Grand Teton

Backcountry Camping

Before Leaving Home

Planning Your Trip
This guide provides general information about backcountry use in Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. The map on the back page is only for general trip planning and/or campsite selection. For detailed topographic map or hiking guide. When planning your trip, consider each member of your party. Backpackers should expect to travel no more than 2 miles per hour, with an additional hour for every 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Do not plan to cross more than one mountain pass in a day. If you only have one vehicle, you may want to plan a loop trip. There is no shuttle service in the park, but transportation services are available; ask at a permits desk for more information. The high country is busiest in July and August due to less snow. Jackson Lake is busiest on weekends and holidays.

Getting A Permit
Permits are required for all overnight backcountry stays in the park and parkway. To minimize the impact on park resources, backcountry permits are limited. One-third of the backcountry campsites and all of the group sites may be reserved in advance. The remaining sites are filled on a first-come, first-served basis at park permits no more than one day before the trip begins. Plan alternative routes based on availability.

Fee
$35 walk-in permit per trip. $45 advance reservation per trip. This covers the reservation and permit.

Reservations
Backcountry camping is very popular, and reservations are recommended. You may secure an on-line reservation between early January and May 15th. For online reservations go to: www.reserve.gov and search for Grand Teton National Park. The system will allow you to choose available sites and dates in real-time. Call 707-3109-3309 for more information.

Picking Up Your Permit
A reservation holds your permit but is NOT your permit. Pick up your reserved permit before 10 am the morning you begin your trip or your campsites will be released. If you will be late, please call to inform us. If you will not be using your permit, please cancel your reservation as soon as possible. During summer, pick up permits at the Craig Thomas and for the Jenny Lake Ranger Station. All permits involving technical climbing or mountaineering or any permit for Garnet Canyon must be picked up at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station when they are open (June through early September). During winter, call 707-3109-3309 for more information.

Backcountry Safety Video
Before you pick up your permit, you will be required to watch a backcountry safety video. Please visit the backcountry website (www.nps.gov/jeta/planyourvisit/back.htm) or ask at a permits office for more information.

In The Backcountry

Please help keep Grand Teton’s backcountry looking as beautiful as the scenery you came to enjoy for your next visit and for generations to come.

Leave No Trace
• Do not leave litter, scraps of food, fire rings, buried trash or toilet paper.
• Where no trails exist, camp in designated sites.
• In camping zones, if improved sites are not available, you may select a campsite at your own discretion. The remaining sites are filled on a first-come, first-served basis at park permits no more than one day before the trip begins. Plan alternative routes based on availability.

Water
Untreated water may contain Giardia, Campylobacter or other harmful organisms that cause intestinal disorders with severe stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Avoid drinking water from the backcountry by boiling, with chemical methods or a portable water filter.

Sanitation
• Prevent contamination water. Urinate at least 200 feet away from any water source in rocky areas that will not be damaged by animals digging for salts and minerals found in urine. Bury feces 6-8 inches deep in soil and at least 200 feet from lakes, streams and wetlands. Pack out toilet paper, used camp stoves, camp oven remnants and diapers in sealed plastic bags.

Backcountry Regulations
Regulations help protect resources and ensure the backcountry experience. By signing the backcountry permit, you agree to respect the backcountry. Read and abide by the backcountry regulations printed on the back of your permit. Failure to comply may result in fines and revocation of the permit.

Fishing
There are fish in backcountry lakes and streams. Anglers must have a Wyoming State fishing license to fish in the park. Obey all posted regulations. For specific fishing rules and regulations, ask for the Fishing brochure.

Boating
Register all vessels annually with the park. Purchase permits at the Craig Thomas and for the Jenny Lake Ranger Station. Vessels are subject to inspection. Watercrafts must be placed on the water by 5:00 pm. If a permit holder is not present, the boat will be towed to the nearest shore. Vessels must be registered with the park.

Stove Use
Hikers, bears, mules and llamas may be used on some established trails; some trails are closed to stoves. There are special campstoves and rules for overnight-stove use. Ask for the Stock Use brochure.

Hikers should expect to encounter stoves. Yield to stoves by stepping off the trail on the uphill side. Wait quietly until stove passes.

Stay Limits
Camps may stay in a camping zone or designated site for two consecutive nights. The limit is three nights on Jackson Lake. Between June 1 and September 15, camps are limited to ten nights in the backcountry in winter, camps may stay up to five nights in one site. Individuals are limited to 30 nights per year in the park’s backcountry.

In Bear Habitat

Black and grizzly bears thrive in the park and Jackson. Follow these guidelines for your protection and for the preservation of bears. A true sign of wilderness.

Be Bear Aware
Careless food storage often spells death for bears. Bears that obtain human food, even once, often become aggressive. Aggressive bears threaten human safety and often must be killed. Do not allow bears or other wildlife to ever obtain human food.

Bear Spray
Carry bear spray and know how to use it. The park offers bear spray demonstrations daily during summer. Keep your bear spray ready accessible at all times, not in your pack. Be careful not to accidentally discharge it.

Avoid Encounters
Avoid surprising bears. If bears hear you coming, they may move away. To avoid an unexpected bear encounter, hike in groups and make noise such as clapping your hands or calling out. Bear bells are not sufficient. Be aware of your surroundings and watch for signs of bears, especially in dense vegetation, near streams, when it is windy or when cresting a hill. Avoid hiking between dusk and dawn. The use of portable audio devices is strongly discouraged.

If You Encounter a Bear
Do not run. Do not attempt to elicit attacks from otherwise non-aggressive bears. Bears can easily outrun you. If a bear is unfamiliar of you, quietly detour downward. If you are aware of a bear but has not acted aggressively, slowly back away. Avoid eye contact.

If a Bear Approaches or Charges
Do not run! Most bear attacks result from surprise encounters where the bear is defending their young or a food source such as a carcass. Some bears will bluff their way out of a threatening situation by charging, then veering off or stopping abruptly. This is the time to use your bear spray. Bear experts generally recommend standing still until the bear stops backing away slowly.

Maps and Books
Maps, guidebooks and bear spray are available from the Grand Teton Association, a non-profit organization that supports the park. Call (307) 739-1453 or visit: www.grandtetonpark.org

Weather

The table below summarizes weather at Moose, WY, 6467 feet. Temperatures in the Teton Range can change quickly and be much colder at upper elevations. Check the local area weather forecasts for up-to-date, detailed information before starting your trip.

Grande Teton National Park requires the use of Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) approved canisters for food storage in the backcountry. All permit holders may check out a canister of free charge. Above are some examples of canisters used by the park.

Before you pick up your permit, you will be required to watch a backcountry safety video. Please visit the backcountry website (www.nps.gov/jeta/planyourvisit/back.htm) or ask at a permits office for more information.
Backcountry Permits—are required for all overnight backcountry stays in both Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway.

Camping Zone Maps
Maps of most camping zone are available at permits desk or may be downloaded from: www.nps.gov/grte/planyourvisit/bczones.htm.

Lakeshore Sites
Jackson Lake
Pets are allowed on boats in Jackson Lake but are not allowed on the shores of Jackson Lake except at designated boat ramps and the Spalding Bay campsites. Pets must be physically restrained on a lead less than six feet in length at all times and are not allowed out of boats.

Food Storage and Fires
• Bears are common. Proper food storage is required by federal law. Park Rangers regularly patrol these campsites.
• Permanent bear-resistant storage boxes are provided at each site and must be used to store food and any item with an odor. You may check out a bear food carrier for excess items. Items may not be hung from trees or left on boats.
• Fires are only allowed in metal grates. When finished, please douse your fire with water until it is cold to the touch.

Consider Your Safety
Travel in the backcountry of Grand Teton National Park has inherent risks. Rescue is not a certainty. Cell phone coverage is spotty and unreliable; text messages may transmit in areas without cell coverage. Your safety is your responsibility and depends on sound judgment, adequate preparation and equipment, constant attention to surroundings and physical conditioning.

Lost, Injured or Overdue
Leave your itinerary with a friend or relative. If you do not return on time, they should notify the park. In the event of an emergency, stay calm. If lost, stay where you are, searchers will locate you more quickly. Find a nearby clearing or rocky outcrop for visibility. If someone is injured, provide treatment if possible. Try not to leave the person unattended. Send for help with information including the exact location, age and health of person, nature of the injury, equipment on scene and treatment given. Keep your group together, especially children. Uncontrolled falls on snow and ice and un-roped falls while rock scrambling may cause injury or death.

Hypothermia
Hypothermia (lowering of body temperature) is a serious condition that may lead quickly to death. Hypothermia is often due to exposure from a storm or a swamped boat. Watch for signs of hypothermia: uncontrollable shivering, incoherent speech and exhaustion. Seek shelter, replace wet clothing and provide warm, nonalcoholic liquids. In serious cases, place the unresponsive victim in a sleeping bag with another unresponsive person. Always carry rain gear and extra clothing. Dress in layers and avoid wearing cotton.

Lightning
Afternoon thunderstorms are common. Plan your trip accordingly; find a safe place before a storm hits. Avoid exposed summits and ridges, open areas and lone trees. Forested areas with trees of similar height are safer. Do not stand on tree roots. If lightning, get off the water.

Altitude
Elevations in the park vary from 6,320 to 13,770 feet above sea level. Altitude sickness may strike anyone regardless of age or physical condition. Symptoms include headache, nausea, sleeping difficulties, and tiredness. Plan your trip to allow a slow ascent. Mild altitude sickness may be treated with rest, fluids and acclimatization. Do not attempt to climb higher. If symptoms persist or worsen, descend to lower elevation.

Hydration
Stay hydrated! High elevation and low humidity will drain your body of fluids. Drink water before you start your hike, carry plenty of water with you and drink fluids after your hike.

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