



# YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

Welcome to Yellowstone National Park. If you are a newcomer to the Yellowstone Forever Institute (formerly Association), you will be amazed at what awaits you during each day of exploration. If you are a veteran of our programs, you will know the many perspectives from which learning can take place in this diverse place. We are glad that you are able to join us. Our goal is to provide you with an enjoyable, high-quality educational experience and a safe and memorable visit to Yellowstone.

The following information is provided to help you prepare for your program. Please read it thoroughly and call us at 406.848.2400 or email [contact@yellowstone.org](mailto:contact@yellowstone.org) if you have any questions. We recommend all first time visitors seek general park information through the National Park Service at 307.344.2107 or [www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell).

To participate in this program, each participant must fill out and sign our health questionnaire and assumption of risk waiver. Registrants receive a link to this form in their confirmation letter which is sent via e-mail. **These forms must be completed and returned at least 30 days prior to your program start date.**

## Important information included in this document:

- Program Overview
- What's Included
- How to Prepare for this Program
- Program Itinerary
- Suggested Reading
- Yellowstone Forever Park Store Information
- Yellowstone Forever Supporter Information
- Code of Ethics
- Cancellation Policy
- Travel Information

## Program Overview: Trails Through Yellowstone

The focus of this five-day program will be hiking, wildlife watching, and discovery in the world's first national park. You will venture beyond the asphalt and boardwalks to experience the raw beauty of Yellowstone's backcountry. Daily hikes will explore representative slices of this diverse park, including the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, geyser basins, the Yellowstone Lake area, and the wildlife-rich Northern Range. Along the way, your instructor will share in-depth information on Yellowstone's history, management, geology, flora, and fauna. We'll also see and discuss effects of climate change, as well as the park's efforts towards sustainability. There will be ample opportunity to relax, enjoy each other's company, and relish the true wildness of the world's first national park.

Each evening you will return to excellent meals, comfortable accommodations, and educational evening programs at accommodations in Mammoth Hot Springs and Grant Village. All field activities will be

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conducted as a group. If you are not able to participate in the day's activities, please let your instructor know in advance.

## What's Included?

***Trails Through Yellowstone*** includes instruction by a Yellowstone Forever Institute instructor, in-park transportation, three nights lodging at Mammoth Hot Springs, two nights lodging at Grant Village, all breakfasts and lunches during full program days, one dinner with the instructor, as well as a gratuity for all prepaid meals. *Any other gratuities, including gratuities for your instructor, are discretionary.* Seating for dinner in the Mammoth Dining Room and the Terrace Grill is on a first-come, first-served basis. Seating in the Grant Village Dining Room is by reservation only. More casual fare without reservations is available at the Lake House at Grant. If you did not make dinner reservations for Grant during registration and would like to do so, please call Yellowstone National Park Lodges at 866.439.7375 before you arrive. Arrival at Grant may be delayed by changing conditions, therefore dinner reservations earlier than 6:30 p.m. are not recommended. If you plan on attending an evening interpretive program, please schedule your dinnertime accordingly.

We look forward to sharing Yellowstone with you!

## How to prepare for this program

### How fit do you need to be?

This program is rated for brisk aerobic hikes up to 8 miles per day with climbs up to 1,500 feet on dirt trails. Loose rocks, uneven footing, and off-trail hiking are possible. This is the maximum distance; hikes are often shorter due to changing conditions and group ability. Good coordination is recommended. Hiking is a rigorous activity, demanding on leg and back muscles, and aerobic in nature. Due to walking at an elevation of 6000 to 7000 feet, we recommend you begin an exercise program right away if you have not already done so. Participants residing at lower elevations may want to arrive a day early to adjust to the altitude. To learn more about how specific medical conditions can be affected by Yellowstone's environment and our activities, please visit [Yellowstone.org/experience/health-information/](https://Yellowstone.org/experience/health-information/).

### General equipment and clothing list

Much of your time will be spent outdoors and all programs are held rain, snow, or shine. You should be prepared for a variety of mountain weather conditions and temperatures. Appropriate clothing, equipment, and footwear are very important. Spring, summer, and fall temperatures can range from below freezing in the mornings to 85 degrees Fahrenheit in the afternoons. The layered use of garments for protection against the wind, sun, and temperature extremes should guide your clothing choices. Loose-fitting layers allow you to maintain a comfortable and dry body as outside temperatures change, and as your own body temperature and moisture output changes with different levels of exertion. Some colder-weather items may not be needed in July or August, but please keep in mind that Yellowstone's weather is unpredictable.

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## Equipment:

Your instructor will be carrying a first aid kit, bear spray, and emergency communication device.

- ☐ **Daypack**, with enough capacity to carry extra clothes, water, lunch, camera, binoculars, field guides, etc.
- ☐ **Water bottle**, one-quart is the minimum. Camelback or similar hydration systems work well in summer but can freeze in winter.
- ☐ **Sunglasses**
- ☐ **Sunscreen/lip protector**. Sun at high altitude can burn unprotected skin quickly.
- ☐ **Camera, binoculars.**
- ☐ **Notebook/pencil.**
- ☐ **Pocket hand and foot warmers**—recommended November through May.
- ☐ **Alarm Clock**, so you're on time for the day's activities.
- ☐ **Flashlight/Headlamp**, a small light for walking to and from your cabin in the evenings and mornings.

## Summer clothing:

- ☐ **Insulating underwear**, capilene, polypropylene, or similar wicking fabric.
- ☐ **Mid-weight insulating layer**, light, 200-weight synthetic fleece or wool shirt/pullover.
- ☐ **Heavyweight insulating layer**, wool, down, or heavy-weight fleece jacket, for less-active times.
- ☐ **Waterproof and windproof outer layer**, lightweight and breathable. Jackets and pants are recommended.
- ☐ **Short-sleeve shirt**, cotton is okay in summer, but synthetic wicking shirts are ideal.
- ☐ **Pants**, synthetic hiking pants, lightweight pile/fleece pants or tights or similar. Jeans are not recommended.
- ☐ **Hats**, both a brimmed sun hat and an insulating hat for cool weather.
- ☐ **Gloves**, lightweight glove liners and a pair of wool/fleece gloves or mittens.
- ☐ **Socks**, light wool or synthetic liner sock with heavier wool or synthetic outer sock. The inner-outer sock combination helps prevent blistering, wicks moisture, and reduces friction. Cotton socks do not wick moisture and are not recommended.
- ☐ **Hiking boots** that provide stability, traction, and comfort. Unless you've consistently hiked in athletic shoes, bring boots that provide ankle support.
- ☐ **Off-duty shoes**, sandals, athletic shoes, or other leisure footwear.

## Program Itinerary

The itinerary is designed to take advantage of the best opportunities in the park, but may be adjusted to adapt to weather conditions, wildlife movements, holidays, and road construction.

### Day 1

#### Welcome and Orientation

Dinner on own at Terrace Grill or Mammoth Dining Room

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- 5 p.m. Orientation in Mammoth Hot Springs (ask front desk staff for location and directions to the orientation room)  
Introduction to Yellowstone hiking, program preview, clothing and equipment review, and question and answer session  
Overnight at Mammoth Hot Springs
- Day 2** **Hiking and Wildlife Watching on Yellowstone's Northern Range**
- 6 a.m. Meet instructor with your gear for the day (pack, water, and appropriate clothing)  
Hot coffee and box breakfast in the field  
Northern Range wildlife watching and interpretive hike  
Deli lunch in the field
- 3 p.m. Return to Mammoth Hot Springs for free time and dinner on own  
Overnight at Mammoth Hot Springs
- Day 3** **South to Grant Village**
- 6:30 a.m. Check out required from Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel  
Meet instructor with your gear for the day (pack, water, appropriate clothing) and luggage  
Hot coffee and box breakfast in the field  
Northern Range wildlife watching and interpretive hike  
Deli lunch in the field
- 6 p.m. Register at Grant Village (arrival at Grant may be as late as 7 p.m.)  
Dinner on your own  
Overnight at Grant Village
- Day 4** **Geysers, Mud Pots, and Fumaroles – the Old Faithful Area**
- 8 a.m. Breakfast at Grant Dining Room or Lake House on your own (with coupon)  
Meet at Yellowstone Forever Institute bus with day's gear (pack, water, appropriate clothing)  
Depart for backcountry interpretive hike  
Deli lunch in the field  
Possible Old Faithful Geyser Basin walk
- 5 p.m. Dinner with instructor at the Old Faithful Inn (with coupon)  
Return to Grant Village for free time  
Overnight at Grant Village
- Day 5** **Hayden Valley Wildlife Watching and Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone**
- Check out required from Grant Village Hotel  
Breakfast on your own (with coupon)
- 7:45 a.m. Meet instructor with your gear for the day (pack, water, appropriate clothing) and luggage
- 8 a.m. Depart travel to Grand Canyon area for hike  
Deli lunch in the field
- 4 p.m. Check in at Mammoth Hot Springs

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Dinner on own at Terrace Grill or Mammoth Dining Room  
Overnight at Mammoth Hot Springs

## Suggested Reading

No prior reading is required, but you might want something to occupy your flight or car ride. Whether your passion is history, geology, wildlife, or ecology, there's something for everyone. Most publications are available from Yellowstone Forever's online Park Store at [www.Shop.Yellowstone.org/](http://www.Shop.Yellowstone.org/) or by calling 406.848.2400. Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15 percent discount and proceeds directly support the park.

- Craighead, F.C.Jr. 1994. [\*For Everything There is a Season: The Sequence of Natural Events in the Grant Teton-Yellowstone Area.\*](#) Falcon Publishing, Inc. Helena, MT. 206 pp.
- Ferguson, G. 2003. *Hawk's Rest: A Season in the Remote Heart of Yellowstone.* National Geographic. 240 pp.
- Halfpenny, J.C. 1987. [\*A Field Guide to Mammal Tracking in North America.\*](#) Second Edition. Johnson Books, Boulder, CO. 176 pp.
- Phillips, M.K. and Smith, D.W. 1996. *The Wolves of Yellowstone.* Voyageur Press, Stillwater, MN 128 pp.
- Schullery, P. 1999. [\*Searching for Yellowstone: Ecology and Wonder in the Last Wilderness.\*](#) First Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, NY. 338 pp.
- Whittlesey, L.H. 1995. [\*Lost in the Yellowstone: Truman Everts' "Thirty-Seven Days of Peril."\*](#) University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT.

## Park Stores

Our Park Stores features more than 900 books, maps, and videos to help you plan your visit, along with a wide selection of shirts, hats, and other logo items to remind you of your visit to Yellowstone. Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15 percent discount on merchandise online or at any of our 11 locations in and around Yellowstone. Proceeds directly support Yellowstone. Visit: [Shop.Yellowstone.org](http://Shop.Yellowstone.org)

## Supporter Program

Yellowstone Forever Supporters directly fund priority park programs and projects. Supporters also provide scholarships for teachers and help expand programming for underserved youth. Benefits include a subscription to our magazine *Yellowstone Quarterly*, early registration and discounts for Yellowstone Forever Institute programs, and discounts on retail purchases throughout Yellowstone (exclusions apply). If you are not yet a supporter of Yellowstone Forever, an introductory subscription (one year) to our magazine *Yellowstone Quarterly* is included with your tuition. For more information, visit: [Yellowstone.org/donate](http://Yellowstone.org/donate)

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## Code of Ethics

The Yellowstone Forever Institute is committed to demonstrating a high standard of appropriate and ethical behavior in Yellowstone. As a participant in a Yellowstone Forever Institute program, we ask you to adhere to the following Code of Ethics. In addition to the ethics highlighted below, the Yellowstone Forever Institute abides by all National Park Service rules and regulations. We also practice Leave No Trace guidelines for traveling responsibly in the wilderness.

**Observing wildlife:** We will do our best to have as little impact on wildlife as possible. Animals will be observed from a distance, using high-powered spotting scopes to help keep our presence from affecting their behavior. Participants should not expect to get close-up photographs of wildlife. The Yellowstone Forever Institute will adhere to National Park Service regulations by keeping a minimum distance of 25 yards from bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, coyotes and nesting birds and 100 yards from bears and wolves. We will not entice wildlife with food, animal calls or any actions that change their behavior.

**Leave what you find:** It is illegal to remove natural or cultural artifacts (plants, animals, bones, rocks, etc.) from Yellowstone. Yellowstone Forever Institute instructors have permission from the National Park Service to manipulate plants, rocks, bones, etc. for educational purposes and will return them to their natural positions and locations.

**General etiquette:** Yellowstone Forever Institute groups will be considerate of other visitors and respect the quality of their experience. Voices and vehicle sounds carry great distances and affect both wildlife and people—remaining silent or very quiet while watching wildlife lets the sounds of Yellowstone (including wolf howls) prevail.

**Roads and vehicles:** Expect wildlife on the road, and drive at or below the posted park speed limits. When stopping to observe wildlife or other park features, the Yellowstone Forever Institute will move vehicles entirely off the road. If there is no safe pullout available, we will drive to the next safe place and walk back to observe the wildlife. We will not stop in the middle of the road, and should a traffic jam develop as a result of our activities, we will cease the activity.

**Properly dispose of waste:** We will pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Your instructor will discuss techniques for properly disposing of human waste in the field.

**Traveling lightly:** When hiking or walking in Yellowstone, we will use existing trails and boardwalks. We will follow appropriate techniques when walking off-trail. Walking around muddy or wet places in the trail increases erosion and negatively affects the resource; proper equipment is essential to hiking ethically. Participants should come adequately prepared with the equipment listed for their program and should expect to walk through mud, snow or puddles in the trail.

*Thank you for helping us set a good example in Yellowstone!*

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## **Cancellation and Refund Policy**

For packages, 60-day notice is required to receive a full refund of your deposit amount. Cancellations made between 30-60 days will result in 50% forfeiture of package cost. Cancellations made within 30 days of arrival result in 100% forfeiture of package cost. We recommend the purchase of travel insurance to help protect you against financial loss if you must cancel or interrupt your trip due to unforeseen circumstances. For more information about travel insurance, please ask our representative when booking your reservation.

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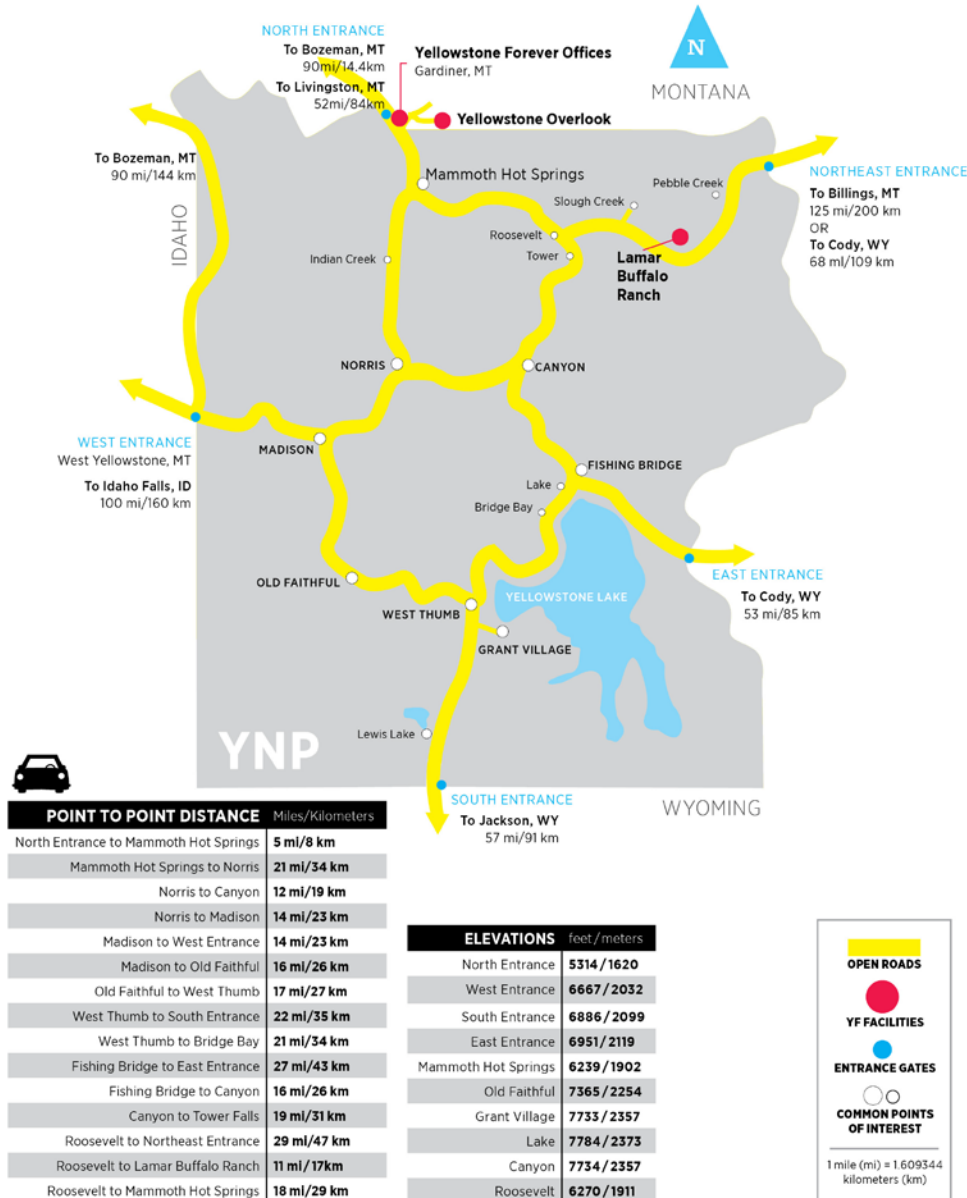
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Plan on extra driving time in the park. The speed limit is 45 mph or lower. There may also be construction delays. Visit [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/hours.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/hours.htm), call the recorded NPS Road Report at 307.344.2117, or contact a visitor center for up-to-date travel information.

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