

R U S H C R E E K L O D G E  
C A L I F O R N I A , U S A

Yosemite's waterfalls, hot springs and wildflowers inspire spa journeys at this woody chic resort a short drive from the renowned National Park.



Everyone has their favorite season in Yosemite – for some, it's fall when maples and dogwoods explode in a riot of autumnal colors along the valley floor; for others, the draw is winter when it's possible to snowshoe among giant sequoias or ski at California's oldest resort, Badger Pass.

Set among 20 forested acres less than a mile from the park's western entrance, Rush Creek Lodge & Spa is a sophisticated back-to-nature base to pair such adventures with healing downtime in the Sierra Nevada. Set back from the saltwater pool, lodge rooms are adorned with log cabin-style touches like wool blankets and wood etchings, with books and board games instead of televisions. Equally charming, although slightly more private, are the hillside suites and villas, which have spacious decks with forest and sunset views and cast iron gas fireplaces.

Home to a trio of hiking and biking trails, a guest lounge and an all-day restaurant, the biggest draw at Rush Creek is undoubtedly its 5,000-square-foot [spa](#). Surrounded by towering pine trees, the indoor/outdoor space pays homage to the natural beauty of the beloved national park. In fact, just being here feels akin to forest bathing. Stone, wood and water are incorporated across amenities and relate to Yosemite in some way – from the restorative warm waterfall cove and a cool mist shower (inspired by local favorite hiking spot, Carlon Falls) to a granite waterfall mineral hot tub and warm river rock beds in the lovely covered outdoor lounge area.

Spa director Gigi Richardson encourages guests on [Yosemite-inspired wellness journeys](#) to join one of the lodge's naturalist-guided [hikes and tours](#) (snowshoeing to the Dewey Point overlook and around the Merced Grove of giant sequoias are popular, but the full-day "Wonders of Yosemite" hits iconic sights like Half Dome, El Capitan and Tunnel View) in combination with therapies such as the hot stone Hiker's Delight massage and a magnesium foot soak – perfect after a day on the trails. Respected Hungarian skin care line Eminence is used for facials and body scrubs, although wildflowers like butterfly pea also feature in foot soaks and massages.

When blanketed with snow, the lodge becomes a rather spellbinding winter wonderland with plenty of places to get cozy outside the spa and those hillside suites. Heated year-round, a dip in the swimming pool isn't totally out of the question, although a soak in the hot tub and toasting s'mores beside one of the fire pits with a whisky cocktail from the Tavern might appeal more.

Star bathing, or "mindful stargazing," was recently tapped as the next big wellness trend, and Yosemite's dark skies are some of the best in California to gaze up at planets and distant galaxies, especially during winter. Quite possibly the dreamiest way to round out a stay at Rush Creek Lodge & Spa is by joining one of their [star guides](#) on a tour into the park that encourages everyone to slow down and take in the majesty of the Sierra Nevada night sky before bedtime. [www.rushcreeklodge.com](http://www.rushcreeklodge.com)

