



Montana: Winter Yellowstone Big Sky Family Adventure



Trip Summary

This Montana Adventure is exactly what you might be looking for if you're looking to "get away from it all" this winter with your family. Based in Gardiner, Montana for the first several days of this trip, discover a different side to our world's first national park by exploring Yellowstone by cross country ski and snowshoe on the lookout for bison, moose, and the elusive wolf. The latter half of your trip is spent in Big Sky dog sledding and exploring powdery trails away from the crowds in Montana's own slice of winter wonderland paradise.

The toughest part is going home.SM



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Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Bozeman Arrival | Museum of the Rockies | Yellowstone National Park

Bozeman Arrival: Welcome to Montana! Your guides will pick you up in the morning from your pre-trip hotel.

Bozeman, Montana: Bozeman has a bustling downtown, trendy shops and restaurants, and is home to the Montana State University Bobcats. Located in southwest Montana, the city is surrounded by mountain ranges and ranches on the outskirts of the residential areas. This growing city is perhaps known best of all for its world-renowned fly fishing, hiking, mountain biking, skiing, and close proximity to Yellowstone National Park.

Museum of the Rockies: Visit the Museum of the Rockies, recognized as one of the world's finest research and history museums. Here you'll find nuggets of golden information about the rugged Rocky Mountains and centuries of history from all over the world in unique exhibits. For the dinosaur lovers out there, be sure to check out the museum's huge collection of fossils.

Transfer Time: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Yellowstone National Park: Welcome to Yellowstone, our world's first national park! This famous national park is home to over 60% of the world's geysers, which periodically erupt in towering explosions of boiling water and steam. And while these astounding phenomena and their neighboring technicolor hot springs and bubbling mud pots draw in the crowds, the surrounding canyons, mountains, forests, and wildlife are no less impressive.

Mammoth Hot Springs: The northern part of Yellowstone is home to Mammoth Hot Springs, a must-see feature of the park due to its difference from other thermal areas in Yellowstone. The orange, yellow, brown, and white travertine terraces of Mammoth have been described as looking at a cave turned inside out. We'll spend time hiking in and around this area, checking out "geology in hyperdrive" up close.

Gardiner, Montana: Gardiner is the town located at the North Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Perhaps the most famous feature of this town is Roosevelt Arch, a towering construction of basalt dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 and inscribed with a quote which reads: "For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People". The nearby Yellowstone National Park sign is also a great place to take family photos!

Accommodation: *The Ridgeline Hotel at Yellowstone (L,D)*

Day 2: Yellowstone National Park | Lamar Valley

Transfer Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Lamar Valley Winter Wildlife Drive: Depart at sunrise to enter into Yellowstone's northeast corner on the lookout for wildlife standing out against a snowy backdrop. We make our way to Yellowstone's famed Lamar Valley, "The Serengeti of the West", where we keep an eye out for wolves, bison, elk, moose, and bighorn sheep.

Lamar Valley Snowshoe: Strap on snowshoes for a quiet walk through lodgepole pine forests as we leave behind yeti-sized footprints in the deep snow. As you trek through Lamar Valley, marvel over the glittering snow and watch for wildlife moving quietly across the wintry landscape.

Transfer Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

***Accommodation:** The Ridgeline Hotel at Yellowstone (B,L,D)*



Day 3: Yellowstone National Park | Tower Fall

Transfer Time: 1 hour

Tower Fall Cross Country Ski: Drive into Yellowstone to the Tower Fall trailhead where we'll click on our cross-country skis for a quick lesson and then whisk off for a scenic five-mile-round-trip ski to Tower Fall. Along the way, you'll glide under basalt lava cliffs with views of the Yellowstone River running through Black Canyon. Upon arrival to Tower Fall, we'll view the 132-foot drop and the unusual rock columns before settling in for a wintry picnic lunch. The ski back to the trailhead is mostly downhill and a quick trip to our ending point.

Transfer Time: 1 hour

***Accommodation:** The Ridgeline Hotel at Yellowstone (B,L,D)*

Day 4: Big Sky

Transfer Time: 3 hours

Big Sky, Montana: Just an hour from Yellowstone National Park, Big Sky is a beautiful mountain community nestled high in the Gallatin National Forest. Home to Big Sky Ski Resort and the iconic Lone Mountain, Big Sky offers plenty for summer or winter time travelers in the way of recreational opportunities in the great outdoors. If there ever was a place that truly lived up to its name, it's Big Sky, Montana.

Big Sky Snowshoe: Head out on a snowshoe excursion to explore the local area around Big Sky. As we move in and out of the snow-covered pine trees, keep an eye out for Lone Peak on the horizon. The distance of this snowshoe excursion can be adjusted depending on how gung-ho the group is feeling and the weather.

Night On Your Own: Enjoy a night on your own this evening for dinner. Your guides will give you restaurant options to choose from in the area and will provide ideas on things to do on your own time. Alternatively, feel free to just relax tonight after a wonderful activity-filled day!

Accommodation: 320 Guest Ranch (B,L)



Day 5: Big Sky | Moonlight Basin | Lone Mountain Ranch

Moonlight Basin Dog Sled: Embark on a dog sled tour through the wintry backcountry, with views of majestic snow-covered mountains and frost-laden pines as your backdrop. Your experienced guides will give you hands-on instructions and tips for you to experience firsthand the thrill of driving a sled dog team. No other method of travel over snow can compare with dog sledding. These athletic huskies love to run and their high spirits and big hearts will quickly win you over.

Lone Mountain Ranch Cross Country Ski: Strap on cross-country skis for a glide along the ski trails of the Meadow Village near Lone Mountain Ranch. Become enamored with the snowglobe-like landscape as you experience more of wintry Montana bliss. With an abundance of intersecting trails, there are plenty of route options for the beginner or expert skier.

Accommodation: 320 Guest Ranch (B,L,D)

The toughest part is going home.SM



Day 6: Ousel Falls | Bozeman Departure

Ousel Falls Snowshoe: Snowshoe or hike (snow dependent) about 1.6 miles roundtrip on a beautiful snow-dusted trail to Ousel Falls. The ice-encrusted edges of the Southfork of the Westfork of the Gallatin River accompany you on your trek. Eventually, you'll happen upon Ousel Falls, frozen in its journey over a rock ledge. Keep an eye out for ice climbers on the falls and surrounding rock walls!

Transfer Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Bozeman Departure: Your guides will shuttle you back to Bozeman to get ready for your departure home.

Accommodation: 320 Guest Ranch (B)

**Trip itineraries are subject to change without notice due to road, weather and other factors outside of our control, for the safety and enjoyment of our guests, as deemed necessary and appropriate by Austin Adventures.*



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Distinctive Accommodation

The Ridgeline Hotel at Yellowstone – 3 night(s)

The Ridgeline Hotel is located in Gardiner, Montana just outside the north entrance of the Park on the banks of the Yellowstone River. Within walking distance to just about any business in Gardiner, this is the perfect accommodation to spend time seeking out the perfect cup of coffee or your favorite gift shop. When you're done with a day of exploration, unwind with a dip in the indoor heated pool and hot tub.



320 Guest Ranch – 2 night(s)

In the west, life has certainly gotten easier than it was in the early days, even at a Montana guest ranch. But some of the things that mattered most back then are still important today; like delicious, hearty meals, and The 320's friendly, laid-back attitude. Experience a 110-year-old-homestead, reshaped into a Montana guest ranch. Relive the early western atmosphere and down-home hospitality, all on one big beautiful, historic property. The 320 Ranch offers exceptional cowboy comfort just south of Big Sky Ski Resort, where the pristine Gallatin River winds through sage and towering pines, and mountains rise up against crystal blue skies.





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Activities Featured on This Trip



Snowshoeing: While snowshoeing, you'll wear your own warm, waterproof boots strapped into snowshoes. Snowshoes are perfect for walking on groomed/packed down trails or for walking in deep snow to keep you from sinking too deep. We snowshoe on fairly easy terrain and outings with your guide will be 1.5 to 3 hours.

Dog Sledding: Your professional guides will give you hands-on instructions and tips for you to experience the thrill of driving a sled dog team. Different members of your group will switch off "mushing" and riding in the sled as your sled dog team pulls you along a snowy trail. As this is a fairly sedentary activity, wear warm clothes and boots.

Cross Country Skiing: For this activity, you'll be outfitted with classic cross-country skis, boots, and poles. Most of the guided cross-country skiing we do is considered easy to moderate, which in ski terms means flat to slightly hilly terrain. Most outings take 1.5 to 3 hours and include plenty of breaks to stop and enjoy the wintry scenery.

What's Included?

Included in Trip Price:

- Double occupancy rooms with private baths
- All meals as listed in itinerary (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)
- Fully trained, first-aid certified professional guides and knowledgeable local partners
- Any necessary equipment - all safe and well-maintained
- Vehicle support and land transportation during the trip
- Austin Adventures T-shirt, water bottle, luggage tags and luggage service
- Access to a guest portal with trip planner materials
- Incidental expenses such as taxes, dining and housekeeping gratuities, local partner and expert gratuities, and national park entrance and permit fees

Not Included in Trip Price:

- Gratuities to Austin Adventures guides
- Alcoholic beverages and related gratuities
- One dinner during the trip
- Pre- and post-trip accommodations and associated expenses
- Air and land transportation to/from host cities
- All types of travel insurance
- Personal expenses