Hotels and campgrounds fill up quickly, both inside and around the park. Make sure you have secured lodging before you make other plans. If you do not, you may have to drive several hours away from the park to the nearest available hotel or campsite.

Plan plenty of time to get to your destination. Yellowstone is worth pulling over for! Plan a minimum of 30 minutes to travel in between junctions or visitor service areas on the Grand Loop Road. The speed limit in Yellowstone is 45 mph (73 kph) except where posted slower.

Top 5 sites to see:
1. Old Faithful Geyser
2. The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River
3. Yellowstone Lake
4. Mammoth Hot Springs Terraces
5. Hayden or Lamar valleys
Welcome to Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone is a special place, and very different from your home. Like any grand adventure, your Yellowstone journey will take you to impressive new locations and introduce you to new experiences. There are different risks here than you may have faced before. **You are responsible for your own safety.**

We need your help to preserve the wildlife, natural features, and cultural treasures that bring so many visitors to Yellowstone. **The park rules protect you and also protect the park.** Follow the park rules for a safe and enjoyable visit. Please be a positive part of the Yellowstone experience. More guidance is described inside and online at [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/rules.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/rules.htm).

Yellowstone National Park is assisted in fulfilling our mission by our official non-profit partner, Yellowstone Forever. Proceeds from Yellowstone Forever educational bookstores, Institute, and philanthropic efforts support priority park projects and visitor education. Find more information at [Yellowstone.org](http://Yellowstone.org) or call (406) 848-2400.

**Accessibility**

A printed guide is available at all visitor centers and on the park website. To arrange for an ASL interpreter for NPS ranger-led programs, call 307-344-2251 at least three weeks in advance.

Qualified service animals are welcome throughout the park and in all park facilities. However, they must be leashed and under your control at all times. A permit is required for a service animal to enter the backcountry due to potential wildlife conflict and safety issues.

**Firearms**

Firearms are allowed in national parks pursuant to state and federal regulations. They are prohibited in facilities where signs are posted, such as visitor centers, government offices, and some concession operations. Discharge of firearms is prohibited. Possession and use of weapons, such as air guns, bows and arrows, spears and slingshots, is also prohibited. Details are available at [www.nps.gov/yell/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/parkmgmt/lawsandpolicies.htm)

**Lost and found**

Call 307-344-5387 to report or retrieve items lost in lodging facilities. In other parts of the park, call 307-344-2109.

**Park mission:** Preserved within Yellowstone National Park are Old Faithful and the majority of the world’s geysers and hot springs. An outstanding mountain wildland with clean water and air, Yellowstone is home of the grizzly bear and wolf and free-ranging herds of bison and elk. Centuries-old sites and historic buildings that reflect the unique heritage of America’s first national park are also protected. Yellowstone National Park serves as a model and inspiration for national parks throughout the world.

**Lodging, campground, and tour reservations**

As one of Yellowstone’s official concession companies, Yellowstone National Park Lodges offers lodging, camping, dining, and a variety of tours and activities. In summer, visitors can enjoy photo safaris, partial or full-day tours, horseback and stagecoach rides, and boating and fishing adventures. In winter, there are partial or full-day tours by heated snowcoach, skiing, and snowshoe adventures.

Reservations are available at park hotels and at:

- [Reserve_YNP@Xanterra.com](mailto:Reserve_YNP@Xanterra.com)
- P.O. Box 165, Yellowstone NP, WY 82190
Watching wildlife

Watching wildlife in Yellowstone can be an amazing experience—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 may also see a variety of birds, including bald eagles.

Looking for wildlife?

- To conserve energy, most animals are active in the cool of dawn or dusk.
- Animals are everywhere in the park, but it is easier to see them in open meadows and sagebrush than in dense forest.
- Find a place with a broad view for your binoculars or spotting scope, and be prepared to wait.

For your safety, and the safety of the animals please obey park rules:

- 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.
- If an animal moves closer to you, you must move to maintain the appropriate distance.
- Do not surround, crowd, or disrupt an animal’s path of movement.
- If other visitors put you or wildlife in danger, leave the area and notify a park ranger.
- Spotlighting, or viewing animals with artificial light, is illegal.
- Calling to attract wildlife is illegal. You may not bugle to elk, howl at wolves, or make bird calls of any kind.
- Tracking wildlife with electronic equipment is not permitted.

Cell phone service

Cell phone service is very limited in the park and surrounding areas. General cell coverage areas are marked on the park map (back cover). Emergency 911 service by cell phone is only available in coverage areas. During peak hours or seasons of heavy visitation, the cellular network may be slow or completely unavailable. As a courtesy to others, please silence your mobile device while enjoying Yellowstone’s natural features.

Pets

Pets are not allowed on trails or boardwalks, in the backcountry, or in hydrothermal basins. Where allowed, pets must be leashed and remain within 100 feet (30.5 m) of a road or parking area.

Do not leave a pet unattended, tied to an object, or without adequate food, water, shade, ventilation, or other basic needs. Owners must bag and dispose of pet waste. We recommend that someone in your group remain with your pet at all times to personally ensure their well-being.
Make Memories to Last a Lifetime

Camping

NPS-operated campgrounds
Campsites are first-come, first-served at Mammoth, Norris, Indian Creek, Lewis Lake, Pebble Creek, Slough Creek, and Tower Fall. Arrive early to obtain a site, campgrounds fill quickly.

Reservable sites
Reserve sites at Canyon, Bridge Bay, Madison, Grant Village, and Fishing Bridge RV Park through Yellowstone National Park Lodges at 307-344-7311. Hookups at Fishing Bridge RV Park include water, sewer, and 50 amp electrical service. Only hard-sided camping units are allowed at Fishing Bridge, no tents or trailers. There are no picnic tables or fire grates.

No overflow camping
There are no overflow camping areas available in Yellowstone. No camping or overnight vehicle parking is allowed in pullouts, parking areas, picnic grounds, or any place other than a designated campground. Additional camping may be available in neighboring communities.

Check-in and check-out
Registration desks at reservable campgrounds are open 7 AM to 10 PM during peak season, and 8 AM to 9 PM during early and late season. Check-out time is 11 AM.

Length of stay
Camping is limited to 14 days from July 1 through Labor Day (first Monday in September) and 30 days the rest of the year. There is no limit at Fishing Bridge.

Discounts
Holders of Senior and Access passes receive a 50 percent discount on camping fees, except at Fishing Bridge, where no discounts apply.

Quiet hours
From 10 PM to 6 AM, no loud audio devices or other noise disturbances are allowed.

Group camping
Group camping (tents only) is available at Madison, Grant, and Bridge Bay for organized groups with a designated leader. Fees range from $110 to $335 (plus tax and utilities) per night, depending on group size. Advance reservations are required.

Food storage boxes
Food storage boxes are available at each of the campsites at Indian Creek, Norris, Pebble Creek, Slough Creek, Tower Fall, and Lewis Lake campgrounds. Many campgrounds in other campgrounds are also equipped with bear-proof storage boxes.

Key to campground features
Δ Sites you can reserve
Ω Rate does not include tax or utility pass-through
‡ Site with full hook ups
A Accessible sites available
F Flush toilets
V Vault toilets
S/L Pay showers/laundry onsite
2S Two showers included each night
DS Dump station
G Generators okay 8 AM to 8 PM

In order of opening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground</th>
<th>Dates*</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Elev (ft)</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>RV sites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mammoth</td>
<td>All year</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>A, F, G</td>
<td>Most are pull-through</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison Δ</td>
<td>4/27–10/14</td>
<td>$25.25Ω</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>A, F, DS, G</td>
<td>Call for availability and reservations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing Bridge RV Δ</td>
<td>5/11–9/5</td>
<td>$47.75Ω</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>A, F, S/L, 2S, DS, G, ‡</td>
<td>Call for availability and reservations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norris</td>
<td>5/18–9/24</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>A, F, G</td>
<td>2 sites are 50 ft (signed), 5 sites are 30 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Bay Δ</td>
<td>5/18–9/23</td>
<td>$25.25Ω</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>A, F, DS, G</td>
<td>Call for availability and reservations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tower Fall</td>
<td>5/25–9/24</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>A, V</td>
<td>All sites are 30 ft or less. Has hairpin curve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canyon Δ</td>
<td>5/25–9/23</td>
<td>$30 Ω</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>7,900</td>
<td>A, F, S/L, 25, DS, G</td>
<td>Call for availability and reservations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Village Δ</td>
<td>6/8–9/16</td>
<td>$30 Ω</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>A, F, S/L, 25, DS, G</td>
<td>Call for availability and reservations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Creek</td>
<td>6/8–9/10</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>A, V</td>
<td>10 sites are 35 ft, 35 sites are 30 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pebble Creek</td>
<td>6/15–9/24</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6,900</td>
<td>A, V</td>
<td>Some long pull-throughs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slough Creek</td>
<td>6/15–10/9</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>A, V</td>
<td>14 sites at 30 ft – walk first to assess sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lewis Lake</td>
<td>6/15–11/4</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>A, V</td>
<td>All sites are 25 ft or less</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Campgrounds open at 8 AM of first date listed and close for the season at 11 AM of last date listed.
**Backcountry camping**
Overnight backcountry camping is allowed in designated sites and requires a permit. Permits can be obtained up to two days before the start of your trip at any backcountry office. Permits are free prior to Memorial Day. From Memorial Day through September 10, a per-person, per-night fee applies.

- Backpackers and boaters: $3 per-person per-night (group maximum $15 per night).
- Groups with stock animals: $5 per-person per-night.

Detailed information on backcountry permit fees and making advanced reservations is available online at [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/backcountryhiking.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/backcountryhiking.htm)

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**Fishing season**
General fishing season opens May 26 and closes November 4, 2018. Some areas remain closed until July 15. Fishing permits are required in Yellowstone, state-issued fishing permits are not valid within the park. Anglers 16 years or older need a permit; younger children can fish for free with a permitted adult.

Fishing regulations in Yellowstone protect the unique values of the park ecosystem and conserve native fish species. Copies of the complete park regulations are available wherever permits are sold, and online at [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/fishing.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/fishing.htm)

Possession limits and closures vary throughout the park. Anglers are responsible for knowing the regulations in the area they are fishing. Anglers are also responsible for knowing how to tell the difference between species. Native fish must be released unharmed back into the water immediately. These include:

- Arctic grayling
- Cutthroat trout
- Mountain whitefish

These tackle and gear restrictions apply:

- Hooks must be barbless.
- Tackle and lures must be non-toxic. Lead tackle is not allowed.
- Bait is prohibited.
- Felt-soled footwear is not permitted.

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**Swimming**
Park waters are swift and cold

- Swimming in hot springs is prohibited.
- Swimming in park rivers is not recommended. Currents can be dangerously strong and fast.
- Swimming in Yellowstone Lake is not recommended. Average lake temperature is approximately 41° F (5° C).

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**Boating**
Watercraft use is limited in Yellowstone. All watercraft (motorized boats, non-motorized boats, and float tubes) must have a permit and be inspected for aquatic invasive species (AIS) by park staff. Any watercraft suspected of harboring AIS will be subject to a non-chemical decontamination treatment.

Motorized boating is allowed on Lewis Lake and most of Yellowstone 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.

If you plan to boat in the park, please familiarize yourself with Yellowstone National Park Boating Regulations. Copies are available online [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/boating.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/boating.htm) and at visitor centers, backcountry offices, ranger stations, and entrance stations.

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**Aquatic Invasive Species** are nonnative plants and animals that can cause irreversible harm to the park ecosystem. New Zealand mudsnails, whirling disease, and lake trout have resulted in loss of native fish and closure of some areas.

Transporting water, or any aquatic plants and animals into or between park waters is illegal. If you witness a violation, call 307-344-2132 or contact a ranger.

**Watercraft users and anglers are asked to inspect all items that may come in contact with park waters, ensuring that they are clean, drained, and dry.**
Day hiking

More than 1,000 miles of hiking trails wind through Yellowstone National Park. Whether you hike for half a mile or more than ten, the backcountry can be an escape from the crowds and a chance to get in touch with the wilderness that Yellowstone preserves.

Ask at any visitor center for brochures describing day hikes throughout the park. Remember to ask about any seasonal closures, trail conditions, or wildlife sightings when you plan your hike. Be prepared for wildlife encounters and carry bear spray on all hikes.

Top 5 day hikes:
1. Mount Washburn, potentially closed, check at Canyon Village.
2. Beaver Ponds, at Mammoth Hot Springs
3. Lone Star Geyser, near Old Faithful
4. Fairy Falls, north of Old Faithful
5. Storm Point, east of Fishing Bridge

Bear spray rentals

Bear Aware LLC rents bear spray from May 26–September 30. The rental kiosk is located at the north end of the Canyon Visitor Education Center parking area.

Rentals include holster and belt, hiking safety information, and instructions on proper use of bear spray. Cost is $9.25 per day or $28.00 per week (3–7 days). Prices do not include tax. For more information visit bearaware.com.

Rental returns

Return items to the Canyon kiosk, Madison campground, or to gas stations at Mammoth, Tower, Fishing Bridge, Grant, and Old Faithful.

Bear spray recycling

Bear spray cannot be taken on airplanes or thrown in the trash. However, canisters can be recycled at park hotels, stores, visitor centers, backcountry offices, and ranger stations, as well as area camping stores, and the Bozeman airport.

Be prepared for bear encounters

Hiking in bear habitat has inherent risks. You are likely to be safer if you stay on roads and official trails but your safety cannot be guaranteed. Federal regulations require you to stay at least 100 yards (91m) away from bears.

Learn more about bears, safe bear viewing, and how to properly use bear spray at Experiencing Wildlife in Yellowstone, a free ranger program presented from Memorial Day to Labor Day at visitor centers throughout the park. See visitor centers for details.

Photography

Have reasonable expectations of your camera. A cell phone camera will not be able to capture the same resolution and detail as a more advanced camera with large lenses.

Arm yourself with patience. To get the best shot, you will spend more time waiting and observing than photographing. Look for patterns in animal behavior that can help you get a great shot. You may have to wait a while—so be ready.

Stay safe behind and in front of the camera. An unusual vantage point can add drama to your image, but you don’t want to add the drama of a hospital visit to your trip. Never sacrifice safety for a photograph.

• Be aware of your surroundings. Stay behind fences and guard rails. Never turn your back on wild animals.
• Keep children close to you at all times. Never try to pose them with wildlife.
• Stay out of the road. Do not stop your vehicle in the road, or stand in the roadway. Do not block any portion of the road with tripods, chairs, or other objects. Do not block the free flow of traffic.

Bicycling

Bicycling is permitted on paved roads, parking areas, and designated routes. Bicycles are subject to the same traffic rules as automobiles and are prohibited on trails and boardwalks.

Park roads are narrow and winding with few shoulders. Therefore, regulations require cyclists to ride single file and we strongly recommend wearing a helmet and high-visibility clothing.

Road elevations range from 5,300 to 8,860 feet (1,615 to 2,700 m), and services and facilities are far apart. During April, May, and June, high snowbanks may make travel more dangerous.

Find information on the park website or pick up the Bicycling in Yellowstone brochure at a visitor center or ranger station.
Activities for young people

Junior Ranger Program
If you are age 4 or older, you can become a Yellowstone Junior Ranger. Stop by any visitor center to purchase a Junior Ranger activity booklet for $3. To earn your official Yellowstone Junior Ranger patch, you need to:

- Hike on a park trail or boardwalk.
- Complete the age-appropriate activities on geyser, wildlife, and park habitats.
- Attend a ranger-led activity—such as a talk, guided walk, or evening campfire program—and get the ranger’s signature.

Children and adults benefit by learning more about the natural wonders of the park and sharing the fun of becoming a Junior Ranger.

Young Scientist Program
Become a Young Scientist! Buy a self-guiding booklet for $5 at the Canyon Visitor Education Center (ages 10 +) or Old Faithful Visitor Education Center (ages 5+). In the Old Faithful area, check out a Young Scientist Toolkit for the gear you need for your investigation. Once you finish, you will be awarded a Young Scientist patch or key chain.

Explore park heritage
Opportunities to connect to the past are everywhere in Yellowstone. 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 Fishing Bridge Museum, the Museum of the National Park Ranger, Obsidian Cliff, and the Old Faithful Inn and Historic District.

The Heritage and Research Center (above) is located just beyond the North Entrance in Gardiner, Montana. This facility is home to Yellowstone’s museum collection, archives, research library, archeology lab, and herbarium. Although primarily a research facility, tours provide an inside look at some of the collections. Free tours are available Wednesdays at 2 PM, May 30 through September 5, 2018 (limit 15). For reservations, please call 307-344-2264.

Make the Most of Your Visit

Yellowstone encompasses more than 2.2 million acres, most of it beyond the reach of roads. One could take an entire lifetime to experience the park—and you would still never see it all. Here are some suggestions for making the most of the time you do have.

Tour early in the day to avoid crowds: Most people tour the park from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Wildlife are most active at sunrise and sunset; arriving before 8 AM improves your chances of observing animals during their active periods. Park entrance gates are open 24-hours.

Visit a hidden gem: Take a day hike, or stroll one of our historic walking tours at Fort Yellowstone or Old Faithful historic districts. You could even explore nearby national park units, national forests, state forests, and state parks. The entire region offers an amazing variety of public lands for recreation and enjoyment.

Only one day here?
- See the most with one-day driving tours:
  - Drive to the Old Faithful area and walk around the geyser basin; drive to the Canyon area—stop at several overlooks and walk along the rim.
  - Or, visit Old Faithful and one other hydrothermal area, such as Norris, West Thumb, Fountain Paint Pots, or Mammoth.
  - Begin in Hayden or Lamar valleys to look for some of the park’s large animals. For a break from the road, consider one or two moderate day hikes.
  - Explore one area of the park in depth—attend a ranger talk. From 15-minute presentations to 2-hour tours, programs are available throughout the park.
  - Make plans to visit again soon!

Two or more days?
- Explore one theme, such as geology, in depth. For example, visit Mammoth Hot Springs to see travertine formations and view the sedimentary layers of Mount Everts, drive through glaciated terrain to Tower Fall or the Lamar Valley, then climb Mount Washburn to view the Yellowstone Caldera and evidence of glaciers.
- Plan an overnight trip into Yellowstone’s backcountry. Rangers at park backcountry offices can help you find a site, get a permit, share information about trail conditions, and help make sure that you are equipped and informed for a safer experience.
- Slow down and try your hand at capturing the beauty of Yellowstone through journaling, painting, or simply observing.

Let someone else do the driving

Authorized guides and outfitters
Many authorized guides and outfitters are ready to show you the wonders of Yellowstone, and each has a unique approach. Make sure that your guide, tour company, or other commercial service is fully authorized by the park. Report unauthorized operators to a park ranger, or contact Concessions Management at 307-344-2271. Authorized providers are listed on the park website at www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/guidedtours.htm

Yellowstone Forever Institute
Programs about wildlife, plants, geology, and history are perfect for curious adults and families who want to spend a day or more exploring the park with a knowledgeable guide. To find out more, call 406-848-2400 or visit Yellowstone.org

Any commercial activity in the park requires a permit.
- Commercial filming, regardless of equipment, and photography with props or models, require permits. For more information call: 307-344-2722.
Famously Hot Features

Yellowstone was established in 1872 as the world’s first national park primarily because of its unparalleled collection of geysers, hot springs, mudpots, and steam vents.

**Hot springs** are the most common hydrothermal features in the park. They vary from frothing mocha-like boiling water to clear and calm pools of tremendous depth.

**Mudpots** are acidic features with a limited water supply. Their consistency and activity vary with the seasons and precipitation.

**Fumaroles**, or steam vents, are the hottest hydrothermal features in the park. They are easier to see in cool weather.

**Travertine terraces** are found at Mammoth Hot Springs, where the interactions of water and limestone create chalk-white travertine.

**Geysers** erupt with steaming hot water. Variations in each geyser’s underground reservoir determine whether it is regular and predictable—like Daisy Geyser in the Upper Geyser Basin—or irregular like Steamboat Geyser in Norris Geyser Basin.

**How do geysers work?**

Geysers are hot springs with narrow spaces in their plumbing, usually near the surface. These constrictions prevent water from circulating freely to the surface where heat would escape. The deepest circulating water can exceed the surface boiling point (199°F/93°C).

The surrounding pressure also increases with depth, similar to the ocean. Increased pressure exerted by the enormous weight of the overlying rock and water prevents the water from boiling as it heats up.

As the water rises, steam forms. Bubbling upward, steam expands as it nears the top of the water column until the bubbles are too large and numerous to pass freely through the constrictions. At a critical point, the confined bubbles actually lift the water above, causing the geyser to splash or overflow. This decreases pressure on the system, and violent boiling results. Tremendous amounts of steam force water out of the vent, and the eruption begins.

Water is expelled faster than it can enter the geyser’s plumbing system, and the heat and pressure gradually decrease. The eruption stops when the water reservoir is exhausted or when the system cools.

Yellowstone’s geyser basins contain fountain-type geysers and cone-type geysers. Fountain-type geysers shoot water out in various directions from a pool of water. Cone-type geysers, like Lone Star Geyser (photo above) erupt in a concentrated jet of water from inside a rock formation.

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**How “faithful” is Old Faithful Geyser?**

Since its first documentation in 1870, Old Faithful has been one of the more predictable geysers. Over time, the average interval between Old Faithful’s eruptions has increased or decreased, due to changes in its plumbing from ongoing processes and earthquakes. The Hebgen Lake Earthquake (1959), caused an increase in the time between eruptions. The average interval between eruptions of Old Faithful Geyser, as of August 2017, is 94 minutes ± 10 minutes, with intervals ranging from 51 to 120 minutes.

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**Where geology and biology thrive**

Descendants of the first life forms to evolve on Earth live in the extremely hot, sometimes acidic, habitats in and around hydrothermal features. The heat-loving microorganisms, called **thermophiles**, survive and thrive in Yellowstone’s active volcanic environment.

Nourished by energy and chemical building blocks available in the hot springs, the microbes build vividly colored communities that vary depending on the types of microbes, the pH (acidity or alkalinity), temperature of the feature, and exposure to sunlight.

Millions of individual microbes can connect into long strands called filaments. Some filaments tangle, forming mats. Flowing water brings other microbes, organic matter, and minerals that add to the mat. Mats can be thin as tissue paper or thick as lasagna. Due to their fragility, they must not be touched.

Dozens of types of microbes from all three domains of life can exist in these mats, from Archea in the hottest, most acidic features to the more widespread Bacteria and Eukarya.

Scientists continue to study the many mysteries of thermophiles and their extreme habitats in the living laboratories of Yellowstone’s thermal areas and features.

Microorganisms thrive in hot springs, and other hydrothermal features.
Within the herd

Yellowstone is the only place in the United States where bison have lived continuously since prehistoric times. Yellowstone bison are special because they are America’s largest bison population on public land and have not been hybridized through interbreeding with cattle. Bison eat primarily grasses and sedges and are well-suited to both prairies and forests. With adult males weighing up to 2000 pounds (907 kg), the bison is the largest land mammal in North America. This iconic ungulate is the National Mammal of the United States.

Yellowstone bison herds exhibit wild behavior, like their ancient ancestors. The herd is comprised of cows, calves, and some younger bulls. Mature bulls spend most of the year alone or with other bulls—except during the rut, or mating season. During the rut in July and August, mature males display their dominance by bellowing, wallowing, and fighting with other bulls. The winners earn the right to mate with receptive females.

After a gestation period of 9 to 9 1/2 months, calves are born in late April and May. Their orange fur makes them easy to see, even from a distance, and has earned them the nickname “red dogs.” Look for bison in open country along the Lamar, Yellowstone, Firehole, and Madison rivers.

What is the difference between bison and buffalo?

In North America, both “bison” and “buffalo” refer to the American bison (*Bison bison*). Generally, “buffalo” is used informally; “bison” is preferred for formal or scientific purposes. Early European explorers called this animal by many names. Historians believe that the term “buffalo” grew from the French word for beef, *boeuf*.

Bringing up bear cubs

Both grizzly and black bear cubs are born in the deep winter months, while their mother hibernates. In April and May, they begin to venture out with their mother as she digs for roots, insects, and squirrels. Cubs stay with their mother for two to three years before striking out on their own.

Look for black bears along the edges of wooded areas in the Lamar and Hayden valleys, or among the trees near Mammoth and Tower. Grizzly bears are usually seen in open areas. (See page 6 for information about safely recreating in bear country.)

Keep your distance

![Diagram of distances]

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.

Signs of spring renewal

Spring in Yellowstone is a feast for your senses. Young animals are being born all around the park, birds are returning or passing through in their timeless migration, frogs call in the ponds. Listen and look for the sights special to this time of year.

Mountain bluebirds (above) return to Yellowstone National Park while winter still cloaks the landscape. These insect eaters feast on the beetles and other scavengers consuming animals killed by the winter. As they flit to and from perches, they look like pieces of the sky flying about.

Bighorn sheep give birth on the sheer cliffs between Tower Junction and Tower Fall. They and their lambs blend in with the columnar basalt, but be patient—sometimes just a hint of movement is all you need to finally spot them.

Pack mentality

Yellowstone National Park is the site of one of the most ambitious and controversial wildlife restoration projects in the world. The Yellowstone Wolf Project has yielded more than two decades of discoveries on wolf behavior, predator-prey relationships, wildlife disease management, and ecological complexity.

The stark white backdrop of snow and the general absence of leaf cover make winter an ideal time for visitors and researchers alike to observe wildlife. From the popular overlooks of Lamar Valley, it is possible to get a glimpse of wolf society. You may even witness the dangerous dance of predators and prey as each struggles to survive.
The Upper Geyser Basin, home of Old Faithful, hosts the majority of the world’s active geysers. The concentration of hydrothermal features here provides ample evidence of Yellowstone’s active volcano.

Partially molten rock, or magma, from this volcano may be as close as 3–8 miles (5–13 km) below your feet. Magma provides the first key ingredient for creating thermal features: heat. Rain and snow eventually supply the second ingredient: water. The water seeps down several thousand feet (more than a kilometer) below the surface where it is heated. Underground cracks and earthquake faults form the third ingredient: a natural “plumbing” system. Super-heated water rises through the plumbing to produce hot springs and geysers.

Old Faithful erupts more frequently than any of the other big geysers, although it is not the largest or most regular geyser in the park. During summer, rangers forecast eruption times for six major geysers. (Five are here; the sixth—Great Fountain—is in the Lower Geyser Basin north of Old Faithful.) However, a geyser’s pattern of eruptions may change at any time.

Forecasted eruption times are posted in the Visitor Education Center and in many of the area facilities. You can also call 307-344-2751 (option 2), access predictions on the Yellowstone–Geyser app, or check the @GeyserSNPS Twitter feed.

Credit card fueling available 24 hours.

Wrecker 406-848-7548 on duty 5/4–10/7
Liquid propane gas bottle exchange available.

Shopping
Old Faithful General Store (upper) 4/27–10/28
Sells groceries, souvenirs, take-away foods, and apparel.

Old Faithful Snow Lodge gift store 4/20–11/4
Old Faithful Inn gift store 5/4–10/7

Other
Medical Clinic 5/18–9/14, 7 AM–7 PM; 9/15–10/2 8:30 AM–5 PM.
Phone: 307-545-7325 Emergency dial 911

U.S. Post Office

Backcountry Office in ranger station.

Self-guiding trail booklets are available for the Upper Geyser Basin and the Historic District.

Public restrooms located in all visitor centers, stores, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and at or near all picnic areas.

Recycling bins are located in the parking lot near the yurts, near trash bins at the General Stores, and in the parking lot near the Visitor Education Center.
The Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River.

The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River illustrates the park’s complex geologic history in dramatic colors and shapes. The Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River add to the grandeur of this unique natural treasure.

This canyon formed when hydrothermal activity altered and weakened the bedrock, making the stone softer. The Yellowstone River eroded the weakened rocks to deepen and widen the canyon.

The 308-foot (93 m) Lower Falls marks the point where the volcanic bedrock beneath the river changes from hard rock, resistant to erosion, to the hydrothermally altered rocks common downstream. The 109-foot (33 m) Upper Falls marks a similar shift. The multi-hued layers of the canyon result from the hydrothermally altered rhyolite and sediments. Look closely at dark orange, brown, and green areas near the river for still-active hydrothermal features. Their activity—and that of water, wind, and earthquakes—continue to sculpt the canyon today.

Local Services

- **Canyon Visitor Education Center**
  Learn about the Yellowstone supervolcano and the forces that drive regional geology.
  Phone: 307-344-2550
  4/20–5/25* 9 am–5 pm
  5/26–9/3  8 am–8 pm
  9/4–9/30  8 am–6 pm
  10/1–11/4* 9 am–5 pm
  (*Limited services 4/20–4/30 and 10/9–11/4)
  - Backcountry Office inside.
  - Yellowstone Forever Bookstore inside.

- **Lodging**
  Canyon Lodge and cabins 5/18–10/14

- **Campground**
  Canyon Campground 5/25–9/23

- **Food**
  - Eatery 5/18–10/14
  - Falls Cafe 5/25–9/3
  - M66 Grill 5/18–10/13
  - Ice Creamery 5/25–9/19

  General Store Soda Fountain 4/20–11/4

- **Fuel**
  Open 4/27–10/21, credit card fueling 24-hours.
  - Repairs 5/25–9/3
  - Wrecker (406) 848-7548 on duty 4/27–10/14
  - Liquid propane gas bottle exchange available.

- **Shopping**
  Sells groceries, ice cream, souvenirs, apparel. Has a public water bottle filling station.
  - Yellowstone Adventures Store 6/8–9/23
  Sells camping and outdoor gear, footwear, fishing supplies.
  - Canyon Lodge Gift Store 5/18–10/14

- **Other**
  - U.S. Post Office
  - Trail rides are offered daily 6/20–9/2.
  - A self-guiding trail booklet is available for this area.
  - Public restrooms are located at all visitor centers, stores, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and at or near all picnic areas.
  - Recycling bins are located in the campground and near trash bins at the General Store.
Yellowstone Lake is the largest high-elevation lake (above 7,000 ft) in North America, covering 286 square miles, with an average depth of 138 feet. The only outlet of the lake is at Fishing Bridge, where the Yellowstone River flows north. The lake is covered by ice from mid-December to May or June.

Powerful geologic processes shaped the shoreline of Yellowstone Lake, which overlies the edge of the Yellowstone caldera. Glacial activity and volcanic events carved the central basin and ragged shores. A pyroclastic explosion created the West Thumb basin 174,000 years ago. Many of the area’s 1,000 to 3,000 annual earthquakes occur under Yellowstone Lake, causing uplift and subsidence events which continue to reshape the water’s edge.

Yellowstone Lake is also the site of one of the most extensive conservation efforts in the National Park Service. Park staff work to reduce the impact of invasive lake trout (Salvelinus namaycush) on the survival of the native population of cutthroat trout (Oncorhynchus clarkii bouvieri).

**Local Services**

- **Fishing Bridge Museum and Visitor Center**
  See historic exhibits about the park’s birds and other wildlife, and dive into the distinctive geology of Yellowstone Lake.
  Phone: 307-344-2450.
  5/25–9/3  8 AM–7 PM
  Yellowstone Forever Bookstore inside.

- **Lodging**
  Lake Hotel and cabins: 5/11–10/8

- **Campgrounds**
  - Fishing Bridge RV Campground is open 5/11–9/5. Only hard-sided RVs are permitted. No tents or soft-sided trailers.
  - Bridge Bay Campground is open 5/18–9/23.
  - West Thumb Campground is open 6/10–9/3.

- **Food**
  - Lake Hotel Restaurant 5/11–10/8
  - Lake Hotel Deli 5/11–10/8
  - Lake Lodge Cafeteria 6/10–9/23

- **Fuel**
  - Fishing Bridge station 5/18–9/3, credit card fueling 24-hours.
  - Repairs 5/25–9/3
  - Wrecker (406) 848-7548 on duty 5/25–9/3
  - RV liquid propane tanks filled.

- **Shopping**
  - Sells groceries, ice cream, souvenirs, apparel.
  - Has a public water bottle filling station.
  - Lake General Store 5/11–9/20
  - Has groceries, snack bar, souvenirs, and apparel.
  - Bridge Bay Marina Store 5/18–9/9.
  - Sells camping and outdoor gear, snacks, and fishing supplies.
  - Lake Lodge Gift Store 6/10–9/23
  - Lake Hotel Gift Store 5/11–10/8
  - Bridge Bay Marina
  - Backcountry Office located at the marina.
  - Motor boat rentals 6/11–9/1.

- **Fuel**
  - Fishing Bridge station 5/18–9/3, credit card fueling 24-hours.
  - Repairs 5/25–9/3
  - Wrecker (406) 848-7548 on duty 5/25–9/3
  - RV liquid propane tanks filled.

- **Shopping**
  - Sells groceries, ice cream, souvenirs, apparel.
  - Has a public water bottle filling station.
  - Lake General Store 5/11–9/20
  - Has groceries, snack bar, souvenirs, and apparel.
  - Bridge Bay Marina Store 5/18–9/9.
  - Sells camping and outdoor gear, snacks, and fishing supplies.
  - Lake Lodge Gift Store 6/10–9/23
  - Lake Hotel Gift Store 5/11–10/8
  - Bridge Bay Marina
  - Backcountry Office located at the marina.
  - Motor boat rentals 6/11–9/1.

- **One-hour Scenic Cruise boat tours of Yellowstone Lake run several times daily, 6/11–9/9. Call 307-344-7311 for reservations.**

- **Other**
  - Medical Clinic 5/18–9/14, 7 AM–7 PM.
  - Phone: 307-242-7241
  - Emergency dial 911

- **U.S. Post Office**

- **Public Restrooms** are located at all visitor centers, stores, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and at or near all picnic areas.

- **Recycling** bins are located near the General Stores at Fishing Bridge and Lake Village, and at the Bridge Bay campground.

- **West Thumb**

  Pique your curiosity before exploring the boiling springs in the adjacent geyser basin on the shore of Yellowstone Lake.
  Phone: 307-344-2650
  5/25–10/8  8 AM–7 PM
  A self-guiding trail booklet is available for this area.
Mammoth Hot Springs terraces are like living sculptures, shaped by the volume of water, the slope of the ground, and objects in the water’s path. Travertine builds up rapidly here and causes the features to change quickly and constantly. Some vents will clog completely, new vents may form, and old vents may reopen. Sometimes the water is concentrated in a few springs while at other times it may spread across many outlets.

In every case, water follows the path of least resistance, whether above ground or underground. Scientists estimate that, at any given time, only about 10 percent of the water in the Mammoth Hot Springs system is on the surface. The features are always changing, but the overall activity of the entire area and the volume of water discharge remain relatively constant. Here, as in few other places on earth, rock forms before your eyes.

**Local Services**

- **Horace M. Albright Visitor Center**
  Phone: 307-344-2263
  5/25–9/30  8 AM–7 PM
  10/1–5/24  9 AM–5 PM
  Backcountry Office located inside.
  Yellowstone Forever Bookstore inside.

- **Lodging**

- **Campground**
  Mammoth Campground is open year-round.

- **Food**
  Mammoth Hotel Dining Room 4/27–10/14
  Terrace Grill 4/27–10/14
  Liquid propane gas bottle exchange 5/11–9/30

- **Fuel**
  Credit card fueling 24-hours; year-round.

- **Shopping**
  Mammoth General Store open year-round.
  Sells groceries, ice cream, souvenirs, apparel.
  Has a public water bottle filling station.
  Mammoth Hotel Gift Store 4/27–9/3

- **Other**
  Medical Clinic 6/1–9/27, open daily 8:30 AM–5 PM; 9/28–5/31 open weekdays.
  Phone: 307-344-7965 Emergency dial 911
  U.S. Post Office
  Self-guiding trail booklets are available for the Mammoth Terraces and Fort Yellowstone.
  Public restrooms are located at all visitor centers, stores, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and at or near all picnic areas.
  Recycling bins are located near the General Store and at the campground.

**Fort Yellowstone**

For the decade after Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872, the park was under serious threat from those who would exploit, rather than protect, its resources. In 1886, the U.S. Army stepped in to help.

The buildings of Fort Yellowstone are a testament to the long history of our first national park and of the important role the Army played in preserving it for the future. They remind us that the resources we find within Yellowstone’s boundaries are not only natural ones, but cultural as well. Our interactions with this wilderness continue to shape our idea of what a national park should be, just as they did during the days of Fort Yellowstone.
**Tower/Roosevelt**

**Local Services**

- **Lodging**
  Roosevelt Lodge is open 6/1–9/3

- **Campground**
  Tower Fall Campground is open 5/25–9/24

- **Food**
  Roosevelt Lodge Dining Room 6/1–9/3
  Roosevelt Old West Dinner cookout 6/2–9/8

- **Fuel**
  Credit card fueling 24-hours, year round.
  Restrooms and C-store open 6/1–9/3

- **Shopping**
  Tower Fall General Store 5/18–9/19
  Has groceries, snack bar, souvenirs, apparel, and a public water bottle filling station.
  Roosevelt Mini Store open 6/1–9/3.
  Roosevelt Lodge Gift Store 6/1–9/3

- **Other**
  - Backcountry Office in ranger station.
  - Trail and stagecoach rides offered 6/1–9/2

**Grant Village**

**Local Services**

- **Grant Visitor Center**
  Explore the extraordinary ecological and social impacts of the historic fires of 1988.
  Phone: 307-344-2650
  5/25–9/30  8 AM–7 PM
  10/1–10/8  9 AM–5 PM
- Backcountry Office located next door.
- Yellowstone Forever Bookstore inside.
- **Lodging**
  Grant Lodge 5/25–9/30
- **Campgrounds**
  Grant Village Campground 6/8–9/16
- **Food**
  Grant Lodge Restaurant 5/25–9/30
  Lake House at Grant 6/1–9/23

**Norris**

- **Norris Geyser Basin Museum and Information Station**
  Exhibits about the range of hydrothermal features in Yellowstone. Phone: 307-344-2812
  5/19–9/30  9 AM–6 PM
  10/1–10/8  9 AM–5 PM
- Yellowstone Forever Bookstore 9 AM–5 PM
- A self-guiding trail booklet is available for this area.
- **Museum of the National Park Ranger**
  Located one mile north of Norris, visit with retired rangers and explore the history of the park ranger profession.
  5/26–9/23  9 AM–5 PM

**Madison**

- **Madison Information Station**
  Ph: 307-344-2821
  5/25–9/30  9 AM–6 PM
  10/1–10/8  9 AM–5 PM
- Yellowstone Forever Bookstore 9 AM–5 PM
- **Campground**
  Madison Campground is open 4/27–10/14

**West Yellowstone**

- **Visitor Information Center**
  Inside the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce find trip planning, fishing permits, and ranger programs. Phone: 307-344-2876
  Chamber of Commerce: NPS Desk: open daily
  4/30–5/20  8 AM–6 PM
  4/20–5/25  8 AM–4 PM
  5/21–9/3  8 AM–8 PM
  5/26–9/3  8 AM–8 PM
  9/4–9/30  8 AM–6 PM
  9/4–11/4  8 AM–4 PM
  10/1–11/10  8 AM–5 PM
  Winter *  8 AM–5 PM
  *weekdays only
- Backcountry Office located inside.
Yellowstone National Park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978, because it protects significant geological phenomena and processes. It is also a unique manifestation of geothermal forces, natural beauty, and wild ecosystems where rare and endangered species can thrive. As one of the few remaining intact large ecosystems in the northern temperate zone, Yellowstone’s ecological communities provide unparalleled opportunities for conservation, study, and enjoyment of large-scale wildland ecosystem processes.

Yellowstone is a place of multiple dangers

- Do not approach or feed any animal.  
- Do not let your children near any animals. 
- Keep at least 25 yards (23 m) from other animals. 
- Keep at least 100 yards (91 m) from bears and wolves. 
- Do not feed any animals. 
- Keep away from geysers and buildings. 
- Do not smoke in geothermal areas or buildings. 
- Always keep an eye on your children. 
- Never run, push or crowd. 
- Water can cause severe burns or death. 
- Do not leave the boardwalk or trails. 
- Make a noise and carry bear spray. 
- Keep a safe distance from bears and wolves. 
- Keep a safe distance from all other animals. 

Yellowstone présente de multiples dangers

- Ne vous approchez pas et ne nourrissez pas les animaux.  
- Ne laissez pas vos enfants près des animaux. 
- Restez à au moins 25 yards (23 m) des autres animaux. 
- Restez à au moins 100 yards (91 m) des ours et loups. 
- Ne nourrissez pas d'animaux. 
- Restez à l'écart des geysers et des bâtiments. 
- Ne fumez pas dans les zones thermales ou les bâtiments. 
- Surveillez constamment vos enfants. 
- Il est interdit de fumer dans les bassins des geysers et les bâtiments.

Vous êtes responsable de votre sécurité.
Share the road. Cyclists must ride single file. Drivers should pass no closer than three feet (1.0 m) to bicycles and roadside pedestrians.

Road schedule 2018
Weather permitting, roads open/close at 8 AM on the day listed. Changes and delays are possible.

- **Open year-round**: April 20–November 5
- **Mammoth to Old Faithful; Madison to West Entrance; Norris to Canyon**
- **Canyon Junction to Lake; Lake to East Entrance (Sylvan Pass)**
- **Tower Junction to Tower Fall; Old Faithful to West Thumb (Craig Pass); Lake to South Entrance**
- **Tower Fall to Canyon Junction (Dunraven Pass); Beartooth Highway**

There is a separate fee for entrance to Grand Teton National Park. Visit nps.gov/GRTE for more information.

**Road status updates**
Hotline: 307-344-2117
Online: go.nps.gov/yellroads
Mobile alerts: text “82190” to 888777

**Road Construction**
1. **Norris to Golden Gate**: Expect 30-minute delays.
   - Jun. 1–Oct. 8: Night closures 10 PM to 7 AM.
2. **Canyon Area Overlooks Closed**: Inspiration Point parking and trail. Uncle Tom’s Point parking and trail.
   - July–Nov.: Brink of Upper Falls.
3. **Fishing Bridge to Indian Pond**: Expect 30-minute delays.
   - Oct. 15–Nov. 5: Closed to ALL traffic.

Approximate Cell Coverage Areas
- Verizon: all coverage areas
- AT&T: Canyon
- Union Telecom: Grant, Old Faithful, and Mammoth