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Montana & Wyoming: Yellowstone

Travel Style - Guided Walking Tour

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep into the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.



From bubbling mudpots and rocketing geysers to grizzlies foraging in highland meadows, Yellowstone offers a glimpse of the American West as it looked a millennium ago. It's a primeval land, where colossal hot springs boil, a kaleidoscope of deep-cobalt water edged with brilliant orange blooms of microbes; where quiet single-track trails lead through lodgepole-pine forests to massive waterfalls or steaming fumaroles; where wolf packs still hunt in the eastern valleys, filling the night sky with their howling. Here, in the company of expert naturalists, you'll walk along the rim of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, looking off a 2,000-foot precipice into rhyolite escarpments streaked red and green with oxidation. Stare straight into the towering 300-foot Lower Canyon Falls, standing in a spot immortalized by the painter Thomas Moran. Delight in bison, bighorn sheep, elk, grizzlies, and mule deer along secluded trails through the Hayden Valley. In the heart of the world's first national park, make memories to last a lifetime.

Tour Only Itinerary - 2019

Day 1

Arrival in Bozeman

Upper Geyser Basin, 6 miles, easy

Welcome to Montana! After meeting your guides in Bozeman, a vibrant college town with a lively frontier spirit, you transfer two hours into the heart of Yellowstone National Park.

Here, you explore the world's largest concentration of geysers, hot springs, and fumaroles in Upper Geyser Basin. Starting on a network of boardwalks, you leave the crowds behind as you follow a forested path to Biscuit Basin. Early settlers named the basin after the biscuit-shaped "sinter mounds" formed by deposits of minerals precipitated out of the water. Sinter also forms the scalloped edges around hot pools, ornate cones around geysers, and terraces which form the basin's numerous runoff



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channels.

Crossing the bridge over the Firehole River, you walk through a regenerating lodgepole pine forest to Mystic Falls, where the river's waters tumble 70 feet down the rhyolite cliffs of the Madison Plateau—the perfect spot for the picnic you'll enjoy. Nearby thermal features produce steam along the flanks of the river's edge. After lunch, your route travels a more remote part of the Upper Geyser Basin, eventually leading you back to the park's largest and best-known geyser, Old Faithful. As its name implies, Old Faithful is famous for the regularity and frequency of its 100- to 185-foot eruptions.

**Please note: Each day presents the possibility that alternative trails of comparable terrain will be used in the event of trail closing due to wildlife activity or other circumstances.*

Accommodation: Lake Yellowstone Hotel, Yellowstone National Park

Casual elegance defines the Lake Yellowstone Hotel, rich in Colonial Revival architectural touches and graced with classic white columns and a vibrant yellow exterior. This National Historic Landmark has been awarded with Green Seal Lodging Certification. Located on the scenic shores of Yellowstone Lake, the entire property has been recently refurbished, making it the ideal place to end a rewarding day of walking. The Lake Hotel dining room offers creative cuisine of fresh fish, wild game, and fresh produce, all locally sourced.

Day 2

Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone

5 miles, easy to moderate

Today you venture farther into the park for a walk through lush forests and blooming meadows that give way to the otherworldly landscapes of thick mudpots and hot springs created by Yellowstone's subterranean geothermal activity. Soon, you arrive at the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. This 1,200-ft deep chasm is layered with the bright red, yellow, and orange colors of volcanic rhyolite, hydrothermally altered and cooled some 600,000 years ago. In fact, the name Yellowstone is thought to have evolved from a French translation of the native Minnetaree "Rock Yellow River" by 18th-century French trappers, *roche jaune*, which was later translated by American trappers into its English name. The canyon is approximately 24 miles in total length, and you follow a trail along the rim as the Yellowstone River rushes below. You pause at a lunch spot overlooking the spectacular Hayden Valley, famous for its congregations of big game. This valley, actually an old lake bed formed by glaciers in the last Ice Age, is home to swans, great blue herons, Canada geese, elk, deer, bison, and, occasionally, wolves, as well as both grizzly and black bear.

Later, you have time to relax back at the hotel before enjoying another mouthwatering meal at your hotel.

Accommodation: Lake Yellowstone Hotel, Yellowstone National Park



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Day 3

Mammoth Hot Spring Terraces

3 miles, easy

Today you follow the Yellowstone River north through Paradise Valley to Mammoth Terraces. The uniquely colorful and steamy tiers for which this area is named represent an incredible natural process—underground magma heats groundwater that flows through limestone as it rises to the earth's surface. The limestone is then re-deposited as travertine, stacked up as terraces that are brilliantly colored by bacteria thriving in the hot water.

In this unique environment, you follow boardwalks, paved paths, and dirt trails past cascading rivulets of steaming water, strange rock formations, and much more. As you go, you keep a look out for elk, which are attracted to these salty steamy terraces.

Late afternoon you reach your home for the next two nights, an elegant western-style lodge. Nestled along the Gallatin River and surrounded by mountains, the Rainbow Ranch offers both comfort and a true Western feel. After settling into your room, relax in the lodge's hot tub or enjoy a cocktail on the terrace before dinner.

Accommodation: Rainbow Ranch Lodge, Big Sky

Overlooking the Gallatin River, all rooms feature handcrafted lodgepole pine queen or king beds with plush down comforters, satellite television, and individual decks overlooking the Gallatin River or a picturesque pond. Rooms with one bed feature wood-burning river rock fireplaces and a small sitting area, while rooms with two beds offer the privacy of adjoining bedrooms.

Day 4

Mt. Washburn

7 miles, moderate; 1,384-ft. elevation gain

An ample breakfast fuels you for the spectacular walk to the summit of Mt. Washburn—presiding at 10,243 feet over the entire Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Part of the Washburn Range, one of two mountain ranges entirely located within the national park, the peak was named in honor of the 19th-century expedition leader Henry Washburn. Both a stagecoach and a wagon road in the past, the wide trail provides clear views of seven different mountain ranges, including the Beartooth, Absaroka,



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and the snowcapped Spanish Peaks. In July and August, the slopes are awash in blossoming wildflowers and grasses, a colorful palette of lupine, asters, buttercups, alpine harebell, forget-me-nots, and light green, silvery sage. Reaching the rocky summit, your efforts are rewarded with spectacular views extending to the Grand Tetons, 75 miles to the south. Enjoy a welcome picnic lunch in this breathtaking spot.

Late afternoon you reach your home for the next two nights, an elegant western-style lodge. Nestled along the Gallatin River and surrounded by mountains, the Rainbow Ranch offers both comfort and a true Western feel. After settling into your room, relax in the lodge's hot tub or enjoy a cocktail on the terrace. This evening's dinner is at a nearby restaurant, quite casual yet extremely popular among the locals for its hearty western fare.

Accommodation: Rainbow Ranch Lodge, Big Sky

Overlooking the Gallatin River, all rooms feature handcrafted lodgepole pine queen or king beds with plush down comforters, satellite television, and individual decks overlooking the Gallatin River or a picturesque pond. Rooms with one bed feature wood-burning river rock fireplaces and a small sitting area, while rooms with two beds offer the privacy of adjoining bedrooms.

Day 5

Fairy Falls Trail, Imperial Geyser

6 miles, easy to moderate

This morning you choose from a light breakfast at the ranch, perhaps on the terrace overlooking the river, or a more hearty breakfast at a small café across the street.

After, you set off on a full day in the park to the delightful Fairy Falls. During an easy walk along an old road closed many years ago, you pass Grand Prismatic Spring and stroll on through forests of lodgepole pine, fir, and spruce to the falls, a 200-foot plummet of spray that cascades into a serene pool. After stopping here for a snack—and to perhaps get your feet wet—you continue on through grassy meadows and quiet stands of trees on your way to Imperial Geyser. Dramatically set beneath twin hills, this perpetually spraying geyser continually rockets out of a hot spring like a fountain. It was first discovered in 1925 and has been bursting forth almost constantly since 1966. Here you stop for a picnic lunch and admire nearby mudpots before heading back to the trailhead. This evening join the group for a farewell dinner, feasting on “ranch to table cuisine” with such specialties as cherry wood-grilled bison ribeye and parmesan-crusted local rainbow trout, perhaps followed with house made almond biscotti.

Accommodation: Rainbow Ranch Lodge, Big Sky

Overlooking the Gallatin River, all rooms feature handcrafted lodgepole pine queen or king beds with plush down comforters, satellite television, and individual decks overlooking the Gallatin River or a picturesque pond. Rooms with one bed feature wood-burning river rock fireplaces and a small sitting



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area, while rooms with two beds offer the privacy of adjoining bedrooms.

Day 6

Daly Creek Trail

3 miles, easy to moderate

Today you transfer a short distance to the start of your walk along Daly Creek. Your walk is a perfect introduction to the beauty and wildness of Yellowstone National Park without the crowds. In the more remote northwest corner of the park, you follow a gently rolling trail along Daly Creek, passing expansive meadows blanketed with wildflowers and stands of aspen which turn golden in the fall. You may spot elk, moose, deer, and raptors throughout your hike. The impressive Gallatin Mountain Range makes a dramatic backdrop. After, you drive an hour to Bozeman for a lively lunch at a favorite local watering hole. Your guides offer a drop-off either at the Bozeman Airport or downtown Bozeman.