

Following are what I consider some of the best experiences in Montana and Wyoming.

- **Glacier National Park (MT):** The best vacation spot in Montana is also the most obvious one. By the standard of other crowded national parks, this spectacular country is virtually undiscovered. See chapter 6.
- **Yellowstone National Park (WY):** It's the crown jewel of American parks, and it remains the prime attraction in the Rocky Mountains. This unique park offers visitors an extraordinary combination of wilderness, wildlife, and geothermal wonders. See chapter 12.
- **Grand Teton National Park (WY):** The Grand Tetons are an excellent short course in Rocky Mountain parks for travelers with less time: magnificent peaks rising from the Snake River plain, alpine lakes, wildflowers, and wildlife, all in a relatively small park that can be seen in a few days or combined with Jackson for a longer vacation. See "Grand Teton National Park" in chapter 13.

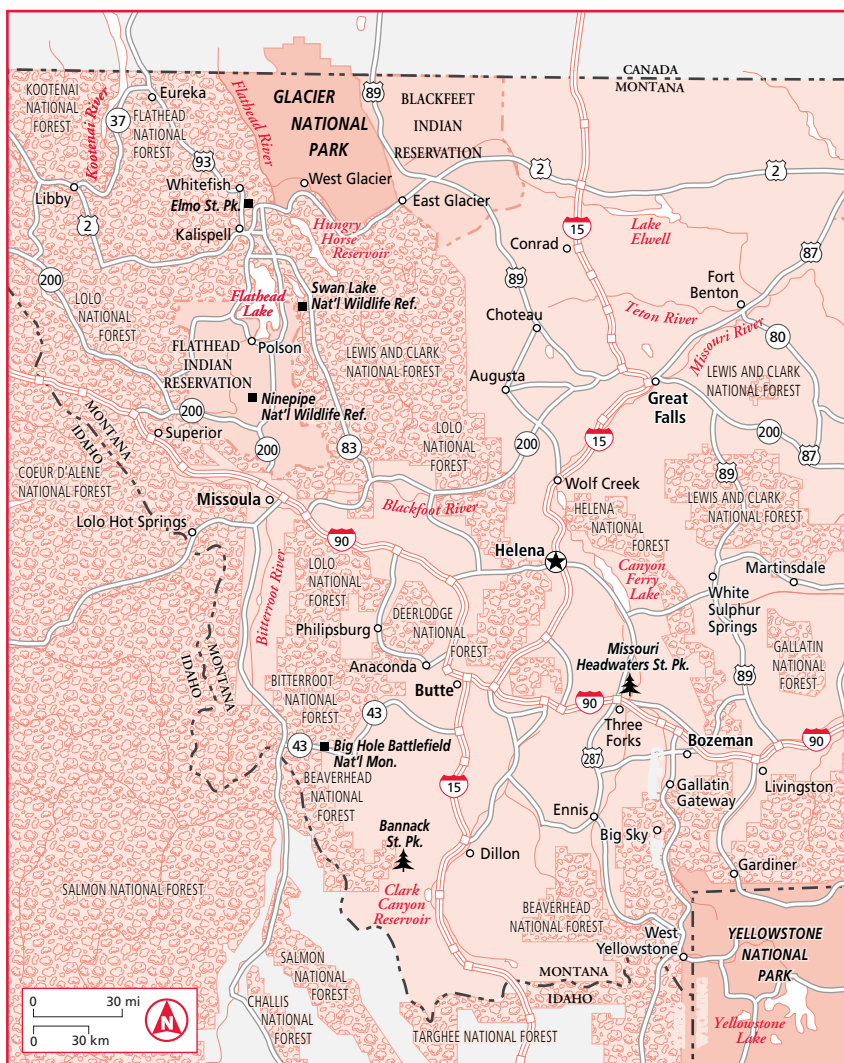
- **Exploring the Bob Marshall Wilderness (MT):** The 1.5-million-acre Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in northwest Montana is one of America's most spectacular wild places. Lace up your hiking boots, tie on your bandanna, and take to the high country in Montana's northwest corner. See section 7, "The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex," in chapter 7.
- **Enjoying the Yellowstone Backcountry (WY):** Outfitters from ranches around Yellowstone National Park will take you into the deep wilderness that surrounds the busy attractions at the park's center, and there you'll get a flavor of the wild as rich as the Rockies can offer. If you have experience, you can go on your own—paddling Yellowstone Lake, backpacking along Slough Creek, or Telemark skiing the powder around Shoshone Lake. See chapter 12.

2 Montana

THE BEST OF MONTANA & WYOMING

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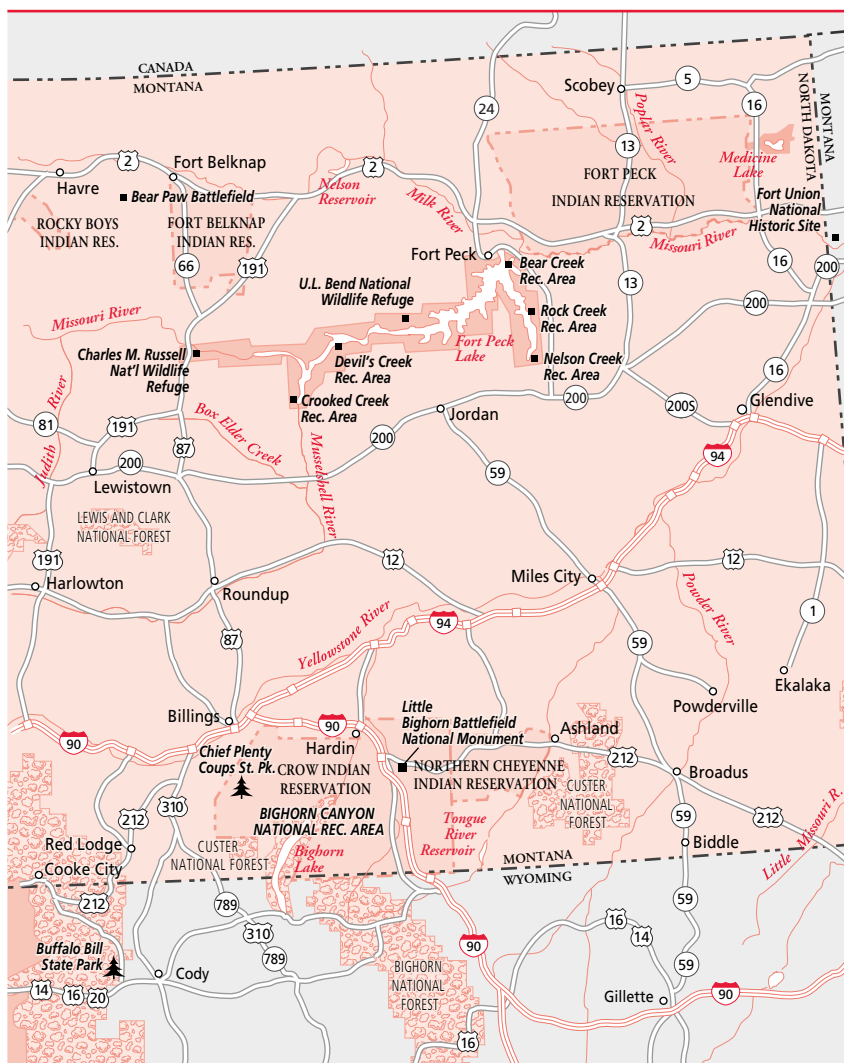
THE BEST WILDLIFE VIEWING



3 THE BEST WILDLIFE VIEWING

- **Glacier National Park (MT):** The experience of watching wildlife amid the imposing terrain of Glacier National Park is tough to beat. With a little energy,

you can see mountain goats, moose, elk, and other native animals in their natural habitat. Keep a good distance, and be aware of all bear restrictions and

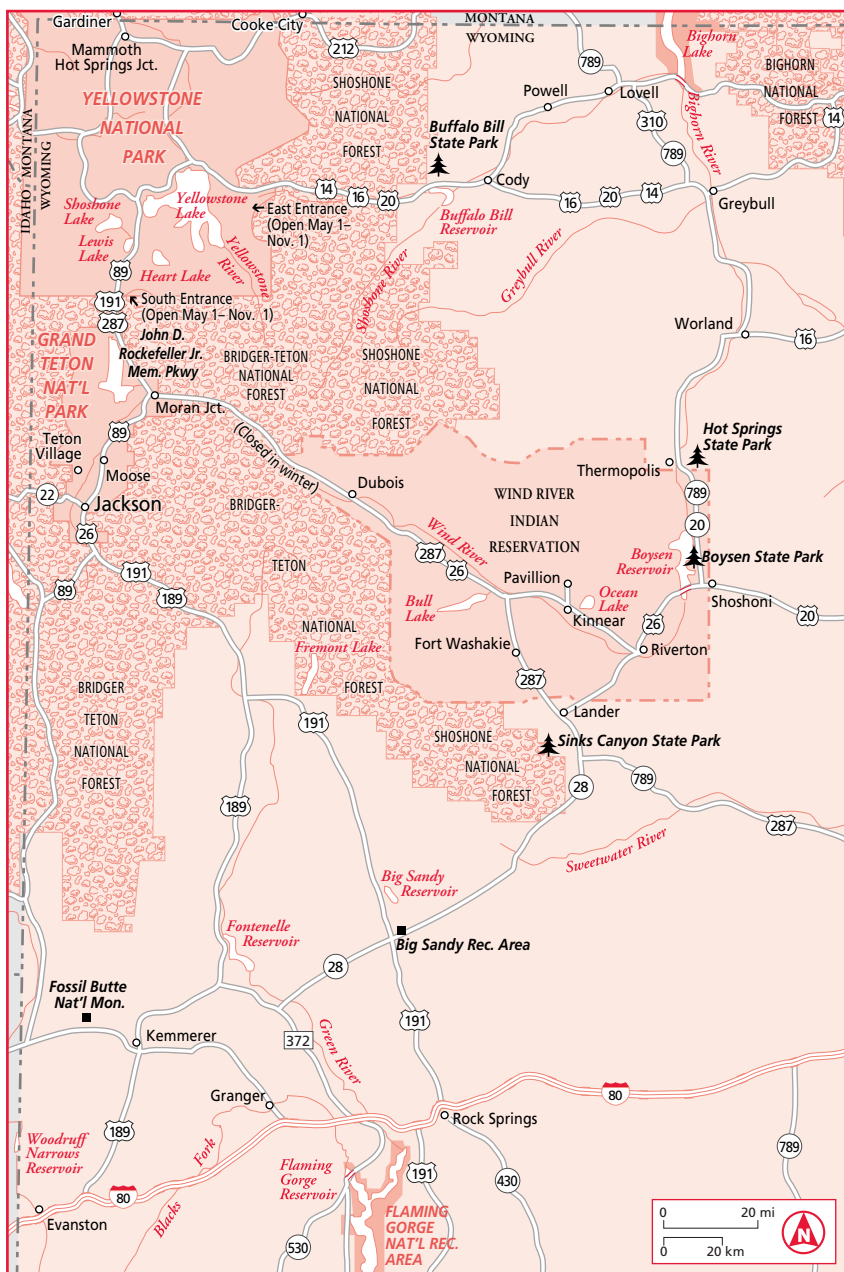


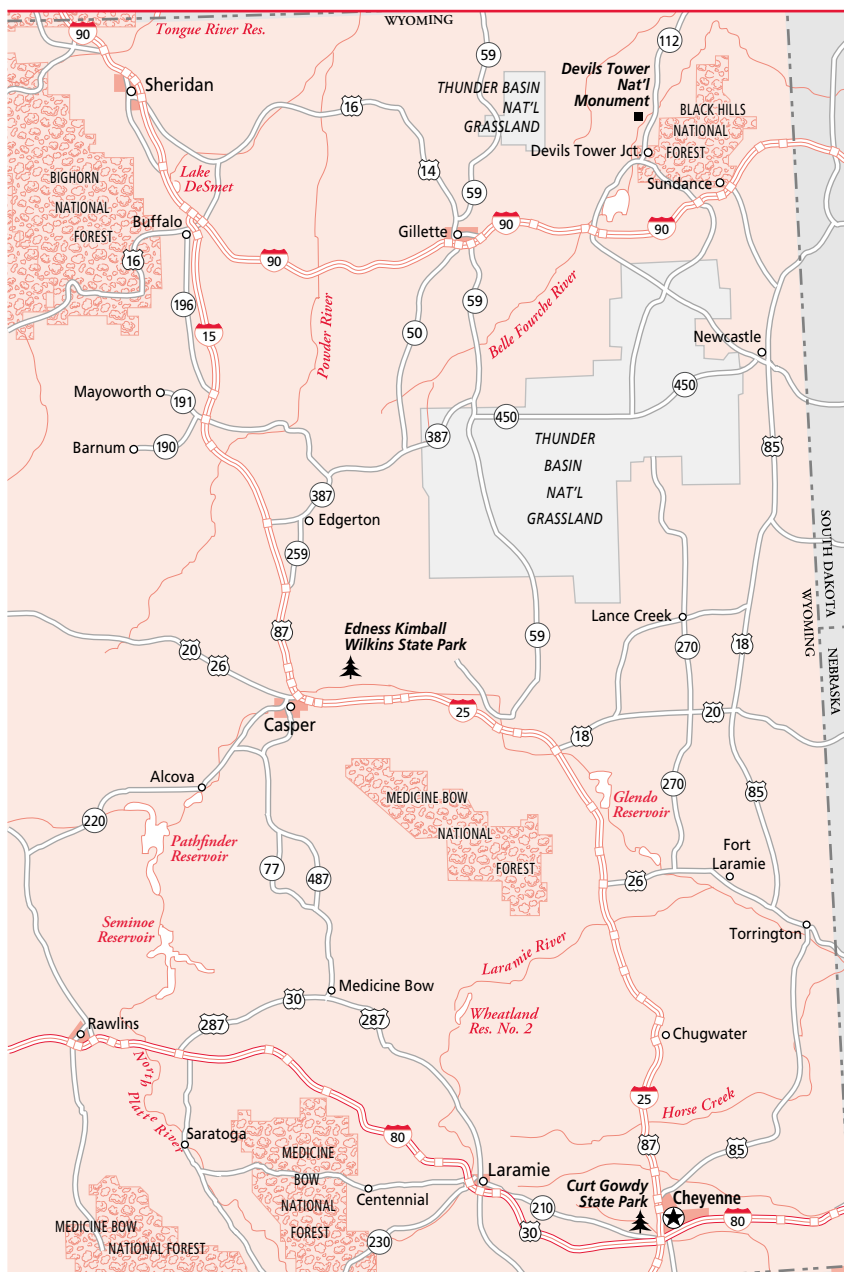
regulations—the grizzly is the park's unofficial mascot. See chapter 6.

- **The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (MT):** Just south of Glacier, in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, roam a full complement of Rocky

Mountain wildlife—although you have to wander into the backcountry to find it. See section 7, “The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex,” in chapter 7.

- **The Lamar Valley (WY):** You can see wildlife in many parts of Yellowstone,





including the meadows across from the Old Faithful complex. But the richest trove of wildlife is in the park's northeast

corner, in the valley nicknamed "The Serengeti of United States." See chapter 12.

4 THE BEST WINTER VACATIONS

- **Skiing at Whitefish Mountain Resort** (MT; ☎ 800/858-3930; www.ski.whitefish.com): With an annual snowfall of 300 inches, a vertical drop of 2,500 feet, a superpipe for the snowboarding crowd, and virtually no lines, Whitefish Mountain is one of the best ski areas in the northwestern United States. See p. 131.
- **Skiing at Big Sky and Moonlight Basin** (MT; Big Sky ☎ 800/548-4486, www.bigskyskyresort.com; Moonlight Basin ☎ 877/822-0430, www.moonlightbasin.com): Big Sky and the much newer Moonlight Basin have connected their trail systems, making for a combined 5,300 acres of terrain—the largest ski area in the country, not to mention the one with the most vertical drop. See p. 225.
- **Wintering at Old Faithful** (WY): The chilly season in Yellowstone is increasingly popular, and it's bound to be even more so now that the **Old Faithful Snow Lodge** (☎ 866/439-7375; www.travelyellowstone.com) has been transformed into a handsome, comfortable facility. You can take a snowcoach into the park, or cross-country ski or snowshoe to the Lonestar Geyser and other attractions. See p. 303.
- **Skiing at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort** (WY; ☎ 888/333-7766; www.jacksonhole.com): Jackson Hole offers a vertical drop that will take your breath away. There are a variety of ways to get to the bottom, from double black diamonds to intermediate slopes. Skiers who like a challenge should come here and mix the visit with some ballooning, tours of the elk refuge, and other adventures. See p. 310.

5 THE BEST HOTELS & RESORTS

- **Many Glacier Hotel** (Glacier National Park, MT; ☎ 406/892-2525; www.glacierparkinc.com): The best thing about Many Glacier, apart from its elegant mien, friendly service, and cozy rooms, is the setting; it sits along Swiftcurrent Lake and in the shadows of Mount Grinnell and Mount Wilbur. See p. 80.
- **The Pollard** (Red Lodge, MT; ☎ 800/765-5273; www.thepollard.net): You can join Buffalo Bill on the guest register at the Pollard, a historic spot that proves that a hotel doesn't need to sprawl all over the place to set the highest standard of comfort and elegance. See p. 236.
- **Old Faithful Inn** (Yellowstone National Park, WY; ☎ 866/439-7375; www.travelyellowstone.com): If you ever wonder whether there's really art in architecture, look at the way the rustic simplicity and monumental structure of this inn make a perfect fit just across the way from one of nature's most astonishing creations. A lattice of logs climbs to an 85-foot ceiling. You can find peace in the upper balconies, or join the convivial crowds around the big stone fireplace below. See p. 302.

- **Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole** (Jackson, WY; ☎ 307/732-5000; www.fourseasons.com/jacksonhole): The most deluxe lodging option in Teton Village, the chic Four Seasons opened in December 2004 and immediately set a new standard for ski-in, ski-out luxury. See p. 320.
- **Jenny Lake Lodge** (Grand Teton National Park, WY; ☎ 800/628-9988; www.gtlc.com): My favorite property in any national park, this small cabin-resort offers seclusion, top-notch food, and individual attention. The property is a hybrid of mountain-lake resort and dude ranch, with many extras included in its prices. See p. 344.
- **The Chamberlin Inn** (Cody, WY; ☎ 888/587-0202; www.chamberlininn.com): A block from the center of town, the new and improved Chamberlin Inn is Cody's best lodging option. It features charming historic rooms and apartment units. Consider asking for the Hemingway Suite, where "Papa" stayed in 1932. See p. 358.
- **The Occidental Hotel** (Buffalo, WY; ☎ 307/684-0451; www.occidentalwyoming.com): Born as a tent in 1878, the Occidental has burned to the ground and been lost in a poker game in its storied history. The hotel has been beautifully restored for the new millennium. See p. 381.

6 THE BEST GUEST RANCHES

- **Triple Creek Ranch** (Darby, MT; ☎ 800/654-2943; www.triplecreek.com): This place is wonderful. It's pretty much the perfect guest ranch, where guests are pampered like European royalty, and the prices reflect it. It has all the traditional dude ranch activities, as well as a pool and a fitness room. See p. 106.
- **Lone Mountain Ranch** (Big Sky, MT; ☎ 800/514-4644; www.lmranch.com): Lone Mountain Ranch is a winter and summer resort that has views into the Spanish Peaks Wilderness Area. In winter there are 45 miles of cross-country trails over terrain that will challenge every level of skier. In summer, you can ride, hike, fish, or simply relax and eat in the popular restaurant. There are bird walks with naturalists and forays into Yellowstone. See p. 227.
- **Lost Creek Ranch** (Moose, WY; ☎ 307/733-3435; www.lostcreek.com): Positioned next door to a national park and possessing a beautiful view of the Tetons on one side and the Gros Ventres on the other, Lost Creek layers on the comforts and activities. You can ride, hike, swim, fish, float, play tennis and billiards, shoot skeet, and eat gourmet food. Regulars return every year. There are only 10 cabins, but if you can get a reservation, it's worth it. See p. 322.
- **Eatons' Ranch** (Wolf, WY; ☎ 800/210-1049; www.eatonsranch.com): The oldest guest ranch in the country, the Eaton is also one of the best. The ranch got its start in North Dakota in 1882 before relocating in 1904 to isolated Wolf Creek Canyon, about 20 miles west of Sheridan. It's a gorgeous location for a dude ranch. See p. 378.

7 THE BEST BED & BREAKFASTS

- **The Garden Wall Inn** (Whitefish, MT; ☎ 888/530-1700; www.gardenwallinn.com): This delightful B&B, built in the 1920s, is full of charm—all of the furnishings are period antiques, including claw-foot tubs and Art Deco dressers. Gourmet breakfasts include specialties such as wild huckleberry crepes. See p. 134.
- **The Sanders B&B** (Helena, MT; ☎ 406/442-3309; www.sandersbb.com): Built in 1875, this historically important B&B has been beautifully restored. You'll relax on original furniture under the eyes of portraits hung by the original owner, U.S. Sen. Wilbur Fiske Sanders. See p. 154.
- **The Symmes-Wicks House** (Lewistown, MT; ☎ 406/538-9068; www.symmeswicks.house.com): This lovingly restored 1909 Arts and Crafts home is in the heart of the Silk Stocking District. The stately home is distinguished by rich hardwood floors, Tiffany glass, and period antiques. See p. 198.
- **Lehrkind Mansion Bed & Breakfast** (Bozeman, MT; ☎ 800/992-6932; www.bozemanbedandbreakfast.com): Located in the Historic Bozeman Brewery District, the Lehrkind Mansion looks like something out of a fairy tale. Everything is period, from the rare 1897 Regina music box in the parlor to the many original fixtures in the bathrooms. See p. 216.
- **Wildflower Inn** (Jackson, WY; ☎ 307/733-4710; www.jacksonholewildflower.com): A B&B on 3 acres near Teton Village, the Wildflower Inn features luxurious rooms named after local wildflowers, with private decks, exposed logs, and exceptional privacy. See p. 319.
- **Spahn's Big Horn Mountain Bed and Breakfast** (Big Horn, WY; ☎ 307/674-8150; www.bighorn-wyoming.com): With a 100-mile view from a secluded peak tucked amid the Bighorn Mountains, this rustic hideaway features a massive three-story living area and rooms decorated with country quilts and lodgepole furniture. See p. 378.
- **Nagle Warren Mansion Bed & Breakfast** (Cheyenne, WY; ☎ 800/811-2610; www.naglewarrenmansion.com): Originally built in 1888 by famed architect Erasmus Nagle, the mansion was converted into a bed-and-breakfast in 1997. The grand three-story mansion is luxurious and filled with regional antique furniture. It boasts a stately spire that anchors the building's southeast corner. See p. 401.

8 THE BEST RESTAURANTS

- **Cafe Kandahar** (Whitefish, MT; ☎ 406/862-6247; www.cafekandahar.com): The chef here is inspired by French and Creole traditions but also loves to experiment. Local produce and meat dominate the menu; favorite creations include seared elk roulade with forest mushroom, as well as creative seafood and pasta dishes. See p. 138.
- **Second Street Bistro** (Livingston, MT; ☎ 406/222-9463; www.secondstreetbistro.com): In the lobby of the Murray Hotel, this stylish bistro serves a creative, French-inspired menu. All of the produce in summer comes from the chef's garden, and in winter much comes from a greenhouse. See p. 233.

- **Snake River Grill** (Jackson, WY; ☎ 307/733-0557; www.snakerivergrill.com): Locals, including celebs who spend time in the valley, love this place. It's won awards for both its wine list and its menu, which features fresh fish, crispy pork shank, and game meat like venison chops and Idaho trout. See p. 324.
- **Jenny Lake Lodge Dining Room** (Grand Teton National Park, WY;

☎ 307/733-4647): The five-course dinners here (from prime rib of buffalo to smoked sturgeon ravioli) are so good you might be distracted from the spectacular scenery just outside the window. You may be roughing it in the park, but you'll need to dress properly at this establishment. See p. 346.

9 THE BEST FLY-FISHING

- **The Madison** (MT): Brown trout aren't native to this area, but no one's asking them to leave; on this popular river running from Yellowstone National Park into Montana, they're the big attraction. The Madison converges with its "holy trinity" counterparts, the Jefferson and Gallatin, near Three Forks, but lots of anglers fish it around Yellowstone. See chapters 10 and 12.
- **The Snake** (WY): It seems somehow fitting that the menacing-sounding Snake River is home to a feisty strain of cutthroat trout, making it one of the most satisfying Western rivers to fish. See chapter 13.

10 THE BEST GOLF COURSES

- **Old Works** (Anaconda, MT): Jack Nicklaus has created a course that is as much fun to play as it is beautiful to look at. The course wonderfully integrates the rocky bluffs, the historic nature of the old copper-processing sites, and prairie grasses and sage. See p. 158.
- **Teton Pines** (Jackson, WY): You won't find a more beautiful view from any golf course in the country—except maybe the neighboring Jackson Hole club—with the granite Grand Teton looming over every shot. See p. 312.
- **The Powder Horn** (Sheridan, WY): Under the majestic Bighorn Mountains, this gorgeous 27-hole course mixes Scottish-style golf, wide-open fairways, and some serious target practice. See p. 375.

11 THE BEST MUSEUMS

- **Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center** (Great Falls, MT; ☎ 406/727-8733; www.fs.fed.us/r1/lewisclark/lcic): This offers a great perspective on the Corps of Discovery, from its conception back East to its endpoint at the mouth of the Columbia River at the Pacific Ocean. Films, lectures, and demonstrations are among the offerings. See p. 189.
- **Museum of the Rockies** (Bozeman, MT; ☎ 406/994-3466): The centerpiece of this first-rate museum is the fabulous dinosaur exhibit. The exhibit,

which just had a stellar makeover, has made the place one of the premier paleontological attractions in the world. See p. 215.

- **Buffalo Bill Historical Center** (Cody, WY; ☎ 307/587-4771; www.bbhc.org): An art museum, a firearm gallery, the memorabilia of the West's great showman, and exhibits about the Plains Indians comprise the finest museum in the Rocky Mountains. See p. 356.

- **National Historic Trails Interpretive Center** (Casper, WY; ☎ 307/261-7700; www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/NHTIC.html): State-of-the-art exhibits give modern travelers an idea of what life on the "road" was like for the emigrants who passed through here in the mid-1800s on the Oregon, Mormon, California, and Pony Express trails. See p. 389.

12 THE BEST PERFORMING ARTS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS

- **International Wildlife Film Festival** (Missoula, MT; ☎ 406/728-9380; www.wildlifefilms.org): This film festival has become a required festival for international filmmakers who specialize in wildlife. It goes for a week, from early to mid-May, and includes panel discussions and workshops, as well as screenings of the world's best wildlife films. See p. 92.
- **Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering** (Lewistown, MT; ☎ 866/912-3980): Held each year in mid-August, this is a rhyming good time for the bowlegged and horse-drawn set. In addition to a healthy dose of range rhyme, there are booths full of leather and arts-and-crafts shows. See p. 196.
- **Grand Teton Music Festival** (Jackson, WY; ☎ 307/733-3050): Talented musicians from well-known orchestras participate in this summer festival. Tickets can usually be obtained on short notice, especially for the terrific weeknight chamber music performances. See p. 327.
- **Cheyenne Frontier Days** (Cheyenne, WY; ☎ 800/227-6336): The "Daddy of 'em All," Cheyenne Frontier Days is 10 days of parades, rodeo, dances, and concerts. This is the most vivid demonstration of Western hospitality you'll encounter in the modern world. See p. 398.