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## USATourist News Magazine

October 2012 – Yellowstone Park and Jackson Hole, Wyoming

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The magnificent [Yellowstone National Park](#) - born in 1872 as the first National Park in the world, along with nearby Jackson Hole, Wyoming go hand in hand as must see places. Visitors will discover real cowboy country, a unique gem of a town, sensational views and one of the most incredible National Parks on earth.



The Lower Yellowstone Falls are 308 feet high. The viewpoint for these falls, in the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, is one of the most popular stops.

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### Where is Yellowstone/Jackson Hole?

Yellowstone National Park is located in northwestern Wyoming on a high plateau entirely surrounded by the Middle Rocky Mountains. (Small portions of the park lie in Montana and Idaho) Yellowstone Park is enormous; approximately 63 miles north to south and 54 miles west to east - larger than the state of Rhode Island. At an average elevation of 8,000 ft. above sea level, the Park is over 80 percent forested but also contains miles of grasslands, mighty rivers, majestic waterfalls and deep canyons including the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. Various bubbling examples of geothermal activity abound such as the famous Old Faithful Geyser, (it erupts approximately every 91 minutes) though Yellowstone Park actually contains more than 300 geysers. Much of this churning geothermal activity is due to the fact that this area incorporates a massive super-volcano, still considered "active." The Park is

filled with flora and fauna of many kinds and is a marvel to visit, where every season provides a different glimpse into the cycle of life.

Nearby Jackson Hole, Wyoming, located at the southern entrance of both [Grand Teton](#) and Yellowstone National Parks, offers visitors a wide variety of year-round activities. The town of Teton Village, the Jackson Hole Mountain Ski Resort and the town of Jackson itself are all within Jackson Hole valley. The quaint town of Jackson has only about 8,500 permanent residents but over 10,000 wild elk! This old western outpost is today a thriving hotspot full of historic bars and inns, chic resorts, luxury vacation homes, fine dining, and of course great skiing.

## Getting there

This area, near the exact epicenter of the North American continent is a very long way from most metropolitan areas and best reached by plane. And flying in to Jackson Hole is an experience in itself, as passengers (try and get a seat on the right side of the aircraft) swoosh down to a landing with the impressive Grand Teton Mountains towering above the landing strip. Various airlines including United Airlines, American Airlines and Delta fly directly to Jackson Hole. Jackson Hole is approximately a 1.5 hr. drive from Yellowstone National Park.



It is easy to have an up close encounter with wildlife in Yellowstone. But beware, they are wild, no matter how tame they may seem. Every year too many visitors try to get a photo next to one of these animals.

Unfortunately some of these encounters end in disaster.

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## Animals, animals, animals

Yellowstone National Park, the National Elk Refuge outside of Jackson, Grand Teton National Park and other nearby wild areas presents an amazing array of wildlife. People may see and experience Rocky Mountain elk, huge bison, black bear, grizzly bear, grey wolves, red fox, moose, mule deer, badgers, coyote, mountain goats, pine martens, beaver, weasels, river otter, porcupine, bighorn sheep, pronghorn (a unique species) as well as bald eagles, golden eagles, a large assortment of hawks, trumpeter swans, great grey owls, sage grouse, great blue heron, giant white pelicans, snipe and more.

## Activities

Yellowstone can get quite crowded in the summer but is still a spectacle in the winter. For the most part, transportation inside Yellowstone National Park is

limited to enclosed heated snowcoaches during the winter. Snowcoach transportation is available daily to a variety of park locations. Yellowstone still runs some retro-historic Bombardier snowcoaches which look like VW bugs on steroids! Wildlife tours of many kinds are easy to book in Yellowstone National Park and around Jackson Hole. This year, the Spring Creek Ranch will launch its first winter wildlife safaris into Yellowstone. This excursion takes people through the park in a special snowcoach outfitted with tank treads and is lead by the resort's on-staff naturalist, Kurt Johnson. Another highly-rated tour service is [Brushbuck Guides](#) which provides year-round tours to both Yellowstone and Grand Teton.

Biking is an attractive option during spring and summer as is horseback riding and white water rafting. For skiers and boarders, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort is an astonishing resort offering some of the most challenging runs in North America. To be sure, this resort offers daredevils a thrill, but fear not, intermediate as well as beginners can also enjoy the breathtaking beauty of Jackson Hole. This season the old Casper Triple Chair has been replaced with a new, faster quad lift allowing intermediate skiers and snowboarders a quick three and a half minute ride up the mountain. "The Casper area is the heart of our intermediate skiing and we are expanding existing trails to make them much more attractive to intermediate skiers," stated Jerry Blann, President of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. Visitors can also enjoy miles of snowmobiling riding, cross country skiing trails, snow shoeing, sleigh rides and winter trekking. (Note - it can get extremely cold in this region so dress appropriately)

## Lodging

Fortunately, guests have a wide variety of lodging choices in Jackson Hole from many humble and rustic accommodations to sumptuous ones such as the chic Hotel Terra, Teton Mountain Lodge, and the elegant Four Seasons Resort. The Spring Creek Ranch also provides lodging, wildlife excursions and dining. The Wort Hotel is a classic hotel right in the older part of Jackson. Yellowstone National Park offers a number of lodges and campsites. See this website, [www.YellowstoneNationalParkLodges.com](http://www.YellowstoneNationalParkLodges.com) which allows travelers to check lodge-by-lodge availability for certain dates. For Yellowstone room reservations book online or call toll free (1) 866-GEYSERLAND (1-866-439-7375). You can also check our [hotel reservation system](#) for lodging outside of the park.



The infinity pool at the luxurious Hotel Terra offers relaxation with a view, no matter what the season.  
© Hotel Terra

## Dining

Visitors have all sorts of dining choices throughout the area plus some surprises. For instance, Teton Thai, in Teton Village offers spicy and inspiring Thai food all in a small and hopping little mountainside joint. (It's simply outstanding Thai cuisine!) Il Villaggio Osteria provides exciting, innovative Italian cuisine - you must also try their legendary fried Brussels sprouts as a side dish. Couler Restaurant, at the top of the Bridger Gondola at the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort features an excellent wine list, good burgers and at 9,095 ft. – absolutely incomparable views. Other local standouts include the Silver Dollar Grill, The Peak Restaurant, Snake River Brewery and the Snake River Grill.

For true American adventure, you can't top visiting Yellowstone National Park and Jackson Hole. This region is still unmatched for the sheer wildness and open-ness of the environment. And it's lots of fun.

## Travel Deals

Sign up to save up to 20% on your hotel reservation instantly - no strings attached. [www.usatouristdiscounts.com/usatourist/hotels.php](http://www.usatouristdiscounts.com/usatourist/hotels.php)

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*Top Photo Credit: © Mike Leco / USATourist.com*

*Photo Description: Boardwalks in Yellowstone National Park allow visitors to safely get an up close view of the geysers.*