



Glacier National Park

Includes ➔

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Why Go?

Few of the world's great natural wonders can compete with the US national-park system, and few national parks are as magnificent and pristine as Glacier. Created in 1910 during the first flowering of the American conservationist movement, Glacier ranks among other national-park classics such as Yellowstone and Yosemite. Perennial highlights include its trio of historic 'parkitecture' lodges, the spectacular Going-to-the-Sun Rd, and a rare, fully intact pre-Columbian ecosystem. This is the only place in the Lower 48 states where grizzly bears still roam in abundance, and smart park management has kept the place accessible yet at the same time authentically wild. Among a slew of other outdoor attractions, the park is particularly noted for its hiking and wildlife spotting, and for its fishing and boating lakes.

Best Hikes

- ➔ Highline Trail (p182)
- ➔ Dawson–Pitamakan Loop (p186)
- ➔ Iceberg Lake Trail (p187)
- ➔ Hidden Lake Overlook Trail (p180)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Many Glacier Hotel (p203)
- ➔ Sperry Chalet (p203)
- ➔ Granite Park Chalet (p203)
- ➔ Lake McDonald Lodge (p202)

Road Distance (KM)

St Mary	30			
Waterton Townsite	85	45		
West Glacier	60	50	100	
Whitefish	80	75	120	30
	East Glacier	St Mary	Waterton Townsite	West Glacier

Note: Distances are approximate

Entrances

Glacier National Park has six official entrance gates. The two busiest are the West Entrance, just north of West Glacier, and the East Entrance, near St Mary at the opposite end of the iconic Going-to-the-Sun Rd. The other entrances are the Camas Creek Entrance and the Polebridge Ranger Station, both off the Outside North Fork Rd on the park's western side; and the Two Medicine Entrance (on Two Medicine Rd, west of Hwy 49) and the Many Glacier Entrance (on Many Glacier Rd, west of US 89) over on the eastern side.

Boards at entrances indicate which park campgrounds are open or full.

DON'T MISS

Glacier's classic 'parkitecture' lodges – Many Glacier Hotel (p203), Lake McDonald Lodge (p202) and Glacier Park Lodge (p211) – are living, breathing, functioning artifacts of another, more leisurely era, when travelers to this wilderness park arrived by train and ventured into the backcountry on horseback. These early-20th-century creations were built with Swiss-chalet features and prototypical Wild West elements. Today they seem to consciously and appealingly conjure up a romantic, almost mythic, vision of rustic luxury – ideal reflections of the beautiful scenery on their doorsteps.

Glacier Park Lodge sits just outside the park's boundaries, in charming East Glacier, while Lake McDonald Lodge and Many Glacier Hotel are both situated within the park on the shores of stunning alpine lakes. The former property is an easy stop while traveling the iconic Going-to-the-Sun Rd, and the latter is ensconced in what long-time visitors consider the heart of the park, with nearby trailheads for several of the park's most stunning day and overnight hikes.

When You Arrive

- Glacier National Park is open year-round. Entry per car or RV costs US\$25. People arriving on foot, bicycle or motorcycle pay US\$12 per person. Both tickets are valid for seven days. Entrance fees are reduced in winter. Fees for Glacier do not include entrance to Waterton Lakes National Park.
- Staff at the entrance stations hand out free detailed Glacier & Waterton Lakes National Parks maps; a quarterly newspaper; and the *Glacier Explorer*, a schedule of events and activities, including ranger-led day trips.

PLANNING TIP

Backcountry camping permits (US\$5 per adult per night, or US\$30 with advance reservation by mail or fax only) can be purchased from the Apgar Backcountry Office (p205).

Fast Facts

- **Area** 4099 sq km (1583 sq miles)
- **Highest elevation** 3190m (10,466ft)
- **Lowest elevation** 980m (3215ft)

Reservations

Glacier National Park operates 13 campgrounds. Sites at Fish Creek and St Mary Campgrounds can be reserved up to six months in advance, and five group sites at Apgar up to a year in advance. Book through Recreation.gov (☎ 800-365-2267; www.recreation.gov). All other campgrounds are first-come, first-served.

Resources

- **Glacier National Park** (www.nps.gov/glac)
- **Glacier Park Inc** (www.glacierparkinc.com)
- **Glacier National Park Lodges** (www.glaciernationalparklodges.com)