

Free Time Activities – Things to Do in the West Yellowstone Area

Madison River Canyon Earthquake Area – In 1959 Madison River Canyon was struck by one of the largest earthquakes ever recorded on the North American continent (7.5 on the Richter scale). The earthquake caused an enormous landslide and sent 80 million tons of rock tumbling into the canyon, obstructing the flow of the Madison River and backing water up behind the fallen rocks to form Earthquake Lake. The Earthquake Lake Visitor Center, located on Highway 287 overlooking the slide area and lake, provides educational exhibits about wildlife, earthquakes, and other geologic phenomena.

Virginia City/Nevada City – <http://www.virginiacity.com> - Virginia City is a living town of 150 year round residents who host the West's best preserved gold mining town from the 1860's. Visitors walk the same boardwalks that desperate Vigilantes once patrolled. Guests are transported to a time when rowdy miners mingled in saloons and restaurants with women of negotiable affection. Virginia City was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. The area holds claim to the largest collection of Gold Rush era buildings in the West, dating back to the height of the Gold Rush when nearly 20,000 hardy souls called it home and Virginia City was Capital of the Montana Territory. Nevada City, just 1.5 miles down the highway, has 14 historic buildings original to the site plus a collection of more than 100 other historic buildings saved from locations all over Montana. The Nevada City Music Hall houses the largest public collection of automated music machines in North America, including historic player pianos, gaviolis, and other music machines - many of which are still in great working order.



White Water Rafting – Try a full-day or half day rafting adventure on the Gallatin River, departing from north of West Yellowstone. Contact local outfitters for more information – Montana Whitewater - <http://www.montanawhitewater.com> – 800-858-7781; Geyser Whitewater Expeditions - <http://www.raftmontana.com> – 800-858-7781; or Yellowstone Raft Company - <http://www.yellowstoneraft.com> – 800-348-4376.

Yellowstone Historic Center Museum – <http://www.yellowstonehistoriccenter.org> - The railroad marks West Yellowstone's historic beginnings, so it is fitting that the Union Pacific Depot building is home to the Yellowstone Historic Center Museum. The museum includes interactive exhibits and artifacts that explore the complete history of the area, from the time the Plains Indians and bison roamed the land to the days the terrifying fires of 1988 swept thru Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding landscape. 104 Yellowstone Avenue. Open daily, 9:00-6:00. Admission – Adults - \$5; Seniors - \$4.



Fishing/Fly Fishing – The Henry’s Fork of the Snake River, the Madison River, and the rivers and creeks of Yellowstone are as close as it gets to fly fishing heaven. There are browns, cutthroats, rainbows, and brook trout just waiting for your line. For more information or to engage a local guide, contact Arrick’s Fly Shop - <http://www.arricks.com> – 406-646-7290 or Bud Lilly’s Trout Shop - <http://www.budlillys.com> – 800-854-9559.

Horseback Riding – Horseback riding is available for trips in Yellowstone National Park or the surrounding National Forests, and can be booked from one or two hours to all day trips. Book a trail ride with Yellowstone Mountain Guides - <http://www.yellowstone-guides.com> – 406-646-7230; Diamond P Ranch - <http://www.yellowstonehorses.com> – 800-709-1358; or Parade Guest Ranch – 800-753-5934.

Golf - West Yellowstone is probably not going to become famous for its golf courses anytime soon. Reason why? There are none. However, a short drive to the north or south will take you to Big Sky or Island Park where you will find golfing with fantastic views! Check out Big Sky Resort (an Arnold Palmer course), an hour north of West Yellowstone at 406-995-5780; The Reserve at Moonlight Basin (a Jack Nicklaus course), an hour and fifteen minutes north of West Yellowstone at 800-323-9212; or Island Park Village Resort Golf Course (9-holes), a half hour southwest of West Yellowstone at 208-558-7550.

Shopping – Don’t forget shopping in downtown West Yellowstone. A favorite is the Homeroom at Madison Crossing, next door to the Pine Cone Playhouse on Madison Avenue, with specialty shops offering furniture, kitchen accessories, gift items, framed artwork, bedding and bath products and a great little toy store featuring forest animals, games, and books where you can surely find something to take back for the grandkids!

Big Sky Resort – <http://www.bigskyresort.com> - Located roughly 50 miles north of West Yellowstone, Big Sky Resort has something for everybody. For the more adventurous among you, try the Zipline, the High Ropes Course, or the Bungee Trampoline. Hiking and mountain biking is superb here. For a more relaxed experience, take the scenic Aerial Lift Ride and get a bird’s eye view of the beauty of the surrounding mountains. For more info about the various activities available at Big Sky Resort, check out their website or call 800-548-4486.



Grand Teton National Park/Jackson Hole, Wyoming – <http://www.nps.gov> and <http://www.jacksonholechamber.com>. Exit the south entrance to Yellowstone National Park, stop at the Flagg Ranch Information Station to get your plans sorted out, and continue into Grand Teton National Park. The scenery is of the “to die for” variety. Four miles south of Grand Teton National Park is Jackson Hole, Wyoming. For a majestic view of the region, catch a ride on “Big Red” the aerial tram at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. Shopping in Jackson Hole will delight you (and may empty your pocketbook!!).