

# Yellowstone & Grand Teton: Walking America's First National Park

## Walking Vacation Only

The aroma of pine needles and the windblown mist of geysers await your arrival to the walker's paradise of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Imagine miles and miles of untouched forest sprinkled with towering mountain peaks and glassy lakes. Home to the country's largest population of mammals, be prepared to view the wild nature of elk, bison, grizzly bears, moose, antelope and wolves. Float across babbling rivers, experience eruptions of water made renowned across the nation, and learn about the rich history that has made these national wonders thrive for years.

## Cultural Highlights

Float leisurely down the Snake River with your cameras at the ready for stunning views and bald eagle sightings

Keep your eyes peeled for buffalo and elk as you explore the base of the tallest mountains of the Teton range, the Cathedral Group

Trail along the shore of the glacial, reflective waters of Jenny Lake

Picnic amongst the jaw-dropping views and wildlife of Yellowstone

Gaze in awe upon the largest waterfalls the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone have to offer

See for yourself why Yellowstone has accolades for being the world's first national park, home to one of the world's largest volcanic calderas, and a habitat to the largest mammal population in the lower 48 states

Witness a variety of thermal features including colorful hot springs and hissing steam vents as you hike in West Thumb

Watch Mother Nature show off her skills at the geyser at Old Faithful, true to its namesake and erupting every 90 minutes

## What to Expect

This tour features fairly easy terrain, with some gradual climbs and spectacular views. You'll walk on a variety of surfaces, including dirt trails and wooden boardwalks. On rainy days the footpaths can be muddy and slippery. Both morning and afternoon walking options are available on most days. This tour is ideal for both enthusiastic beginners and experienced walkers. Our VBT support vehicle is available at specific meeting points for those who would like assistance. Several of the walks require a transfer from your hotel to the start of the walk.

**Tour Duration:** 6 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 2 - 6

**Average Cycling Time:** 01:15 - 04:00

## Climate Information

### Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Jun 62°/35°, Jul 72°/42°, Aug 71°/37°, Sep 61°/30°

### Average Rainfall (in.)

Jun 2.3, Jul 1.6, Aug 1.6, Sep 1.5

## DAY 1: Arrive Jackson and Scenic Snake River float / VBT Walking Vacation begins / The Lodge at Jackson Hole

Your tour begins at 1:00 p.m. at The Lodge at Jackson Hole, in Jackson. Please plan to have a snack before you meet. You will start the trip with a float along the scenic Snake River, including a late, picnic lunch. Come dressed for your float! Be sure to wear shoes that can get wet. A rain poncho will be provided. We will depart the lodge at 1:30 p.m.

If you are arriving after 1:00 pm or if your flight is delayed, you must make your own arrangements to reach The Lodge at Jackson Hole. The Lodge at Jackson Hole does provide transportation to/from Jackson Hole Airport (JAC). This service is available daily for arriving and departing flights from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm, and requires 24 hours advanced notice. Please contact the lodge directly for arrangements. Please note that our river float excursion departs the hotel at 1:30 pm sharp. If you arrive after this time, plan to meet your leaders at approximately 5:30 pm at the lodge.

Guests driving to the tour should park their cars at The Lodge at Jackson Hole for the week (no charge; leave keys with the hotel front desk).

Your scenic float trip on the Snake River is guide-powered so you can relax and enjoy the scenery all around you, so cameras and binoculars are welcome. Your late afternoon float takes you approximately 13 miles downriver, with breathtaking panoramic views of the Teton Range. This stretch of the braided river is home to an array of wildlife and is especially rich in bird life including Bald Eagles, Osprey, Herons, Kingfishers, and Mergansers.

After you disembark your rafts, you'll return to The Lodge at Jackson Hole in time to check in. Dinner tonight will be at one of VBT's favorite local restaurants.

Hotel: The Lodge at Jackson Hole

Meals: Dinner

Daily Options: River float

## **DAY 2: Grand Teton National Park / Walk Jenny Lake / Explore Jackson**

After breakfast at your lodge, you'll travel by van to Grand Teton National Park and Jenny Lake, the main hub in the heart of the Tetons. Board the Jenny Lake Ferry. The Tetons tower above you as you make your way across the pristine waters to start the day. Multiple walking route options await upon disembarking the Ferry. From here, trails range from flat walks around the lake to expeditions to the heights of the Grand Tetons. You'll stay close to Jenny Lake, where you can enjoy incredible views of the Teton Range from the trail. Stop along the way at one of the many scenic overlooks to enjoy your packed lunch. Keep an eye out for wildlife in and around the lake as you make your way to the String Lake.

Next, you will transfer to the Grand Teton National Park Visitor and Discovery Center in Moose, Wyoming. Get acquainted with the park at the Visitor Center, where you can get your National Park Passport stamped and pick up souvenirs. The center offers natural history exhibits, a relief map of the park and an informational 22-minute film on the park.

Later in the afternoon, you'll return to the lodge where you may swim in the all season indoor-outdoor heated pool, hot tubs and sauna or go for a stroll in town. The lodge is located just over a one-mile walk to the Jackson, Wyoming town square.

The evening dinner is included at a local restaurant.

Hotel: The Lodge at Jackson Hole

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Options: 3-7 miles

## **DAY 3: Transfer to Canyon Lodge / Interpretive Boardwalk at West Thumb / Picnic Lunch / Lake Overlook Walk**

Wake up early this morning for a hot gourmet breakfast at the lodge. You'll depart The Lodge at Jackson Hole and Jackson this morning and make your way into Yellowstone.

Your transfer takes you north across the park border into Yellowstone. You'll pause along the way to view wildlife or learn about the park's fire ecosystem. Our destination is West Thumb Geyser Basin, which offers a short interpretive walk and excellent opportunities to see a variety of thermal features including colorful hot springs and hissing steam vents. You'll picnic under the canopy of the evergreen forest back in West Thumb.

Gather this afternoon with your Trip Leaders for a loop walk to Lake Overlook through shaded pine forest and hillside meadows to a stunning view of Yellowstone Lake amid back-country thermal features. Extend your walk by adding on the Duck Lake Trail, walking through the young forest regrowth from the 1988 Fires. Arrive at the shore of this small lake before returning on the same path.

You continue your journey via Hayden Valley, home to a variety of wildlife, to Canyon Lodge located on the east side of the park only half a mile from the famous Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River and its Lower Falls. After checking into your room and enjoying your surroundings, dine on your own at your lodge this evening.

Hotel: Canyon Lodge

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 3-4 miles

## **DAY 4: Walk along the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone / Transfer to your next lodge**

As the sun rises, enjoy breakfast at your lodge. Then travel by van to the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. When huge volcanic eruptions occurred here around 600,000 years ago, they created a massive, lavafilled caldera. This caldera makes up much of what we now know as Yellowstone National Park. The magnificent landscape you see here today—including the impressive Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone—has been sculpted over millennia.

You'll walk along the rim of the canyon this morning, marveling at spectacular views of the two largest waterfalls in Yellowstone—the Upper and Lower Falls of the Grand Canyon. Stop along the way for a packed lunch with impressive views of the canyon below.

Later, you'll shuttle to your lodge for the next two nights. Enjoy time on your own this afternoon to explore or relax. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Hotel: Old Faithful Snow Lodge

Alternate Hotel: Grant Village

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 3 miles

## **DAY 5: Walk around Grand Prismatic Spring / Explore the Upper Geyser Basin**

You'll depart after breakfast and shuttle along the scenic Grand Loop to the Midway Geyser Basin. Your footsteps take you along the trail to view the magnificent Grand Prismatic Spring. The surrounding hillsides are still recovering from the famous forest fires of 1988.

After visiting the Midway Geyser Basin, you'll shuttle to Old Faithful. Arrive at Black Sand Basin and traverse an off the beaten path to the main boardwalks. Stroll around the Geyser Basin to learn about and witness some of nature's grandest spectacles. Yellowstone National Park is home to nearly 50% of the world's geothermal features.

Break in the afternoon for lunch on your own at one of the variety of restaurants in Old Faithful Village. After lunch, choose to take a flat walk through the Geyser Basin or challenge yourself with a hike to the top of Observation Point for a view overlooking the vast Upper Geyser Basin. No matter which trail you choose, be sure to pause for an Old Faithful eruption, which occurs every 90 minutes or so.

Afterward, you might peruse the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center, which opened in 2010. Or visit Old Faithful Inn, with its heavy timber construction it is a significant example of classic "parkitecture."

Tonight, you'll toast your discoveries of the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone during a farewell dinner.

Hotel: Old Faithful Snow Lodge

Alternate Hotel: Grant Village

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: 3-8 miles

## **DAY 6: Return home / VBT Walking Vacation ends**

Shortly after breakfast, say goodbye and depart the lodge by shuttle, arriving at the Jackson Hole Airport (JAC) at 11:30 a.m. Flights departing before 1:30 p.m. are not recommended. VBT will offer a second drop off at The Lodge at Jackson Hole arriving at 12:00 pm.

Meals: Breakfast

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Canyon Lodge (Day: 3)

Canyon Lodge offers guests a comfortable stay right in the heart of Yellowstone National Park. Located on the park's east side, it is only a half-mile to the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. The largest of the properties in Yellowstone, there are over 500 non air-conditioned rooms and cabins spread around the wooded property. The newly constructed superior lodge rooms offer modern Western themed furnishings including an activity table with chairs, coffee maker, and minifridge.

### Old Faithful Snow Lodge (Days: 4,5)

Old Faithful Snow Lodge is an award-winning facility with an appeal that is both rustic and contemporary. Located within Yellowstone National Park, this luxurious retreat of classic log architecture was constructed recently and is one of the only lodging facilities open year-round. The main building is made of wooden log columns with a cedar shingle roof. Comfortable, well-appointed rooms are un-air conditioned. Some of the lodge's wood was recycled from the same mill that provided lumber for the famous Old Faithful Inn in 1904. Old Faithful Geyser and the boardwalks of Geyser Hill are located just across the parking lot.

### The Lodge at Jackson Hole (Days: 1,2)

The Lodge at Jackson Hole is located in the heart of Jackson, the gateway to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. It offers the ambiance of a lodge close to the heat of Jackson. The lodges lounge and bar offers light fare for dinner. Amenities include a spa, a bar/lounge, a heated indoor/outdoor pool, a hot tub, a sauna and a business center. The resort fee covers hot breakfast, pool towels, fitness center access, Wi-Fi, parking and area shuttle transportation.