

Playing with Light: Here's How to See Yosemite's Firefall Now



There's a lot to be said for being in exactly the right place at the right time. In the case of Yosemite National Park's rare natural phenomenon, **Firefall**, it's everything. It's no surprise the two-week annual spectacle at Horsetail Fall caused by sunlight hitting the waterfall at precisely the right moment—happening now through February 25th—has attracted renowned photographers, nature enthusiasts and throngs of visitors from around the globe. If you plan on attempting to get in on the action (pending perfect weather conditions), here's what you need to know.



Evergreen Lodge Welcome Sign

Firefall Origins

In the late 1800s, Charles Peregoy, innkeeper of the defunct Mountain House perched at the edge of Glacier Point—now known as Horsetail Fall, an ephemeral waterfall on the eastern edge of El Capitan—built nightly bonfires and pushed fiery hot embers over the edge to illuminate the falls with a lava-like glow for hotel guests and onlookers. Due to sustainability reasons, the event, aptly named “firefall” was halted in 1968. Five years later, late photographer Galen Rowell fatefully happened upon the natural wonder, and captured it with his camera.



Aerial View of Rush Creek Lodge

Firefall 101

Be sure to check the park [website](#) for details on advanced reservations (required for all visitors to drive into Yosemite). Don't forget to pack a camera, hat, extra warm layers, sturdy hiking or walking shoes, binoculars, and a flashlight or headlamp. You'll likely need to walk a distance to the prime viewing spot at El Capitan Picnic Area.



Evergreen Lodge

Staying Overnight

Other lodging options include the 20-acre [Evergreen Lodge at Yosemite](#), built in 1921 and consisting of 88 cabins (some with gas fireplaces) and 21 camping sites, and sister property [Rush Creek Lodge & Spa](#) with an indoor-outdoor spa, a heated saltwater pool, and fireside s'mores.



Rush Creek Lodge



Fire pit at Evergreen Lodge