



## Visiting Lamar Valley & Tower Junction Area of Yellowstone

Lamar Valley is located in the northeast section of the park, just east of Tower Junction. Home to herds of elk, bison, and several packs of wolves, the Lamar Valley is Yellowstone's prime location to view wildlife. The best time to see wildlife is in the early morning or late evening. Lamar Valley has the largest concentration of grizzlies in the park, and with a little patience and a lot of luck, you may see one. **Be sure to bring along a pair of binoculars or a spotting scope.** Lamar Valley is the top destination inside Yellowstone Park for viewing wolves. There are also abundant fishing opportunities in the Lamar Valley.

### Mammoth Springs of Yellowstone Sites of Interest:

#### 1. Tower Falls Overlook

At present, there is a partial closure of the Tower Fall trail in effect that unfortunately restricts access to the bottom of the waterfall, and will for some time, in the interest of public safety. However, the upper platform at the top of the trail still provides historic views of the falls and remains open to the public. Starting at the parking area for the Tower Fall General Store, this trail leads approximately 100 yards to an overlook of the falls. From there it descends 200 feet (60 m.) via a series of switchbacks to the base of the 132 foot (40m.) fall, where the view is even more dramatic.

**Trailhead:** Starting at the parking area for the Tower Fall General Store

**Round trip Distance:** 1.0 mile (1.6 km.)

**Level of Difficulty:** Somewhat strenuous uphill climb back from the base of the falls

## 2. Lost Lake Trail

This trail departs from behind Roosevelt Lodge and climbs 300 feet (91 m) onto the bench. Here the trail joins the Roosevelt horse trail and continues west to Lost Lake. (If you take the trail east, you loop back to the Roosevelt corrals on the horse trail. Currently there is no footbridge across Tower Creek just prior to Tower Campground. The trail east from the Lost Lake/Roosevelt horse trail junction is currently an out-and-back trail until the bridge is replaced.) From Lost Lake, the trail follows the contour around the hillside to the Petrified Tree parking area. Cross the parking lot and climb the hill at its northeast end to loop back behind Tower Ranger Station. Cross the creek and return to the Roosevelt Lodge cabins.

Offering views of Lost Lake, waterfowl, wet meadows, sagebrush hilltops, wildflowers, and quite often black bears, this trail has a bit of everything. Parts of the trail are used by horse parties.

**Trailhead:** Behind Roosevelt Lodge

**Distance:** 4 miles (6.4 km) Round trip

**Level of difficulty:** Moderately strenuous

## 3. Hellroaring Trails

The Hellroaring Trail can start from the Hellroaring parking area 3.5 miles (5.6 km) west of Tower Junction. Follow the trail over the Yellowstone River Suspension Bridge, cross a sagebrush plateau, and drop down to Hellroaring Creek. The Yellowstone River and Hellroaring Creek are both popular fishing areas. **Note:** This trail can be hot and dry during the summer months. Please remember to take water! Also, watch your footing if you go off-trail and onto the smooth river boulders along the Yellowstone River.

**Trailhead:** Tower Junction or 3.5 miles (5.6 km) west of Tower Junction

**Hellroaring Trailhead:** 4 miles (4.6 km) Round trip

**Level of difficulty:** Moderately strenuous

## 4. Yellowstone River Picnic Area Trail

This often overlooked trail along the east rim of the Yellowstone River offers views of the Narrows of the Yellowstone, the Overhanging Cliff area, the towers of Tower Fall and basalt columns. **Tower Fall itself is not visible**, but the store and highway across the river can be seen for reference purposes. Watch for bighorn sheep along this trail. Use caution along the river canyon with its steep dropoffs.

**Trailhead:** Yellowstone Picnic Area, 1.25 miles (2 km) northeast of Tower Junction on the road to the Northeast Entrance and Cooke City

**Distance:** 3.7 miles (5.9 km) Round trip

**Level of difficulty:** Moderately strenuous

## 5. Slough Creek Trail

This is both a scenic walk and a fishing trail, a favorite of catch-and-release anglers from around the country. The trail follows a historic wagon trail up Slough Creek through several meadows and over Plateau and Elk Tongue creeks. From the trailhead, the trail switchbacks up a moderately steep trail and rejoins Slough Creek in about 2 miles (3.2 km) at the first meadow. While wildlife do not abound in this meadow during the summer, moose are commonly seen. Grizzly and black bears also use this valley. You may encounter the horse drawn wagons of Silver Tip Ranch, a private ranch north of the park boundary that has a historic right of access.

**Trailhead:** Near the vault toilet on the road to Slough Creek Campground

**Distance:** 2 miles (3.2 km) one way to First Meadow;

5 miles (8 km) one way to Second Meadow

**Level of difficulty:** Moderately strenuous for first 1.5 miles (2.4 km), then easy.

## 6. Trout Lake

Trout lake is a steep 1/2 mile trail that leads to a beautiful lake. Once you get to the lake you can take a nice easy walk around it with great views in every direction. Mount Hornaday is seen behind the lake and in spring to early summer will sometimes have a waterfall on the side. If you walk around the lake, there is a small wooden bridge over the inlet of the lake. Sometimes in the Spring you will see trout spawning here.

**TROUT LAKE NOTE:** Trout Lake was used as a fish hatchery to transplant fish eggs from to other parts of the park. Rainbow trout are NOT native to this area, but can be seen in the lake.

**Trailhead:** The trail starts from a small pullout about 1.5 miles (2.4 km.) south of Pebble Creek Campground on the Northeast Entrance road

**Round trip Distance:** 1.2 miles (1.9 km)

**Level of difficulty:** Easy

**Although not hikes, check out  
these sites of interest in the area:**

**Always begin your hike by stopping at a ranger station or visitor center for information. Trail conditions may change suddenly and unexpectedly. Bear activity, rain or snow storms, high water, and fires may temporarily close trails.**

## 7. The Buffalo Ranch (Not open to the general public.)

Home to Yellowstone Association Institute Classes. Check out their website for class times and details - [www.yellowstoneassociation.org](http://www.yellowstoneassociation.org).

The Lamar Buffalo Ranch was built in the early part of the century in an effort to increase the herd size of the few remaining bison in Yellowstone, preventing the feared extinction of the species. Buffalo ranching operations continued at Lamar until the

1950s. The valley was irrigated for hay pastures, and corrals and fencing were scattered throughout the area. Remnants of irrigation ditches, fencing, and water troughs can still be found. Four remaining buildings from the original ranch compound are contained within the Lamar Buffalo Ranch Historic District (two residences, the bunkhouse, and the barn) and are on the National Register of Historic Places. In the early 1980s, old tourist cabins from Fishing Bridge were brought to Lamar to be used for Yellowstone Association Institute Classes.

#### **8. The Blacktail Plateau Drive**

The Blacktail Plateau Drive is **one way** for automobiles. The drive is 6 miles long, returning to the main park road almost 2 miles/3 kilometers north of Tower/Roosevelt Junction, near the Petrified Tree access road. A sometime bumpy dirt/gravel road offers great wildlife viewing, including elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. Bears are also known to frequent this area.

**Please don't limit yourself to just these places of interest... if you like history, visit the museums, walk thru the buildings or visitor center. There are more strenuous hikes, but may not be recommended for first time visitors not in good physical health. Test yourself on the short hikes. There is history and beauty all around - enjoy, and have your camera ready!**

**For more information go to: <http://www.nps.gov/yell/index.htm>**