

## Montana: Glacier National Park

### Tour-Only Itinerary

Cool breezes and even cooler views pass through the open roof of your sporty Red Jammer bus as it rounds a hairpin curve towards Logan Pass. Alighting at the summit, you stride with your guide into the heart of Montana's Rockies. Lacy white beargrass floats cloudlike atop tall stalks, and ribbed green slopes plunge into the U-shaped glacial valley below. Trading gazes with a mountain goat on the cliffs above, you break into a smile and realize you're living in a primeval world few are privileged to know. Staying each night at historic lodges, with hiking trails right out your back door, you've got a front-row perspective on Glacier's mountains, lakes, and wildlife on this Montana hiking trip. So embrace the moment. The trail ahead curves enticingly round another bend, and you're off, into the high country.



### Highlights

Ascend the peaks and cliffs of the Continental Divide as you cruise the famous Going-to-the-Sun Road in one of the park's classic Red Buses.

Learn from passionate and knowledgeable naturalist guides, as they bring Glacier National Park's impressive geological history to life.

Traverse alpine slopes through a profusion of colorful wildflowers and grasses, all beneath the impressive face of Mt. Wilbur.

## On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate to challenging, with an average of 4 to 11 miles of walking daily. The terrain is well-worn paths with occasional rocks and exposed roots, and varies from forested to exposed sun-drenched trails. Many of the trails are narrow at times with wide, expansive views and steep drop-offs on one side. The Going-to-the-Sun Road, while beautiful, is narrow and winding with steep drop-offs to one side. If you are prone to motion sickness, have a fear of heights, or have concerns about vertigo, we strongly urge you to phone our office. There are ascents and descents of up to 1,200 to 2,200 feet, which are mostly gradual but some portions are steep. The highest elevation during this trip is approximately 7,500 feet. High mountains, stunning scenery, and wildlife combine on

each walk in Glacier National Park.

## DAY 1

### Arrival in Whitefish

Transfer to Glacier National Park. Avalanche Lake; 4-6 miles, easy to moderate

Your guide(s) will meet you at the Best Western Rocky Mountain Lodge at 8:00 a.m. in the lobby. Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

From the meeting point in Whitefish, you drive (approximately one hour) to the western side of Glacier National Park. Here, in the lush, ancient cedar rainforest, you stretch your legs on an easy walk up to the glacial meltwaters of Avalanche Lake. The path first passes Avalanche Gorge, where rushing waters have carved the stone into smooth chutes and bowls. From here you continue climbing on a moss-rimmed pathway among western red cedars and hemlock to the tranquil shores of Avalanche Lake, which rests in a cirque surrounded by the towering, layered cliffs of Glacier Park's dramatic mountains.

Following a lakeside picnic lunch, you travel a short distance to your home for the night—a national park property that first began welcoming guests in 1895. Nestled in a cedar grove on tranquil Lake McDonald, the lodge provides opportunities to stroll the lakeshore or perhaps relax near the lobby's giant stone fireplace.

Tonight's dinner will be at a restaurant in nearby Coran or a prepared meal from your lodge.

**Accommodation:** Lake McDonald Lodge, Glacier National Park

## DAY 2

### Highline Trail to Haystack Butte

7 miles, moderate

This morning, early risers may have an opportunity to view the wildlife, such as deer and elk, which make

their home in the forested foothills around Lake McDonald. After breakfast, you depart the western side of the park by way of the well-known Going-to-the-Sun Road, a marvel of engineering that spectacularly scales the Continental Divide at Logan Pass (elevation 6,646 feet) and affords close-up views of the park's majestic high peaks, cliffs, and lakes.

Today's walk is the famous "Garden Wall" section of the Highline Trail, which provides spectacular scenery and excellent opportunities to view wildlife on the open mountain slopes below the rugged ridge of the Continental Divide. The trail crosses a broad ledge, then winds through fir and spruce that have been molded over time into eerie shapes by the strong winter winds and ice particles, leaving many without windward branches and, instead, with a flag-like appearance. You are surrounded by the results of glacial activity, in a valley overlooking mountains that cradle a high hanging basin, from which a waterfall cascades hundreds of feet to the valley floor below. You may share the trail with mountain goats or bighorn sheep, which are at home on the ledges of the rugged, rocky terrain. After lingering near a promontory known as Haystack Butte, you then return on the same trail.

By late afternoon you reach your home for the next two nights, another spectacular park lodge built by the Great Northern Railroad in 1915. The lodge sits on the shores of Swiftcurrent Lake, and offers some of the best wildlife viewing in the park. This convenient location provides two days of walking directly from the front door. Built with a true Swiss flavor, the hotel features a recently renovated exterior. This evening you will either dine at a nearby restaurant or outdoors at a nearby picnic area with to-go meals prepared by the lodge.

**Accommodation:** Many Glacier Lodge, Glacier National Park

## DAY 3

### Iceberg Lake

5-9 miles, moderate, 1,200-ft. elevation gain

After breakfast, you set out for the striking aquamarine tarn known as Iceberg Lake. The trail climbs briskly for the first few hundred yards and then continues on a gradual ascent to the lake (elevation gain of 1,200 feet). You traverse slopes colored with a profusion of wildflowers, including the creamy white blossoms of beargrass in early summer and the magenta spikes of fireweed mid-summer. In all seasons,

you behold the spectacular views of Swiftcurrent Glacier, Grinnell Point, and towering Mt. Wilbur, known to the Blackfeet as “Heavy Shield Mountain.”

Ptarmigan Falls provides a refreshing rest spot on warm summer days. For a shorter walking option, you may turn back here and enjoy a leisurely afternoon at the lodge. For the longer option, you continue on to the glacial cirque that supports the frigid turquoise waters and ice flows of Iceberg Lake (elevation 6,094 feet). In the late afternoon, you return to the lodge with time to refresh before dinner on your own from the lodge’s dining room.

**Accommodation:** Many Glacier Lodge, Glacier National Park

## DAY 4

### Grinnell Lake Overlook

5 miles, moderate, 600-ft. elevation gain; or Grinnell Glacier; 11 miles, moderate to challenging, 1,400-ft. elevation gain

An area known as the Grinnell Valley holds two destinations in store today—Grinnell Lake Overlook or Grinnell Glacier. The trail begins with a climb through a forest of sub-alpine firs, then traverses ledges of sedimentary red and green argillite, which open broadly to breathtaking views of the surrounding peaks, while Mts. Gould and Grinnell tower above. With the distinctive milky flow of glacial meltwater, Grinnell Falls cascades into Grinnell Lake below. Wildlife sightings are likely as you travel through the habitat of bighorn sheep, mountain goats, bear, and moose. The turnaround point at Grinnell Lake Overlook is remarkably picturesque and allows for a leisurely pace on the return along the wildflower-studded shores of two lovely lakes (elevation gain of 600 feet).

For those who continue onward and upward, the trail is demanding, but rewarding, and provides access to one of the largest remaining glaciers in the park (elevation gain of 1,400 feet). At the end of the day’s adventures, a scenic drive of just over an hour brings you to new accommodations—a historic park lodge known as the “Big Tree” hotel owing to the enormous Douglas fir trees adorning its majestic lobby. Dinner is served in the lodge’s dining room.

**Accommodation:** Glacier Park Lodge, Glacier National Park

## DAY 5

### Scenic Point Trail

8 miles, moderate to challenging, 2,200-ft. elevation gain or Upper Two Medicine Lake; 7.5 miles, easy

This morning, a short drive brings you to Two Medicine Valley and the trailhead for a walk that boasts the week's highest elevation, uniquely located here in the park's vast, eastern prairies. From the east bank of Appistoki Creek, the trail climbs quickly, passing Appistoki Falls, then ascends steeply and steadily via switchbacks up the arid mountainside above the creek. All of today's elevation gain (approximately 2,200 feet) is within the first three miles, but you are rewarded at the summit of Scenic Point (elevation 7,522 feet) with spectacular views. To the west are great peaks, passes, and deep blue lakes along the Continental Divide, and to the east are great plains that stretch for hundreds of miles. After a picnic lunch, you return on the same trail with beautiful views of Glacier National Park before you.

For those looking for something more leisurely, a walk is offered to Upper Two Medicine Lake. Starting at the foot of Two Medicine Lake with magnificent Rising Wolf Mountain towering to the north, the trail gently winds through diverse forest where occasional avalanche chutes open to views of this gorgeous valley. While eating a snack at the impressive Twin Falls, you may see an ouzel (or American dipper), which makes its home in a nest under one of the falls. Continuing on to Upper Two Medicine Lake (elevation gain of 300 feet), you unpack your picnic lunch before making your way back to Two Medicine Lake. Tonight's farewell dinner is at a local restaurant known for its casual menu and lively atmosphere.

**Accommodation:** Glacier Park Lodge, Glacier National Park

## DAY 6

### Forest and Fire Nature Trail

1 mile, easy. Departure from Whitefish

Your final day offers a pleasant hike around the Forest and Fire Nature Trail loop which is near the Camas Creek entrance to the park. Previously called the Huckleberry Mountain Nature Trail, this hike takes you

through areas that were severely burned in 1967 – and scorched yet again in 2001. Determined pine saplings, young aspens, and fragrant wildflowers surround the trail as you walk through the rebirth of the forest. Soon you'll ascend vantage points to see thousands of dead trees and spreading views of the Flathead River. Once this hike is complete, you'll shuttle to Apgar Village on the shores of Lake McDonald, for a picnic lunch before returning to Whitefish for departures from the airport or downtown.

## What's Included

### Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
All on-tour meals except 1 dinner	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓