

DESTINATIONS

THE US | YELLOWSTONE

Snapshot

YELLOWSTONE, THE US

Explore the great outdoors in the world's first national park, writes **Katie McGonagle**

star attraction...



Old Faithful

This oft-erupting geyser played a decisive role in putting Yellowstone on the map, prompting its inscription as the world's first national park in 1872. It remains the park's most-visited attraction, with staff able to predict its eruptions – 20 a day, and sometimes reaching as high as 56 metres – with surprising accuracy. It even has its own webcam for those who'd like to watch the action from home. nps.gov/yell



we love...



Fountain Paint Pot

Yellowstone is a hotbed – in places, quite literally – of geothermal activity, and nowhere is that more apparent than the half-mile boardwalk trail around Fountain Paint Pot in the Lower Geyser Basin. Here, bubbling pools of thick clay-like mud whoosh and gurgle with heat, fumaroles spout steam, hot springs shimmer in flashes of vivid blue and green (depending on the water's mineral make-up) and the nearby Fountain Geyser sends jets of water into the sky several times a day.



book it...



Cosmos has a 14-day itinerary, National Parks & Canyon Country with Denver Start, that spends two nights in Yellowstone National Park (or in West Yellowstone outside peak season), and visits Bryce Canyon, Zion and Grand Canyon national parks, from £1,833 excluding flights. cosmos.co.uk



when to go...



Summer or winter?

There are pros and cons to each season, so it's down to what your clients are looking for from wildlife – which varies month by month – and accommodation, as only a few lodges remain open from October to May. Summer brings warm weather, verdant scenery but also crowds, while winter has its own ethereal beauty but no chance of bear sightings as they'll be hibernating.

make time for...



Wildlife

With its 3,400 square miles of wilderness, Yellowstone is awash with 61 species of mammals, most notably black and grizzly bears, moose, elk, bison and bighorn sheep. Native wolves were reintroduced to the area in the 1990s and knowledgeable guides can take guests to the best viewpoints in Lamar and Hayden valleys, while explaining the creatures' complex social structure and power struggles between competing packs.



PICTURES: Shutterstock

don't miss



Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone

At 370m deep, this canyon isn't quite as 'grand' as its namesake, but it's still mighty impressive. Its craggy rockfaces are streaked with red, orange, yellow and black – the shade depending on the iron content of the rock – and punctuated by three powerful waterfalls cascading to the swirling waters of the Yellowstone River below. There are miles of hiking trails leading to viewpoints over the canyon, and spots including Inspiration Point are accessible to travellers in wheelchairs.

