

**GETTING THERE**

Yellowstone National Park is in the Rocky Mountain Range, USA. It is mainly located in the state of Wyoming. The closest major international airport is in Salt Lake City, Utah.

GETTING AROUND

Cars can be rented at the airport for the 320-mile (515-km) drive to Yellowstone. There are small airports closer to the park, with a 1–2 hour drive. Regional airports are found in Cody and Jackson, WY; Bozeman and Billings, MT; and Idaho Falls, ID. The West Yellowstone, MT airport is open June–September.

WEATHER

August has daytime temperatures of up to 86°F but can drop below freezing at night. Thunderstorms are frequent.

ACCOMMODATIONS

All of the accommodations in the park are managed by Xanterra Parks and Resorts, with rooms in historic lodges, motels, and cottages. Old Faithful Inn, Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, and Yellowstone Lake Hotel are popular choices; doubles from \$110; www.xanterra.com

Budget accommodations, from \$70 a night, may require sharing a bathroom.

EATING OUT

Restaurants range from elegant lodge dining to an Old West Cookout. There are many cafeterias and grills that also offer packed lunches.

PRICE FOR TWO

\$250–300 per day including accommodations, food, car rental, and park entrance charge.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.nps.gov/yell/home.htm



Left (left to right): Majestic bull elk; plains, buffalo grazing in the park; striped least chipmunk stands alert; signpost for the Continental Divide—the ridge of mountains that runs from Alaska in the north to Mexico in the south.

Left panel (top and bottom): Visitors on a horseback tour through the park; Old Faithful geyser.



Above: Caspary Spring, named after the yellow algae growing at its edge.



Main: Aerial view of the Grand Prismatic Spring in Yellowstone—the spring is around 590 ft (120 m) in diameter.

WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM

THE DUST RISES AS HEAVY HOOVES FALL, the older males stand guard, young calves stay close to their mother's side. Time comes to a standstill as you count ten, then twenty, then a hundred thundering herbivores; and you realize you are witnessing a primeval scene that once had all but vanished from the planet, but is now slowly returning—North American buffalo or bison on the move. You wait till the herd disappears into the valley below, then continue on your way, forever changed by the sheer magnitude of the wild beauty of Yellowstone National Park.

More than half a million years ago, a gargantuan volcanic explosion blanketed western North America in ash and scooped out a vast caldera 50 miles by 30 miles wide (80 km long and 50 km wide). Today that caldera, located just north of the spectacular Grand Teton Mountains, is green and lush with landscapes and ecosystems that are unique in the world. Stunning tableaux of green mountain meadows, wild rivers, azure lakes, and snow-capped

peaks set the backdrop for an otherworldly landscape of 10,000 steaming fumaroles, geysers, bubbling mud pots and psychedelically colored thermal springs (the color is caused by pigmented bacterial growth in the cooler water at the edge of the pool).

This huge park preserves one of the most intact ecosystems in the United States. August is an ideal time to visit because although tourists are present in large numbers, they tend to congregate in the popular areas, so discovering the real wilderness beauty of Yellowstone is as simple as getting off the beaten path anywhere in the park. A walk along the South Rim Trail east from busy Artist Point leads you up a brief, steep ascent that leaves the crowds behind and plunges you into a pristine world leaving civilization far behind. Following the gentle terrain of the canyon rim, the trail offers stunning views of the canyon, the Yellowstone River, and the cascading cataract of lower falls. A turn on the short Lily Pad Lake Trail takes you farther into the outback to the unspoiled splendor of the lily-covered lake where moose, bear, and elk roam freely and the vistas here are as wild and visually captivating as they were when the park was first discovered.

WILDERNESS DIARY

August days are long and warm, with the chance to participate in ranger-led tours and activities. It is possible to see the park's highlights in four days. Try to escape the crowds and explore the spectacular wilderness. Guided fishing and boating trips, naturalist-led outings, photo-safaris, and overnight hikes are all available.

Four Days in the Parkland

Watch the spectacular eruption of Old Faithful, Yellowstone's most popular geyser, early in the morning when crowds are thin.

Stroll along the walkways at Upper Geyser Basin to see spouting geysers, steaming pools, and bubbling springs. Be sure to see the colorful Morning Glory Pool.

Drive, or if you are feeling energetic walk, along the 20-mile (32-km) Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, stopping frequently for breathtaking views of the waterfalls and magnificent, coppery-orange canyon.

Visit lovely, marshy Hayden Valley in the early morning and watch for herds of bison. Elk, grizzly bears, wolves, bald eagles, and geese may also be seen from the road.

In the afternoon, join in one of the ranger-led daytime programs offering guided nature and history walks. There are also evening slide-shows and talks offered at a variety of locations throughout the park.

Drive the length of Lamar Valley starting as the sun comes up, stopping frequently to look for bison, pronghorn antelope, bear, and wolves in the valley and along the gently rolling hills.

Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ Stop in visitors' centers for park maps and brochures, get the latest information on wildlife viewing, and peruse the exhibits on this incredible wilderness park.
- ✗ Don't try to see too much in one go—limit your exploration to one section of the park each day and take along a packed lunch or have meals close-by.
- ✓ Try to be outdoors at dawn when there are no crowds, getting out of the car often to walk, hike, take tours, and attend the ranger programs available at the park.
- ✗ Don't be caught out by the changeable weather; dress in layers as it may be below freezing at dawn and over 86°F by mid-afternoon with a late-afternoon thunderstorm.
- ✓ Drive slowly, be patient, and watch closely everywhere you go. Sometimes animals can be seen very close to the road.

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

JUL

AUG

DAY 1

DAY 2

DAY 3

DAY 4

SEP

OCT

NOV

DEC

Wonders of Yellowstone

Known as "Ni-tsi-a-dzi" or "Rock Yellow River" to the Minnetaree tribe of Native Americans, the region's name was simplified by early fur trappers to Yellowstone. It took a major expedition by a forerunner of the U.S. Geological Survey in 1871 to introduce the world to the wonders of the park. Accompanying that expedition were photographer William H. Jackson and artist Thomas Moran. Their images helped convince President Grant to set aside the land as the world's first National Park in 1872.