



AARP's Guide to Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park

Stunning snowcapped mountains, wildlife galore and more in this serene haven

by Dina Mishev, **AARP**, August 4, 2021 | Comments: 0

Other U.S. mountain ranges are taller, bigger and wider, but [Wyoming's Tetons](#) might be the country's most famous and most photographed. They rise, improbably dramatic and toothy, almost vertically from sagebrush flats to hulk 7,000 feet above the mighty Snake River and the surrounding valley of Jackson Hole. Often snowcapped until July — and home to a handful of small glaciers and year-round snowfields — the Tetons have as much subtlety as they do foothills, and they have no foothills. These mountains are the heart of the 310,000 acres that make up Grand Teton National Park (GTNP), just seven miles south of [Yellowstone National Park](#).

Founded in 1929 and expanded in 1950 — thanks in large part to land donated by John D. Rockefeller Jr. — GTNP attracts more than 3 million visitors annually. While the Tetons' stunning beauty remains the biggest draw, the park is becoming known as a wildlife-watching hot spot, too, with bears (black and grizzly), bison, elk, moose and wolves roaming its acres. And rock climbers test themselves on its multipitch granite buttresses, arêtes and ridges.

In winter, an average of 10 feet of snow transforms the park, burying hiking trails and lakes much to the delight of snowshoers and Nordic and backcountry skiers. From November through April, the park's hotels and restaurants close, as do many of its roads, giving it a quiet allure some can't resist. The backdrop of white often makes it easier to see the wildlife as well.

"Grand Teton National Park offers an abundance of year-round recreational and wildlife-viewing opportunities, and is enjoyable for all ages and abilities," says Kristen Dragoo, GTNP park ranger and district interpreter for the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve.

Where to Stay and Eat

Come mealtime in Jackson, the Bistro restaurant at the Cloudveil serves up French brasserie-inspired dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And even though you're in Wyoming, don't write off its oyster bar. Try the St. Germain Oyster Shooter, with St. Germain liqueur, lemon, sparkling rosé, caviar and an oyster served up in a shot glass.

When you get hungry, head to Il Villaggio Osteria for house-made pizzas and pastas.