

STEAL THE ITINERARY

FREE NATIONAL PARK ITINERARIES • GUIDE NO. 004

The Perfect 5-Day Glacier National Park Itinerary

Going-to-the-Sun Road, the Highline Trail, and Grinnell Glacier — the full sweep of Montana's crown jewel, built around Glacier's new 2026 access rules.

GUIDE 004

5 DAYS

BEST: JUL–SEP

MODERATE–STRENUOUS

WHERE	Glacier National Park, Montana (West Glacier & St. Mary)
AIRPORT	Glacier Park International (FCA), ~30 min from West Glacier
ENTRANCE	\$35 / vehicle (7 days) or \$70 annual — park is cashless
2026	No vehicle reservations; Logan Pass 3-hr parking + ticketed shuttle
BEST	Mid-July to mid-September (full Sun Road access)
ROUTE	West side → Sun Road → St. Mary & Many Glacier → Two Medicine

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DAY 01 • WEST SIDE

Lake McDonald, Apgar & Avalanche Lake

An easy arrival day on the park's quiet, forested west side.

- 1 Apgar & Lake McDonald.** The park's biggest lake — famous colored pebbles under clear water.
- 2 Trail of the Cedars + Avalanche Lake.** 4.6 mi round trip, easy–moderate; a waterfall-ringed alpine lake. Arrive before 9am or ride the shuttle.
- 3 Lake McDonald Lodge.** Historic 1913 lodge — sunset from the dock.

Tonight: grab tomorrow's Logan Pass shuttle tickets the moment they drop at 7pm on [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) (\$1/person).

DAY 02 • GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD

Cross the Sun Road to Logan Pass & St. Mary

The most iconic drive in the American West — 50 miles over the Divide.

- 1 Climb the west half.** Leave by 6:30–7am. Bird Woman Falls, the Weeping Wall, The Loop — every pullout is a photo.
- 2 Logan Pass (6,646 ft).** 3-hr parking limit — grab the free kiosk permit. Hike the Hidden Lake Overlook boardwalk (2.8 mi) through goat & wildflower country.
- 3 Descend to St. Mary.** Jackson Glacier Overlook, Wild Goose Island, and the St. Mary & Virginia Falls hike (2.4–3.8 mi). Overnight east side.

DAY 03 • THE HIGHLINE

Hike the Highline Trail

Glacier's most famous day hike — a cliff-edge traverse with almost no climbing.

- 1 Shuttle up, hike down.** Ride to Logan Pass and hike the Highline north — 11.6 mi point-to-point, net downhill, ending at The Loop for the shuttle back.
- 2 Optional: Grinnell Glacier Overlook.** A steep +1.2 mi spur for a birds-eye view down onto the glacier and Grinnell Lake.
- 3 Shorter alternative.** Out-and-back to Haystack Butte (~7.6 mi) — save the legs for Grinnell tomorrow.

DAY 04 • MANY GLACIER

Grinnell Glacier & the Many Glacier Valley

The most scenic valley in the park — fully open again in 2026 (339 parking spaces).

- 1 Grinnell Glacier hike.** 10.6 mi / 1,600 ft to an iceberg-dotted basin. The two-boat combo trims ~3.4 mi. Carry bear spray — prime grizzly country.
- 2 Many Glacier Hotel.** A drink on the deck of the 1915 hotel; sunset and wildlife on Swiftcurrent Lake.

Can't get enough? Swap Day 5 for the Iceberg Lake hike (9.6 mi) or Ptarmigan Tunnel — Many Glacier easily fills two days.

DAY 05 • TWO MEDICINE & EXIT

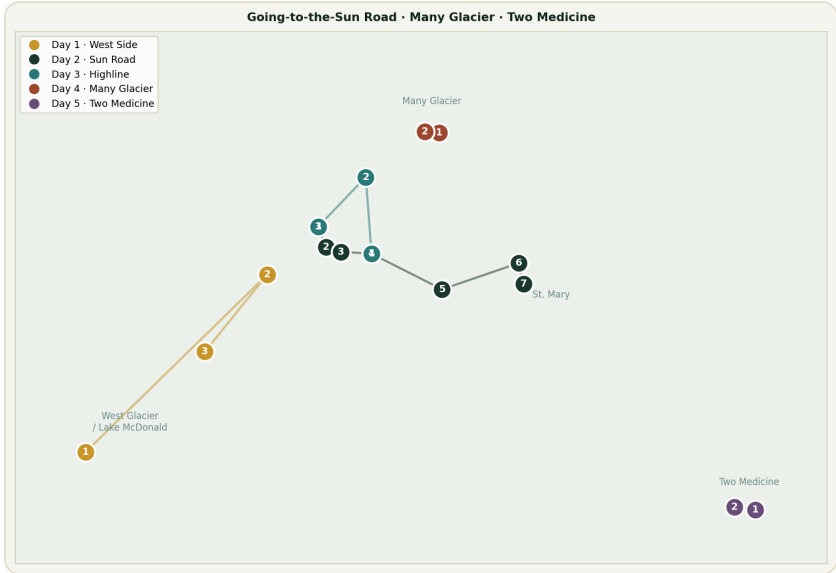
Two Medicine, then Home via US-2

The park's quietest corner — perfectly placed for the drive to the airport.

- 1 Running Eagle Falls & Two Medicine Lake.** A flat 0.6-mi walk to a waterfall that pours from solid rock, then a scenic boat cruise (hop off for Twin Falls).
- 2 Scenic exit via US-2.** Loop back to the airport along the park's southern boundary (~2.5 hr) — no re-driving the Sun Road.

2026 note: the Two Medicine Campground is closed all year, but the area is fully open for day trips in peak summer.

Map This Route



SCAN FOR THE LIVE MAP

Opens the interactive Google Map, color-coded by day — tap any pin to navigate.

Where to Stay

- **Split your stay.** Two nights west (Whitefish, West Glacier, or Lake McDonald Lodge), then two to three nights east (St. Mary, Rising Sun, or Many Glacier Hotel) — so you never re-drive the pass.
- **In-park lodges** (Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge) sell out fast — book 12–13 months out.
- **Cabins** cluster on the west side (West Glacier, Coram, Columbia Falls) — best for families.
- Full guide: stealthitinerary.com/where-to-stay-glacier/

What to Pack

- **Layers.** 40°F mornings at Logan Pass, 80°F afternoons in the valleys.
- **Sturdy trail shoes** and a light rain shell.
- **Bear spray** — essential in Many Glacier. Buy or rent in-park (you can't fly with it).
- **Refillable water**, sun protection, and a card (the park is cashless).
- Full gear guide: stealthitinerary.com/national-park-gear-guide/

That's the whole park in five days.

The iconic road, the Highline, and Grinnell Glacier — timed around Glacier's new 2026 rules. Save this guide and follow along for the rest of the National Park series.

stealthitinerary.com/glacier

Last updated for the 2026 season. Access rules, shuttle tickets, and construction status can change — confirm current conditions on the official NPS Glacier page before you go.