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PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC SEYMOUR/JHMR



Let's face it: when most of us think summer camp, visions of tent cabins, scratchy blankets, and bland steam-table food dance in our heads. But imagine a truly alluring, nature-focused summer retreat. A getaway in the midst of one of the world's most fascinating ecosystems—where the list of outdoor adventures is as inviting as the accommodations, and the food is actually something to write home about. If that piques your interest, consider a trek to the Tetons. But instead of staying in bustling downtown Jackson, make compact Teton Village—the base area for

the vast Jackson Hole Mountain Resort—your “glampsite.” Just 14 miles northwest of the area's visitor hub and right on the border of Grand Teton National Park, it's easy to get to and full of surprises.

The memory that's the most vivid for me of a three-day stay in Teton Village last summer is the almost Disney-like access to the wildlife in the magnificently preserved park. Sure, you can explore on your own, but if you long to spot some fascinating creatures and give your kids an indelible lesson in the beauty of careful conservation, your best bet is to join a Teton “safari” with an expert.

Enter Kurt F. Johnson, resident naturalist at Teton Village's eco-friendly Hotel Terra and author of *A Field Guide to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks*. At dawn on a chilly June day, Johnson piled our group into a van and proceeded to blow our decidedly urban minds over the next few hours. One minute he'd be chatting about the park's history; the next he'd pull over and point out a stunning long-billed curlew. We spied the quivering noses of baby coyotes peeking out from their den, careened through deep mud to keep up with a thundering herd of adult and baby bison, and saw 16 pronghorn bucks—elegant creatures Johnson calls “the Ferrari of land animals.” In all, we logged over 60 birds, including a singing meadowlark. I will remember them forever because at the end of the day, he emailed us a list of the day's wildlife sightings.

That afternoon, though we had a choice of endless activities right in the village, including horseback riding, mountain biking, bungee trampolines, and “the ropes”—an aerial adventure course of zip lines, balance beams, and cargo nets—I'm glad we instead went fishing on the nearby Snake River. Thanks to our patient father-and-son guides, we actually caught and released a few elusive Snake River cutthroat trout. As we navigated the river, I counted 19 bald eagles, each quietly watching from its perch.

At the end of the day, as with all good campsites tucked away far from city lights, the vivid night sky over the Tetons offers its own kind of dazzling entertainment. Look up and sing your own version of “Kumbaya.”

## Teton Top Picks

### EAT

**Il Villaggio Osteria** (307.739.4100, [jhosteria.com](http://jhosteria.com)). Savor high-end Italian, including a terrific wine list. Go for the salumi bar or a full-on meal.