visited the famous *Tunnel View* overlook where we can see *Bridal veil* fall as well as *El Capitan*, a massive rock that depicts the power of nature.

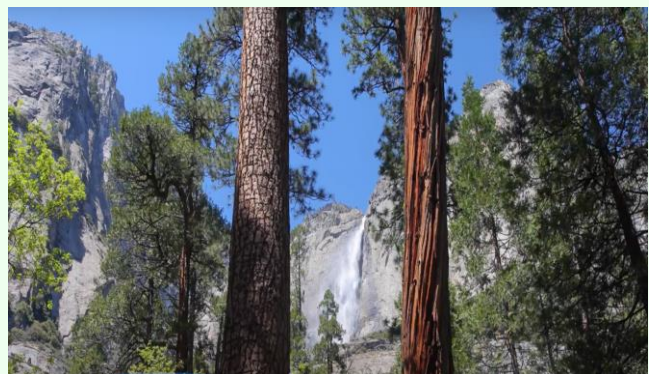


I also decided to use this last full day to do some hiking in the forests covered with wildflowers and trees.



Nature in this place is so unpredictable with its highest pics, green, calm valleys and wild forests! In every site you can find different scenic views.

« Nature says to everyone something unique: be as I am, be magnificent, be wise and never stop growing ! »



Seventh day 04/05/20:

Just before leaving for the airport, I decided to watch the sunrise at Yosemite park and take some photos to remember this unique moment.



I also had the chance to visit *Gates of the Valley*. Everywhere in this place the water is so pure that it looks like a mirror in which you can see yourself easily. It is incredible because in cities you will rarely find such a clear water. In this park we find lakes and small waterfalls almost everywhere and each one of them has its own particular and inspirational beauty.



This was an amazing trip that gave me a wonderful chance to discover nature's treasures that we can't see in cities. I cleaned my spirit and became I part of this

community where bears live with humans and humans discover wild but amazing places such as waterfalls, meadows and mountains full of wildflowers, bird songs and fresh air. I will always remember these breathtaking night sky views with their millions of stars. I had an opportunity to learn new things, gain experience of living in nature and hear this nature itself. I enjoyed every minute of being here and these memories will never fade.

It is time to leave now!



One day I will return to this amazing place!