



# **The American West with Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons**

*Experience the diverse heritage and natural splendor of the American West on this small group tour. From Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse to Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons, this journey features cowboys, ranches, the Badlands, and stays inside Yellowstone National Park and in downtown Jackson Hole.*

## **Itinerary**

Created on Jun 4, 2026

# **The American West**

## **Day-by-Day Itinerary**

### **DAY 1: Depart for Rapid City, South Dakota**

We depart today for Rapid City, South Dakota. As guests' arrival times may vary, the day is at leisure to explore the "gateway to the Black Hills" as we wish. This evening we meet our Odysseys Unlimited Tour Director and fellow travelers at a briefing about the journey ahead, followed by dinner together.

*Meals:* Dinner

### **DAY 2: Rapid City/Badlands National Park**

This morning we visit South Dakota's famed Badlands National Park. Covering an area of nearly 400 square miles, this wind-carved landscape features a stunning array of rock formations — buttes, spires, pinnacles, and canyons, as well as the largest prairie ecosystem in the United States. Native American tribes have hunted on this land for millennia, and we learn their history, along with that of the Badlands' fossil deposits and endangered species. After our time here, we return to Rapid City for an afternoon and evening at leisure. Lunch and dinner today are on our own.

*Meals:* Breakfast

### **DAY 3: Rapid City/Mount Rushmore/Sheridan, WY**

A short drive west into the Black Hills reveals two compelling sculptures commemorating several of our best-known leaders. We stop first at Mount Rushmore National Memorial, the world-famous site where the visages of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and T. Roosevelt have been carved into the very face of the granite mountainside. With each face measuring 60 feet tall, the monument is a stirring testament to patriotism. Continuing on, we visit the Crazy Horse Memorial, an even larger mountain monument dedicated to the leader of the Oglala Lakota Native American tribe. Although work began on the massive horse-and-rider statue in 1948, it remains decidedly unfinished to this day: only the leader's enigmatic face gazes out from the edge of Thunderhead Mountain. Once completed, the statue will measure an astonishing 641 feet wide by 543 feet high. We enjoy lunch together here before continuing on to Wyoming, the "Cowboy State," arriving in time for dinner together tonight.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 4: Sheridan**

Today we get an authentic taste of the Old West as we visit a local ranch. Embodying an archetypical American profession, the hardworking cowboys still performs many of the same duties that their predecessors did two and three centuries back. During our visit we meet the cowboys and ranch hands and learn about their way of life. Then we enjoy lunch before returning to Sheridan, where our afternoon is at leisure in this classic Western town.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch

### **DAY 5: Sheridan/Bighorn Mountains/Cody**

This morning we travel through Bighorn National Forest and across the Great Plains, arriving in the city of Cody in time for lunch on our own. We're in the "Rodeo Capital of the World," named for its famous founder William Frederick Cody — better known as Buffalo Bill. One of the most colorful personalities of the Old West, Buffalo Bill rode for the Pony Express at age 14, served in the Civil War, and created (and starred in) Buffalo Bill's Wild West cowboy variety show. We learn all this and more during this afternoon's visit to Cody's central attraction: the five-museum Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Guests on select summer departures will enjoy an evening visit to the Cody Nite Rodeo, a show of longstanding tradition that keeps the Western spirit alive.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 6: Cody/Yellowstone National Park**

We set off this morning for the first of two full days of exploring nearby Yellowstone National Park. Established in 1872, Yellowstone was the world's first national park; it covers nearly 3,500 square miles of jagged mountains, high plains, and an extensive volcanic region. In his seminal 1898 piece for *The Atlantic*, John Muir described the park as "healing, reviving, exhilarating, kept pure by frost and fire... a glorious place to grow and rest in." Today's highlight is a stop at the 24-mile-long Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, a snaking, rock-walled channel, ranking as the park's most spectacular sight. Throughout the day we hope to see some of Yellowstone's wildlife: bison, elk, moose, black bear, mountain lion, and lynx count among the park's many species.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 7: Yellowstone National Park**

We enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Yellowstone today. Along with its breathtaking views and dramatic rock formations, the park boasts myriad geothermal wonders, described by Muir as "thousands of boiling springs...hot paint-pots, mud springs, mud volcanoes, mush and broth caldrons of every color and consistency, [which] splash and heave and roar in bewildering abundance." Our tour director will guide us through today's adventures, including a mid-day stop where we're at leisure for lunch on our own. Tonight we have dinner at our hotel, set within the national park itself.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 8: Yellowstone National Park/Grand Teton National Park/Jackson Hole**

More stunning Western scenery is on offer today as we depart on the scenic drive south along the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. This strip of protected land connects Yellowstone with its neighbor, Grand Teton National Park. Though only 10 miles separate Grand Teton and Yellowstone, the two parks offer vastly different — yet equally awe-inspiring — experiences. Grand Teton includes most of the grassy Jackson Hole valley and almost all the major peaks of its titular mountain range (the Tetons), giving the smaller of the two parks arguably the more dramatic landscape. We explore Grand Teton today, taking in the splendid scenery and keeping our eyes peeled for the many species of wildlife living here, including fox, moose, and American bison. If we're lucky, we may also catch a glimpse of a black or grizzly bear. We have lunch together in the park, then descend to our hotel on the valley floor in Jackson Hole in time for dinner on our own this evening.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch

### **DAY 9: Jackson Hole/Snow King Gondola**

This morning, we ascend Snow King Mountain aboard the scenic Snow King Gondola. Rising directly above downtown Jackson, the mountain is often referred to as “town hill” and offers sweeping views of the Tetons, the Snake River Valley, and charming town below. After taking in the spectacular scenery, we are at leisure this afternoon to enjoy our time in one of America’s premier mountain retreats. Tonight we gather to toast our Western adventure at a farewell dinner.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 10: Depart Jackson Hole**

This morning we transfer to the Jackson Hole airport for our flights home.

*Meals:* Breakfast

This tour itinerary was generated for The American West on Jun 4, 2026. Please visit the The American West page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/north-america/the-american-west/> for the latest and most accurate information.