

Yellowstone National Park is a treasure that inspires awe in travelers from around the world. New Zealand and Iceland are known for their geysers, but nowhere are there as many as in Yellowstone. At the heart of Yellowstone's past, present, and future lies volcanism. About 2 million years ago, then 1.2 million years ago, and then again 600,000 years ago, catastrophic volcanic eruptions occurred here. The latest eruption spewed out nearly 240 cubic miles of debris. What is now the park's central portion then collapsed, forming a 28- by 47-mile caldera, or basin. The magmatic heat powering those eruptions still powers the park's famous geysers, hot springs, fumaroles, and mud pots. The spectacular Grand

Canyon of the Yellowstone River provides a glimpse of Earth's interior: Its waterfalls highlight the boundaries of lava flows and thermal areas. Rugged mountains flank the park's volcanic plateau, rewarding both eye and spirit. Yellowstone's wildlife includes the American bison, elk, grizzly and black bears, trumpeter swans, and Yellowstone cutthroat trout. A variety of vegetation types is encountered, from near-desert vegetation around the North Entrance to subalpine meadows and forests on Mt. Washburn. Lodgepole pine covers about 60 percent of the park and constitutes about 80 percent of the forested areas. Yellowstone would be a premier national park for its scenery or its wildlife alone, but its history

also resonates with colorful tales of fur trappers—Jim Bridger and Osborne Russell—and explorers and surveyors, with their photographers and artists. William Henry Jackson's photographs and Thomas Moran's sketches influenced Congress to establish Yellowstone as the world's first national park in 1872. This national park idea has now become a land-use model for many nations, and Yellowstone has evolved from a pleasuring ground and wildlife refuge to be recognized today as an International Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site as well. The guide below can help you choose what to see within the time limits of your Yellowstone visit. We hope it will make your travel more

efficient and rewarding. The guide presents capsule advice on three segments of the park's Grand Loop. This figure-8 shaped road system was designed to present the park's major attractions to travelers. Facilities and services are shown on the maps, and may also be found in the gateway communities—Jackson and Cody, Wyo., and West Yellowstone, Gardiner, Silver Gate, and Cooke City, Mont. Ask at the visitor centers for other publications to help you explore the park. And remember: Park roads sample but a fraction of Yellowstone National Park. The rest is backcountry—traversed by 1,000 miles of trails.

Old Faithful Geyser, by Stan Osolinski

A Guide to the Park and Its Wildlife



Regulations to Protect You and the Park

All wildlife, especially bison and bears, can be dangerous. Keep your distance! Never approach, harass, or feed any animals, even small ones. It is against the law to approach within 100 yards of bears or within 25 yards of other wildlife or within any distance where harassment occurs. Pets must be leashed; they are prohibited on trails and in the backcountry. Camp and build fires only in designated areas. Hot springs and geyser areas are fragile and unstable; stay on trails to protect yourself and features. Throwing coins and

FOR EMERGENCIES, DIAL 911, or (307) 344-7381.

other items into thermal pools damages them and is illegal. Climbing in the Canyon area is dangerous and is prohibited. Swimming or bathing in thermal pools or streams whose waters originate entirely from a thermal spring or pool is prohibited. Boating and fishing permits are required for overnight trips. Discuss your plans with a ranger. It's safer never to hike alone. Always register at the trailhead before your trip. Know how to store your food in bear country. Vehicles and bicycles are prohibited on trails.

Maximum speed limit is 45 mph, lower when posted. Drive defensively! Traffic accidents cause more injuries to visitors than natural hazards. Use pullouts to watch wildlife and allow faster traffic to pass. Be alert for pedestrians and bicyclists. Driving off roads is not permitted.

Defacing park features, collecting natural or archeological objects, picking wildflowers, and littering are illegal. Store your valuables securely and lock your vehicle. Report thefts or accidents promptly to a ranger.

Where to Watch for Wildlife

The best times to see wild animals in summer are early morning and late evening. The Hayden Valley between Fishing Bridge and Canyon, and Pelican Creek east of Fishing Bridge are prime moose territory. Watch for bison in the Hayden Valley, and waterfowl along its Yellowstone River. Watch for elk, bison, pronghorn, and coyotes in the Lamar Valley, and for pronghorn in sagebrush flats near the North Entrance. Bighorn sheep frequent Mount Washburn in summer. Elk and occasional bison are seen in the Midway and Upper

Geysers Basins. The Lewis River environs near the South Entrance are good elk and moose habitat. Watch for mule deer near Old Faithful, Lake, Canyon, and the areas between the North Entrance and Tower.

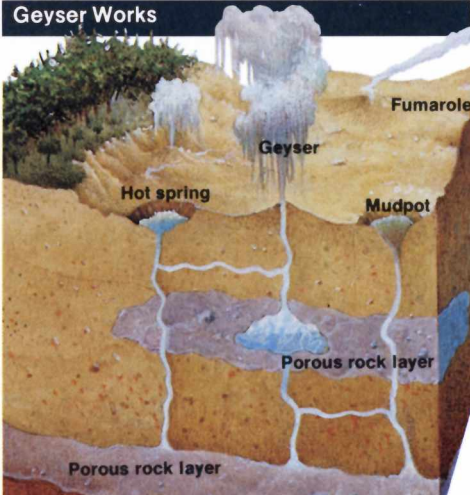
Bear Country

Grizzly and black bears are wild and dangerous. People have been seriously injured and killed by both. Bears appear tolerant of people but may attack without warning. Always view bears from a safe distance. FEEDING WILDLIFE IS UNLAWFUL. Animals who receive handouts often become aggressive and must be destroyed. To avoid personal injury store all food in your car, never in your tent. Dispose of garbage in bear-proof garbage cans. Obtain information on hiking and camping in bear country at a visitor center.



Minerva Terrace, Mammoth Hot Springs, by Jeff Nass

Old Faithful to Mammoth Hot Springs



Surface water seeps down into porous rock layers to be heated under pressure and then rises back up as geysers or hot springs. As superheated water nears the surface, pressure drops and it flashes into the steam of a geyser. Hot

springs occur when water emerges that is not superheated or under pressure. Fumaroles, lacking enough moisture to flow, vent steam. Mud pots form over fumaroles whose acid gases decompose rocks into mud and clay.

One of the main routes to Old Faithful is from the south via Jackson, Wyo., and the South Entrance. The park road crosses the Continental Divide three times. Waters flow east of the divide to the Atlantic, or west to the Pacific. This park route passes five geyser basins—West Thumb, Upper (Old Faithful), Midway, Lower, and Norris—on its way to Mammoth Hot Springs. Sampling the world's largest concentration of geysers, you follow the beautiful Firehole and Gibbon rivers. A visitor center at Old Faithful and museums at Norris tell aspects of the park's stories.

Old Faithful Old Faithful Geyser is the world's best known geyser. Its eruption intervals have long varied around an average of 65 minutes, ranging from 30 to 120 minutes. Recent earthquakes have lengthened the average interval to 75 minutes. Eruption times of nearby geysers are available at the visitor center.



Lower Falls, Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, by Jeff Nass

To Tower Roosevelt and Canyon Village

The road east from Mammoth Hot Springs leads you 4 miles to Undine Falls, then 0.2 miles to Lava Creek (picnicking). Three miles further east look for waterfowl and muskrats at Blacktail Ponds. Next, Blacktail Plateau Drive, a one-way dirt road eastbound, leaves the main road to traverse grass- and sagebrush-covered hills and forests of Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce, and lodgepole pine. Watch for pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and elk. Scattered groves of quaking aspen trees turn gold in autumn. The next side road leads to a petrified redwood tree. Such trees may be found over hundreds of square miles in northern Yellowstone. Some are still in an upright position.

Tower Roosevelt to Northeast Entrance Lamar Valley, accessible all year, is winter range for elk and bison. During the park's main season, you may camp at Slough Creek or Pebble Creek campgrounds en route to the Northeast Entrance, 29 miles from Tower Junction. Beyond lie Silver Gate (1 mile) and Cooke City (4 miles), Mont., and the Beartooth Highway climbs to 10,940 feet at Beartooth Pass.

Tower Roosevelt to Canyon Tower Falls, tumbling 132 feet, was named for the adjacent volcanic pinnacles. Tower Creek flows into the Yellowstone River. South from Tower Falls, as you drive up Mount Washburn, look east, down into prime grizzly bear country on Antelope Creek. This area is closed to human travel, to offer the bears refuge. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FEED OR APPROACH BEARS.** The main road next crosses Dunraven Pass at 8,850 feet elevation, amidst broad-topped whitebark pines and spire-shaped subalpine fir. Meadows produce a profusion of wildflowers during the brief summer. From the Washburn Hot Springs Overlook south of the pass, you can see the Yellowstone caldera. Its north boundary is Mount Washburn and its south boundary is the Red Mountains 35 miles away. You can see the Teton Range on clear days, on the right beyond the Red Mountains.

Canyon A 2.5-mile loop road (one way) leads first to a spur road out to Inspiration Point. The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River plunges 1,000 feet. The canyon's colors were created by hot water acting on volcanic rock. It was not these colors, but the river's yellow banks at its distant confluence with the Missouri River that occasioned the Minnetaree Indian name that French trappers translated as *roche jaune*, meaning yellow stone. The canyon has been rapidly downcut more than once, perhaps by great glacial outburst floods. Little deepening takes place today.

Early Visitors



Since the late 1800s Yellowstone has been a mecca for travelers. The world's first national park was soon a popular success. These folks hiked into the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, where Uncle Tom Richardson served their picnic.

Grandview Point affords spectacular views of the Canyon. Lookout Point affords a vista of Lower Falls, and a steep trail descends to a closer viewpoint. Back on the main road, turn left in 0.3 miles to view the brink of the 109-foot Upper Falls. On the main road again, go 0.6 miles south to Artist Point Road and cross Chittenden Bridge to Uncle Tom's Parking Area. Trails here offer close views of the Upper and Lower Falls. South Rim Drive leads to Artist Point for another view of the canyon and Lower Falls.

Hayden Valley The road here follows the Yellowstone River's meanderings across a former lakebed. After the great glaciers retreated, Yellowstone Lake was much larger than it is today, and this area was then flooded. The lake left fine silt and impermeable clay soil that permits little tree growth but allows rich shrubland that provides food for a variety of wild animals. Waterfowl, including white pelicans and trumpeter swans, abound in marshy areas. In this open parkland you may see moose, bison, and occasionally grizzly bears. **VIEW LARGE ANIMALS ONLY AT A DISTANCE. FROM YOUR CAR OR FROM ROADSIDES.** Do not stop in roadways; use roadside parking areas for your safety. No fishing is allowed for a 6-mile section in Hayden Valley. This provides quiet for the animals and views of untrammeled wilderness scenery for you. Stop at Mud Volcano and see the varied thermal features there. You might see spawning cutthroat trout jumping at Le Hardy Rapids, 3 miles north of Fishing Bridge, in June and July.



Yellowstone Lake, by Jeff Nass

The Lake Area

East Entrance to Fishing Bridge Junction Cody, Wyo., lies 50 miles beyond the East Entrance. As you cross 8,530-foot elevation Sylvan Pass, watch for pikas and yellow-bellied marmots, illustrated above, in the rocky debris of talus slopes. You descend the west slope of the Absaroka Range, an eroded volcanic range named for the Crow Indians. Near Yellowstone Lake a spur road leads to Lake Butte Overlook for a view of this immense body of water. Yellowstone Lake occupies only the southeast quarter of the Yellowstone caldera (see top text). At the overlook you are 4 miles outside the caldera's east boundary. Just north of the lake the Earth's surface has recently risen as much as 1 inch per year. This suggests future volcanic activity here. As you drive along the lake's edge, you can see Steamboat Springs. This is a hot spring remnant located on a line of faults, or fractures in the Earth, that also pass through Mary Bay and Indian Pond to the northwest. Bay and pond both occupy geologically recent hydrothermal explosion craters. The bottom sediments in Mary Bay are still very warm. Watch for moose browsing in the sedge meadows and marshes along Pelican Creek flats as you approach Fishing Bridge.

Exhibits at Fishing Bridge Visitor Center feature the park's birds. Fishing Bridge itself spans the Yellowstone River, the lake's outlet. The bridge was closed to fishing in 1973. Fishing Bridge now offers one of the best wild trout spawning shows anywhere for most of the summer. While pelicans feed on the native cutthroat trout. Because of a high level of bear activity, only hard-sided units are allowed to camp in the Fishing Bridge area.

Yellowstone Lake is North America's largest mountain lake. Over geological time it has drained into the Pacific Ocean, the Arctic Ocean via Hudson Bay, and now drains into the Atlantic via the Gulf of Mexico. It is 20 miles long, 14 miles wide, and 320 feet deep at its deepest point. The average depth is about 139 feet. Trout generally inhabit the upper 60 feet because their foods rarely occur below that depth. The average surface temperature in August is about 60°F, and the bottom temperature never rises above 42°F. Swimming is discouraged even where not prohibited: Such cold waters can cause potentially fatal hypothermia or hyperventilation in minutes.

Boating is permitted on some park lakes. Permits—required for all watercraft—and advice on canoeing and kayaking can be obtained at ranger stations at Lake Village or at Grant Village. A marina is at Bridge Bay and boat ramps are at Grant Village.

Native Fish



Yellowstone has 2 native subspecies of cutthroat trout (top), named for the red marks on lower jaws. Mountain whitefish are also park natives.

Traveling toward West Thumb you may walk or bike a rough spur road, starting south of Bridge Bay, to see the natural bridge for which the area is named, Gull Point Drive loops off the Grand Loop Road for a closer view of the lake's edge.

West Thumb and Grant Village Walk the boardwalk through the geyser basin at lake's edge at West Thumb. Intense heat, measured in lake sediments below West Thumb indicates a shallow thermal system underlying this more recent caldera within the Yellowstone caldera. Should the lake level fall just a few feet, an immense steam (hydrothermal) explosion could occur here. That is what created the craters now filled by Mary Bay and Indian Pond, described above. Exhibits at Grant Village Visitor Center, 2 miles south of West Thumb, highlight the role of fire in Yellowstone. Fishing, boating, and backcountry use permits are available at the ranger station.

For more information about the park write: Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190-0168. Telephone: TDD (307) 344-2386; or (307) 344-7381.

Yellowstone

Services and Facilities

Check the park newspaper for seasonal dates of services and facilities.

- Ranger station
- Campground
- Lodging
- Food service
- Picnic area
- Boat launch
- Store
- Gas station
- Interpretive trail
- Horse rental

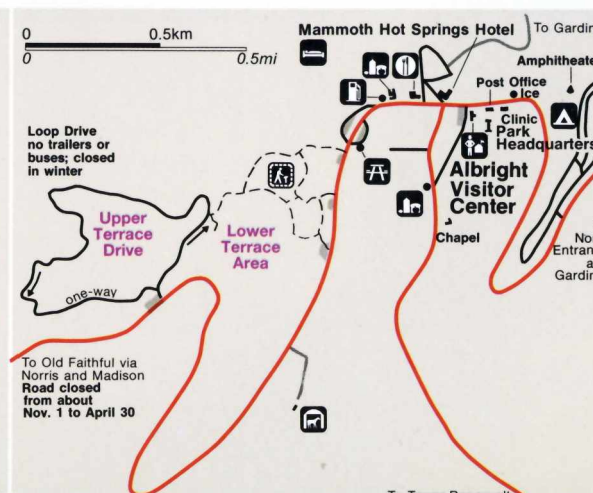
Backcountry use
Get permits required for backcountry camping and trail maps at most ranger stations. Do not use this map for backcountry hiking. There are over 1,000 miles of trails.

Emergencies
For medical or other emergencies, contact a ranger, or call 307-344-7381 or 911.

Winter road closures
From about November 1 to April 30 most park roads are closed. The only exception is the road within the park between the North Entrance and Cooke City. It is open all year.
From about December 15 to March 15, snowmobiles may be used on the unpaved, groomed park roads. Call park headquarters for regulations.

Mammoth Hot Springs

1902m 6239ft



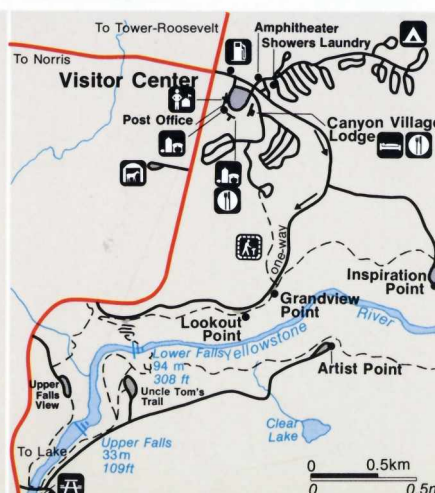
Old Faithful

2254m 7395ft



Canyon Village

2357m 7734ft



West Thumb and Grant Village

2357m 7733ft



Fishing Bridge, Lake Village, and Bridge Bay

2373m 7784ft

