Easy Drives, Big Fun, and Planning Tips MONTANA Homo Hanning Tips

DAY HIKES, FLY-FISHING, SKIING, HISTORIC SITES, AND MUCH MORE

A custom guidebook in partnership with Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development and Outside Magazine



Montana

is the perfect place for road tripping. There are miles and miles of open roads. The landscape is stunning and varied. And its towns are welcoming and alluring, with imaginative hotels, restaurants, and breweries operated by friendly locals.

Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks are the crown jewels, but the Big Sky state is filled with hundreds of equally awesome playgrounds in which to mountain bike, trail run, hike, raft, fish, horseback ride, and learn about the region's rich history, dating back to the days of the dinosaurs. And that's just in summer. Come winter, the state turns into a wonderland. The skiing and snowboarding are world-class, and the state offers up everything from snowshoeing and cross-country skiing to snowmobiling and hot springs. Among Montana's star attractions are ten national forests, hundreds of streams, tons of state parks, and historic monuments like Little Bighorn Battlefield and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Whether it's a familyfriendly hike or a peaceful river trip, there's an experience that will recharge your spirit around every corner in Montana.

Contents

3 Glacier Country

6 Roaming the National Forests

8 Montana's Mountain Biking Paradise

10 Gateways to Yellowstone

14 The Beauty of Little Bighorn Country

16 Exploring Missouri River Country

18 Montana on Tap

20 Adventure Base Camps

22 Montana in Winter

23 Resources





Glacier Country

Soul-stirring views and mountain playgrounds fuel this adventure across the rugged northwest corner of the state.

n 2015, Glacier National Park received its 100 millionth visitor since its establishment in 1910. It's still every bit as enchanting now as it was back then. Hike a few miles into the backcountry from practically any trailhead and you'll feel like you

have the million-acre wilderness to yourself. The real exploration in these parts, however, takes place beyond park boundaries.

Columbia Falls to Two Medicine Lake



Road

Trip

The Middle Fork of the Flathead River marks the southwestern boundary of the park. With the Great Bear Wilderness on the other side, paddlers can raft Class II-III whitewater. Glacier Guides, in West Glacier, offers half- or full-day trips. One of the best ways to access the park is the Two Medicine entrance, a short nine-mile drive that ends at Two Medicine Lake, where

the water is so clear that on some days the surface provides an exact simile of 9,513-foot Rising Wolf and 8,271-foot Sinopah Mountains.

EAT & STAY: Two Medicine Grill features locally raised beef and makes a mean huckleberry pie. With amazing views, cascading waterfalls, and access to lots of hiking trails, Two Medicine Campground is one of the most spectacular sites in the park.



Going-to-the-Sun Road

This iconic road, which is open only during the summer, winds from one jaw-dropping vista to another. Let someone else do the driving so you can take pictures by booking seats on one of Sun Tours' daily interpretive bus tours.

(below)

For a stunning day hike, park at Siyeh Bend and lace your boots up for a 4.5-mile hike up to Siyeh Pass. You'll be rewarded with fields of wildflowers and panoramic downvalley views.

Whitefish

This resort city is a hub for recreation, with a sevenmile-long glacial lake, the ever-expanding Whitefish







Trail, and Whitefish Mountain Resort overlooking it all. Hike

Danny On National Recreation Trail to the 6,817-foot summit of the resort, or rent a mountain bike at Village Equipment Rentals and explore the town's incredibly well-maintained network of multi-use trails. At Whitefish City Beach, rent a SUP or kayak at Paddlefish Sports. Back in town, treat yourself to an ice cream cone at Sweet Peaks Ice Cream and then take a leisurely stroll along the Whitefish River at nearby Riverside Park.

EAT & STAY: Order elk meatloaf and a glass of wine at Tupelo Grille. At Good Medicine Lodge, the breakfasts, like Montana Morning—a trout cake topped by a poached egg—are so delicious that they win national competitions.

Eureka

Six miles south of the Canadian border, Eureka sits in the far northwest corner of Montana. With easy access to Glacier National Park and Kootenai National Forest, the recreation potential is endless. Stone Hill Climbing Area has 500 routes rated 5.10 and higher and great views to 90-mile-long Lake Koocanusa. **EAT & STAY:** Café Jax serves up soups, salads, juicy burgers, and classic old-fashioned malts. Crystal's Grave Creek Cabins are brand-new and sit eight miles south of Eureka in the heart of the Kootenai National Forest.

Libby

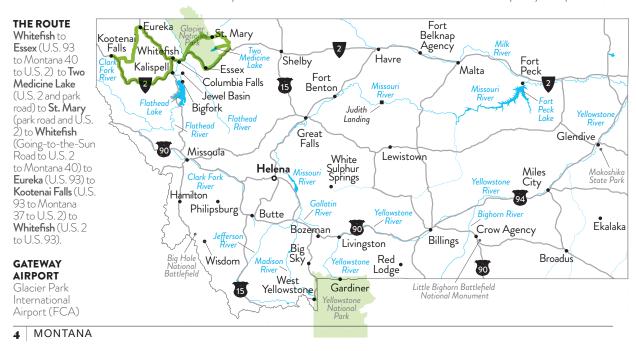
For a sense of just how pristine the wilderness around Libby is: *The Revenant* and *The River Wild* were both filmed in Kootenai County. North of Libby, check out Kootenai Falls, which crashes more than 90 feet over the course of a mile. Hike across the swinging Kootenai Bridge and continue on Trail #218 up high cliffs overlooking the river to excellent viewpoints for bighorn sheep and peregrine falcons.

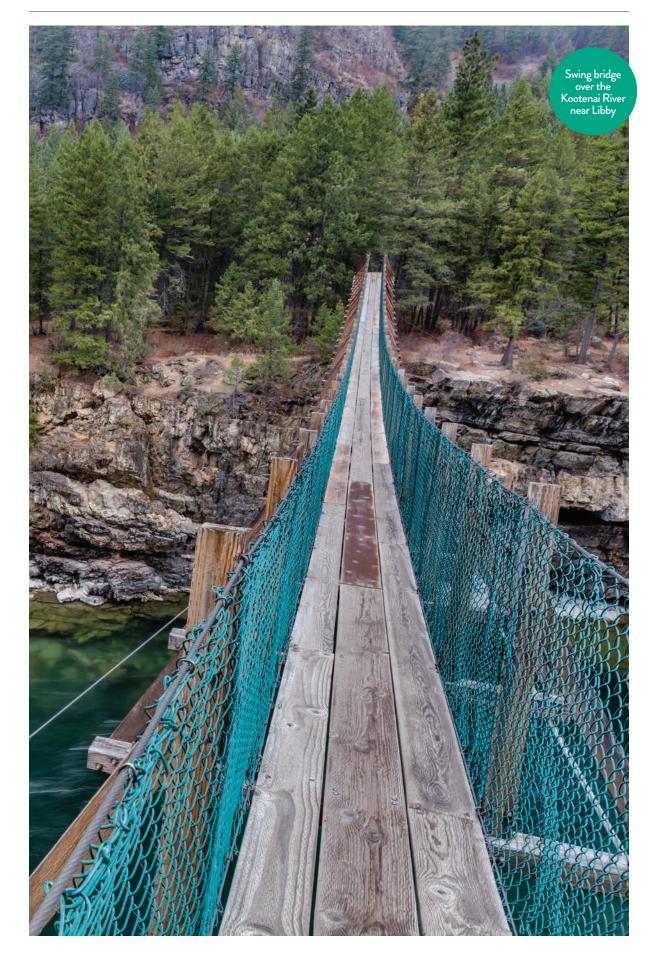
EAT & STAY: Rosita's has tasty homemade everything, from the chips and salsa to cheese enchiladas. Venture Inn has a friendly staff and serves a complimentary continental breakfast.

MADE IN MONTANA Montana Shirt Company Glacier tee What started out as a mom-and-pop Whitefish shop to raise money for two ski-racing sons has evolved into an iconic Montana brand. Buy a Glacier tee and \$1 will be donated to the Glacier National Park Conservancy for education, research, and preservation. Montanashirtco.com

 DAY 1-2
 DAY 2-3
 DAY 4-5
 DAY 6-7
 DAY 7-8
 DAY 9

 Whitefish to Two Medicine Lake
 Two Medicine Lake to St. Mary to Whitefish
 Whitefish to Eureka
 Whitefish to Eureka to Kootenai Falls to Libby to Kalispell to Whitefish





Roaming the National Forests

A sampler of western Montana's most beautiful mountain playgrounds.

ellowstone and Glacier National Parks are undeniably awesome, but locals know that the state's ten national forests are just as much fun to explore. On this western Montana road trip, you can easily access five of them by car, with nearly endless opportunities to fly-fish, horseback ride, whitewater raft, hike, mountain bike, and possibly even surf along the way. Added bonus: The loop also passes the oldest continually operating bar

Road Trip in Montana (est. 1877), the National Bison Range, and the site of the 1877 Battle of the Big Hole.

TOTAL DISTANCE 393 miles TOTAL DAYS

Missoula

Before setting out into the surrounding Lolo National Forest, hike the 1.8-mile Mount Sentinel Trail, which starts in town and leads to the giant M overlooking the University of Montana campus. Or marvel at the surfers at Brennan's Wave, a human-

⁶⁻⁸ made hydraulic on the Clark Fork River, which bisects the city. Want to give it a whirl? Rent a board and take a river surfing lesson from Strongwater Mountain Surf Company. Or sign up for the "Historic Town Float," from Bearpaw River Expeditions, which starts in Milltown and ends in time to

shop at the (summer-only) Saturday



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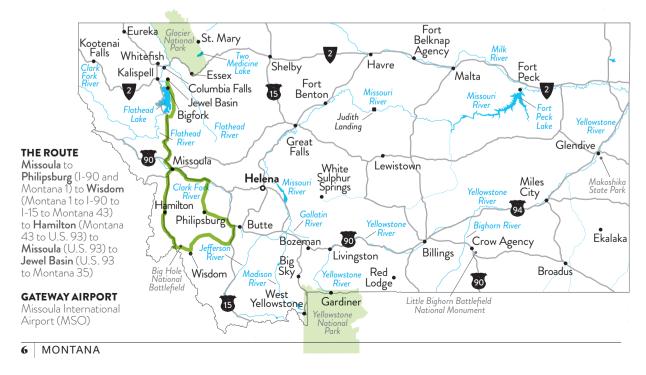
Farmer's Market back in Missoula. For a trip back in time, drive an hour east to Garnet Ghost Town, a historic mining town with 30 preserved buildings.

> **EAT & STAY:** Fuel up with spicy Cajun food at Charlie B's & the Dinosaur Café and then kick back at the DoubleTree by Hilton Edgewater, which has rooms with patios facing the Clark Fork River.

Philipsburg

Situated within striking distance of both Lolo and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National





Clockwise from top left: Hiking on Wild Horse Island State Park; Time After Time B&B; family fun on Flathead Lake; Garnet Ghost Town



Forests, this former mining town is at the base of Discovery, a ski area with lift-accessed mountain biking. Rock Creek, a worldfamous blue-ribbon trout stream, also runs near town. Missoula-based Blackfoot River Outfitters has a satellite store here with the necessary gear, permitting, and guides. If you



want to see old Montana, don't miss the basement display in the Granite County Museum and Cultural Center in Philipsburg, with its collection of cowboy chaps, artifacts found in a typical western Montana homestead, and a mine car from Contact Mining.

EAT & STAY: Have ribs your way at UpNSmokin BBQ House, then head next door for taffy and fudge at The Sweet Palace. The Franklin Mountain Cabin, a beautiful, modern two-bedroom cabin, sits two miles from downtown and a short drive from Rock Creek, Georgetown Lake, and Discovery Ski Area.

Wisdom to Lolo

This stunning 121-mile-long corridor between Beaverhead-Deerlodge and Bitterroot National Forests follows the Big Hole and Bitterroot Rivers most of the way. With the appropriate fishing licenses, visitors can drop a line in almost anywhere. The wide-open valley at Big Hole National Battlefield, west of Wisdom, honors those who died during a fierce battle in 1877. Off



U.S. 93 between Chief Joseph Pass and Lolo, there are 40 access points into the Bitterroot National Forest and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness beyond. Trailheads are well marked with brown road signs—pick one and go.

EAT & STAY: In Wisdom, The Crossing Bar & Grill has excellent bacon and blue cheese burgers and vanilla shakes. Time After Time B&B in Victor sits on ten acres and has a new, rustic cabin plus three bedrooms in the main house.

Flathead Lake to Jewel Basin

The largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi, Flathead Lake is home to Wild Horse Island State Park, where, true to its name, horses still roam. Book a boat tour with Montana Journeys to explore the 2,160-acre island's rolling hills. Back on land, drive the eastern shoreline, lined with cherry orchards on one side and the Flathead National Forest on the other, before heading to your final destination, Jewel Basin, a 15,349acre area south of Glacier National Park with 27 alpine lakes and 35 miles of trails.

EAT & STAY: Order braised bison short ribs on the deck at Schafer's Restaurant, overlooking Flathead Lake, part of Bigfork Mountain Lake Lodge, which has 30 suites with fireplaces.

MADE IN MONTANA R.L. Winston Rod Company Kairos Rod This new series of freshwater, saltwater, and spey fast-action fishing rods use 100 percent graphite technology. It's the reason they're so fun and responsive for such a wide array of fishing scenarios. With a clear graphite finish, the famous Winston Green thread wraps, and a handwritten inscription on the rod, they look good, too. **Winstonrods.com**



biking in Butte; Fire Tower Coffee House, Helena (below)

Montana's Mountain Biking Paradise

Riding trails suitable for all skill levels is just the start. This route also highlights some of central Montana's most vibrant towns and outdoor activities for every interest.



• ith 64 mountain ranges, the Continental Divide Trail slicing through the state, and historic trails plying mountain passes, Montana

has trails pretty much everywhere, from mellow beginner- and family-friendly rides to experts-only singletrack. Don't ride? Don't worry! This



trip has tons of other fun options, from fly-fishing and whitewater rafting to hot springs soaking.



511 miles

TOTAL

DAYS 5-8

Big Sky

Forty-five miles south of Bozeman, Big Sky Resort has more than 40 miles of liftaccessed trails, many of which flow downmountain from the top of the Explorer Lift, like the brand-new intermediate flow trail. Rent an e-bike for an extra boost. To hone downhill skills, sign up for a group

or private downhill lesson. Closer to the town of Big Sky are ample Forest Service roads like the eight-mile Beehive Ridge to North Fork Loop, accessible from the North Fork Trailhead.

EAT & STAY: In the summer months, the Carabiner deck has a full bar, tasty appetizers like bison sliders, and the best views of 11,166-foot Lone Peak. When the temperature drops, head inside to the fireplace in the lounge. Steps from the Explorer Lift, the historic Huntley Lodge has an outdoor pool and rooms that sleep up to six, and—bonus—allows dogs.

White Sulphur Springs to Great Falls

Best known for its hot springs and fly-fishing along the coveted Smith River, White Sulphur Springs is nestled between the Little and Big Belt Mountains. Stop for a soak at the 105-degree mineral pools at the Spa Hot Springs Motel and Clinic, right on Main Street. Then check in with Smith River Flyfishing Expeditions for a half-, full-, or multi-day trip on the river. On to riding: Start with Bender Creek, just east of Monarch. It requires a five-mile drive to the trailhead on a good gravel road, but the nine-mile round-trip with a three-mile descent is worth it. In Great Falls, the south and north banks of the Missouri River have 18- and 24-mile





pump-track-style flow trails. For more info and to rent bikes, head over to the Knicker Biker bike shop.

EAT & STAY: In Great Falls, Sip 'n Dip Lounge has mermaids swimming behind the bar. Housed in an 1890 building, Hotel Arvon has 22 luxurious guest rooms.

Helena

As they say in the state capital, "There's a singletrack at the end of every street and a brewery at the end of every trail." It's true. Helena is home to 75 miles of singletrack open to hikers, riders, and runners, with a free shuttle that picks people up downtown Wednesday through Sunday, May through October. The most popular ride is a six-mile bomb down Mount Helena Ridge Trail. Rent a bike at Great Divide Cyclery.

EAT & STAY: Fire Tower Coffee House and Roasters makes a mean cup of joe. The Last Chance Lodge, southwest of Helena, is surrounded by some of the best trails in the state.

Butte

Ask a local to name his or her favorite mountain biking trail and you may be listening for a while—there are



at least 350 miles of trails in these parts, including many miles along the Continental Divide. A fun way to access it is the Maud S trailhead, just off I-90 south of town, which offers an impressively

strenuous, rocky four-mile loop. Linked Adventures offers shuttle services, excellent trail advice, and rental bike delivery to hotels.

EAT & STAY: Park & Main Café has made-to-order everything, like eggs Benedict. Homestake Lodge, ten miles south of town, is nestled in a valley off the Continental Divide, with incredible access to mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding.

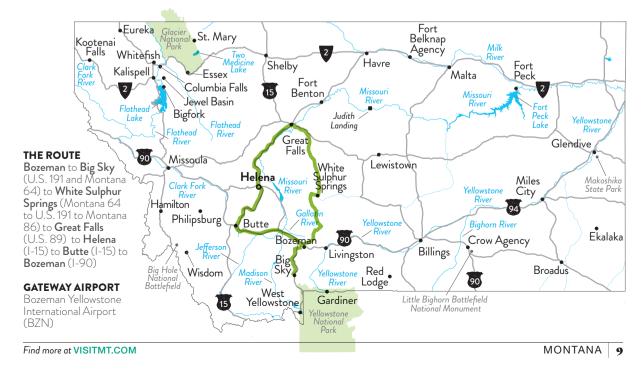
MADE IN MONTANA Sklar Bikes

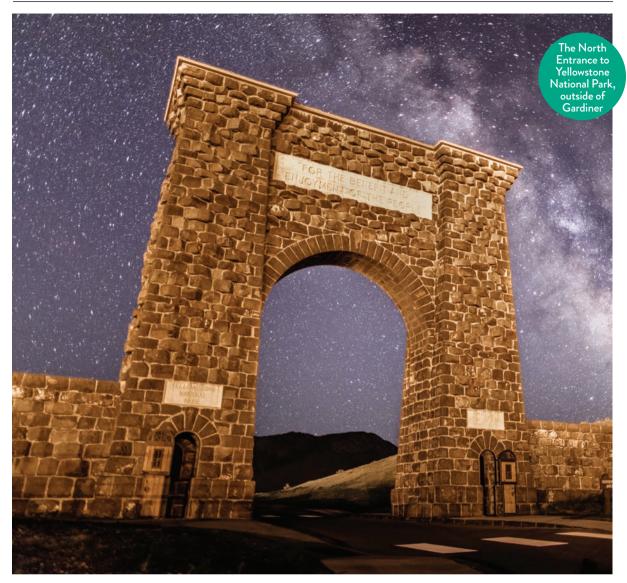
Who better to build a bike that can handle Montana's varied terrain than Bozeman native Adam Sklar? From nimble single-speeds to beefy mountain bikes, Sklar's frame artistry and ingenuity will get you wherever you want to go. **Sklarbikes.com**



 DAY 1-2
 DAY 3
 DAY 4-6
 DAY 6-8

 Bozeman to Big Sky
 Big Sky to White Sulphur Springs
 White Sulphur Springs to Great Falls to Helena
 Helena to Butte to Bozeman





Gateways to Yellowstone

From the outdoor recreation hub of Bozeman to the heart of the park, this iconic trip is bursting with high-alpine roads, trout-rich rivers, geothermal marvels, and incredible dining.



stablished in 1872 as the world's first national park, there's no question 3,471-square-mile Yellowstone deserves its iconic status, with its wolves, elk, moose, bison, and bears, unique geothermal activity, 10,000-foot peaks, and

waterfalls that cascade more than 300 feet. The park feels massive, but is really just part



TOTAL DISTANCE

TOTAL DAYS 6-8

of what makes this chunk of the state so enticing. What lies outside the park on this nearly 450-mile road trip is equally compelling, from the mountain views along the Beartooth Pass to the world-class fly-fishing around Livingston to the hiking, cycling, and mountain biking around Bozeman.





Number of active geysers' and hydrothermal features in Yellowstone National Park

Bozeman

This leafy enclave, filled with coffee shops, brewpubs, gear stores, and art galleries, is cradled between four major mountain ranges: the Gallatin, Absaroka, Bridger, and Madison. Hike, mountain bike, climb, fly-fish, or cycle in any direction, but for easy access, head to Bozeman Creek Trail, an old logging road that

terminates ten miles later at Mystic Lake. Back in town, visit the Museum of the Rockies, a world-renowned, Smithsonianaffiliated museum that has an entire T. rex skeleton and an accurate replica of a late-1800s Montana homestead.

EAT & STAY: Housed in an Airstream trailer off Main Street, Victory Taco is perfect for a quick summer bite. For dinner, Blackbird



serves up homemade pastas and wood-fired pizzas. The LARK, a fantastically rehabbed motor inn with a massive outdoor fireplace and patio, gourmet coffee on tap for breakfast, and comfortable rooms featuring work by local artists, is just down the street.

Livingston

On the banks of the Yellowstone River, this old railroad town 55 miles north of Yellowstone's North Entrance is the epicenter of Montana fly-fishing. Sign up with one of the top-notch experts at Montana Fly Fishing Guides for a half-, full- or multi-day fishing trip—floating, walking, or wading one of seven nearby rivers, private spring creeks, or trophy lakes.

EAT & STAY: Hit the Livingston Bodega and Bakery in the morning, when their pastry case is freshly stocked with sticky buns, currant scones, and apple cider doughnuts. Live like a local and stay at the Red House, a charming rehabbed Victorian four blocks from Sacajawea Park and the Yellowstone River.

Red Lodge

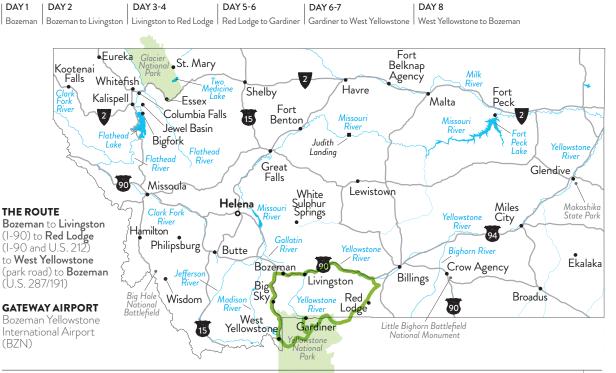
On the north end of the 68-mile-long Beartooth Highway, Red Lodge makes the ideal place to hunker down for a night or two to explore the wilds on the

GATEWAYS TO YELLOWSTONE



northeast edge of Yellowstone, like 12,799-foot Granite Peak, the highest mountain in Montana. In summer, Adventure Whitewater offers a Paddle N' Saddle trip, where guests ride horses in the morning and float the family-friendly Lower Stillwater River in the afternoon. Back in town, U.S. flags fly on every corner, offering up a slice of pure Americana. Kids' eyes will bug out in the Montana Candy Emporium, with barrels full of every kind of sweet imaginable. Adults will appreciate the legendary margaritas a few doors down at Bogart's.

EAT & STAY: The Carbon County Steakhouse gets high marks for its casual atmosphere combined with an award-winning menu that includes "Gallagher's Cut of the Day," a prime cut of regionally sourced beef. Three blocks from downtown, the townhomes at the Island at Rock Creek lodge have creek-side hot tubs and panoramic views of the Beartooth Mountains.





Clockwise from top left: The Wild Table; snowcoach along the Madison River; Yellowstone's Old Faithful geyser; rafting the Gardner River



Yellowstone National Park

There are five entrances into the park, three of which are in Montana, with the Northeast Entrance being one of the most dramatic ways to access it. In Cooke City, stop at the historic Cooke City Store, which houses a new fly shop and sells fishing licenses. Its guides have excellent advice on which trailheads access the best troutfishing lakes and streams in the park.

In the Lamar Valley, watch the bison herds wander oftentimes across the road. The trailhead leading to 10,243-foot Mount Washburn is just off the park road, and the smooth doubletrack to the top is ideal for hiking families. Mammoth Hot Springs's ever-changing travertine formations are one of the park's more unique formations—and should not be missed. Old Faithful, the world's most renowned geyser, is another must-see, erupting at intervals of 40 to 126 minutes.

While waiting for Old Faithful to blow, step inside the iconic A-framed Old Faithful Inn. The post-and-beam construction of the four-story foyer is not only an inspirational reminder of the glory days of the national park system, it's also the largest log structure in the

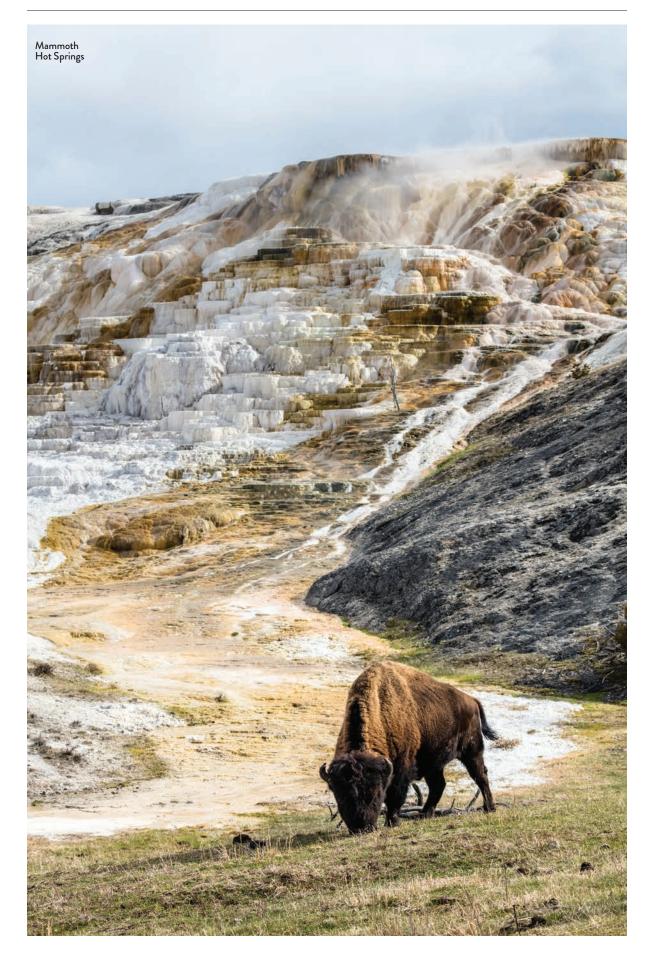
Number of species of large predators in Yellowstone (black bears, Canada lynx, coyotes, grizzly bears, mountain lions, wolverines, and wolves) world. Check out the handcrafted copper clock and the massive stone fireplace, and if you still have time before the next geyser show, stop off for a cold brew on the second-floor deck of the Old Faithful Inn's lounge.

In winter, the only way to access the park is by snowcoach, snowmobile, cross-country skiing, or snowshoeing. Based out of West Yellowstone, Backcountry Adventures and Alpen Guides offer several different

interpretive tours in their heated snowcoaches.

EAT & STAY: Time your layover at Old Faithful to hit lunch at Old Faithful Inn. The Western Buffet includes pulled pork, wild game sausage, mac and cheese, corn bread muffins, and more. Outside the park, the 15 cabins at Campfire Lodge Resort, on the Madison River north of West Yellowstone, have a familyfriendly summer camp vibe.

MADE IN MONTANA Mystery Ranch Hover Pack 40 Stay cool and comfortable with this well-ventilated 4.4-pound hiking pack. Like all of Mystery Ranch's packs, it's hand-sewn in Bozeman. With 43 liters of space and plenty of pockets, there's no need to keep anything at home. **Mysteryranch.com**





The Beauty of **Little Bighorn Country**

Steeped in history, this swath of southeastern Montana is also brimming with

dinosaur bones, rugged landscapes, and outdoor adventures. he wide-open spaces and canyons of eastern Montana take travelers through epochs, from dinosaur bones to the Little Bighorn battle site to classic western ranching towns like Miles City. If history, solitude,

and space are what you're after, you'll find them in abundance on this road trip.



Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

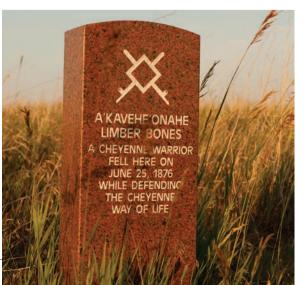
Book one of Indian Battle Tours' Native American guides to explore the site where soldiers led by Lieutenant Colonel George Custer clashed with Sioux and Cheyenne warriors under the leadership of Sitting Bull. In addition to highlighting the history of the battle and the life of the Plains Indians, the site is also home to Custer National Cemetery, the interment site for unknown veterans of past wars.

EAT & STAY: Buy one of the many historical books at the Custer Battlefield Trading Post & Café, then sit on the patio and order a hand-cut rib-eye steak. Oakwood Lodge, 25 miles west of Broadus, sits on 1,000 acres, and its owners whip up a hearty ranch breakfast.

Ekalaka and Surroundings

On the way to Ekalaka, detour to the Chalk Buttes, white sandstone formations in the Custer Gallatin National Forest. There are no designated trails, so make sure you have the proper maps and supplies before you set out to explore these lesser-known buttes. In Ekalaka, visit the Carter County Museum, home to the first juvenile T. rex skeleton, before moving on to Medicine Rocks State Park, which Teddy Roosevelt called "as fantastically beautiful a place as I have ever seen," thanks to its

and headstone (below)





sandstone pillars and abundance of antelope and sharp-tailed grouse.

EAT & STAY: Not surprisingly, RB's Home Cooking in Ekalaka offers home-cooked daily specials. In Baker, 36 miles north, stay at one of ten new Jackson Village Cabins, each with full kitchens and barbecue grills.

Makoshika State Park

Makoshika State Park, off I-94, is

Montana's largest state park and a bounty of badlands fun, with more than ten miles of hiking and mountain biking trails and a newly remodeled visitor center that houses a triceratops skull.

EAT & STAY: In Wibaux, 30 miles east of Makoshika State Park, Beaver Creek Brewery makes pizza and brews tasty beers. Yellowstone Bluffs Bed and Breakfast sits on a sandstone bluff overlooking the Yellowstone River.

Billings

Billings will feel like a metropolis after the solitude of the last few days. The Yellowstone River flows right through town. Check in with Big Sky Fly Fishers to hire a guide on the Yellowstone or nearby Bighorn River. The sandstone Rimrocks surrounding the city are where the locals blow off steam climbing, hiking, and

353 Population of the town of Ekalaka, which is named for the daughter of the famous Sioux chief Sitting Bull

THE BEAUTY OF LITTLE BIGHORN COUNTRY

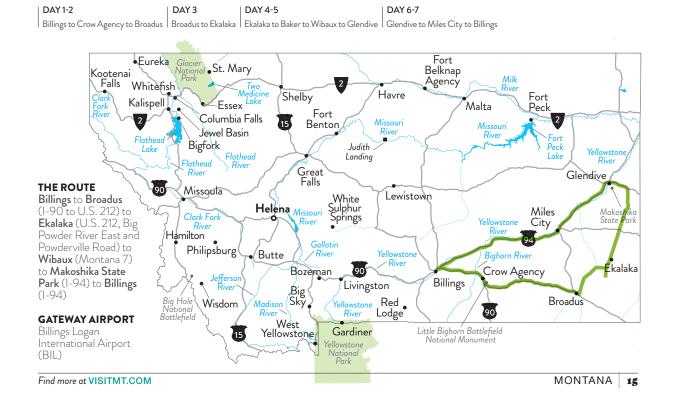


mountain biking. Steep World Climbing and Fitness has details on climbing, and the Spoke Shop rents mountain bikes. Be sure to check out the Western Heritage Center downtown, which covers the history of the 72,000 square miles of the Yellowstone watershed.

EAT & STAY: After visiting one of the city's eight breweries, be sure to save room for meatloaf at The Fieldhouse. The freshly rehabbed Northern Hotel has an impressive wood-burning fireplace in the foyer and antlers on the carpeting.

MADE IN MONTANA Warrior Trail Jewelry and Gifts

This mother- and daughter-owned boutique in Lame Deer specializes in Montana-made goods, from hemp and goat-milk beauty products from Butte to one-of-a-kind handpainted jewelry made from birchbark and rawhide by Ojibwa-Dakota artist Katie Bendickson. **facebook.com/WarriorTrailJewelry.Gifts**





Exploring Missouri River Country

Rich in cultural history, wildlife, and geological wonder, this route is dominated by expansive plains and vast stretches of pristine landscape.

ewis and Clark navigated the Missouri River in 1804. More than two centuries later, there's still a lot to discover along the river's Wild and Scenic portion, where even novice canoeists can paddle past 200-foot-high chalky white cliffs, sprawling cottonwoods, bald eagles, and

beavers. Off the river, this region is about subtle beauty, from the rolling grasslands to charming towns right out of the Old West.

Fort Benton

TOTAL DISTANCE 611 miles TOTAL DAYS 8-9

Road

Trip

This old settlement is now a magnet for entrepreneurs who serve travelers here to launch river trips. Adventure Bound Canoe can rent you gear or guide you on everything from a half-day paddle to a three-day trip, camping along the way. If you choose the

latter, they'll shuttle your car to the takeout at Judith Landing. If you don't have time to actually float the river, the Upper Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center has a 3-D scale model of the river corridor and a short film on the White Cliffs.

EAT & STAY: Wake Cup Coffee House serves buttery pastries and hearty pizzas. Recently renovated, the Grand Union Hotel



is a short walk from the Upper Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center.

Lewistown

In the midst of five mountain ranges, this ranching community in the geographic center of the state is also home to the Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering and Western Music Rendezvous every August. The town also offers excellent brook trout

fishing on the nearby Judith River.

EAT & STAY: The 123-room Yogo Inn sits adjacent to the biking and walking paths of the Lewistown Trail System. The specialty at Stetson's, the linen-tableclothed restaurant at the Yogo Inn, is Montana-cut prime rib.





Malta

Home to the 84,000-acre Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge (where more than 260 bird species have been observed), Malta offers plenty in the way of wildlife and the kid-friendly Great Plains Dinosaur Museum.

EAT & STAY: Book a room at the historic Great Northern Hotel and then order ribs at the Stockman Bar & Steakhouse.

Fort Peck

Sitting at the head of 134-mile-long Fort Peck Lake Reservoir, Fort Peck is a mecca for anglers in search of walleye and northern pike. Surrounding the lake is the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, a brilliant spot to hike, camp, and bird-watch. Save time to see a show—from a musical comedy to a dramatic play—at the historic Fort Peck Theatre.

EAT & STAY: Stop in at the Gateway Club for a plate of Dam Big Nachos, then relax at the Fort Peck Hotel, where wooden rocking chairs and no TVs in the rooms make it easy to unplug.





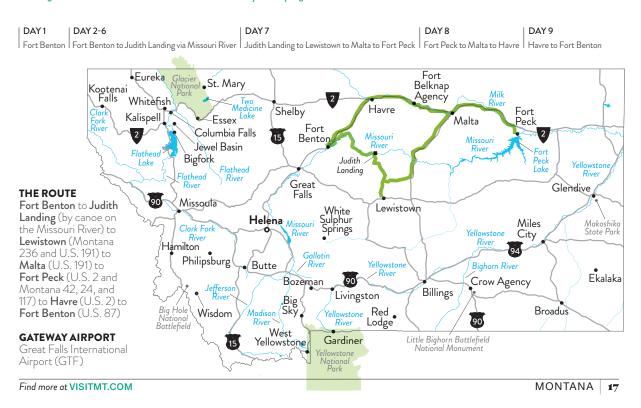
Havre

On the edge of this agricultural college town is Wahkpa Chu'gn, a 2,000-year-old bison-hunting ground. An hour southeast is Bear Paw Battlefield, where Chief Joseph famously surrendered to the U.S. Army.

EAT & STAY: Rod's Drive In prides itself on its "ugly" burgers, a locals' favorite. Best Western Plus Havre Inn & Suites overlooks the rolling plains and Milk River.

MADE IN MONTANA Lewistown Art Center

Give yourself extra time in Lewistown to browse this collection of 150 Montana-based artists who sell their ceramics, wood art, glass art, jewelry, paintings, and photography through this collective. **Lewistownartcenter.net**













Montana on Tap

Full of character and infused with local ingredients, Montana has more than 70 craft breweries, cideries, and distilleries.

southwest montana Willie's Distillery, Ennis

Considering that one of the founders grew up in the epicenter of North Carolina moonshine country, it's no wonder that Willie's showcase spirit is Montana Moonshine, a whiskey made with four grains and gently distilled in a custom copper still to bring out its full flavor. **PERFECT PAIRING**: Horseback ride in the Spanish Peaks, then head back to town for a taste of Willie's Montana Honey Moonshine.

GLACIER COUNTRY

Western Cider, Missoula

This new cidery is on a quest to revive the apple-growing traditions

of the Bitterroot Valley—and it's happening. The cider house recently took home Best in Show from the Portland International Cider Cup for its McIntosh singlevarietal cider. **PERFECT PAIRING:** A six-cider tasting flight on their outdoor patio after inner-tubing the Clark Fork River.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY Katabatic Brewing, Livingston

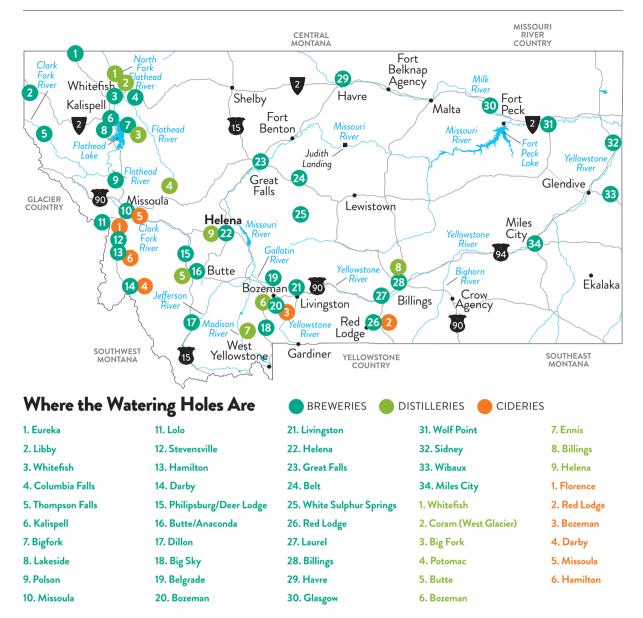
Named after cold downslope winds that are often severe, this cozy space in downtown Livingston has live music twice a week and the occasional Sunday "Suds and Buds," where \$10 gets you a pint and expert advice on how to tie a fly. BYO: scissors, black thread, bobbin, and tying vise. **PERFECT**



PAIRING: Fly-fish the Yellowstone, the longest undammed river in the Lower 48, then sling back a Katabatic Strong Scotch Ale.

MISSOURI RIVER COUNTRY

Busted Knuckle Brewery, Glasgow This funky brewery in eastern Montana was born in the former



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garage of a mechanic turned brewmaster. His 30 years of fixing cars is evident in the garage doors, tables made from radiators, and flights served on old license plates. **PERFECT PAIRING:** Catch a lunker walleye on Fort Peck Lake, then hightail it to the Busted Knuckle for the crowd-favorite Rusted Nut Amber Ale.

GLACIER COUNTRY

Spotted Bear Spirits, Whitefish

Named after the owner's favorite river in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, this airy space with fresh herbs lining the bar is where Montana's rugged beauty is translated into sublime libations. **PERFECT PAIRING:** On a hot summer day, after a mellow float on Whitefish Lake, order the Midsummer Night's Dream, gin infused with watermelon, basil, sugar, and lime.

SOUTHEAST MONTANA

Angry Hank's Microbrewery, Billings

There are six breweries, two distilleries, and one cider house along downtown Billings's Walkable Brewery District, all of which make tasty libations. Angry Hank's outdoor patio is the ideal spot to plan your tour. **PERFECT PAIRING:** A Dog Slobber Brown Ale after a run along the High Line Trail.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Mighty Mo Brewing Company, Great Falls

Other than brewing the most satisfying beer in central Montana, Mighty Mo's owners had an even loftier mission when it was founded in 2013: to revitalize the city. It seems to be working, with live music, a full menu of chicken wings, and tasty brews. **PERFECT PAIRING:** After checking out the paintings and other artwork from the days of the western frontier at the C.M. Russell Museum in town, order up a Lip Ripper IPA.



Adventure Base Camps

Play and relax like a true Montanan at these eight iconic lodges, ranches, and cabins.

GLACIER COUNTRY Averill's Flathead Lake Lodge

It's hard to beat a dude ranch on the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River, 35 miles south of Glacier National Park. Beyond sailing, swimming, horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, fly-fishing, and feasting at a steak-fry cookout, guests return to this historic lodge over and over again because the third-generation Montana family that founded it 73 years ago makes them feel like family.

GLACIER COUNTRY

Triple Creek Ranch

This exclusive, Orvis-endorsed, 600-acre ranch is etched into the Bitterroot Mountain range 75 miles south of Missoula, where horseback riding, fly-fishing, hiking, and panning for rough-cut sapphires are all on the menu. After cleaning up in their doublesteam shower, guests can relax in their own private hot tub, read around the elegant new pool, or reserve a seven-course dinner with wine pairings at the chef's table.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY Blue Sky Cabins

From the outside, these five cabins that sit on a high plateau in the shadow of Montana's highest mountain, 12,799-foot Granite Peak, look as if they might have been built by a settler back in the 1860s. Step inside, however, and the Jacuzzi tub, full kitchen, and plush beds tell a different story. Early risers can head out with the sun to scout for elk, moose, or black bears. Or linger in bed and save your energy for hiking, horseback riding, whitewater rafting, or fly-fishing the Stillwater and Yellowstone Rivers, or exploring Red Lodge, a 20-minute drive away.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY Lazy M Mountain Cabin

If you're looking for a secluded Montana base camp from which to explore Yellowstone National Park, horseback ride in the Custer Gallatin National Forest, whitewater raft the Yellowstone River, or explore Gardiner, then quickly retreat from the crowds, look no further than this unplugged oasis. Sitting on Cinnabar Creek, an idyllic trout stream northwest of Gardiner. the cabin offers the best form of entertainment: sitting back in an Adirondack chair on the porch and listening to the gurgling creek as the stars align overhead.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Deep Canyon Guest Ranch

Nestled into a canyon on the edge of the million-acre Bob Marshall Wilderness, 90 miles southeast of Glacier National Park, this dude ranch is for guests craving space. Fly-fish for cutthroat trout on the North Fork of the Teton River; horseback ride through the

ADVENTURE BASE CAMPS









alpine meadows; scope out rufous hummingbirds, elk, or moose on daily hikes; or float lazily down the river in an inner tube. When it comes time for the evening meal, dine family style on local grassfed beef or barbecue ribs back in the historic lodge, built in 1928.

MISSOURI RIVER COUNTRY

Montana River Ranch

Practically a stone's throw from the Montana–North Dakota state line, this private lodge near the



confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers is a deer and pheasant hunter's dream. On the three-day, four-night guided ring-necked pheasant hunt, you'll be tracking birds along the beautiful Missouri River Flyway.

southeast montana Bighorn River Lodge

There are few other rivers in the world that contain 6,500 fish per mile. That's why beginner and expert anglers alike return again and again to this log-cabin-style lodge on the bank of the Bighorn River. When they aren't fishing, guests can explore nearby Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area by foot or chill out on the deck overlooking the Bighorn Mountain range. Bring a big appetite: Breakfasts are huge and bavette steak is the signature dinner dish.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Big Hole Lodge

Be prepared to rise at the crack of dawn and fish until you're exhausted—this luxuriously rustic lodge on the bank of the Wise River is, after all, the 2017 Orvis Fly-Fishing Lodge of the Year. Guests who don't want to spend all day casting dry flies into the Big Hole River can horseback ride up to a high-mountain lake or laze in a hammock until the huckleberry-glazed quail hors d'oeuvres are served.



Montana in Winter

Skiing and snowboarding are just the start. From snowshoeing and hot springs soaking to snowmobiling and ice fishing, Montana is a winter wonderland.

GLACIER COUNTRY Cross-Country Ski Glacier National Park

It's every nordic skier's dream—to have miles and miles of trails all to yourself, with towering peaks all around you. Welcome to Glacier National Park in winter, where you and your friends can enjoy this iconic park by nordic skiing the trails and unplowed roads of the Apgar–West Glacier area. From the beginner-friendly, two-mile Lower McDonald Creek Trail to the 10.5-mile Apgar Lookout Trail, there's a path for everyone. Rent skis at Glacier Cyclery and Nordic, in Whitefish, or sign up for a ranger-led snowshoe tour at the Apgar Visitor Center.

southwest montana Soak at Elkhorn Hot Springs

This rustic oasis in the gentle Pioneer Mountains of Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest was built in 1918 and still has an abundance of hot water—two natural hot springs and an indoor Grecian sauna. After downhill skiing at Maverick Mountain, a laid-back, family-friendly resort, or nordic skiing or snowmobiling in the surrounding forest, soak in the springs, dine on an Elkhorn burger in the restaurant, then cozy into Rockchuck, the newest cabin, with a woodstove and a full kitchen.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY **Point 'Em Downhill at Red Lodge Mountain** Montana has 15 ski areas and



resorts with world-class slopes for everyone from beginners to experts. Many are like Red Lodge, whose tagline is "no lift lines, no attitude, no big prices." With 65 trails, there's downhill action for every level of skier or snowboarder. There's also a fun town to explore nearby, for family members who don't do either. Stay at the historic Yodeler Motel, six miles from the mountain and three blocks from downtown Red Lodge, and the price breakdown per person, per night, for lift tickets and accommodations is almost unbelievable.

central montana Snowmobiling the Little Belt Mountains

Snowmobilers: This is your place. With 291 miles of marked and groomed snowmobile trails that forge through meadows and forests and rise from 5,500 to 8,000 feet in the Little Belt Mountains southeast of Great Falls, it's easy to see why



locals are so revved up about the immense distances they can travel in this wide-open part of the state. Emanating from the Kings Hill Winter Recreation Area parking lot, on the north side of Kings Hill Pass and two miles from Showdown Ski Area, the trails are groomed six nights a week by the Great Falls Snowmobile Club. Visit their website for a daily report on which sections are tracked. Nonresidents must purchase a temporary-use permit through the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks website.

MISSOURI RIVER COUNTRY

Ice Fish Fort Peck Lake

In the winter, there's no better place to catch trophy lake trout, walleve, and northern pike than 382-square-mile Fort Peck Lake. The key to winter fishing here is stealth: Instead of sitting in a fish house over one hole all day, snowmobile-riding anglers equipped with maps, depth finders, and augers zip from one hole to the next, often catching all three species in one lucky spot. The proof of just how big the fish can get is on the wall at Hell Creek Marina-the owner caught a 15.9-pound walleye in -33 degrees on New Year's Day a few years ago. The marina also rents fishing gear and has limited accommodations and good ice-fishing advice.

SOUTHEAST MONTANA

Hiking and Snowshoeing in Makoshika State Park

The snow can pile up pretty deep at 12,000-acre Makoshika State Park. But Montana's largest state park can handle it. The main road into Makoshika was paved in 2016 and the visitor's center is open year round. When there's good snow, drive to the Cap Rock trailhead and ski or snowshoe the park road all the way to the top. The payoff is shimmery badlands views of whitetipped cap rocks and pinnacles. If the weather turns bad, warm up at the visitor center, renowned for its collection of dinosaur fossils like a triceratops skull. Rent snowshoes or skis nearby at the Glendive Recreation Department.

MONTANA

ONLINE RESOURCES



From general inspiration to specific trip ideas, **VISITMT.COM** is your source for places to go and things to do in Big Sky Country. With a wealth of information on the national parks, Indian nations, outdoor activities, history, culture, and more, there is something for every adventurer.

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