

Yellowstone National Park



A picture of the Grand Canyon in Yellowstone National Park

The Earth is a beautiful place. Look around. See if you can spot something amazing. It can be as small as the wings of a fly. Now let's go bigger. Think of the most beautiful place you have ever been. What was there? Tall mountains? Gushing waterfalls? Breathtaking scenery? Yellowstone National Park has all of this and more. Together we will explore this extraordinary **pocket**¹ of nature.

The History of Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone National Park is a national park in the United States. Most of the park is located in Wyoming, although it also reaches into Montana and Idaho. In 1872, Yellowstone became the very first national park! A national park is an area set aside to protect nature, including its landforms, vegetation, and animals.

People have appreciated Yellowstone for a long time. Besides being beautiful, Yellowstone has many natural resources. Natural resources are things found in nature that people can gain from.

¹ **pocket** – a small section of something

Trees are one example of a natural resource. Trees provide people with wood for building, fuel for warmth and cooking, and more. People lived in Yellowstone for thousands of years, even before North America was settled by Europeans. **Archaeology**² allows us to have a glimpse into the lives of these ancient people. We can learn how they lived off the land.

Yellowstone's Hydrothermal Features

There are so many incredible places to visit in Yellowstone. It can be hard to choose where to visit first. There are lakes, waterfalls, mountains, and valleys. But one thing is certain. You cannot visit Yellowstone without enjoying its hydrothermal **features**.³ *Hydro* means "water," and *thermal* has to do with "heat." *Hydrothermal* refers to water that is heated under the surface of the Earth. The hot water that comes up from underground creates many of Yellowstone National Park's wonderful attractions. Grand Prismatic Spring and "Old Faithful" are two very famous ones.

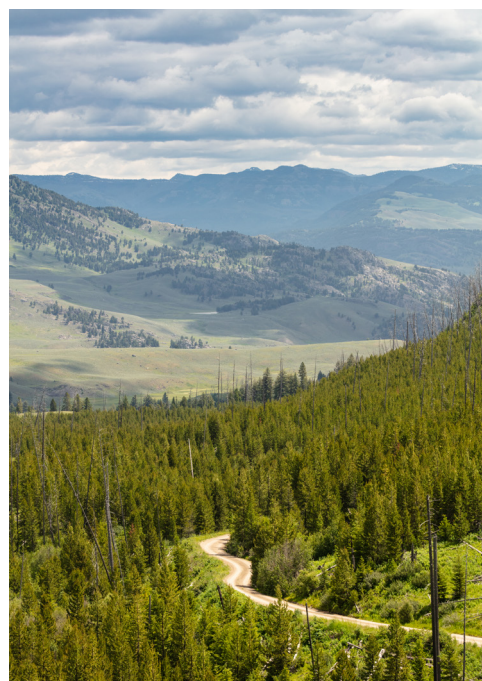
Grand Prismatic Spring

Springs are places where water flows out of the ground. The Grand Prismatic Spring is another one of Yellowstone's hydrothermal features. It is a stunning hot spring, and it is as colorful as a rainbow. **Bacteria**⁴ living in the hot spring are the reason for its magnificent colors. Not only is the Grand Prismatic Spring beautiful, but it is big. It is the third-largest hot spring in the world. It is bigger than a football field! Remember, this hot spring is good for looking but it is too hot for swimming.

"Old Faithful"

Geysers are exciting for everyone. A geyser is a kind of hot spring, meaning that the spring water boils from time to time. A fountain of water and steam shoots into the air after the boiling water builds up enough pressure underground. In fact, the name geyser comes from an Icelandic word meaning "gush."

You want to be sure you will be able to watch this show. You cannot visit Yellowstone just to stare at a geyser, hoping it will **erupt**.⁵ That is why you visit a geyser like Old Faithful. Old Faithful erupts every 60 to 110 minutes. It has erupted this often for years. No wonder this geyser is called "Old Faithful." Just pack a picnic and wait for the fun to begin. There are viewing areas and boardwalks where you can thrill at this natural wonder and still stay safe.



One of the beautiful views in Yellowstone National Park



*A view of Grand Prismatic Spring
Credit: Brocken Inaglory, Wikimedia*

2 **archaeology** – studying history by looking at old ruins and objects

3 **features** – noticeable details

4 **bacteria** – germs

5 **erupt** – explode; spurt up

Other Attractions

A canyon is a deep, narrow valley. Many canyons, like the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, have a river running through them. The Yellowstone Grand Canyon is awe-inspiring. It is a massive 20 miles long. Its flowing river and giant waterfalls are breathtaking.

There are many more activities and places to see in Yellowstone. Visit gurgling **mudpots**⁶ to watch how they bubble like soup on the stove. Water lovers can enjoy canoeing and kayaking on Yellowstone Lake, North America's largest high-elevation lake. Or, they can swim and wade in the river sites. Animal fans will also get a treat. Yellowstone is **teeming**⁷ with wildlife like bears, bison, wolves, sheep, and deer.

So, pick your **destination**,⁸ grab a pair of binoculars, and let's go!



*Old Faithful erupting
Credit: Grahampurse, Wikimedia*



*The Grand Canyon in Yellowstone Park
Credit: Grastel, Wikimedia*

6 **mudpots** – hot springs filled with mud that bubbles

7 **teeming** – full of

8 **destination** – the place a person is going to



Questions

1. Circle the vocabulary word that best fits the sentence.

We had to drive for miles until we reached our (destination/bacteria).

2. Mark each statement as T (true) or F (false).

_____ F Yellowstone's land is all level and flat.

_____ T Yellowstone was the first national park.

_____ F A national park means that only American citizens can visit there.

_____ F Yellowstone has many beautiful plants but no animals.

3. Make a check mark next to each statement that correctly describes geysers.

_____ They are hot springs that boil from time to time.

_____ There are many geysers in the Yellowstone's Grand Canyon.

_____ They shoot steam and hot water into the air.

_____ They often shoot hot mud into the air.

4. Which of the following statements best summarizes the lesson?

A. Yellowstone was the world's first national park.

B. Yellowstone is a national park with many fascinating things to see and do.

C. A national park is an area set aside to protect nature and the animals living in it.

5. How did "Old Faithful" get its name?
