

5

Exploring Grand Teton National Park

Although Grand Teton National Park is much smaller than Yellowstone, there is much more to it than just its peaks, a dozen of which climb to elevations greater than 12,000 feet. The park's size—54 miles long, from north to south—allows visitors to get a good look at the highlights in a day or two. But you'd be missing a great deal: the beautiful views from its trails, an exciting float on the Snake River, the watersports paradise that is Jackson Lake.

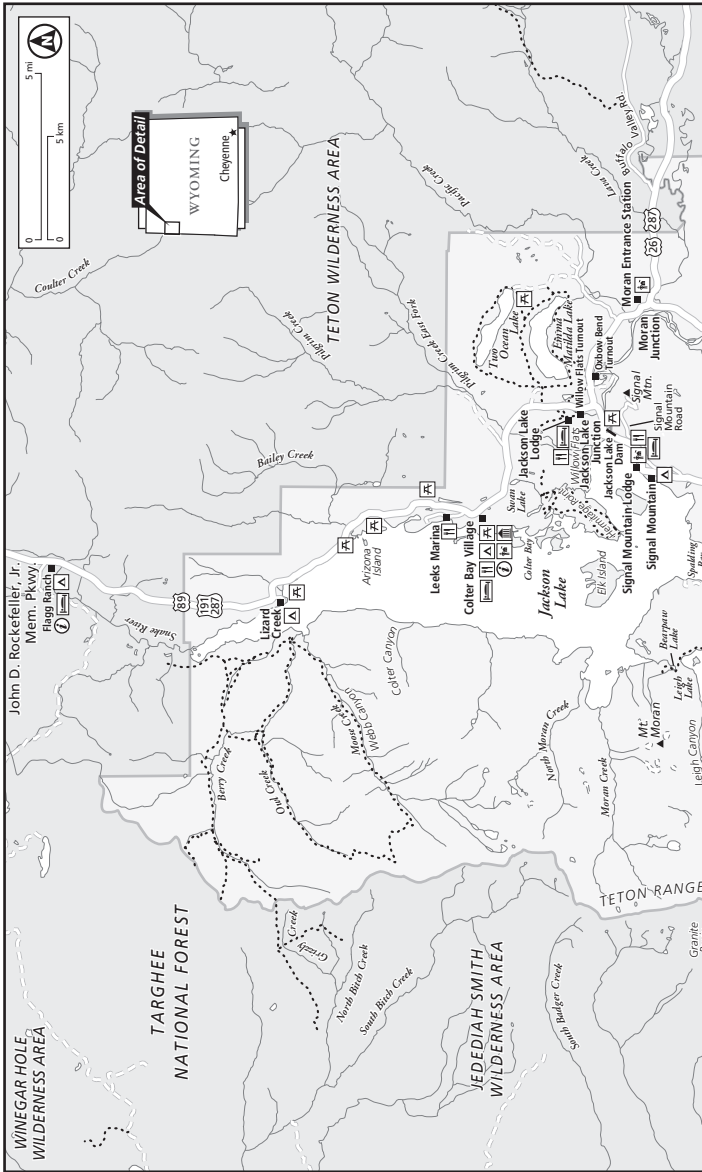
Whether your trip is half a day or 2 weeks, the park's proximity to the town of Jackson allows for an interesting trip that combines the outdoors with the urbane. You can descend Grand Teton and be living it up at the Million Dollar Cowboy Bar or dining in a fine restaurant that evening. The next day, you can return to the peace of the park without much effort at all.

1 Essentials

ACCESS/ENTRY POINTS Grand Teton National Park runs along a north-south axis, bordered on the west by the omnipresent Teton Range. Teton Park Road, the primary thoroughfare, skirts along the lakes at the mountains' base. From the **north**, you can enter the park from Yellowstone National Park, which is linked to Grand Teton by the **John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway** (U.S. Hwy. 89/191/287), an 8-mile stretch of highway, along which you might see wildlife through the trees, some still bare and blackened from the 1988 fires. If you enter this way, you will already have paid your entrance fee to both parks, but you can stop at a park information center at Flagg Ranch, just outside Yellowstone, to get Grand Teton information. From December through mid-March, Yellowstone's south entrance is open only to snowmobiles and snowcoaches, and there is a trail that connects to Grand Teton. (*Note:* The snowmobile ban goes into effect December 2004. See p. 106.)

You can also approach the park from the **east**, via U.S. Hwy. 26/287. This route comes from Dubois, 55 miles east on the other

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side of the Absaroka and Wind River mountains, and crosses **Togwotee Pass**, where you'll get your first (and one of the best) views of the Tetons towering over the valley. Travelers who come this way can continue south on U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191 to Jackson without paying an entrance fee, although they are within the park boundaries, and enjoy spectacular mountain and Snake River views.

Finally, you can enter Grand Teton from Jackson in the **south**, driving about 12 miles north on U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191 to the Moose turnoff and the park's south entrance. Here you'll find the park headquarters and Moose Visitor Center, plus a small community that includes dining and shops.

VISITOR CENTERS & INFORMATION There are three visitor centers in Grand Teton National Park. The **Moose Visitor Center** (☎ 307/739-3399), mentioned above, is a half mile west of Moose Junction at the southern end of the park; it's open 8am to 7pm daily from June through Labor Day, and 8am to 5pm the rest of the year. The **Colter Bay Visitor Center** (☎ 307/739-3594), the northernmost of the park's visitor centers, is open 8am to 8pm from early June through Labor Day, and from 8am to 5pm after Labor Day through early October. There is also **Jenny Lake Visitor Center** (☎ 307/739-3343), open 8am to 7pm daily from early June through Labor Day, and 8am to 5pm after Labor Day through early October. Maps and ranger assistance are available at all three, and there are bookstores and exhibits at Moose and Colter Bay. Finally, there is an information station at the **Flagg Ranch** complex (no phone), which is located approximately 5 miles north of the park's northern boundary.

To obtain park maps before your arrival, contact **Grand Teton National Park**, P.O. Box 170, Moose, WY 83012 (☎ 307/739-3600; www.nps.gov/grte).

FEES There are no park gates on U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191, so you can get a free ride through the park on that route; to get off the highway and explore, you'll pay \$20 per automobile for a 7-day pass (admission is good for both Yellowstone or Grand Teton). If you expect to visit more than once a year, buy a \$40 annual permit. Better yet, if you visit parks elsewhere in the country, buy a \$65 **Golden Eagle Passport**, good for all parks and national monuments for a year from the month of purchase, or a \$50 **National Parks Pass**, good for a year's access to the parks but not the monuments.

Seniors can get a **Golden Age Passport** for a one-time fee of \$10, and blind or permanently disabled people can obtain a **Golden**

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Access Passport, which costs nothing. Most of the money from entrance fees goes back into the park where it was collected, so consider it a contribution worth making: In Grand Teton, this revenue has been spent on renovating the Jenny Lake Overlook, maintaining trails, and restoring the lakeshore at Jenny Lake, among other things.

Fees for **camping** are \$12 per night at all the park campgrounds (\$5 for hike- and bike-in sites). For recorded information on campgrounds, call ☎ **307/739-3603**. For more information on camping, see “Where to Camp in Grand Teton,” in chapter 7, “Where to Stay & Dine in the Parks.” It is not possible to make advance reservations at campgrounds in Grand Teton.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS & WARNINGS See chapter 3, “Exploring Yellowstone,” for a summary of the major park regulations, which are generally similar in both parks.

FAST FACTS: Grand Teton

ATMs There are three ATMs in the park: at the Jackson Lake Lodge, at the Dornan’s Store in Moose, and at the general store in Colter Bay Village.

Car Trouble/Towing Services There are no towing services inside the park; if you are not a member of an automobile club, try one of the services in nearby Jackson, Wyoming. The park’s main information number is ☎ **307/739-3600**.

Emergencies Dial ☎ **911**, or dial 307/739-3300 and ask for park dispatch.

Gas Stations Gasoline is available at Flagg Ranch, Colter Bay Village, Jackson Lake Lodge, Signal Mountain Lodge, and Dornan’s in Moose.

Laundry There are laundry facilities at the Colter Bay Village.

Medical Services There is a medical clinic at Jackson Lake Lodge (☎ **307/543-2514**, or 307/733-8002 before 10am or after 6pm), open mid-May to mid-October, and a hospital in Jackson, Wyoming (☎ **307/733-3636**).

Permits Boating permits and backcountry permits can be obtained at the Colter Bay and Moose visitor centers and at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station. For recorded information on climbing, call ☎ **307/739-3604**.

Post Offices There are post offices in Moose (☎ 307/733-3336) and Moran (☎ 307/543-2527).

Supplies You'll find well-stocked general stores in the Dornan's complex at Moose Village and in Colter Bay Village; there are convenience stores at Flag Ranch, Signal Mountain Lodge, and South Jenny Lake.

Weather Updates Call ☎ 307/739-3611 for weather information.

2 The Highlights

No matter what you do in Grand Teton, you are nearly always in view of the big granite peaks dominating the western skyline. They define the park and, resultantly, deserve top billing of all of its highlights.

THE PEAKS The **Cathedral Group** (☞☞☞) is comprised of **Grand Teton** (elevation 13,770 ft.), **Mount Owen** (elevation 12,928 ft.), and **Teewinot** (elevation 12,325 ft.). Nearby, almost as impressive are **South Teton** (elevation 12,514 ft.) and **Middle Teton** (elevation 12,804 ft.). To the north, **Mount Moran**, at 12,605 feet, is the fourth largest of the Tetons (on a clear day, though, you can take a great photograph of this peak all the way from Colter Bay to North Jenny Lake Junction). If you come from the east, you will pass no toll booths on your way south on U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191, but there are frequent pull-outs on the west side of the road that give you a panoramic overview of the Snake River and the Tetons. For that matter, you get a more distant but equally spectacular perspective of the mountains coming over **Togwotee Pass** on U.S. Hwy. 26/287. **Signal Mountain**, reached off Teton Park Road by Jackson Lake, is less a peak to look at than to look off—you can drive or hike to the top for a grand view.

COLTER BAY At the north end of the park, alongside Jackson Lake, Colter Bay offers a busy mix of information, services, activities on and off the water, and shopping. The **visitor center** (☎ 307/739-3594) provides wildlife videos, slide programs, natural history hikes, and evening amphitheater programs. Most remarkable is the **Indian Arts Museum** (☞), which houses a collection of American Indian crafts, clothing, and beadwork, covering rooms on two floors.

JACKSON LAKE (☞) This biggest of park lakes was dammed to provide more water for potato farmers in Idaho, but that also makes

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it a good place to sail, fish, and ride around on powerboats. Several lodges dot its shores, but the one that bears its name, **Jackson Lake Lodge**, is set back from the lake, bordered by Willow Flats and marshlands—prime moose habitat. The views are striking, and some good hikes begin here.

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN AREA ☞ The **Signal Mountain campground** is a favorite of park visitors, conveniently located on the lakeshore for folks with watercraft, and the **Signal Mountain Lodge** is a fine place to stop for a meal with a view or a room for the night. Across the road, you can climb the mountain, by foot or car, and get a panoramic view of the valley and mountains—the best way to get a perspective on the glacier-carved area known as Jackson Hole.

JENNY LAKE ☞☞ A loop off Teton Park Road takes you close to String and Jenny lakes and the exclusive **Jenny Lake Lodge** (home to what is probably the finest restaurant in any national park). Day visitors can go to the south end of the lake, the point of origin of both boat rides and the popular trail to **Inspiration Point and Hidden Falls** ☞, on the west side of the lake. There's also a small store. If you've got your wide-angle lens handy, stop at the **Cathedral Group Turnout**, a terrific spot for photographers.

MOOSE You'll find plenty of services and shops here—even a fine wine store—and the **park headquarters** and a **visitor center**. It's been a service area since the days of Bill Menor, who ran a river ferry and a country store here a century ago. Half a mile from the park offices, the store and ferry have been re-created at the **Menor/Noble Historic District**. The nearby **Chapel of the Transfiguration** is a log church built in 1925. The altar window frames a view of the Grand Teton.

SNAKE RIVER ☞☞ Below Jackson Lake Dam, the Snake River winds its way east and south, eventually turning west toward Idaho in the Snake River Canyon. There are beautiful stretches of river in the park, such as Oxbow Bend, where trumpeter swans and moose appear, which make it a destination for canoeists and kayakers. To the east and up on the flats, U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191 follows the river from Moran Junction to Jackson, with several pullouts and overlooks.

3 If You Have Only 1 Day

A 1-day trip around this park is not unreasonable, given its size, and you can do a loop where you see many major attractions without

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having to retrace your steps. For more complete information on what you'll see along the way, read the next section on touring the park. Although this 1-day itinerary assumes that you are entering Grand Teton from the north, after visiting Yellowstone, you could just as easily begin your itinerary in Jackson, which is 8 miles south of the Moose Entrance Station.

Begin at the south entrance of Yellowstone National Park, driving through the **John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway** (U.S. Hwy. 89/191/287) south past **Flagg Ranch** and to the park. As you drive south, you'll find yourself skirting the northern shore of Jackson Lake, with a view of **Mount Moran** to the west, and, farther south, the stunning **Cathedral Group**.

On the northeast shore, **Colter Bay Village** is one of the park's busiest spots. You can rent boats, take scenic cruises, embark on guided fishing trips, buy fishing licenses and supplies, rent a cabin, or camp. Several popular hiking trails start here. If you turn right at Colter Bay Junction, you'll be at the **Colter Bay Visitor Center** a half mile later; stop here to take in the **Indian Arts Museum** (☞).

The **Lakeshore Trail** begins at the marina entrance and runs along the harbor for an easy 2-mile round-trip. It's level, paved, shady, and wheelchair accessible, the best opportunity for a hike in this area if you don't have much time. Nearby, on the shore of the lake, is an amphitheater where ranger-naturalists conduct evening programs. The Douglas firs and pine trees here are greener and healthier than the lodgepole pines that you see at higher elevations in Yellowstone.

A few minutes' drive south of Colter Bay, you'll pass Jackson Lake Lodge (you might want to look in the lobby and out the big picture window) and then **Jackson Lake Junction**, where a right turn puts you on **Teton Park Road**, the beginning of a 43-mile loop tour. You'll be driving parallel to the mountain range, with Grand Teton as the 13,770-foot centerpiece. You'll see lakes created by glaciers thousands of years ago, bordering a sagebrush valley inhabited by pronghorn and elk.

Just 5 miles down the road along Jackson Lake, a left (east) turn will take you up **Signal Mountain**, where you'll have a 360-degree view of the valley. Then continue down Teton Park Road to **South Jenny Lake**, where there is a huge parking area (which fills quickly in peak season) for the many people who stop to either hike around the lake or take a boat ride across. If you have time, get to the other side (it's a 2-mile hike) and make the short climb to **Hidden Falls** (☞). Another good day hike in this area is the **Taggart Lake Trail** (see

chapter 6, “Hikes & Other Outdoor Pursuits in Grand Teton National Park”).

When you leave South Jenny Lake, you’ll drive along a flat, sagebrush-dotted stretch to Moose, the southernmost of the park’s service centers. A half mile before Moose Junction is the **Moose Visitor Center**, which features exhibits of the Greater Yellowstone area’s rare and endangered species, a video room, and an excellent bookstore. While you’re in Moose, you might want to visit the **Menor/Noble Historic District** and the **Chapel of the Transfiguration**.

Coming out of Moose, take a left (north) turn on **U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191**, which crosses the open flats above the Snake River to Moran Junction. The best views along this road are the **Glacier View Turnout** and the **Snake River Overlook**, both of which are right off the road and well marked. At Moran Junction, turn left for a final 5-mile drive back to Jackson Lake Junction, past **Oxbow Bend**, a great spot for wildlife watching.

Worn out? Catch the dramatic sunset behind the Tetons and head for your campsite (if you’re tenting, stake out a spot early) or room, either in the park or in Jackson, Wyoming.

4 Touring Grand Teton

A 1-day whirlwind tour of Grand Teton is far from ideal. Like Yellowstone, this park demands a visit of 2 days or more. An extended stay allows for some relaxed hiking, picnicking, and sightseeing—you’ll gain a greater appreciation for the park and the area’s culture and history. A day at the Jenny Lake area, for instance, will provide awe-inspiring views of the peaks and a chance to walk the trails around the lake, to Inspiration Point or beyond up Cascade Canyon. You could also easily spend a day in the Jackson Lake Lodge area, where there are several wildlife viewing spots, trails, and places for a secluded picnic.

As with the short tour in the previous section, I begin at the northern end of the park, but you could just as easily start exploring from the southern end near Jackson. From Jackson, it’s about 13 miles to the Moose Entrance Station, another 8 miles to the Jenny Lake Visitor Center, another 12 miles to the Jackson Lake Junction, and 5 more miles to Colter Bay.

JACKSON LAKE & THE NORTH END OF THE PARK

Many people enter Grand Teton National Park from the north end, emerging from Yellowstone’s south entrance with a 7-day park pass

that is good for admission to Grand Teton as well. Yellowstone is connected to Grand Teton by a wilderness corridor called the **John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway** that runs north-south for 8 miles past meadows sometimes dotted with elk, over the Snake River above Jackson Lake, and through forests that in some places still show the mosaic burns of the 1988 fires.

Along the parkway, not far from Yellowstone, you'll come to the recently modernized **Flagg Ranch** (see chapter 7), with gas, restaurants, lodging, and other services. In the winter, this is a busy staging area for the snowcoach and snowmobile crowd.

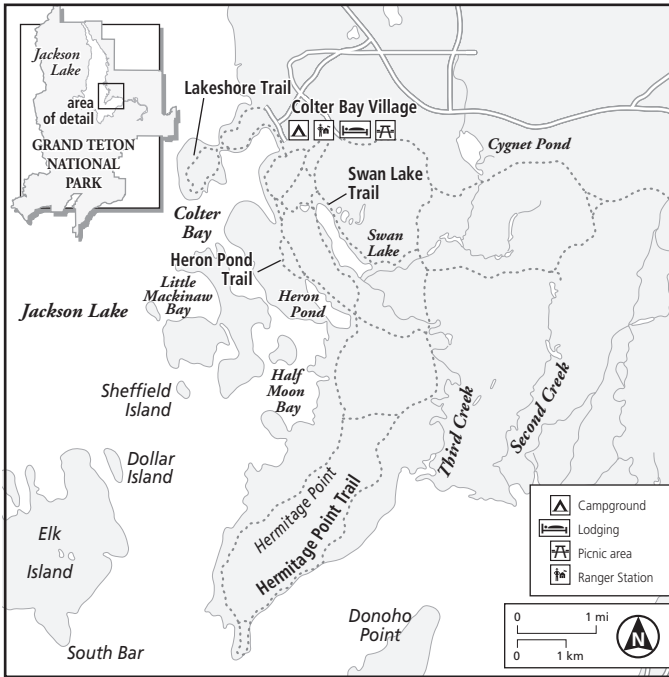
Giant **Jackson Lake** ☼, a vast expanse of water filling a deep gouge left 10,000 years ago by retreating glaciers, dominates the north end of the park. While it is a natural lake, it was dammed nearly a century ago, encroaching the surrounding forest and dismaying conservationists. It empties east into the Snake River, curving around in the languid **Oxbow Bend**—a favorite wildlife-viewing float for canoeists. The water eventually turns south and then west through Snake River Canyon and into Idaho. Stream flow from the dam is regulated both for potato farmers downstream in Idaho and for rafters in the canyon. Elsewhere on the lake, things look quite natural, except when water gets low in the fall.

As the road follows the east shore of the lake from the north, the first development that travelers encounter is **Leeks Marina**, where boats launch, gas up, and moor from mid-May to mid-September. A casual restaurant here serves light fare and pizza during the summer, but there are also numerous scenic pullouts along the lake that are good picnic spots.

Just south of Leeks is **Colter Bay**, a busy outpost of park services where you can get groceries, postcards and stamps, T-shirts, and advice. At the **Colter Bay Visitor Center**, you can view park and wildlife videotapes and attend a park orientation slide program throughout the day. Ranger-led activities include museum tours, park-orientation talks, natural-history hikes, and evening amphitheater programs. Colter Bay has plenty of overnight options, from cabins and old-fashioned tent camps to a trailer park and campground (see chapter 7). There is also a general store, a laundry facility, two restaurants, a boat launch and boat rentals, and tours. You can take pleasant short hikes in this area, including a walk around the bay or out to **Hermitage Point** (see chapter 6).

The **Indian Arts Museum** ☼ (☎ 307/739-3594) at the Colter Bay Visitor Center is worth a visit, although it is not strictly about

Jackson Lake: Colter Bay Area



the Native American cultures of this area. The artifacts are mostly from Plains Indian tribes, but there are also some Navajo items from the Southwest. The collection was assembled by David T. Vernon and includes pipes, shields, dolls, and war clubs sometimes called “skull crackers.” There are large historic photos in the exhibit area. Visiting Indian artists work in the museum all summer long and sell their wares on-site. Admission is free.

From Colter Bay, the road curves eastward and then south again, passing **Jackson Lake Lodge** (see chapter 7), a snazzy 1950s-style resort with a great view of the Tetons and brushy flats in the foreground where moose and coyotes often roam. Numerous trails emanate from here, both to the lakeshore and east to **Emma Matilda Lake** (see chapter 6). The road then comes to **Jackson Lake Junction**, where you can either continue west along the lakeshore or go east to the park’s Moran entrance station. If you exit via the Moran entrance, you are still in the park, and can turn south

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on U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191 and drive along the Snake River to Jackson, making most of your journey within the park's borders. However, you're probably here to enjoy the park, so you should turn right (west) on **Teton Park Road** at Jackson Lake Junction. After only 5 miles, you will arrive at **Signal Mountain**. Like its counterpart at Colter Bay, this developed recreation area, on Jackson Lake's southeast shore, offers camping sites, accommodations in cabins and multiplex units, two restaurants, and a lounge with one of the few live televisions in the park. If you need to stock up on gas or food, do so at the small convenience store here. Boat rentals and scenic cruises of the lake are also available.

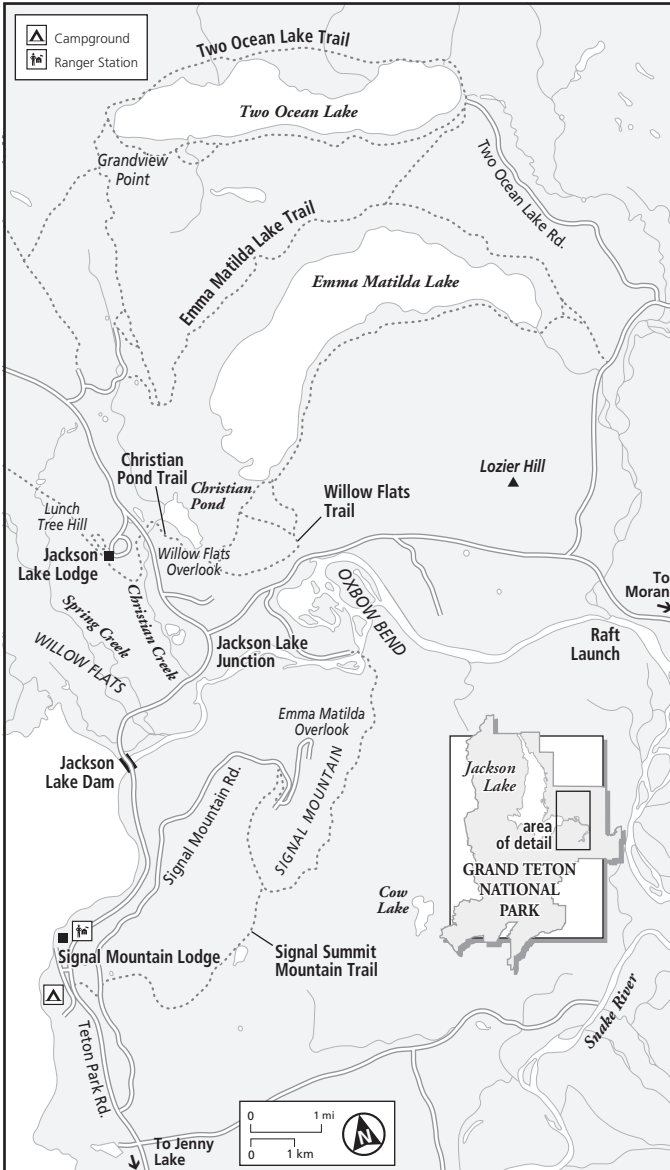
If you turn east instead of west off Teton Park Road at Signal Mountain, you can drive up a narrow, twisty road to the top of the mountain, 700 feet above the valley, where you'll have a fine view of the ring of mountains—Absarokas, Gros Ventres, Tetons, and Yellowstone Plateau—that create Jackson Hole. Clearly visible are the “Kettles”: potholes in the valley's hilly moraines that are the mark of long-gone glaciers. Below the summit, about 3 miles from the base of the hill, is **Jackson Point Overlook**, a paved path 100 yards long leading to the spot where legendary photographer William Henry Jackson shot his famous landscapes of Jackson Lake and the Tetons in the 1870s—proof to the world that such spectacular places really existed.

Looking for a hideaway? On the right (west) side of the road between Signal Mountain and North Jenny Lake Junction, approximately 2 miles south of the Mount Moran turnout, is an unmarked, unpaved road leading to **Spalding Bay**. It's a sheltered little campsite and boat launch area with a primitive restroom. There isn't much space if others have beaten you there, but it's a great place to be alone with great views of the lake and mountains. If you decide to camp, a park permit is required. An automobile or SUV will have no problem with this road, but speed will not be of the essence. Passing through brush and forest, you might just spot a moose.

JENNY LAKE & THE SOUTH END OF THE PARK

Continuing south along Teton Park Road, you move into the park's southern half, where the tallest peaks rise abruptly above a succession of small, crystalline lakes—**Leigh Lake**, the appropriately named **String Lake**, and **Jenny Lake** (☞☞), beloved by many visitors. At North Jenny Lake Junction, you can take a turnoff west to **Jenny Lake Lodge** (see chapter 7). The road then continues as a

Jackson Lake: Signal Mountain Area



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one-way scenic loop along the lakeshore before rejoining Teton Park Road about 4 miles later.

Beautiful **Jenny Lake** attracts its share of crowds throughout the summer, both from hikers who circumnavigate the lake on a 6-mile trail and from more sedentary folks who pay for a boat ride across the lake to Hidden Falls and the short steep climb to Inspiration Point (see chapter 6). The parking lot at **South Jenny Lake** is often jammed, and there can be a long wait for the boat ride, so you might want to get there early in the day. Or, you can save your money by taking the 2-mile hike around the lake—it's level and easy. There is also a tents-only campground, a visitor center, and a general store stocked with a modest supply of prepackaged foods and even less fresh produce and vegetables. You'll have to buy a ticket and wait in line for the trip across the lake in a powerboat that holds about 30 people. Contact **Jenny Lake Boating Company** (☎ 307/734-9227); round-trips cost \$7 for adults and \$5 for children.

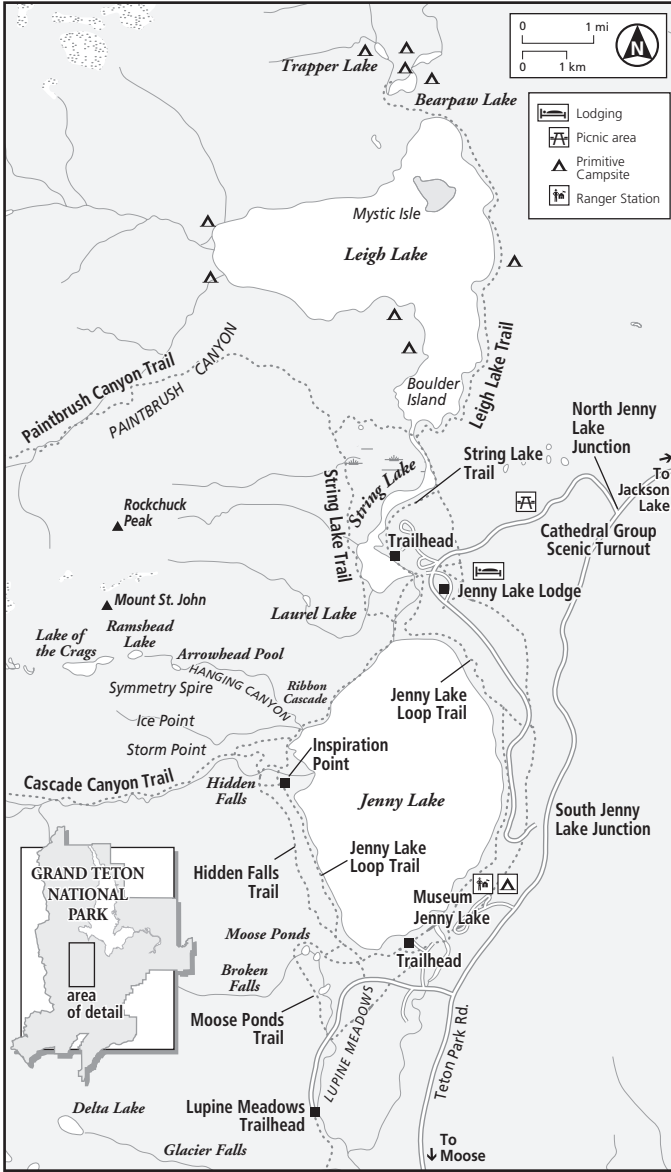
South of the lake, Teton Park Road ambles through wide-open sagebrush plains with immaculate views of the mountains. You'll pass the **Climbers' Ranch**—an inexpensive dormlike lodging alternative for climbers, run by the American Alpine Association—and some trail heads for enjoyable hikes to a handful of pristine alpine lakes. Look closely in the sagebrush for the shy pronghorn, more commonly (and incorrectly) labeled antelope. This handsome animal, with tan cheeks and black accent stripes, can spring up to 60 mph. Badgers also roam the brush here; you might encounter one of the shy but ornery creatures in the morning or at twilight.

The **Teton Glacier Turnout** presents a view of a glacier that grew for several hundred years until, pressured by the increasing summer temperatures of the past century, it reversed course and began retreating.

The road arrives at the park's south entrance and the sprawling **Moose Visitor Center**, which is also park headquarters. If you are approaching the park from the south rather than the north, this is where you'll get maps, advice, and some interpretive displays.

Just behind the visitor center is **Menors Ferry**. Bill Menor had a country store and operated a ferry across the Snake River at Moose back in the late 1800s. The ferry and store have been reconstructed, and you can buy items like those once sold here. Nearby is a historic cabin where a group of locals met in 1923 and planted the seed for the protection of the natural and scenic quality of the area, an idea that eventually led to the creation of the national park.

Jenny Lake Area & Trails



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Also in this area is the **Chapel of the Transfiguration**. In 1925, this chapel was built in Moose so that settlers wouldn't have to make the long buckboard ride into Jackson. It's still in use for Episcopal services from spring to fall and is a popular place for weddings, with a view of the Tetons through a window behind the altar.

Dornan's is a small village area just south of the visitor center on a private holding of land owned by one of the area's earliest homesteading families. There are a few shops and a semigourmet grocery store, a post office, rental cabins, a bar with occasional live music, and, surprisingly, a first-rate wine shop.

THE EAST SIDE OF THE PARK

At Moose Junction, just east of the visitor center, drivers can rejoin the highway and either turn south to Jackson and the Gros Ventre turn or cruise north up U.S. Hwy. 89/26/191 to Moran Junction. This 18-mile trip is the fastest route through Grand Teton National Park and, being farther from the mountains, offers views of a broader mountain tableau.


The junction of U.S. Hwy. 89 with **Antelope Flats Road** is $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles north of the Moose Junction. The 20-mile route beginning here is an acceptable biking route. It's all on level terrain, passing by the town of Kelly and the Gros Ventre campground before looping back to U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191 at the Gros Ventre Junction to the south. (If you're interested in the area, you might also look at the end of the "Day Hikes" section in chapter 6, "Hikes & Other Outdoor Pursuits in Grand Teton National Park," where there's a short description of Kelly and the Gros Ventre Slide area, which can be viewed just beyond the park boundaries to the east.) If you continue straight on Antelope Flats Road, you'll reach the **Teton Science School** (☞) at the road's end, about a 5-mile trip. The school offers interesting learning vacation programs, which are described more fully in chapter 2, "Planning Your Trip to Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks."

Less than a mile down U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191, on the left, **Black-tail Ponds Overlook** offers an opportunity to see how beavers build dams and the effect these hard-working creatures have on the flow of the streams. The area is marshy early in summer, but it's still worth the $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile hike down to the streams where the beaver activity can be viewed more closely.

Two miles farther along U.S. Hwy. 89 brings you to the **Glacier View Turnout**, which offers views of an area that 140,000 to 160,000 years ago was filled with a 4,000-foot-thick glacier. The

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view of the gulch between the peaks offers vivid testimony of the power of the glaciers that carved this landscape. Lower **Schwabacher Landing** is at the end of a 1-mile, fairly well maintained dirt road that leads down to the Snake River; you'll see the turnoff $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of the Moose Junction. The road winds through an area filled with glacial moraine (the rocks, sand, and gravel are debris left behind as glaciers passed through the area), the remnants of the ice age. At the end of the road is a popular launch site for float trips and for fly-fishing. It's also an ideal place to retreat from the crowds. Don't be surprised to see bald eagles, osprey, moose, river otter, and beaver, all of which regularly patrol the area.

The **Snake River Overlook** , approximately 4 miles down the road beyond the Glacier View Turnout, is the most famous view of the Teton Range and the Snake River, immortalized by Ansel Adams. From this overlook, you'll also see at least three separate, distinctive 200-foot-high plateaus that roll from the riverbed to the valley floor, leaving a vivid example of the power of the glaciers and ice floes as they sculpted this area. In the early 1800s, this was a prime hunting ground for John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company and a certain David E. Jackson, for whom the lake and valley are named. But by 1840, the popularity of the silk hat had put an end to fur trapping, and the hunters disappeared. Good thing—by the time they departed, the beaver population was almost decimated.

A half mile north of the Snake River Overlook is the newly repaved road to **Deadman's Bar**, a peaceful clearing on the riverbank. Many float trips launch here (multiday trips also camp in the area), and there is a limited amount of fishing access.

Cunningham Cabin, $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles north of Deadman's Bar, is a nondescript historic site at which homesteaders Pierce and Margaret Cunningham built their ranch in 1890. By 1928, they had been defeated by the elements and sold out to Rockefeller's Snake River Land Co. You can visit it at any time for a peek into the rough life of early Jackson Hole ranchers.

If you head down the highway in the other direction (south) from Moose Junction, on U.S. Hwy. 26/89/191, you can turn east on the **Gros Ventre River Road** 5 miles before you reach Jackson and follow the river east into its steep canyon—a few miles past the little town of Kelly, you'll leave the park and be in **Bridger-Teton National Forest**. In 1925, a huge slab of mountain broke off the north end of the Gros Ventre Range on the east side of Jackson Hole, a reminder that nature still has an unpredictable and violent side.

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The slide left a gaping open gash in the side of Sheep Mountain, sloughing off nearly 50 million cubic yards of rock and forming a natural dam across the Gros Ventre River half a mile wide. Two years later, the dam broke and a cascade of water rushed down the canyon and through the little town of Kelly, taking several lives. Today the town of **Kelly** is a quaint and eccentric community with a large number of yurts (tentlike homes) and, nearby, the **Teton Science School**. Up in the canyon formed by the Gros Ventre River, there is a roadside display with photographs of the slide area and a short nature walk from the road down to the residue of the slide and **Lower Slide Lake**. Here, signs identify the trees and plants that survived or grew in the slide's aftermath.

5 Organized Tours & Ranger Programs

The **Grand Teton Lodge Company** (☎ 307/543-2811; www.gtlc.com) runs half- and full-day bus tours of Grand Teton (\$30 adults, \$15 children) and Yellowstone (\$50 adults, \$30 children) from mid-May to mid-October, weather permitting.

The **Teton Science School** (☎, P.O. Box 68, Kelly, WY 83011 (☎ 307/733-4765; www.tetonscience.org), has an excellent curriculum for students of all ages, from integrated science programs for junior high kids to adult seminars covering everything from botany to astronomy. Classes take place at the newly renovated Stokes Family Learning Center in Kelly, and younger students can stay on-site in log cabins for some of the programs. The school's **Wildlife Expeditions** (☎ 800/WILD-567 or 307/773-2623; www.wildlifeexpeditions.org) offers tours that bring visitors closer to the park's wildlife. These trips range from a half-day to a week, covering everything from bighorn sheep to the wolves of Yellowstone.

Within the park, there are several interesting ranger programs. These range from a ranger-led 3-mile hike from the Colter Bay Visitor Center to Swan Lake, to a relaxed evening chatting with a ranger on the back deck of the Jackson Lake Lodge, with the Tetons as a dramatic backdrop and spotting scope for watching moose and birds. There are numerous events during the summer at Colter Bay, South Jenny Lake, and the Moose Visitor Center. Check the daily schedules in the park's newspaper, *The Teewinot*, which you can pick up at any visitor center.

At the Taggart Lake trail head, there are **wildflower walks** led by rangers who can tell you the difference between lupine and larkspur,

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daily in June and July, and guided morning hikes to Hidden Falls from Jenny Lake (you take the boat across the lake), among other activities.

At Colter Bay, you can climb aboard a boat for an afternoon **fire and ice cruise**, during which a ranger will talk about volcanics, glaciers, and fires that have shaped, reshaped, and colored the landscape. There are programs on Indian art and culture, lakeshore strolls with rangers, and evening gatherings at the Colter Bay amphitheater in which rangers teach about park wildlife.

Youngsters 8 to 12 can join **Young Naturalist programs** at Colter Bay or Jenny Lake and learn about the natural world for 2 hours while hiking with a ranger. Signups are at the visitor centers (the fee is a mere \$1), and the kids will need basic hiking gear.

There are also evening campfire gatherings at the Gros Ventre, Jenny Lake, Signal Mountain, Lizard Creek, and Colter Bay campground amphitheaters on a variety of park-related topics.