

**Yellowstone National Park**



**Trip Planner**





# Explore Yellowstone Safely

## Welcome

Millions of visitors come to Yellowstone each year to see and experience wild animals in their natural environment, and exceptionally preserved hydrothermal features. This guide aims to help you enjoy and make the most of these opportunities.

## Stay on boardwalks

You must stay on boardwalks and designated trails around hydrothermal features. Delicate formations and the crust surrounding them are thin and break easily, and often overlie scalding water. Visitors have died in thermal features.

- Toxic gases exist at dangerous levels in some areas. If you feel sick, leave immediately.
- Pets are prohibited in hydrothermal areas.
- Swimming is prohibited where water flows entirely from a hydrothermal spring or pool. Where allowed, swim at your own risk. The water can harbor agents of fatal meningitis and Legionnaires' disease.



Follow park happenings online:

[www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell)  
[facebook.com/YellowstoneNPS](https://www.facebook.com/YellowstoneNPS)  
[twitter.com/YellowstoneNPS](https://twitter.com/YellowstoneNPS)  
[twitter.com/GeyserNPS](https://twitter.com/GeyserNPS)  
[youtube.com/YellowstoneNPS](https://www.youtube.com/YellowstoneNPS)  
[flickr.com/photos/YellowstoneNPS](https://www.flickr.com/photos/YellowstoneNPS)  
[instagram.com/YellowstoneNPS](https://www.instagram.com/YellowstoneNPS)

## Leave room for wildlife

**Do not approach wildlife**, no matter how tame or calm they may appear. If any wild animal changes its behavior due to your presence, you are too close. Always obey instructions from park staff on scene.

Big as they are, bison can sprint three times faster than humans can run. No vacation picture is worth personal injury. Your best view may be from inside a hard-sided vehicle.

Do not feed any animals (including birds and squirrels), or allow them to obtain a food reward from you. It is unhealthy, and can lead to aggressive behavior and roadside accidents. Close human presence can be highly stressful to wildlife, forcing them to risk injury and to squander energy reserves needed for reproduction, nurturing offspring, and winter survival.



25 yards (23 m)



100 yards (91 m)



Keep your distance. Federal regulation requires you to stay at least 100 yards (91 m) away from bears and wolves, and at least 25 yards (23 m) away from all other wild animals, such as bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, and coyotes.

## Bear safety

Vacationing in bear country takes appropriate preparation. Be sure to learn what to do if you encounter a bear unexpectedly. Your safety cannot be guaranteed.

If you see a bear while driving, do not stop, and do not block the road. Keep moving to the next paved pullout and park safely. If the bear is within 100 yards, watch and take photographs from inside your car.

Visitors are required to keep all food, garbage, and scented items stored in a bear-proof manner. Tents, truck beds, unattended packs, and picnic tables are not secure.

Bear spray is proven to be highly successful at stopping aggressive behavior in bears.

### Bear Encounters

Check at local visitor centers or ranger stations for recent bear activity and respect all bear management closure areas.

Bears and other wildlife rely on carcasses for food and will protect a food source aggressively. Bears with cubs are especially dangerous.

- If you encounter a bear (*most common*)—Back away slowly. Do not run.

## Hiking in Bear Habitat

- **Be alert** for bears, watch for fresh tracks or scat.
- **Make noise** in areas with limited visibility.
- **Carry bear spray** and know how to use it.
- **Avoid hiking alone**—hike on designated trails, in groups of three or more people.
- **DO NOT RUN.** Bears have an instinct to chase.

- If a bear charges at you (*rare*)—stand your ground and use bear spray.
- If a bear charges and makes contact with you (*very rare*)—fall onto your stomach and “play dead.”
- If a bear persistently stalks you, then attacks (*extremely rare*)—fight back.
- If a bear attacks you in your tent (*extremely rare*)—fight back.

Report all bear encounters and wildlife incidents to a park ranger immediately.



[www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/bearsafety.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/bearsafety.htm)



# Highlights

## History

People have been visiting and living in the Yellowstone area for thousands of years. The park was established in 1872. Visit Mammoth Hot Springs to walk the self-guiding trail around Fort Yellowstone, which chronicles the U.S. Army's role in protecting the park. Other historic sites include the Norris Geyser Basin Museum, the Museum of the National Park Ranger, Obsidian Cliff, and the Old Faithful Inn and Historic District.

## Canyon of the Yellowstone

The spectacular Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, including Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River, can be seen from the overlooks and trails of the Canyon Village area, and from the Tower Fall and Calcite Springs overlooks south of Tower Junction.



Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River



## Geysers and Hot Springs

Geysers, hot springs, mudpots, and fumaroles are evidence of ongoing volcanic activity. To see them, visit Mammoth Hot Springs, Norris Geyser Basin, Fountain Paint Pot and Firehole Lake Drive, Midway Geyser Basin, the Old Faithful area, West Thumb Geyser Basin, and Mud Volcano.

## Yellowstone Lake

Yellowstone Lake is North America's largest high-altitude lake. The area is prime habitat for many birds and mammals. You can also enjoy boating, fishing, hiking, and viewing hydrothermal features.

## Wildlife

You can see a variety and abundance of wildlife unparalleled in the lower 48 states. All the large mammals present when Yellowstone became a park are here today: grizzly and black bears, wolves, mountain lions, elk, bison, pronghorn, moose, and bighorn sheep. You'll also see a variety of birds, including bald eagles. Check visitor centers for best viewing locations.

# Visitor Centers and Museums



## Albright Visitor Center

Located at Mammoth Hot Springs, the center features wildlife dioramas and historic artifacts, a bookstore, trip planning, ranger programs, and the park's only free wi-fi. *Open all year.*

## Canyon Visitor Education Center

Explore the world of Yellowstone's supervolcano. You can see, hear, and learn how the Yellowstone volcano, its geysers and hot springs, and geologic history influence all life found here. *Open May-early October.*

## Open from late May to late September

### Fishing Bridge Visitor Center

Information, bookstore, and exhibits on birds, wildlife, and lake geology.

### Grant Visitor Center

Information, bookstore, exhibits, and video on fire in Yellowstone.

### Madison Information Station

Information and bookstore.

## Old Faithful Visitor Education Center

Discover secrets of geysers and other hydrothermal wonders, and the fascinating story of life in extreme environments. *Open mid April-early November. Winter access via guided snowcoach or snowmobile tours.*

## West Yellowstone Visitor Information Center

Information and publications. *Open late April-early November and winter.*

## Museum of the National Park Ranger, Norris

Exhibits at this historic soldier station on the history of the park ranger profession.

## Norris Geyser Basin Museum

Information, bookstore, and exhibits on the hydrothermal features of Yellowstone.

## West Thumb Information Station

Information and bookstore.



## Programs and tours

### Park ranger programs

Ranger-led activities and programs—from short walks to evening campfire presentations—occur during the summer and winter seasons. Rangers are also roving through major park feature areas. Check visitor centers and the park newspaper for program schedules. Or plan ahead at [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/rangerprog.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/rangerprog.htm)

### Commercial services

There are concessioners, outfitters, and professional guides that operate in the park. Authorized providers are listed at [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/guidedtours.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/guidedtours.htm)

### Especially for children



The *Junior Ranger* and *Young Scientist* programs promote involvement in and understanding of

Yellowstone. Ask about them at visitor centers or learn more on the park website at [www.nps.gov/yell/forkids/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/forkids/index.htm)



### Yellowstone Forever



The park's official non-profit partner offers wildlife watching tours, backpacking trips, and short field study courses. Most programs are based at the Lamar Valley field campus or park hotels.

Yellowstone Forever also sells a complete selection of books and educational materials online and at their 12 park stores in and around Yellowstone. The Deluxe Trip Planner package contains books and maps at a 30% discount over the cost of purchasing each item separately.

Contact 406-848-2400, or visit [www.Yellowstone.org](http://www.Yellowstone.org)

## Activities



Yellowstone's weather is unpredictable. Be prepared for changing temperatures, storms, and emergencies. Most of the park is above 7,500 feet (2,275 m). Allow yourself time to acclimate, and drink plenty of liquids. Visitors with cardiac or respiratory medical history should consult a physician before a visit.

**Hiking** can take you far from roads and crowds. Check trail conditions (i.e., areas of dead trees, stream crossings, etc.) at visitor centers, backcountry offices, or ranger stations.

**Self-guiding trails** are available at Mammoth Hot Springs, Fort Yellowstone, Norris Geyser Basin, Fountain Paint Pot, the Upper Geyser Basin, Canyon, West Thumb Geyser Basin, and Mud Volcano.

**Stock use** depends on trail conditions. Coggins testing is required. Hay restrictions are enforced. Contact the backcountry office for information.

**Swimming** and wading are allowed, but discouraged due to extremely cold water and strong currents.

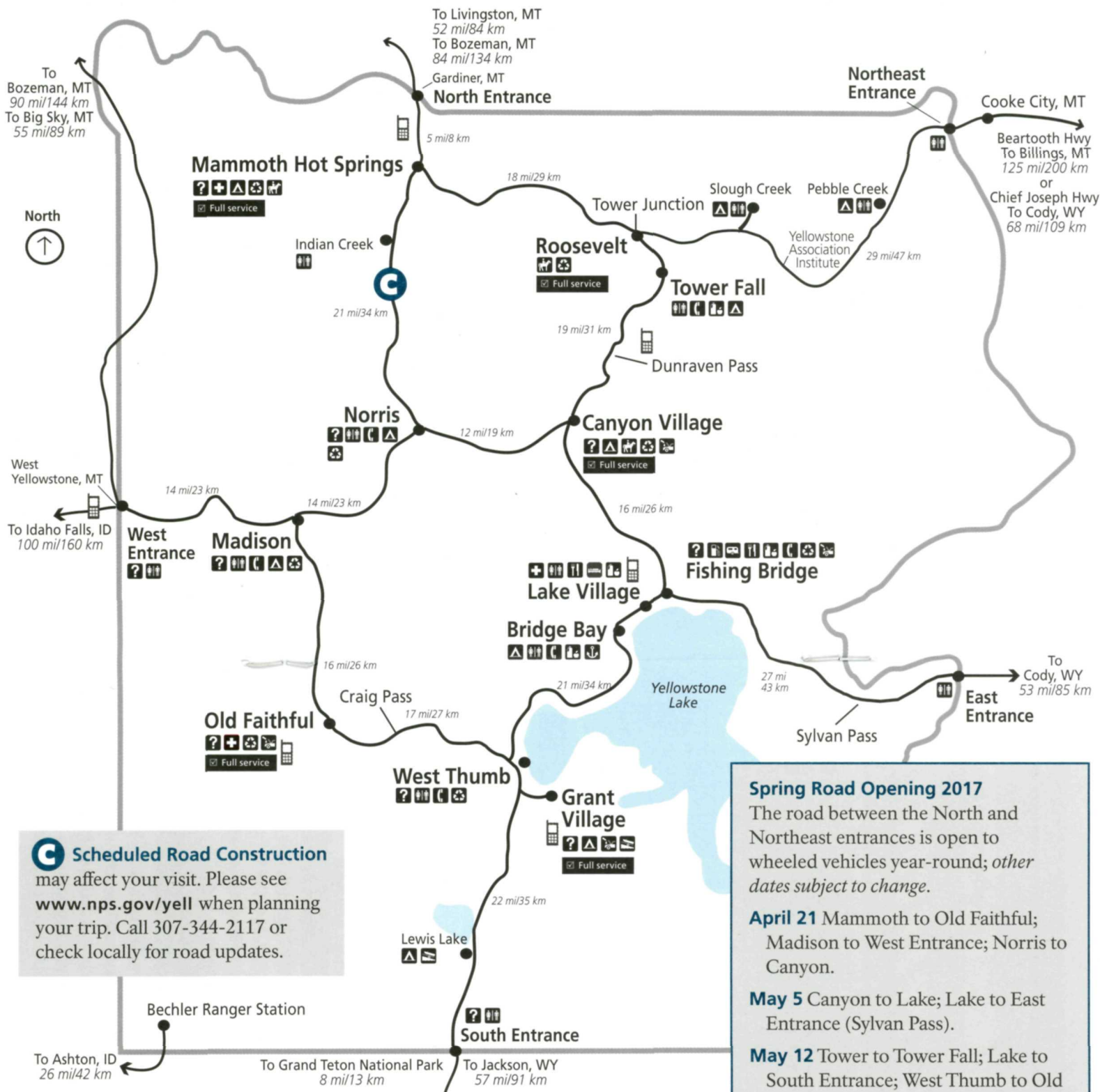
**Fishing** requires a Yellowstone National Park fishing permit. Special regulations also apply.

**Boating** is allowed on most of Yellowstone Lake and on Lewis Lake. Only non-motorized boating is allowed on most other lakes. Only one river is open to non-motorized boating, the Lewis River channel between Lewis and Shoshone lakes (see "Regulations" for permit and inspection information).

**Bicycling** is allowed but roads are narrow and winding with few shoulders. When biking, wear safety gear, helmet, and high visibility clothing.

**Drive** the Grand Loop. Regardless of which park entrance you choose, you can drive a "figure eight" of interior roads that link you to many of the park's major features.





**C Scheduled Road Construction** may affect your visit. Please see [www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell) when planning your trip. Call 307-344-2117 or check locally for road updates.

**Spring Road Opening 2017**  
 The road between the North and Northeast entrances is open to wheeled vehicles year-round; *other dates subject to change.*

**April 21** Mammoth to Old Faithful; Madison to West Entrance; Norris to Canyon.

**May 5** Canyon to Lake; Lake to East Entrance (Sylvan Pass).

**May 12** Tower to Tower Fall; Lake to South Entrance; West Thumb to Old Faithful (Craig Pass).

**May 26** Tower Fall to Canyon (Dunraven Pass); Beartooth Hwy.

**Fall Road Closures 2017**  
**October 10** Beartooth Highway, Tower Fall to Canyon (Dunraven Pass).  
**November 6** All park roads close at 8 AM except the north entrance road to Cooke City.

- Full service** = restrooms, food service, general store, lodging, fuel
- Clinic
- General store
- Auto service
- Restrooms
- Lodging
- Horseback riding
- Visitor center or information station
- Camping
- Marina
- Boat launch
- Fuel
- RV camping (Hard-sided units only)
- Recycling
- Food service
- Phone
- Cell phone tower (Connectivity is limited)



## Services

Dates and hours of operation vary and are subject to change.

Auto/RV Repair  
Backcountry Office  
Boat Cruises/Marina  
Bus Tours  
Fishing Permits  
Fuel  
General Store/Grocery  
Horseback Riding  
Lodging  
Public Laundry  
Public Showers  
Ranger Station  
Restaurant/Snacks  
Visitor Center

	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bridge Bay		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	
Canyon	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fishing Bridge	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Grant Village	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lake Village				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	
Mammoth		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Old Faithful	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roosevelt		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Tower Fall					✓	✓							✓	

### Accessibility

Facilities judged to be negotiable for wheelchair users are described in a free guide, *Accessibility in Yellowstone*, available at entrance stations and visitor centers. Or contact: *Park Accessibility Coordinator, PO Box 168, Yellowstone, WY 82190.*

To request a sign language interpreter for NPS interpretive programs, please call three weeks in advance 307-344-2251.

### Medical services

The park has 911 emergency service. Mammoth Clinic is open year-round. In summer, outpatient services are also offered at Lake and Old Faithful. Ambulances, 24-hour emergency service, laboratory, pharmacy, and radiology services are available.

### Information and lodging



Limited cell phone service may be available at Canyon, Grant, Mammoth Hot Springs, Lake, and Old Faithful.

**Yellowstone National Park**  
PO Box 168, Yellowstone, WY 82190  
307-344-7381, TTY 307-344-2386

[www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell)

**Xanterra Parks & Resorts**  
307-344-7311, toll free 866-439-7375  
TTY 307-344-5395

[www.YellowstoneNationalParkLodges.com](http://www.YellowstoneNationalParkLodges.com)

### Worship services

In summer, most major denominations and interdenominational services are available in the park and adjacent communities. Check at visitor centers for local dates and times.

### Park entrance fees (Valid for 7 days with receipt)

Private vehicle	\$30	\$50*
Individual motorcycle	\$25	\$40*
Per person (foot, bike, ski, etc.)	\$15	\$20*

\* Includes Grand Teton National Park

### Annual Passes (photo ID required)

<b>Yellowstone National Park</b> , valid for one year from month of purchase.	\$60
<b>Interagency</b> , valid for multiple federal fee areas.	\$80
<b>Active Duty Military</b> , valid for active duty U. S. military personnel and their dependents with proper identification (CAC card or DD Form 1173).	Free
<b>Every Kid in a Park 4th Grade</b> , student must be present.	Free
<b>Lifetime passes (US citizens/Permanent residents)</b>	
<b>Interagency Senior</b> age 62 or older. Golden Age passports are still accepted.	\$10
<b>Interagency Access</b> for visitors with a permanent disability. Golden Access passports are still accepted.	Free

Several pass options are available for federal recreation sites, including national parks and wildlife refuges, where entrance fees are charged.

Purchase at an entrance station or <http://store.usgs.gov/pass>.

### Area National Park units

Glacier NP	406-888-7800
Grand Teton NP	307-739-3300
Devil's Tower NM	307-467-5283

### Area National Forests

Shoshone	307-527-6241
Gallatin	406-587-6701
Bridger-Teton	307-739-5500
Caribou-Targhee	208-624-3151
Custer	406-657-6200

### Chambers of Commerce

<b>Montana</b>	
Big Sky	406-995-3000
Billings	406-245-4111
Bozeman	406-586-5421
Cooke City/	
Silver Gate	406-838-2495
Gardiner	406-848-7971
Livingston	406-222-0850
Red Lodge	406-446-1718
West Yellowstone	406-646-7701

### Wyoming

Cody	307-587-2297
Dubois	307-455-2556
Wapiti Valley	307-587-9595
Jackson	307-733-3316

### Idaho

Idaho Falls	208 523-1010
Eastern Idaho	800 634-3246



# Regulations



**Bicycling** is allowed on public roads, parking areas, and designated routes. It is prohibited on boardwalks and backcountry trails.

All **boats and float tubes** require permits and aquatic invasive species (AIS) inspection. Boaters must have a Coast Guard approved “wearable” personal flotation device for each person boating.

**Calling to attract wildlife:** Bugling to elk, howling to wolves, calling to attract birds, is illegal.

## **Disturbing park features**

Possessing, collecting, removing, defacing, or destroying any natural or archeological objects or plants, animals, or minerals is prohibited.

**Driving** while intoxicated or under the influence is illegal.

**Feeding animals** is against the law.

**Fires** are permitted only in designated campgrounds, in picnic areas with fire grates, and in some backcountry campsites.

**Fishing** requires permits. Hooks must be barbless. Tackle must be non-toxic. Leaded split-shot sinkers, soft lead-weighted ribbon, and other toxic tackle are not allowed.

**Food** must be attended at all times while not in storage. Never leave food outside your vehicle or around your campsite—not even inside a cooler—when you are away or asleep.

**Hay and stock feed** are allowed only if certified weed-free hay and processed feed. Hay must be baled and covered. Trailers must be clean and empty of manure, loose hay, or feed.

**Littering** is illegal, unsightly, destroys hydrothermal features, and injures wildlife.

**Motorcycles**, motor scooters, and motor bikes are not allowed off-road or on trails. Operators must carry a valid state driver’s license. Vehicles must display valid state plates.

**Pets** must be leashed. They are prohibited on any trails, in the backcountry, and in hydrothermal basins. Pets are not allowed more than 100 feet (30.5 m) from a road or parking area. Leaving a pet unattended and/or tied to an object is prohibited.

**Service animals** are allowed on trails and boardwalks in developed areas. They require permits in the backcountry.



**Slow-moving vehicles** must pull over to let others pass. Never stop or pause in the middle of the road. Use pullouts.

**Speed limit** is 45 mph (73 kph) unless posted slower.

**Spotlighting**, or viewing animals with artificial light, is illegal.

**Transporting** water, fish, and any other aquatic plants or animals into the park’s waters is illegal.

**Unmanned aircraft**, also called drones, are prohibited. Launching, landing, or operating them on park lands and waters is not allowed.

**Weapons and firearms:** Possessing or using weapons (air guns, bow and arrow, crossbows, blowguns, spears, slingshots, etc.) is prohibited. Firearms possession is allowed pursuant to applicable state and federal regulation. You are responsible for knowing and following all current firearms and weapons regulations for national parks, available at: [www.nps.gov/yell/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm)

## Permits

**Fishing** season generally begins the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, usually the last weekend in May, and continues through the first Sunday of November. Fishing season opens later in some areas. Anglers 16 years or older require permits to fish in the park. No state license is required. Younger children can fish for free under certain conditions. Inquire at ranger stations, visitor centers, or general stores. Regulations are posted at [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/fishing.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/fishing.htm)

**All boat permits** (motorized and non-motorized) can be purchased at the South Entrance, Grant Village Backcountry Office, and Bridge Bay Ranger Station. Area restrictions apply.

**Float tube permits** can be purchased at the locations listed above, as well as the Mammoth, Canyon, and Old Faithful backcountry offices, the Northeast Entrance, and Bechler Ranger Station.

**Overnight backcountry camping** requires a permit, and is subject to fees. Service animals are allowed in the backcountry but must have additional (free) permits. For more information, visit <http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/backcountryhiking.htm> or request a backcountry trip planner from the Backcountry Office, PO Box 168, Yellowstone, WY 82190.



# Camping

## How long can you camp?

Fourteen days from July 1 to the first Monday in September. Thirty day maximum the rest of the year. No limit at Fishing Bridge.

## Group camping

Available at Madison, Grant, and Bridge Bay campgrounds for large groups with a designated leader, such as youth or educational groups. Price depends on size. Reservations are required.

Reserve sites with :  
 Xanterra Parks & Resorts  
 PO Box 165  
 Yellowstone NP, WY 82190  
 Toll-free: 866-439-7375.  
 TTY: 307-344-5395

## Attention RV drivers

Few campgrounds have sites for a combined vehicle/towed equipment length of more than 30 feet. Reservations recommended. Some communities near the park also have RV parks.

Campground	Dates (2017)	Rates (2017)	Sites	Elev. (ft)	Features
Mammoth	All year	\$20	85	6,200	A, F, G
Madison*	4/28-10/15	\$24.25	278	6,800	A, F, DS, G
Fishing Bridge RV*^	5/5-9/17	\$47.75	346	7,800	F, S/L, DS, G
Norris	5/19-9/25	\$20	>100	7,500	A, F, G
Tower Fall	5/26-9/25	\$15	31	6,600	V
Bridge Bay*	5/19-9/11	\$24.25	432	7,800	A, F, DS, G
Canyon*	5/26-9/24	\$29	273	7,900	A, F, S/L, DS, G
Indian Creek	6/9-9/11	\$15	70	7,300	A, V
Pebble Creek	6/15-9/25	\$15	27	6,900	V
Slough Creek	6/15-10/7	\$15	23	6,250	V
Lewis Lake	6/15-11/5	\$15	85	7,800	V
Grant Village*	6/9-9/17	\$29	430	7,800	A, F, S/L, DS, G

\* Price does not include tax or utility fee.  
 ^All sites have electricity.

Holders of Golden Age, Senior, Golden Access, and Access passes receive a discount (~50%) on camping fees, except at Fishing Bridge RV Park.

A Accessible sites available  
 F Flush toilets  
 V Vault toilets  
 S/L Pay showers/laundry near  
 DS Dump station  
 G Generators OK 8 AM-8 PM

# Seasonal access to the park



Each season in Yellowstone holds its own special beauty. Riots of wildflowers enliven meadows in the summer and a glittering crust of snow blankets the park in winter.

Weather and road access vary greatly throughout the year. Consider average conditions when planning your trip and check again before your departure.

## Spring

Early in spring, daytime temperatures average in the 40s and 50s. By late May and June, they may reach the 60s and 70s. Cold and snow linger into June. Nighttime lows fall below freezing. Roads open by sections beginning the third Friday in April. Storms may cause restrictions or closures.

## Summer

Daytime temperatures are usually in the 70s. Nights are generally cool, dropping into the 40s and 30s. June can be cool and rainy. July and August tend to be drier, although afternoon thunder showers are common. Park roads are open, excepting accidents, rock slides, or construction work.

## Autumn

Temperatures average in the 50s and 60s. Nighttime lows can fall into the teens and lower. Snow increases in frequency and intensity. Storms may cause temporary closures or restrictions, such as chain or snow tire requirements. Park roads close on the first Monday of November, except the road from Gardiner to Cooke City, MT, which is open all year round.

## Winter

Daytime temperatures range from near zero to above freezing. Night temperatures may fall well below zero. Annual snowfall averages nearly 150 inches in most of the park, except in the northern range. All roads and entrances, with one exception, are closed to motor vehicle travel. Some may be groomed for over-snow vehicles. The North Entrance road from Gardiner to Cooke City, MT, is open to wheeled vehicles and may close due to storms. Snow tires are recommended, and often required. You must return to the North Entrance to leave the park.



## Yellowstone Trip Planner

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 168  
Yellowstone National Park  
Wyoming 82190

Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use: \$300



**America the Beautiful:** *National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass*, valid for one year from month of purchase for entrance fees to federal fee areas.

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Yellowstone National Park, WY  
Permit G-83