

NATIONAL PARK SERIES • GUIDE NO. 002

# 4-Day Yellowstone Itinerary

*Lower Loop + Upper Loop, By Area*

4 FULL DAYS

ZERO BACKTRACKING

SOUTH → NORTH

## Quick Facts Before You Go

- Enter South, exit North — no backtracking anywhere on this route
- In-park lodging opens 13 months out, on the 5th of each month
- Reserve Roosevelt's stagecoach or horseback ride early — it sells out
- Pack layers: mornings run 30-40°F cooler than midday
- Cell service is spotty to nonexistent — download offline maps first



STEALTHEITINERARY.COM

Steal the research. Keep the adventure.

LOWER LOOP · DAY 1 OF 4

# Lake Yellowstone Area

West Thumb, Storm Point & an Evening Wildlife Drive

- 
- 1

8:00 AM **Lewis Falls**

EASY ADVENTURE

Roadside waterfall just past the South Entrance — no hike required. → 20 min drive
- 
- 2

8:30 AM **West Thumb Geyser Basin**

BEST PHOTO SPOT

Boardwalk beside Yellowstone Lake, colorful hot springs. 0.5 mi · 20-30 min. → 25 min drive
- 
- 3

10:00 AM **Scenic Cruise or Kayak**

ASHLEY'S FAVORITE

Depart Bridge Bay Marina — the Lake Queen cruise or a sunset kayak tour. Book ahead. → 5 min drive
- 
- 4

12:30 PM **Lake Yellowstone Hotel**

WORTH THE SPLURGE

Lunch or coffee at the historic 1891 hotel — the oldest in the park. → 10 min drive
- 
- 5

2:00 PM **Storm Point Trail**

BEST WILDLIFE

2.3 mi round trip · Easy · best wildlife odds along the lake. → Check in ~4pm, then 25 min drive
- 
- 6

6:00 PM · Opt. **Hayden Valley Wildlife Drive**

BEST WILDLIFE

Evening drive between Lake and Canyon — loop back to your lodge after.
- 

**Pro Tip:** Book your scenic cruise or kayak tour before your trip — both sell out fast in peak summer.

LOWER LOOP · DAY 2 OF 4

# Old Faithful Area

Old Faithful & Upper Geyser Basin

## 1 8:00 AM Old Faithful

DON'T MISS

Arrive 20-30 minutes before the predicted eruption. → 5 min walk

## 2 8:45 AM Upper Geyser Basin Boardwalk

FAMILY FAVORITE

World's largest concentration of geysers. 3.2 mi · 2-3 hrs. → 15 min drive, lunch at Old Faithful Inn

## 3 1:00 PM Grand Prismatic Spring Overlook

BEST PHOTO SPOT

1.2 mi round trip · Easy · best aerial view of the park's most colorful hot spring.

## 4 2:00 PM · Opt. Fairy Falls Extension

EASY ADVENTURE

5.4 mi total round trip · ~200 ft falls · Easy.

**Pro Tip:** Download the Old Faithful eruption schedule in the NPS app before arriving — predictions update throughout the day.

UPPER LOOP · DAY 3 OF 4

# Canyon & Tower Area

Norris Geyser Basin, Artist Point & Tower Fall

## 1 8:00 AM Norris Geyser Basin

HIDDEN GEM

Back Basin Loop — Yellowstone's hottest geothermal area. 1.5 mi · ~1.5 hrs. → *30 min drive*

## 2 10:00 AM Artist Point

BEST PHOTO SPOT

Classic Lower Falls view — short paved walk from parking. → *10 min walk*

## 3 10:45 AM Brink of the Lower Falls

DON'T MISS

Short but steep paved walk right to the falls' edge. → *Lunch at Canyon Village, then 30 min drive*

## 4 2:00 PM Tower Fall

EASY ADVENTURE

132-ft waterfall with an easy overlook and short walk. → *~4pm return to your lodge*

## 5 3:00 PM · Opt. Mount Washburn

ASHLEY'S FAVORITE

6 mi round trip · 10,219 ft summit · staffed fire lookout. Bighorn sheep common.

**Pro Tip:** Mount Washburn takes 3-5 hours. Skip it if you're planning an early Lamar Valley wildlife drive tomorrow. (Uncle Tom's Trail is permanently closed since 2019.)

UPPER LOOP • DAY 4 OF 4

# Lamar Valley & Mammoth Area

Sunrise Wildlife, Roosevelt's Wild West & the Terraces

## 1 6:00 AM Lamar Valley

BEST WILDLIFE

Sunrise wildlife drive — wolves, bears, bison & pronghorn. → *45 min drive*

## 2 10:00 AM Roosevelt Corral

ASHLEY'S FAVORITE

Historic stagecoach or horseback ride through Roosevelt country. Reserve early. → *Lunch at Roosevelt Lodge, then 25 min drive*

## 3 1:00 PM Mammoth Hot Springs

BEST PHOTO SPOT

Famous travertine terraces & historic Fort Yellowstone district. → *3pm huckleberry ice cream at Mammoth Terrace Grill, then exit north*

## 4 3:30 PM • Opt. Continue to Bozeman

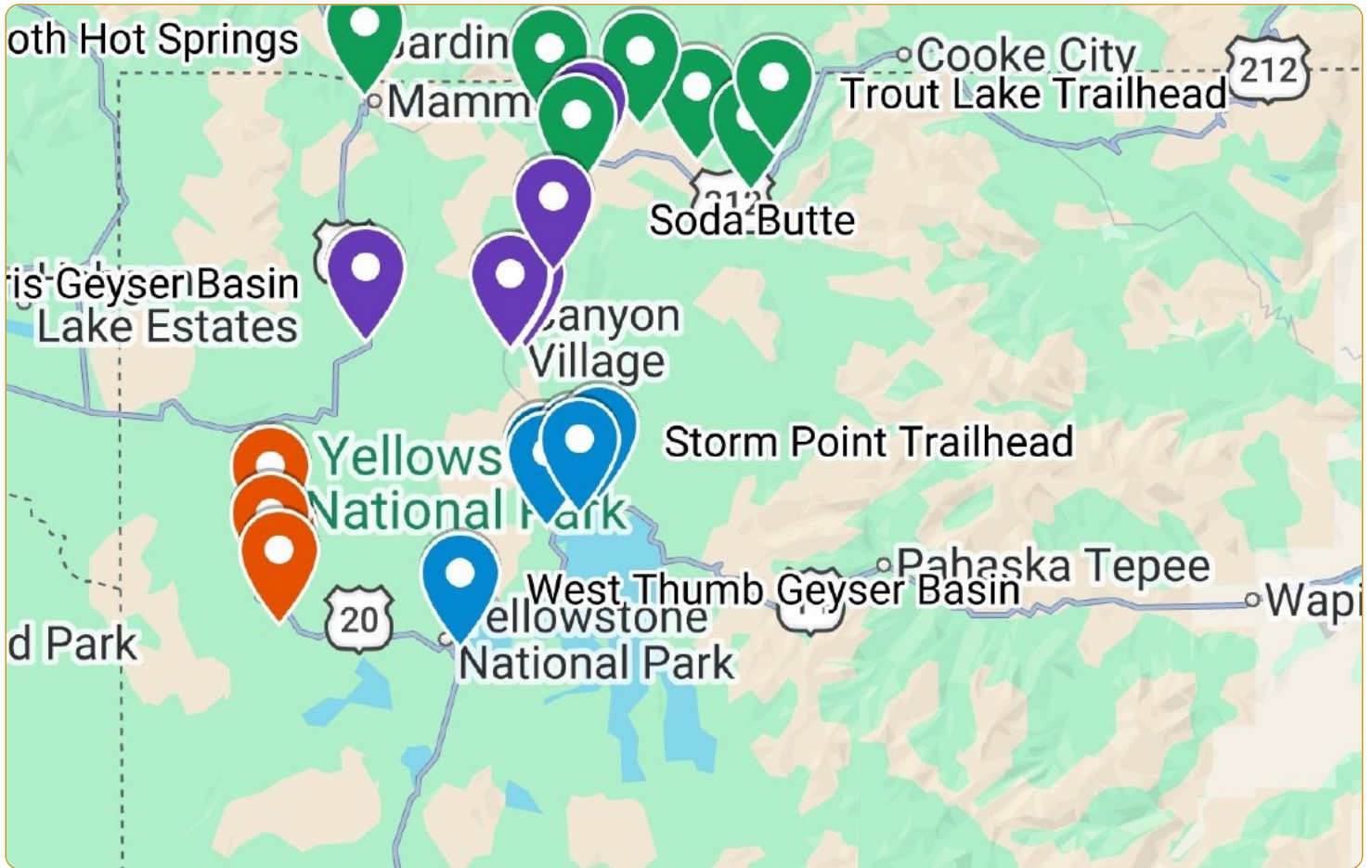
ROAD TRIP

~1.5-2 hrs from Gardiner — for early flights out of BZN.

**Pro Tip:** Reserve Roosevelt's stagecoach or horseback ride months ahead — summer departures often sell out.

## Map This Route

Every stop from all 4 days, color-coded so you can navigate offline once you're in the park.



● DAY 1 · LAKE & WEST THUMB   ● DAY 2 · OLD FAITHFUL   ● DAY 3 · CANYON & TOWER   ● DAY 4 · LAMAR & MAMMOTH



### Scan for the Live Interactive Map

Every stop, plotted and color-coded by day, in Google Maps. Pull it up before you go so it's ready even when the park's cell signal isn't.

# Where to Stay & What to Pack

## One Base or Two?

- Canyon Lodge & Cabins — the best central base for this entire itinerary
- Split stay — Old Faithful area (Days 1-2) → Canyon area (Days 3-4)
- Historic lodges worth exploring: Old Faithful Inn, Lake Yellowstone Hotel, Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, Roosevelt Lodge
- Gateway towns Gardiner & West Yellowstone make great backup options

## Don't Forget

- Pack layers — mornings run 30-40°F cooler than midday
- Bear spray — rent at the airport, don't ship it
- Offline maps — cell service is spotty to nonexistent
- Full gear guide with 70+ picks available on the website

FULL ITINERARY • BOOKING LINKS • INTERACTIVE MAP

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