Welcome to Fall: The Best in America’s West

Our natural landscape in the Eastern Sierra, where rugged granite canyons are carved by rushing streams and framed by an azure sky, offers a spellbinding contrast of colors during autumn—golden, crimson and orange aspen and cottonwoods as far as the eye can see. The best time to see this spectacular array is generally mid-September to mid-October. When you know where to go to see the best fall colors and what activities are in store (using this guide), you’re sure to agree with GORP.com’s rating of the High Sierra as No. 2 for Fall Colors in the U.S.A. Continue reading for more about how our warm days and cool evenings are not only ideal for brilliant color—they’re also wonderful for hiking, horseback riding, fishing, mountain biking and unwinding.

October

Fall Colors Car Show
Bishop

Lone Pine Film Festival
Lone Pine

Deer Hunter BBQ
Walker/Columbia

June Lake Autumn Beer Festival
June Lake

Halloween Festivities
Mammoth Lakes, Tom’s Place and June Lake Heidelberg Inn

For more information on events, please visit websites listed on the back panel.
Bishop Chamber of Commerce, Scenic drive: During fall, Mammoth Lakes brims with glowing leaves. Here are some top spots —

13 Lundy Canyon Scenic drive: A scenic drive, Lundy Canyon ends at a popular hiking trail. Hiking: With a starting-off point in the midst of thick aspen grove, the trail climbs above Wil Creek to terraced sparkling lakes and the cascading Lundy Falls. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

14 Virginia Lakes Scenic drive: The Aspen-lined road follows Virginia Creek up the canyon, where the Virginia Lakes Basin includes eight lakes within two miles (3.2 k). Hiking: With options to connect to Green Creek, the trail offers later-after-lake views, aspen-lined creeks, and dramatic mountain vistas. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

15 Conway Summit Easely viewed from US 395, Conway Summit via fall is a half-laid path cut through winter color (located at 8,900 feet (2,730 m) between Bridgeport and Leaven, this fall valley visitors’ definitely worth a stop at the pull-out. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

16 Bodie State Historic Park Once the wildest town in the West, Bodie is now the West’s largest unrestored ghost town. While there is some fall color in the outfield hills, the "Wild West" history is where the real color is found. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

17 Green Creek Scenic drive: Just two miles (3.2 k) before the town of Bridgeport, Green Creek Road takes you approximately eight miles to the campground and hiking trailhead, where you’ll enjoy views of beautiful meadows and canyon walls splattered with color. Popular activities: Fish the small, pretty fishing lake Dane Pond, which was originally built in the 1990s to serve as a water supply for a hydroelectric plant to provide electricity to Mono. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

18 Twin Lakes Scenic drive: Travel west of Bridgeport along Twin Lakes Road through expansive ranch lands. With views of the Sawtooth Ridge, the lake shimmering blues contrast with simple aspens and cottonwood that line both shores. Popular activities: The Twin Lakes Recreation Area is home to facilities that host some of the best hiking, camping, fishing and boating in the High Sierra. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

19 Sonora Pass Scenic drive: Located 11 miles (18 k) south of Walker, the sage-lined Highway 108 winds through meadows intersected by the scenic west Walker River and past the Marine Corp Mountain Warfare Training Center. Just after the orange-ghost hues of Looft Mill Meadows, the road becomes steep and curvy, (not recommended for trailers). Stop at the pull-out overlook to see Lost Trail. Hiking: Looft Mill Meadows Trail at an easy-grade trail through lush and sunny terrain. Heading up to several pine-surrounded lakes. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

20 Walker River Canyon Scenic drive: Pine, willow and cottonwood line the steep canyon walls along the highway here, which parallels the rushing Walker River — one of the most popular sections of US 395 to drive in fall. Further into the Antelope Valley, terrain widens into ranching land that is distinguished by magnificent mature cottonwood — some more than 100 years old. Twin Lakes marks the border between California and Nevada. Popular activities: Explore the fishing West Walker, and hiking at AVVNP’s Loop Canyon Road and Burcham Flat Road. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

21 Monitor Pass Scenic drive: Less than 10 miles (16 k) south of Walker/Coleville in Northern Mono County, Monitor Pass (Highway 91) offers dramatic fall color vistas due to thick stands of aspen along the pass through the Markleeville and Bishop Valley, in neighboring Alpine County. Resource/Contact: Mono County Tourism & Film Commission, 1-800-940-7622.

Higher elevation roads are subject to winter closures. Tours, Sonora and Monitor passes are closed in winter. Call 1-800-437-5623 for current highway conditions.