

# Chief Joseph Scenic Byway

*A Heroic Journey*



5 Days/4 Nights

Gateway City: Cody, Wyoming



In the spring of 1877, Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians made a daring escape worthy of a movie. Pursued by the United States Cavalry in an attempt to force the tribe off their native land and onto a reservation, Chief Joseph made a plan to lead his people 1,800 miles north into Canada. After moving stealthily through Yellowstone National Park, the group found themselves on a mountain pass surrounded by General Sturgis and his cavalry. But instead of surrendering, they stirred up their horses to create giant clouds of dust, dropped through a narrow gorge previously thought to be impassable, and escaped into a deep canyon below. While the tribe was ultimately captured only 40 miles from the Canadian border, the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway commemorates this heroic journey with 46 miles of breathtaking mountain scenery. Carving a diagonal line through the Shoshone National Forest and curving around thrilling switchbacks, you'll experience unbeatable views of northwest Wyoming. Discover Yellowstone's geological wonders and immerse yourself in the spectacular countryside of the Clarks Fork Valley as you follow in the footsteps of this iconic humanitarian.



### **Touring the Byway**

We recommend starting your journey in Cody, a rugged mountain town in the heart of the American West. Hear the incredible stories of the town at the Cody Heritage Museum and Buffalo Bill Center of the West, learn about the pioneers who pursued Western expansion at the Historic Cody Mural and Museum, and experience life on the frontier at Old Trail Town before spending the evening at Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel.

On Day Two drive, the 46 thrilling miles on the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway. Twist and turn your way on WY-296 stopping at scenic overlooks, ultimately reaching an elevation over 8,000 feet at Dead Indian Pass, and defying gravity as you cross Wyoming's highest bridge, Sunlight Creek Bridge. After a stop in Cooke City, Montana, make your way to Yellowstone National Park. Spend Days Three and Four in Yellowstone exploring the jaw-dropping scenery and dozens of famous geological wonders, hot springs, cones, towering volcanic spires, plunging waterfalls, mud pots, geysers, and of course Old Faithful. By the time you explore both loop routes, you'll have seen all the most popular locations in the park. Tuck

into one of Yellowstone’s on-site lodges for the evening and marvel at the blanket of stars sparkling overhead.

On Day Five, enjoy a leisurely drive through southeast Yellowstone on your way back to Cody, via the Buffalo Bill Scenic Byway. Pause at the Buffalo Bill Dam and Visitor Center for a breathtaking view 280 feet over the Shoshone River. From there, we wish you a safe passage if you’re continuing your journey on another Wyoming Scenic Byway, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



## DAY ONE



### **Cody**

As he explored the region in the 1870s as an Army scout, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody was so impressed with the grand scenery surrounding Yellowstone National Park, that, after taking his Wild West Show all over the world, he returned to start the town in 1896. Several streets in the historic downtown are still named after other investors and founders; Beck, Alger, Rumsey, Bleistein, and Salsbury. The construction of a dam on the Shoshone River brought federal money pouring in, spurring Cody to grow and prosper even before oil was discovered in the Oregon Basin in 1912. By the time Cody passed in 1917, his namesake town, deemed the “Rodeo Capital of the World,” was well on its way.

## **Buffalo Bill Center of the West**

Often referred to as the “Smithsonian of the West,” the Buffalo Bill Center of the West weaves together stories of the Yellowstone region and the American West in five different museums. Immerse yourself in the geology and natural environment of the region at the Draper Natural History Museum. Get to know William F. Cody in the Buffalo Bill Museum. Experience the traditions, values, and culture of regional Native Americans at the Plains Indian Museum, and enjoy artists’ depictions of the West at the Whitney Western Art Museum. The Cody Firearms Museum houses more than 4,000 firearms used in the American West.

720 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-4771, Summer hours: May 1-Sept 15 Daily, 8AM-6PM, Sept 16-Oct31 Daily 8AM-5PM, Nov1-30 Daily 10AM-5PM, Dec 1-Feb 28, Th-Sun 10AM-5PM, Mar 1-Apr 30, Daily 10AM-5PM Adults \$22 (Tickets good for 2 consecutive days)



## **Cody Heritage Museum**

Exhibits feature founders William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody, George Beck, Nate Salsbury, H.M. Gerrans, George Bleistein and Bronson Rumsey, ranching and agricultural history, early Cody businesses, the oil, gas, and railroad industries, and cowboy history. The Heritage Garden surrounding the historic De Maris House is a living exhibit of native plants, pollinator plants, wildflowers, grasses, and a bronze sculpture which memorializes the original pioneers who built the town.

1092 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-586-4272, Tu-Sat 10AM-4PM & Sun 12PM-4PM

## **The Historic Cody Mural and Museum**

Experience an awe-inspiring mural painted by a renowned artist illustrating Mormon pioneers in the region, complemented with items they used as they settled Wyoming’s rugged Big Horn Basin.

1719 Wyoming Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-3290, Memorial Day through the last Friday of September M-Sat 9AM-7PM, Free



## **Old Trail Town**

Explore a rare collection of ghost-town relics, authentic buildings, and historic furnishing in this reconstructed frontier town where Cody started. Original cabins used by outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid and a Wyoming saloon frequented by Cassidy's "Hole-in-the-Wall Gang" were moved to the site, along with the cabin of "Curley," a Crow scout who helped guided Custer and the U.S. 7th Cavalry to the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. Several pioneer graves on the property include mountain man John Johnson, portrayed by Robert Redford in "Jeremiah Johnson."

1831 Demaris Drive, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-5302, May 15th-Sept 1st M-Sun  
8AM-6PM, Adults \$10





## **Downtown Cody Historic Shopping District**

As you browse through the local shops in downtown Cody, stroll through the Downtown Cody Historic District along Sheridan Avenue, where the sandstone buildings constructed of locally quarried materials lend the district a distinctive western character. Most of the one or two-story structures date from between 1900 and 1930, built after Cody was incorporated in 1901. Although relatively free of ornamentation, iron fronts, large iron cornices with brackets, and clerestory windows are evident on some buildings. You'll find a variety of shops in downtown Cody, especially those with western flair: Custom Cowboy Shop, Wayne's Boot Shop, Wild West Emporium, High Country Emporium, along with a great representations of arts and antiques including Von Morisse Gallery, Big Horn Galleries, Simpson Gallagher Gallery, Treasured Memories, and the Watchful Raven Antiques.

## **Cody Nite Rodeo**

Started in 1938, the Cody Nite Rodeo is the longest running rodeo and the only nightly rodeo June-August in the world. Gates open at 7PM, with the action kicking off at 8PM. All seats are general admission within two section, but purchase of tickets in advance is recommended.

519 West Yellowstone Avenue, Cody, WY. 82414, 307-587-5155





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**The Irma Hotel**, 1192 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-4221

Opened in 1902, the Irma has been a symbol of neighborliness and good cheer for over 100 years. As they say, everyone from Colonel Cody, to princes and potentates, Indian chiefs and cowboys “came as they were” to the Irma. You can too.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Trailhead Bar and Grill Wood Fired Pizza**, 1326 Beck Avenue, Cody, WY 82414, 307-578-8510

**Proud Cut Saloon** 1227 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-527-6905 Buffalo burgers and traditional American classics with a full bar.

**Irma Hotel Restaurant** 1192 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-4221

Famous for its Prime Rib, the hotel also has a full menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and daily summer buffet. The famous cherry back bar was a gift from British Queen Victoria to Buffalo Bill Cody.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**By Western Hands**, 1007 12th Street, Cody, WY 82414, 307-586-1755 Preserving Western heritage and design through celebrating past and present artisans.

**Timmer Gallery** 1371 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 586-604-6314 Art studio and gallery featuring contemporary landscapes and unique gifts by artist Brian Timmer.

**Cowtown Candy Company** 1323 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-8212 Delectable treats, popcorn and fudge.

## DAY TWO

### **Chief Joseph Scenic Byway**

This morning you'll be off to drive the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway, which connects Cody with the Beartooth Highway, closely following the path taken by the Nez Perce as they fled the US Cavalry in 1877. Several interpretive signs along the route tell more of the story. Along with learning the story of the route, you'll be driving through Shoshone National Forest for most of the route, enjoying spectacular vistas, beautiful scenery, and mountains at every twist and turn. Distant views of the Beartooth Mountains are complemented with views of the Beartooth Plateau and the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River. Unlike the Beartooth, the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway is not a high-elevation drive. It does cross Dead Indian Pass at 8,048 feet, but for the most part passes through a series of open valleys, surrounded with tall, forested mountains. Be sure to stop at the scenic pullout at Mile 1.2, Dead Indian Summit Overlook at Mile 13.3, and the Sunlight Bridge at Mile 23.



## **Cooke City/Silver Gate**

For decades, Cooke City was known as Miner's Camp, until it was renamed for the Pacific Railroad contractor working to bring the railroad to the mountain camps in the New World Mining District. Like so many western mountain towns, people came and went with the fortunes of mining. Where there was once two smelters, two sawmills, three general stores, two hotels, and a local meat market, is now home to about 100 hardy souls. The tiny town of Silver Gate began when a family that wanted to work on the Beartooth Highway purchased the original land. Instead of coming from mining, the name of Silver Gate came from the silver haze which seemed to shine over the mountains.

## **Cooke City Montana Museum**

The Cooke City Montana Museum has several permanent exhibits on the history of the three communities of Colter Pass, Cooke City, and Silver Gate, as well as exhibits on the Beartooth Highway, local schools, tourism, local women and winter. 206 Main Street, Cooke City-Silver Gate, MT 59020, 406-838-2203. M-Sat 10AM-5PM, Sun 10AM-4PM, Free

## **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Miners Saloon** 208 Main Street, Cooke City-Silver Gate, MT 59020, 406-838-2214

Enjoy quality food made as the seasons change with local fresh, and sustainable foods.

**Beartooth Café** 211 Main Street, Cooke City-Silver Gate, MT 59020, 406-838-2475

A beautiful old log structure decorated with everything from antique beer signs and mining artifacts, to fine art by local artists.

## **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**Cooke City Store** 101 Main Street, Cooke City, MT, 59020, 406-838-2234 Featuring many of the original fixtures from the late 1800's, this General Store still uses the original hand crank cash register and sells penny candy.



## **Yellowstone National Park**

The creation of Yellowstone National Park and protection of its astounding resources was not without challenges. The first Park Act called for administration with no cost to the United States, which unfortunately, did not protect the land or the wildlife from poaching and squatters. A second superintendent appointed in 1877 began constructing roads, appointed a “gamekeeper,” and campaigned against hunters and vandals. When those measures still didn’t work, the U.S. Army arrived in 1886 to develop and enforce regulations, evict troublemakers, and patrol park lands. Finally, recognizing that America’s National Parks needed cohesive management, the National Park Service was established in 1916.

Fortunately for all visitors since then, Yellowstone has remained a beautiful place with incredible wildlife and more thermal features than anywhere else in the world. It is best to allow at least one whole day to travel each of the two park loop roads. If you enjoy stopping at both the Visitor Centers and the natural attractions, it may take two days to thoroughly explore each loop.



Accommodations are located in six different locations, affording a lot of flexibility for overnight stays. Reservations should be made well in advance of arrival, as the hotels fill up fast. If you don't want to drive all of Yellowstone's roads, the best way to tour is to take the Yellow Bus, vintage White Motor Company buses that ferry visitors on guided wildlife-watching tours, photo safaris, sunset tours, tours into the heart of the geyser region, wildlife-rich areas like Hayden Valley, the Northern Range, and more. The distinctive antique yellow vehicles have retractable canvas roofs and panoramic windows, making them ideal for sightseeing.

Coming in from the Northeast Entrance, you'll pass the Yellowstone Association Institute before you reach Tower-Roosevelt. There is no actual Visitor Center here, but the Roosevelt Lodge serves as accommodations at this location, which is likely the best place to stay before taking the northern park loop drive tomorrow. Stagecoach rides are available as well.



**Roosevelt Lodge and Dining Room**, 100 Roosevelt Lodge Road, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, 307-344-7311

Built near one of Theodore Roosevelt's favorite places, this rustic log lodge, Yellowstone's tribute to the Old West, boasts two stone fireplaces, a family-style restaurant, lobby bar and front porch made for rocking and relaxing. Cabin-style lodging and a large corral operation contribute to the "cowboy-feel."

## DAY THREE

Today, to begin the Northern Loop, it's time to head to Mammoth Hot Springs. Walk on the upper and lower boardwalks above the steaming hydrothermal features or take a drive around the vibrant travertine terraces with approximately 50 hot springs.

This area is also home to the Albright Visitor Center, Historic Fort Yellowstone, the Mammoth Springs Hotel, the Upper Terrace Drive, and the headquarters of Yellowstone National Park. Explore exhibits to learn more about the wildlife and history of Yellowstone and check the ranger programs offered. The visitor center has free Wi-Fi. 307-344-2263.

The North Rim Scenic Drive takes you to Inspiration Point along the Yellowstone River and the South Rim Scenic Drive takes you to Artist Point. There are also views of the Upper Falls. Next up is the Norris Geyser Basin, home to the Norris Geyser Basin Museum and Information Center which overlooks the Geyser Basin. This historic building dates from the 1930s when it was built to serve as a “trailside museum” to serve people traveling in their own cars without a guide. Restrooms are located in the parking lot. 307-344-2812





Next up is the Norris Geyser Basin Museum and Information Center which overlooks the Geyser Basin. This historic building was built to serve as a “trailside museum” to serve people traveling in their own cars without a guide in the 1930s. Restrooms are located in the parking lot. 307-344-2812. The Norris Campground and Museum of the National Park Ranger is staffed by retired park rangers who celebrate the history of the Park Ranger profession. After visiting here, you’ll be headed through the basin to view the steam vents and geysers.

From there, it’s off to Canyon Village. Here you will find the Canyon Visitor Education Center where you can learn about the geologic story of the area, including the Yellowstone volcano, and view a room-size relief map of the Park. Be sure to watch the 20-minute film. Restrooms are available 24 hours a day. 307-344-2550





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Canyon Lodge & Cabins** Yellowstone National Park, 41 Clover Lane, Yellowstone National Park, WY, 82190, 307-344-7311 The largest sustainable lodging in the National Park collection, is also the largest hotel in Yellowstone.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining and Retail**

**Canyon General Store & Canyon Fountain and Grill** 2 Canyon Village Loop Road, Canyon Village, Yellowstone National Park, WY, 82190, 307-242-7377 Opened in 1957, the fun look and feel of the structure recalls America's first ventures by automobile to the scenic West. The store offers a wide selection including Native American-inspired collectibles. The Canyon Fountain and Grill is a nostalgic diner serving hamburgers, fries, and shakes.

## DAY FOUR

On the South Park Loop Road, next up is Madison, home to the Madison Information Center and Trailside Museum. Located about halfway between Old Faithful and West Yellowstone, this structure is a good example of "parkitecture" from the 1930s. You can sign up for a ranger program and use the bathrooms here. 307-344-2821. Between Madison and Old Faithful, take the Firehole Canyon Drive, Firehole Lake Drive, the drive to the Fountain Paint Pot, Lower Geyser Basin, Midway Geyser Basin, Biscuit Basin, Black Sand Basin and the Upper Geyser Basin right at Old Faithful. While exploring the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center, marvel at the famous Old Faithful Geyser from the tall front windows. Delve into the natural wonders of Yellowstone in the exhibit hall, check the ranger programs offered, and use the restrooms. 307-344-2751

Now it's over to West Thumb and Grant Village, both of which sit at the edge of Yellowstone Lake. Grant Village is likely the best place for tonight's accommodations. The small facility at the start of the West Thumb Geyser Basin boardwalks, built in 1925, is a good example of historic ranger-station architecture in Yellowstone. 307-242-7690. At the Grant Village Visitor Center, you can learn more about Yellowstone's fires over the years in the exhibit hall. Ranger programs and restrooms are also available. 307-344-2650. From there, head back north from Grant Village, past the Bridge Bay Marina to the Lake Area.





**Lake Yellowstone Hotel**, 235 Yellowstone Lake Road, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190  
307-344-7311

Situated on the shores of shimmering Yellowstone Lake, the Lake Yellowstone Hotel takes you back to the elegance of the 1920s. Restorations have stayed true to its old-fashioned roots by incorporating charming interior furnishings with a colonial-style exterior. The building is painted a fitting golden yellow inside and out. Enjoy dinner in the dining room. Be sure to make dinner reservations in advance.

## DAY FIVE

From the Lake area this morning on your way back to Cody, it's on to the Fishing Bridge Visitor Information Center and Trailside Museum. The distinctive stone-and-log architecture of this old building—known as "parkitecture"—was one of several prototypes for park buildings around the country. Today, the museum highlights the ecology of Yellowstone Lake. 307-344-2450. At this point, you have traveled virtually all the roads in Yellowstone National Park. It's most convenient at this point to exit the Park by the East Entrance. Traveling back to Cody, you'll be enjoying the Buffalo Bill Scenic Byway.

### **Wapiti**

Situated halfway between Cody and Yellowstone on the North Fork of the Shoshone River, Wapiti is named after the Cree Indian word for elk. As you pass through, you can catch a glimpse of Wapiti's landmark attraction, the Smith Mansion, a five-story, 77-foot high, twisting, rustic structure hand-built without blueprints by the late Francis Lee Smith. He spent every spare moment working on this project for 22 years, that eventually morphed into a tangle of rooms, balconies, and staircases. Made from logs Smith hauled from Rattlesnake Mountain by pickup truck, Smith was hit by falling lumber while alone on a balcony. His body was discovered two days later.



### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Yellowstone Cutthroat Guest Ranch** 53 Stagecoach Trail, Cody, WY, 82414

307-272-6982 Providing guest lodging on the Shoshone River with 360° views, frequent wildlife sightings, and access to on-site amenities. This private riverfront lodge with panoramic views of the Shoshone River features a five-star restaurant with a full bar.

### **Buffalo Bill Dam & Visitor Center**

Completed in 1910 at 325 feet, the Buffalo Bill Dam was one of the first concrete arch dams built in the United States. Water held by the dam is used to irrigate more than 93,000 acres of beans, alfalfa, oats, barley, and sugar beets. Be sure to watch the film, view the taxidermy and savor close up views of the reservoir.

4808 N Fork Highway, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-527-6076, Daily 9AM-5PM



## **Buffalo Bill Scenic Byway**

It's the stuff of legends! William Frederick Cody, aka Buffalo Bill, was once one of the most recognized people in the world. His Wild West Show was featured at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, and only the Egyptians rivaled the attention paid to Cody at the Chicago World's Fair. Following a rather humble start in Iowa, Canada, and Kansas, Cody became a Pony Express rider at age 15. He served in the Union Army during the Civil War, receiving a Congressional Medal of Honor in 1872 for his service as a scout during the Indian Wars. His first show performance as the character of the "Scout of the Prairie" brought to life his exploration of the remote terrain surrounding Yellowstone National Park, at the Old Glory Blowout, July 4, 1882. The following year, he unveiled Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, featuring Annie Oakley, "Wild Bill" Hickok, bronco riding, roping, and other rodeo skills. After a successful tour of the United States and a special invite to England, he quickly rose to international fame. More than two decades later, Cody returned to found the town. Fortunately, his success, fame, and vision enabled Cody to bring attention to western causes, the rights of Native Americans and women, the need to conserve Western lands and the destruction of buffalo herds. Winding through the Shoshone National Forest on routes that Bill traveled, you'll be exploring the same remote rugged terrain Cody loved so much.

