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THREE RIVERS

The Big Trees and More

AS NICE AS ORANGE COUNTY IS, you still have to get outta Dodge now and then. Don't overlook Three Rivers, a town four to five hours away by car, and a few winding miles from the southwest entrances to Sequoia National Park. Three forks of the Kaweah River and five waterways offer fishing, boating, and whitewater rafting this time of year. You'll also find hiking, biking, rock-climbing, spelunking, and golf. Should you make the drive in the winter, you won't need chains to get to Three Rivers, but you can rent them for the journey to the 7,000-foot elevations in the park. This town of 2,600 residents, where actors Anjelica Huston and William Shatner have homes, is a great place to relax and enjoy the outdoors. And while the spotty cell phone service may be frustrating, you'll eventually realize it's a godsend.—BARBARA DEMARCO-BARRETT

More B&Bs

Browse bed and breakfasts throughout Three Rivers at threeivers.com.

See

You won't see taller trees than the enormous sequoias of the **GIANT FOREST**. Five of the largest grow here, including the 275-foot General Sherman that's believed to be at least 2,000 years old. Catch a shuttle from town (\$15) for the drive up the mountain. Or grab a daylong tour and sit back on a bus (\$88, adults; \$52, children) as it motors through the forest, with stops at the ruins of a Native American village and for lunch. If golf is how you spend your down time, **THREE RIVERS GOLF COURSE** is open year round (\$30 to \$37). And winter's melting snowpack offers a great afternoon ride from **WHITewater RAFTING** (\$50 per person).

Taste

Visit **ANNE LANG'S EMPORIUM** for a latte and local color, as you sit alongside friendly locals on the deck overlooking the river. The best lunch and dinner take-out is at **SIERRA SUBS AND SALADS**; try the wasabi stinger (\$6). The **PIZZA FACTORY** serves up great pies, such as the large vegetarian (\$19), or choose ravioli (\$7) and Italian staples. Have a sweet tooth? Visit **REIMER'S CANDIES AND GIFTS** for a box of house-made peanut brittle (\$9) for your ride up the mountain. If you're a night owl, the **RIVER VIEW RESTAURANT & LOUNGE** is this little burg's happening place with live music till 1:30 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Relax

This area offers dozens of lodging choices; most are guest cottages or bed and breakfasts. The **SEQUOIA VIEW COTTAGE** is a 900-square-foot, one-bedroom guesthouse with a view of 11,280-foot Alta Peak and the Great Western Divide through a wall of windows. This fully equipped guesthouse feels remote, but is minutes from town. It sleeps four (\$180 for two; \$20 per extra person). **KAWEAH PARK RESORT** offers tent and RV camping (\$38 and up). Campgrounds in the park's highest elevations are usually available through Labor Day. If you want to stay in the park, the upscale **WUKSACHI LODGE**, built in 1999, has 102 rooms (\$129 and up) and is open year-round.