

Yellowstone

Day Hikes

In the Old Faithful Area

Yellowstone National Park
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone, WY 82190
www.nps.gov/yell



Welcome to the Old Faithful Area

Numerous trails suitable for short or extended hikes into Yellowstone's backcountry begin in the Old Faithful area. This guide introduces you to nine hikes selected by interpretive rangers. Always carry rain gear, extra food and water, and other emergency equipment when venturing into the backcountry. Obtain current trail condition and bear activity information at visitor centers.

Cautions

Hydrothermal areas: The thin ground in these areas breaks easily, and often overlies scalding water. Stay on the trail.

All Wildlife: You must stay at least 100 yards (91 m) from bears and wolves, and at least 25 yards (23 m) from all other animals—including birds. It is illegal to disturb animals from any distance.

Bears: Although your chance of an encounter is low, your safety is not guaranteed. Minimize your risks by making loud

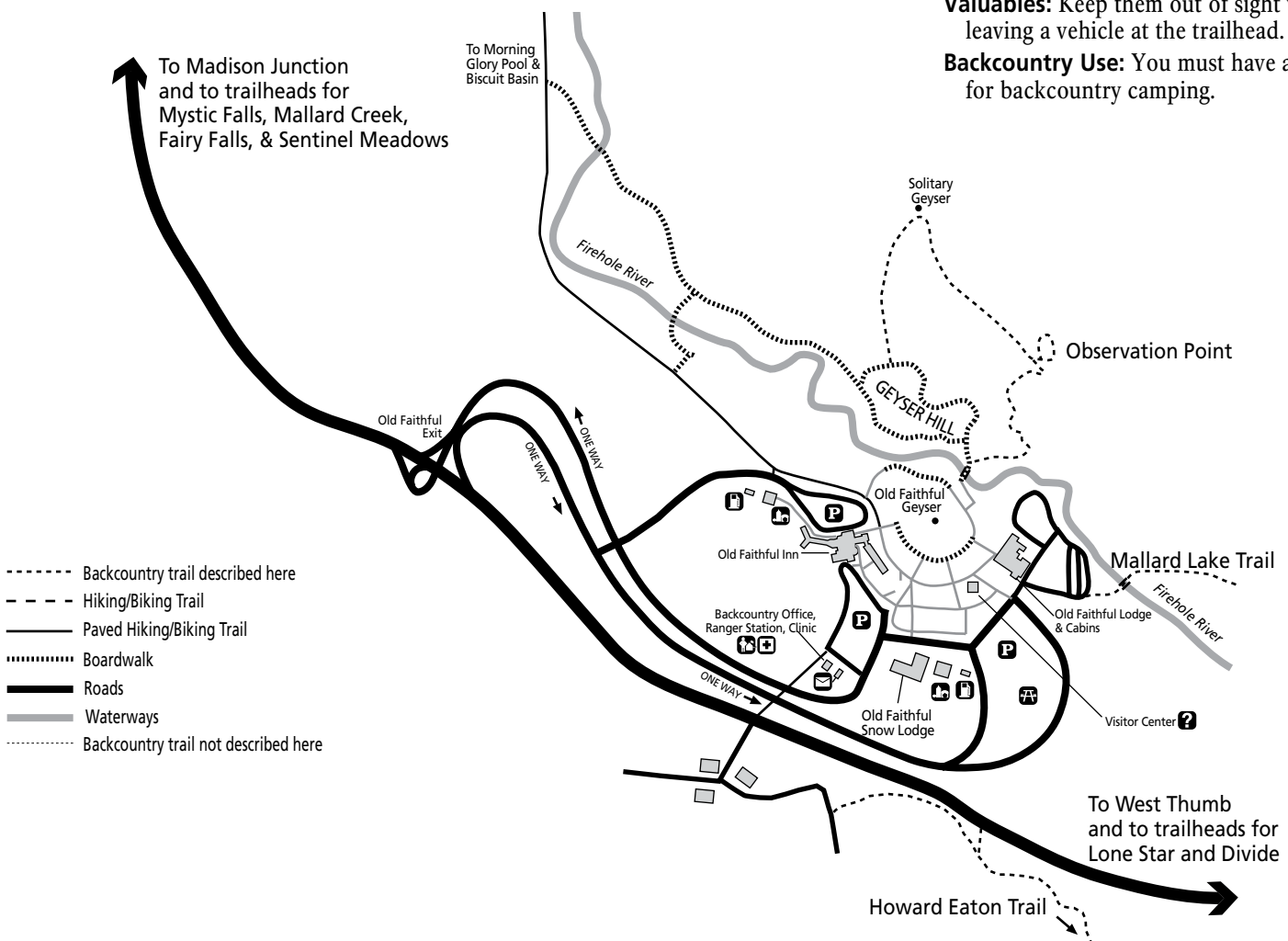
noises, shouting, or singing. Hike in groups and use caution where vision is obstructed. Do not hike after dark. Avoid carcasses; bears often defend this source of food. Obtain detailed bear information at the Old Faithful Visitor Center.

Elevation: This area is above 7,000 feet (2,132 m) in elevation; even short walks can be strenuous. Allow plenty of time and carry plenty of water.

Fishing: Anglers must have a Yellowstone National Park fishing permit in their possession. Consult the park newspaper or rangers at visitor centers.

Valuables: Keep them out of sight when leaving a vehicle at the trailhead.

Backcountry Use: You must have a permit for backcountry camping.



OBSERVATION POINT

Distance, round trip: 1 mi (1.6 km) or 1.4 mi (2.25 km) (does not include portion on Upper Geysers Basin boardwalks)

Difficulty: strenuous; elevation gain 160' (48.8 m)

Trailhead: See map above. Walk counterclockwise around the Old Faithful boardwalk; turn right at the sign to Geysers Hill. Trailhead is on the right after the Firehole River bridge, approximately 0.3 miles (0.5 km) from the visitor center.

Switchbacks lead up the hill 0.5 miles (0.8 km) to a commanding view of the Upper Geysers Basin. Return the same way or continue west to Solitary Geysers, which erupts frequently, then to the Geysers Hill boardwalk. The longer route is 1.4 miles.

MALLARD LAKE

Distance, round trip: 6.8 miles (11 km)

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Trailhead: See map above. Southeast side of the Old Faithful Lodge cabins, near the Firehole River.

Take the first right turn as you come into the Lodge area and continue down the road to the trailhead. The trail crosses the Firehole River, passes Pipeline Hot Springs, and climbs rolling hills of partially-burned lodgepole pine and open, rocky areas to the lake. Return the same way. (Or return via the Mallard Creek trail, for a total of 12 miles; see trail description on next page.)

HOWARD EATON

Distance, round trip: 5.8 miles (9.3 km)

Difficulty: moderate

Trailhead: For more detailed map, see reverse side. Park near the Old Faithful Ranger Station, then follow the paved path across the Grand Loop Road. Turn left at the first intersection, turn left again, and follow orange trailmarkers to the beginning of the trail.

The trail climbs a burned hill, continues through spruce-fir forest, then down to Lone Star Geysers. Return the same way.



LONE STAR

Distance, round trip: 4.8 miles (7.7 km)

Difficulty: easy

Trailhead: 3.5 miles (5.6 km) south of Old Faithful Junction, just beyond parking for Kepler Cascades.

This pleasant, partially paved trail follows an old service road beside the Firehole River to the geysers. Cyclists must dismount at the end of the asphalt and walk the last few hundred feet. Lone Star erupts up to 45 feet (13.7 m) from a 12-foot (3.6 m) cone approximately every three hours.

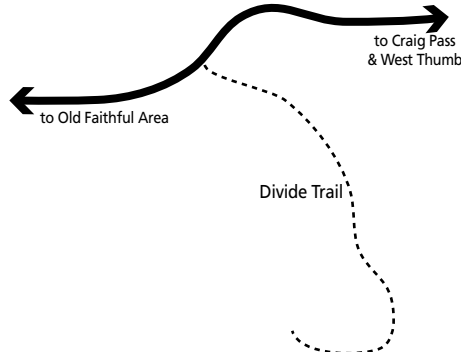


DIVIDE

Distance, round trip: 3.4 miles (5.5 km)

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Trailhead: 6.8 miles (10.9 km) south of Old Faithful Junction, look for a pullout on the right.



This trail crosses Spring Creek and climbs 735 ft (223 m) through mixed conifer forest to the Continental Divide. You can see Shoshone Lake from halfway up the trail.

MYSTIC FALLS

Distance, round trip: 2.5 miles (4 km)

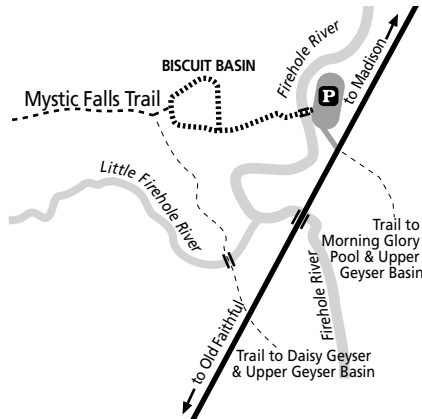
Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Trailhead: At the back of the Biscuit Basin boardwalk, 2 miles (3.2 km) north of Old Faithful Junction.



Bear Management Area:

Trail closed until the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend (usually the last Saturday in May).



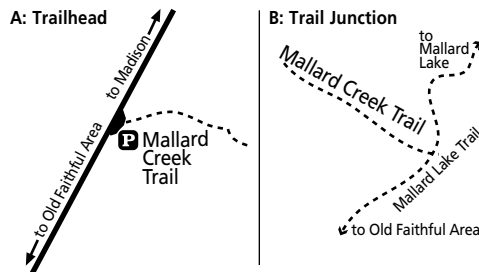
This trail follows a lovely creek through mixed conifer forest to the 70-foot falls, over which the Little Firehole River drops from the Madison Plateau. Turn around here or climb the switchbacks to an overlook of the Upper Geysers Basin, then loop back to the main trail.

MALLARD CREEK

Distance, round trip: 9.2 miles (14.8 km)

Difficulty: strenuous

Trailhead: See Map A at right. Approximately 3.8 miles (6.1 km) north of Old Faithful Junction, toward Madison; look for a trailhead sign and pullout on the right.



Originally designed as a winter ski trail, this route follows hilly terrain through heavily burned forest up to Mallard Lake. Return the same way or, if you have arranged a car shuttle, follow the Mallard Lake Trail to the Old Faithful area (Map B: Trail Junction).

FAIRY FALLS

Distance, round trip: 5 miles (8.3 km) or 7 miles (11.2 km)

Difficulty: easy

Trailheads:

Short route—Park 1 mile (1.5 km) south of Midway Geysers Basin, cross the steel bridge and walk 1 mile (1.5 km) to the trailhead.

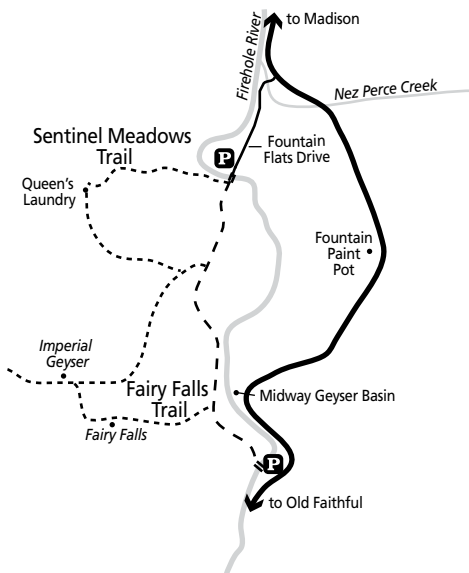
Long route—park at the end of Fountain Flat Dr. and walk 1½ miles (2.8 km) to the trailhead.

The trail travels through young forest 1.6 miles (2.6 km) to the 200-foot (61 m) falls. Continue 0.65 miles (1.05 km) past the falls through a wet area to Imperial Geysers, which has frequent minor eruptions.



Bear Management Area:

Trail closed until the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend (usually the last Saturday in May).



SENTINEL MEADOWS & Queen's Laundry

Distance, round trip: 3 miles (4.8 km) (4 mi/6 km if you go to Queen's Laundry)

Difficulty: Moderate

Very wet in spring and buggy in summer.

Trailhead: 10 miles (16 km) north of Old Faithful, turn left on Fountain Flat Drive. Park at the end of the road, cross the footbridge over the Firehole River to the trailhead.

The trail follows the Firehole River a short distance, then veers toward the meadows. Look for the large sinter mounds of hot springs and the remains of the old, incomplete bathhouse at Queen's Laundry, 1.9 miles (3.1 km) from the trailhead. Begun in 1881, construction was abandoned as park administrations and priorities changed. Minerals from the hot springs preserved the structure, which was the first building constructed by the government for public use in any national park. Queen's Laundry is a National Historic Site.

For more information

www.nps.gov/yell

www.yellowstoneassociation.org

Each major area of the park has a free hike handout. The Yellowstone Association bookstores also sell a "Dayhike Sampler" with a hike or two per area plus several guides for trails throughout the park. Proceeds from all sales support Yellowstone National Park's interpretive ranger programs.