

YELLOWSTONE WILDLIFE TRAILS – 12 DAYS

Day 1: Salt Lake City

Welcome to Salt Lake City, the capital of Utah and the gateway to incredible national parks. Set in a beautiful location at the foot of Utah's Wasatch Mountains, Salt Lake is also the home of the worldwide headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Mormons. A welcome meeting will be conducted at 18:00 hrs in your hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals paid locally

Day 2: Jackson

Leave Salt Lake City behind, cross Idaho and pass through the beautiful Targhee National Forest en route to the valley of Jackson Hole, Wyoming. This mountain resort is popular during the winter months as skiers flock to the area, whilst summer sees walkers and other thrill seekers enjoying the area and its proximity to Grand Teton National Park. Why not take an optional aerial tram ride to the top of Rendezvous Mountain for 360 degree views of the Snake River Valley and Grand Teton National Park, or simply explore the town of Jackson Hole which maintains an authentic 'Wild West' feel.

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Lunch and dinner included

Day 3: Grand Teton National Park

Famed for its iconic soaring peaks, the 64 km Grand Teton Range explodes out of the ground with its jagged fang-like mountains. Rocky spires, lakes and forests fill the park, with more than 10 pinnacles reaching over 12,000 ft. Rich in fauna, inhabitants of the area include bison, elk, Black and Grizzly Bear, Bighorn Sheep, moose and Mule Deer, all of which have been seen on our trips. There are many self-guided hikes to choose from today, walking amidst dramatic scenery and appreciating the geology and nature of the area. Perhaps choose to take the ferry across Jenny Lake and hike up to Inspiration Point and beyond, following the stream. It is commonplace to see moose and bear whilst hiking this trail.

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

Day 4: Yellowstone National Park

It's a beautiful drive to the very first and most revered national park in America, Yellowstone, and your home for the next four nights. Part of the highway clings to the side of the 24 km long Jackson Lake, and the expansive ice-blue water reflects the Teton Range on a clear day. Entering Yellowstone, the scenery starts to change from striking jagged peaks to colourful open meadows and rolling terrain. See how the regular lava flows have flattened the largest geological features in the south of the park. This afternoon, take a walk amidst this fascinating volcanic environment before returning to set up camp. Yellowstone is home to an incredible variety of wildlife so always keep your camera at the ready!

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Day 5: Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone overflows with geothermal features - geysers, bubbling mud pools, multi-coloured hot springs and fumaroles! The park is famous for its volcanic history and there are estimated to be around 10,000 thermal features - nowhere else on earth (not even Iceland or New Zealand) can boast this concentration of geysers, which are scattered amongst several distinct geyser basins. Spend half a day with a local geology guide to explore the many effects of volcanism and enjoy walks around some of the parks most interesting features. The brightly coloured springs, caused by the hot, nutrient-rich waters full of different species of coloured bacteria are a particular photographic highlight.

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Day 6: Yellowstone National Park

When Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872, Northern Rocky Mountain Wolves (a subspecies of the Grey Wolf) were native to the area. In the years after, predator control saw the decline of this remarkable species but following a reintroduction programme there are now thought to be more than 1,000 wolves in the Greater Yellowstone area. You spend a full day with a specialist wolf tracking guide, venturing into the park's wilderness by foot and by vehicle to learn about these extraordinary animals. Your guide will explain how wolves live and hunt together in Yellowstone and how the pack hierarchy works. It's important to note that you may not always be lucky enough to see wolves, however this is our goal and at the same time you're likely to see numerous other wildlife species as you explore the park.

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Day 7: Yellowstone National Park

Today you'll take your new-found knowledge of Yellowstone's wildlife and geology on a wilderness day walk in the park, leaving some of the well-known geysers and crowds behind to explore the wilds together. Your route will depend on the group's general ability and fitness but it's likely to involve a walk to view the Upper and Lower Yellowstone Falls. More strenuous options are available if you're feeling more energetic - simply ask your leader for different options. You'll also visit the Mammoth Hot Springs which literally feels like being on another planet.

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Day 8: Bozeman

Today's drive reveals the wide open 'Big Sky' scenery that Montana is so famous for. Journey through the ever changing landscape of forest and mountain backdrops to Bozeman, where you'll enjoy a comfortable bed and some luxury for the night.

Accommodation: Hotel included | Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

Day 9: Glacier National Park

Continue through the mountains of Montana to the famed Glacier National Park where you'll spend the next two nights, with time to explore this immense expanse. Keep your eyes peeled for deer and bear which frequent this area, as well as taking in the stunning scenery and glacial lakes. You'll have time on arrival for a short walk to stretch your legs and to admire some of the scenery and prepare for a big day of hiking tomorrow.

Accommodation: Camping included | Lunch and dinner included

NB: The National Park Service regulates guided hikes in Glacier. Tomorrow you will be led by a national park guide but on other days your tour leader is not permitted to walk with you on trails. They will however provide detailed briefings, directions, maps and transportation.

Day 10: Glacier National Park

Spend the day exploring the heart of the park with a Glacier National Park wilderness guide along the famous Going-to-the-Sun Road. Stopping en route for regular walks your guide will help you try to spot some of the huge variety of animal species for which this park is renowned, including Grizzly Bear, wolverine and lynx. Big Horn Sheep, Mountain Goat, coyote and wolves are also common, so make sure you keep your camera at the ready! If conditions are right your guide will take you on the Iceberg Lake or Hidden Lake Trail for more striking mountain scenes and wildflowers.

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

Day 11: Coeur d'Alene

You leave Glacier behind and make your way towards Coeur d'Alene in the state of Idaho. You'll pass through small historic towns in Idaho's 'Silver Valley', which was once the 'silver capital of the world'. After reaching Coeur d'Alene, there may be time to walk the trail through forested areas which hugs the watery edge of the lake. If it's a hot day make sure you don't forget your swimsuit, but be careful, the water can be bracing! A good option for the afternoon is to enjoy a drink down by the marina and then watch the sunset over the sparkling lake.

Accommodation: Camping included | Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Day 12: Coeur d'Alene - Seattle

Crossing into the state of Washington you make your way towards Seattle, your final destination. Today's journey takes you past the border of Mount Rainier National Park where the imposing Mount Rainier stands at 14,000 ft. This is Washington's highest volcano and on a clear day you may be able to see it from Seattle. Upon arrival to Seattle your tour ends back at the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

This tour ends at our gateway hotel at approximately 17:00 hrs. We recommend booking post-tour accommodation if time allows. If you are planning to fly tonight, please do not book a flight that departs before 21:00 hrs.