Welcome to the Mammoth Hot Springs Area

Numerous trails suitable for short or extended hikes into Yellowstone’s backcountry begin in the Mammoth area. This guide introduces you to several hikes selected by park rangers. Always carry rain gear, extra food and water, and other emergency equipment when venturing into the backcountry. Be sure to 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) away from bears and wolves; and at least 25 yards (23 m) away from all other animals—including birds.

**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 know how to use it. Do not hike after dark. Avoid carcasses; bears often defend this food source.

**Fishing:** Anglers must have a Yellowstone National Park fishing permit in their possession. Consult the park newspaper for purchase locations.

**Backcountry Camping:** Permits are required for backcountry camping.

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**Beaver Ponds Loop**

- **Distance:** 5 miles (8.3 km)
- **Estimated time:** 2–3 hours
- **Difficulty:** moderately strenuous
- **Trailhead:** between Liberty Cap and the stone house next to the Lower Terraces of Mammoth Hot Springs

The trail begins just north of Liberty Cap and the lower Mammoth Terraces, and begins with a 350 foot (106.7 m) climb up and above Clematis Gulch. At the junction with Sepulcher Mountain Trail, go right. Soon thereafter, the trail levels out and rambles through meadows and stands of aspen to a series of beaver ponds. The Beaver Ponds are approximately half way around the loop. Look for elk, mule deer, pronghorn, moose, beaver dams and lodges, the occasional beaver, and waterfowl. Past the ponds, the trail travels through forest and grassland back to Mammoth.

Be alert for bears: both black and grizzly bears forage in this area.
Visitor centers have a free day hike handout for each major area of the park. A “Day Hike Sampler,” with a hike or two per area, is also available along with several guides for trails throughout the park.

**Bunsen Peak**
- **Distance, round trip:** 4.6 miles (7.6 km)
- **Estimated time:** 2–3 hours
- **Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

**Osprey Falls**
- **Distance, round trip:** 8 miles (13 km)
- **Estimated time:** 4–5 hours
- **Difficulty:** strenuous

**Lava Creek**
- **Distance, one way:** 4.2 miles (6.9 km)
- **Estimated time:** 2–3 hours
- **Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

**Blacktail Deer Creek to Yellowstone River**
- **Distance, round trip:** 7.4 miles (12 km)
- **Estimated time:** 4–5 hours
- **Difficulty:** return is strenuous

**Rescue Creek**
- **Distance, one way:** 8 miles (12.8 km)
- **Estimated time:** 4–6 hours
- **Difficulty:** moderately strenuous

**Sepulcher Mountain**
- **Distance, round trip:** 11 miles (17.7 km)
- **Estimated time:** 6–8 hours
- **Difficulty:** strenuous

**For more information**
[www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell)