Welcome
Yellowstone offers a variety of enjoyable and challenging trails for skiers. All trails are marked but may be untracked. On some trails, the difficult sections can be avoided by skipping part way in and returning by the same route. The quality of your experience will depend upon the amount of planning and preparation you do prior to your trip. We suggest that you stop at a visitor center or ski shop and discuss your trip. The staff will be happy to provide current information on weather, trail, snow conditions, and alert you to any special winter hazards.

Some backcountry trails are suitable for travel, but snow plowing, herringboning, and diagonal stride. Skiers need to be able to ski varied terrain requiring turning, sections, and in some instances make trails difficult to follow, increasing the difficulty of a trail. Trails are not groomed or checked daily.

Easiest
Skiers need basic knowledge and limited experience to move slowly when you are out of breath. Always drink plenty of water.

Avalanche danger: avalanches can occur on any slope and hazards will not always be marked. In avalanche-prone areas carry a shovel, avalanche transceiver, probe, and first aid kit—and know how to use them. Cross slopes one at a time, while others watch from safety.

Wildlife
Do not approach wildlife. Large mammals survive on stored fat and low quality food during winter. Caring them to move will cost them precious calories vital for survival. Park regulations require you to stay at least 75 feet (23 m) from bison and other large animals, 300 feet (91 m) from bears and wolves. You are travelling through essential winter habitat. Never approach animals, give them time to move away from you. Travel around a herd, not through it. Always allow animals an escape route through shallow snow or on a packed trail. Pets are not allowed on ski trails or in backcountry areas.

Trail Etiquette
• Do not snowshoe or walk directly on skis tracks. Skiers/snowshoers going uphill yield to those going downhill.
• Fill in depressions in the snow after falling to reduce injuries.
• Ski trails are at high elevation, above 6000 feet (1,829 m). Consider elevation when deciding on a ski trail. Many ski trails are at high elevation, above 6000 feet (1,829 m)
• Skiers/snowshoers going uphill yield to those going down.
• Never approach bears, wolves, or any large mammals. Give them time to move away from you.
• Be patient and courteous.
• Ski within your ability. If you find the trail too difficult, turn back.

Safety
Trails may have natural hazards such as animals, avalanches, thermal features, downed trees, steep slopes and cliffs. When skiing near thermal areas, stay on marked trails. Approaching thermal features is dangerous and prohibited. The snow in these areas is often icy and what appears to be bare ground may be a thin crust over boiling water.

Winter weather in Yellowstone changes rapidly and can be severely cold and windy. Wear proper clothing layers. Watch yourself and other members of your party for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. For safety, always ski with someone else. Tell someone where you are going, by what route, and when you plan to return. Carry extra clothing, food, water, map and compass, matches, flashlight, and a whistle.

Consider elevation when deciding on a ski trail. Many ski trails are at high elevation, above 6000 feet (1,829 m) and may require you to move slowly when you are out of breath. Always drink plenty of water.

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Trail Ratings
Trails are rated by the National Park Service with trail ratings specific to Yellowstone National Park. We strongly encourage all skiers to inquire at a visitor center or Xanterra Ski Shop before beginning their first ski trip. Weather conditions can cause changes in trail conditions and in some instances make trails difficult to follow, increasing the difficulty of a trail. Trails are not groomed or checked daily.

Easiest
Skiers need basic knowledge and limited experience in the diagonal stride, snow plow, and side stepping. Trails may have short downhill and uphill stretches.

More Difficult
Skiers need to be able to ski varied terrain requiring turning, snow plowing, herringboneing, and diagonal stride. Trails need to be experienced. Trails are hazardous and terrain is frequently extreme. Turns are often sharp and linked together with no room to snow plow or herringbone.

National Park Service
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

For emergencies, dial 911