

HIGH SIERRA FUN TRIP

July 24 and 25

Hello High Sierra Travelers---

Next month, we'll be departing on our adventure over some of the higher passes of the Sierra along with some fun and interesting sights .

Listed below are some addresses that you will want to punch into your GPS:

1. Peet's Coffee & Tea, 1004 White Rock Rd. (suite 100), El Dorado Hills, CA
2. Ironstone Vineyards, 1894 Six Mile Rd., Murphys, CA
3. Calaveras Big Trees State Park, 1170 E. Highway 4, Arnold, CA
4. Topaz Lodge and Casino, 1979 US HWY 395, South Gardnerville, Nevada
5. National Hotel, 18183 Main St., Jamestown, CA

DEPARTURE

We'll form up at 7:30 AM, with an 8:00 AM departure. This will give us time for a group picture, distribution of maps that Tracy is making, and related material. Let's form three lines of 9 or 10 cars. Carl will lead group one, Tracy group two, and Ron group three. We'll have walkie-talkies for the last car in each line. The mountains will make communication difficult, with virtually no cell available on most of highways 4 and 108. Let's do "lights-on" and maintain a fairly tight spacing with each of our three groups. When we need to reform, try to stay with your original group.

Our trip to Peet's Coffee & Tea in Eldorado Hills will be our first "pit stop". Plan to spend about 45'. We'll depart about 9:45 AM for Ironstone Winery. Please form up at the east end of the parking lot, where the exit to the road is signalized, allowing us to make an easy left turn.

IRONSTONE VINEYARDS

We should arrive at Ironstone about 11:15 AM. Turn into the "upper parking" road. Turn into the cemented drive to the right of the first building, where we will be directed to park on the concrete in front of their amphitheater stage. There will be a young lady distributing the box lunches you have ordered on stage. Behind her are restrooms and an elevator to take you to the tasting room located in the building to your right, with many tables to sit and enjoy your lunch and sip a little wine, should you so choose. When you exited the elevator, their museum was immediately to your left. Check out the 48 pound gold nugget on display for us to see.

We'll depart Ironstone about 1:00 PM

CALAVERAS BIG TREES PARK

We have pre-paid discounted group tickets to pick up and disburse to everyone as we check in with the ranger at the entry kiosk. Drive all the way through past the visitor's center and on past the huge stump on the left. We'll try to park "in line" where the road curves and there are numerous slotted parking spaces on the right (again, we'll overpark

these by parking in line). Wendy Harrison, our ranger/naturalist has suggested we meet at the big redwood “dancing stump” that we passed when going to our parking area, where we’ll divide into several groups for a one hour exploratory tour of Big Trees, each led by a guide. Let’s plan on leaving for Topaz Lake Lodge at 3:00 PM. ***Make certain to take advantage of the restrooms before leaving the Park, as Topaz Lodge is about 2 hours and 15’ away.*** Bear Valley has limited facilities, but is only 30’ up the road. However, U.S. Forestry campground facilities are one hour out of Big Trees Park at the east side of Pacific Grade, on the left. Another Forestry facility is located about 1 hour and 35 minutes out of Big Trees at Centerville Flat, on the right. Since the roads are narrow and parking for the group difficult, it probably is best for the group to continue directly to Topaz Lodge. If you need to make a “pit” stop, please let your ‘Line Leader’ or “Sweep” know that you are dropping out. Anyone who has to make a stop can easily rejoin us at the Lodge, and proceed to check-in at the desk, with little possibility of getting lost on this stretch. The view from Monitor Pass is a delight as we descend the Eastern Slope of the Sierras.

TOPAZ LAKE LODGE (SUPER EIGHT)

After checking in at the Lodge, be sure to reserve your dinner time at either the coffee shop on the main floor, or the dining room which is located downstairs. Dining is at your leisure. Both have good views of the Lake. The evening is yours to enjoy. A continental breakfast is included for us. We will not be having breakfast with our young marines---- they get up too early!, so do load up. Lastly, it would be a good idea to **gas up** at the **Chevron** station located to the left of the Lodge. Nevada gas prices are surprisingly reasonable at this remote spot.

MARINE CORP MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CENTER

We’ll regroup in the Topaz Lodge parking lot on Thursday morning for an 8:00 AM departure to the “Marine Corp Mountain Warfare Training Center” located about 40 minutes away on CA-108 W on the right side of the road. Upon arrival at the gate, there will be a short waiting period while we wait for a Marine Escort to guide us onto the base. We will continue onto the base “wagon style” to a nearby area where we will park on the **left side** of the road. Lock your cars as base personnel are being told they can view our collection of sport cars while we are on tour.

Our tour will consist of a quick visit to a small Quonset Hut Marine Museum followed by visiting the Main BX and Theatre Building (where there are restrooms). After the Museum, we will go into the Theatre and be given a briefing of the base’s mission and be presented with some show-n-tell information followed by one-on-one time to ask questions of Marines and their personal duties and lives. Before departing the building, Sgt. Major James Kirkland has made arrangements for us to be able to shop in the base’s BX for food, drinks, and souvenirs (key chains, decals, T-shirts, backpacks, hats, etc. etc.).

Be sure to complete your shopping and restroom needs in time to leave with our group. We will have approximately 1.5-2.0 hours on base before leaving for Sonora Pass and Donnell Lake Overlook.

NATIONAL HOTEL, JAMESTOWN

We need to leave our Marines by 11:00 AM, in order to make our late lunch time of 1:00 PM. at the historic National Hotel (1859). But, what beautiful vistas we will see as we cross Sonora Pass (el. 9,624') enroute, along with a photo op stop at Donnell Lake overlook (good restrooms). When we arrive in Jamestown, the best parking is down the drive on the right side of the city park, across the street and east about one block from the Hotel. Directly across the street from our parking spot is Gianelli Vineyards' tasting room (18263 Main St.). For all you wine aficionados information, they were featured on Huell Hauser's "California Gold". They feature many Italian varieties grown on their ranch from vines that were brought over from Tuscany.

The bar at the hotel should be open for mixed drinks and wine, which you can purchase and pay on your own. Lunch will conclude our trip. Some of you will be staying over to explore the gold rush country, others some interesting vineyards, and the rest of us heading back on highway 49. Have a safe and enjoyable trip home.