



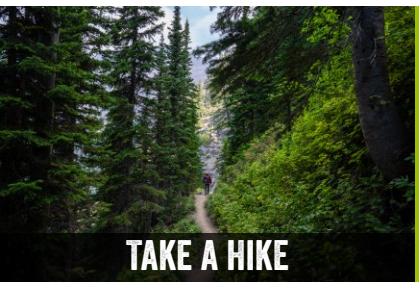
TOP THINGS TO DO IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

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America's first national park packs a mighty punch with so much to see and do. The park contains geothermal features like mud pots, hot springs, geysers and fumaroles, covering more than 3,400 square miles. With more than 1,000 miles of trails in the park, there are plenty of places to get out and explore the natural wonders that make Yellowstone so unique. This list just scratches the surface, but it is a great place to start.



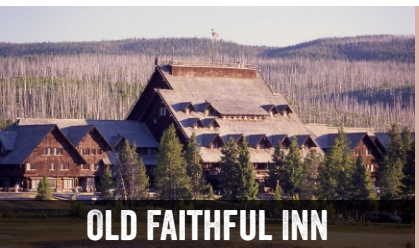
EXPLORE BY FOUR WHEELS



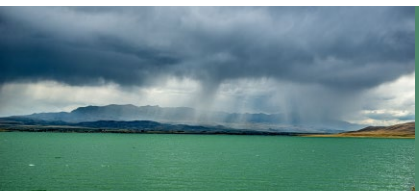
TAKE A HIKE



BISON WATCHING



OLD FAITHFUL INN



FISH, BOAT OR BEACH

10 Take a scenic drive through the park on the Yellowstone Grand Loop Road. Best traversed over several days because there is so much to see, the road loops through the park in a figure-eight pattern, encompassing more than 140 miles of pavement. This road is the best way to see the main attractions within Yellowstone and includes significant sites like Old Faithful, Grand Prismatic Spring and Mammoth Hot Springs. Grab a map of the park and plan your route to see as much as possible on this loop.

9 With more than 1,000 miles of trails, you have no excuse to get out and explore Yellowstone by foot. Some trails wind around the geothermal features, while others offer great back-country hiking opportunities. Some of the more popular hikes are the Artist Paint Pot Trail, West Thumb Geyser Basin Trail, Fairy Falls Trail and the Grand Prismatic Overlook Trail. Hikes range from easy to strenuous, and many hikes around the geothermal features are on a boardwalk, making traversing the area easier for all hiking capabilities.

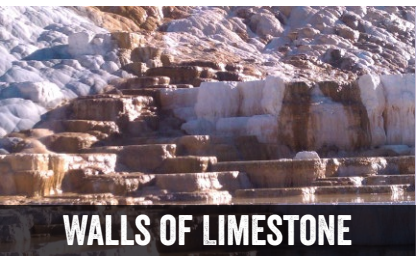
8 Because Yellowstone is home to the most significant concentration of mammals in the lower 48 states, your chances of seeing wild animals are almost guaranteed. Hayden Valley is a great place to view large herds of bison that call this area home. Grizzlies and wolves are known to frequent this area, so keep a pair of binoculars handy to view wildlife from a distance. For a unique experience, visit this area after dark, find a safe place to park, roll your windows down and listen to the bison as they call to one another.

7 This national historic landmark is considered one of America's top favorite 150 buildings. It's astonishing to see with its grand seven-story lobby and massive 500-ton fireplace. Made from rocks from volcanic eruptions in the park, this 85-foot-tall fireplace is one of the main focal points of the inn. Stand in the lobby and admire the timber as it stretches, twists and climbs towards the heavens to create a unique architectural wonder.

6 Yellowstone Lake is a whopping 20 miles long by 14 miles wide and is the largest lake at its elevation of 7,733 feet above sea level. Spend an afternoon lounging on one of the beaches, hike along its shores or take a scenic boat tour on the Lake Queen II. You can also take a kayak tour, bring your boat to explore the waters or spend a day fishing for cutthroat trout.



MUDDY FUN



WALLS OF LIMESTONE



CAPTURE A RAINBOW



GRAND CANYON NUMBER TWO



FAITHFUL AND TRUE

5 Though not as majestic as witnessing a geyser spew water over 100 feet into the air, there's something charming about watching air bubbles pop to the surface under a layer of mud. The Artist Paint Pots and the Fountain Paint Pots are the two best places in the park to watch bubbling caldrons of mud pop, plop and belch. A boardwalk stretches around the Fountain Paint Pots, while the Artist Paint Pots tend to be slightly less populated.

4 One unique feature near the park's north end is Mammoth Hot Springs. Here, limestone is liquified and pushed to the surface, then solidifies again on the travertine surface, creating a stunningly beautiful landscape of staggered white terraces. Boardwalks take visitors up, over and around almost 2 miles of the upper and lower terraces. The scenery is otherworldly, as the white limestone has overtaken trees, leaving stark empty branches reaching for the skies.

3 One of the most photographed sites within Yellowstone is the Grand Prismatic Spring. This rainbow-painted hot spring is the largest in the United States. More extensive than a football field, you can view the spring two different ways: up close and personal around the boardwalks or from the viewpoint up on a hill overlooking the spring. Do both. There's something magical about walking through the steam as the wind clears your view to see the massive liquid rainbow stretch out before you.

2 While everyone has heard of the Grand Canyon, some may not know that Yellowstone is home to its own Grand Canyon: the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River. This 24-mile-long canyon reaches depths of 1,000 feet. The canyon is home to Upper and Lower Falls, with the more popular being Lower Falls. Walk along the paved path to view the Lower Falls as they crash 308 feet to the valley floor, making this fall the highest-volume waterfall in the U.S. For a closer view, try the Brink of Lower Falls Trail, which switchbacks down the canyon walls for an epic view.

1 No trip to Yellowstone is complete without visiting—and watching—Old Faithful erupt. Old Faithful is one of only six geysers in the park (of more than 500 geysers) that predictably erupts—a rare quality. Spewing water upwards of 180 feet into the air, Old Faithful has delighted guests since the park's opening in 1872. Look for posted signs near Old Faithful for estimated times of eruptions, then grab a seat along the boardwalk and take in the show. You can also catch the show from a distance at the Old Faithful Viewing Area on the hill surrounding the geyser. Hike about two miles with an elevation gain of 160 feet and take in the surrounding sights as Old Faithful Erupts in the background.

Yellowstone National Park is a never-ending wonderland of geothermal features. You could spend a lifetime attempting to explore all of Yellowstone and never scratch the surface of her splendor.