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Montana: Glacier National Park

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.



Step into a world of imposing, snow-graced peaks, massive glaciers, whispering cedar forests, and icy waterfalls tumbling into broad green valleys. Here, deer and elk forage along aquamarine tarns and bighorn sheep climb rocky cliffs. The smooth stone chutes of plunging gorges, wind-twisted trees high on mountainsides, and glittering lakes reward hikers in this remote wilderness. Perched on the “Crown of the Continent”—the meeting point of headwaters for the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Hudson Bay—it’s perfect for those hoping to enjoy a pristine ecosystem in the heart of North America. Endowed with some glorious alpine scenery, it’s the perfect place to spot mountain goats, moose, eagles, and even mighty grizzly bears foraging through secluded valleys. With your expert guides, you explore iconic regions like Grinnell Glacier, Avalanche Gorge, Garden Wall, and Iceberg Lake. Enjoy meals showcasing fresh-caught trout, farm-to-table produce, and local game. Come fill your senses with the timeless splendor of two billion years of geological creation.

Tour Only Itinerary - 2019

Day 1

Arrival in Whitefish

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

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.



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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 is 20 minutes down the road at the Belton Chalet, which has been restored to its 1910 charm with original wainscoting and leaded glass windows. Here your chef blends local ingredients into savory dishes grilled on the Belton Boiler BBQ, which is a story in itself. This first evening is a perfect way to ease into the week in this spectacular, natural gem of a park.

Accommodation: Lake McDonald Lodge, Glacier National Park

Built in 1914, this national-park lodge is situated in a cedar grove on the shores of beautiful Lake McDonald.

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 in the dining area with its rough-hewn beams and hunting trophies, you depart the western side of the park in a classic Red Bus 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 dine in the lodge's Ptarmigan Dining Room, which serves Continental and American cuisine.



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Accommodation: Many Glacier Lodge, Glacier National Park

The largest of the national-park lodges in Glacier, this historic lodge was built in the Swiss tradition and opened in 1915. Located on the shores of Swiftcurrent Lake, this lodge affords some of the best wildlife viewing in the park.

Day 3

Iceberg Lake

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

After a breakfast buffet, 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 reuniting for dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Many Glacier Lodge, Glacier National Park

The largest of the national-park lodges in Glacier, this historic lodge was built in the Swiss tradition and opened in 1915. Located on the shores of Swiftcurrent Lake, this lodge affords some of the best wildlife viewing in the 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. Both options begin with a short, yet scenic boat ride across Swiftcurrent and Josephine Lakes. 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).



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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

A National Park lodge, first opened to the public in 1913, with a massive, welcoming lobby and reputation as “The Big Tree” hotel.

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 and returning by boat. Tonight's farewell dinner is at a local restaurant known for its casual menu and lively atmosphere.

Accommodation: Glacier Park Lodge, Glacier National Park

A National Park lodge, first opened to the public in 1913, with a massive, welcoming lobby and reputation as “The Big Tree” hotel.

Day 6

Flathead River Float Trip



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Departure from Whitefish

Your final day offers a relaxing alternative for viewing Glacier's scenery during a river-raft float trip on the Flathead River, part of which forms the southern boundary of Glacier National Park. After full days of hiking, you may find yourself ready to put up your boots and float or paddle peacefully downstream on the emerald green Flathead River. Lunch tastes better riverside, where it is served on tables at the bend known as Devil's Elbow, with the sound of waves and the opportunity to swim, skip rocks, or simply relax in your beautiful surroundings.

If you prefer to hike today, a walk is offered by your guide, who presents many options to choose from. You return to Whitefish in the late afternoon for departures from the airport or downtown.