

DESTINATIONS





# W Y O M I N G

## W O N D E R L A N D

Experience winter wildlife, Western culture,  
and historic adventures in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

BY ROBYN VOLKENING

PHOTOS COURTESY JACKSON HOLE TRAVEL AND TOURISM BOARD

**I**magine yourself bundled up in a cozy Pendleton blanket, sipping on a mug of hot cocoa or a glass of whisky while traveling across crisp snow in a sleigh drawn by high-stepping draft horses. Sound romantic?

Maybe your idea of winter fun is piloting a snowmobile at high speed, racing your friends across a snowy meadow on your way to a brewery for live music and locally harvested bison burgers for dinner. Either way, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, is the place

for all your winter vacation fantasies to come true.

"Jackson," as locals call it, is a contemporary Western town built on the rich history of the Rocky Mountain region. There are countless opportunities for outdoor recreation amid awe-inspiring natural beauty during every season. While many visitors flock to the area during the summer to escape hotter climates and experience nearby National Parks, don't overlook the opportunity for winter fun in this historic cowboy town.



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*If you're seeking outdoor adventure, don't miss the chance for a cross-country ski experience on trails near Jackson Hole.*

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*Ice skating in downtown Jackson offers a more intimate, romantic outdoor option for couples, friends, and families*

### **Adrenaline Rush**

Jackson offers action-packed winter sports for every outdoor enthusiast. The town is home to three ski resorts: Snow King, Grand Targhee, and Jackson Hole Mountain. Each one offers full amenities such as ski rentals and lessons. You can also cross-country ski or snowshoe at resort or on nearby trails like Cache Creek, Game Creek, and Turpin Meadows. For next-level adventure, consider booking an overnight ski trip into the backcountry.

Locals suggest beginners ski at Snow King, mentioning that trails at Jackson Hole Mountain can be steep and frustrating for those who don't ski often.

"Snow King has a new gondola with scenic tours that will be fun for the non-skiers," says Sue Muncaster, communications manager for Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board. "The Cowboy Coaster is a thrill for all."

Snowmobiling is another popular winter activity in Jackson, thanks to the world-renowned terrain that makes this a bucket list destination. Guided tours to Granite Hot Springs, into the wilderness, and even into nearby national parks are available, too.



Ice skating offers a more elegant way to enjoy the crisp winter air at either of Jackson's two skating rinks. For a unique perspective with less energy output, take a ride in a dog sled! Navigate wilderness trails and let the agile canines power your scenic tour. Half and full day tours are available, with opportunities to see wildlife such as bald eagles, elk, bison, deer, or fox without a motor disrupting your time on the trail.

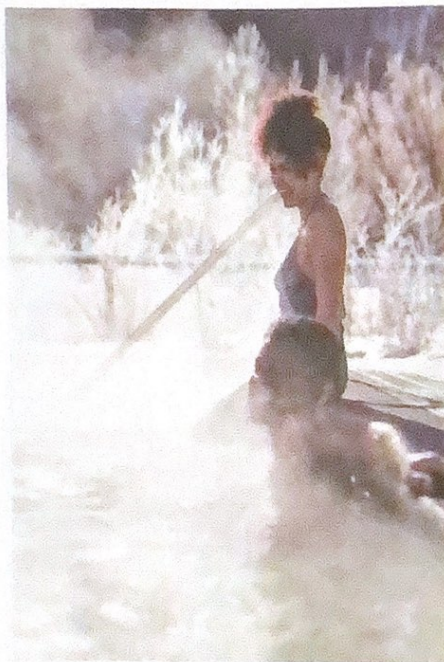
## Relax and Unwind

After a day of outdoor pursuits, you'll be ready for some relaxation. Enjoy massages, facials, rustic hot tubs, and other pampering treatments to unwind at one of several spas around Jackson. If you'd rather focus more on relaxation than adventure, consider booking a spa with overnight accommodations or spend a few hours at a day spa.

Choose from a plethora of locations inspired by the natural beauty surrounding Jackson. The Wilderness Adventure Spa at Spring Creek Ranch was voted one of the top 15 destination spas by Travel and Leisure, while Solitude Spa was named "Hot Spa" of Conde Nast Traveler. Book a spa day to revitalize your soul or limber up before your next outdoor activity with a hot stone massage.

Another unique experience waiting in Jackson starts at one of several local hot springs. Built in the 1930s, Granite Hot Springs is nestled under the Gros Ventre Mountain peaks and towering pines on forest service land. It features a 110-degree hot pool and can only be accessed in winter by dog sled, snowmobile, skiing, or fat biking (a winter bike with large snow tires). What better way to reward yourself after a winter workout than by soaking in a hot spring?

Just south of town, Astoria Hot Springs has five natural spring-fed pools along the Snake River. This developed hot spring has changing rooms and showers on site, but reservations are required as this small venue only allows 35 people at a time.



Warm up and unwind in a comfortable hot tub at one of many spas located near Jackson Hole.

## Uniquely Jackson

Maximize your Jackson trip with a few can't-miss excursions that will give you memories—and Insta-worthy snapshots—to last a lifetime. Take a guided sleigh ride right into an elk herd with contractor Double H Bar at the National Elk Refuge.

As part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, the elk refuge is critical to the protection of native species in Wyoming. During colder months when herds move to the refuge, visitors can see more than 8,000 elk from the comfort and safety of a horse-drawn sleigh.



## Travel Planning Tips

Jackson Hole Airport (JAC) offers flights connecting from Denver, Dallas-Fort Worth, Salt Lake City, Phoenix, New York, Chicago, and Miami. If you're driving, Jackson is about 515 miles from Denver, 243 miles from Bozeman, Montana, and 304 miles from Salt Lake City. Winter driving conditions can be a challenge, so rent a 4x4 SUV,

watch the weather reports, and pack the puffy coats and snow boots!

If you fly to Jackson, check with your lodging to see about shuttles, because there is public transportation in town as well, and many tour companies will even pick you up, so you may not need the expense of a rental car!

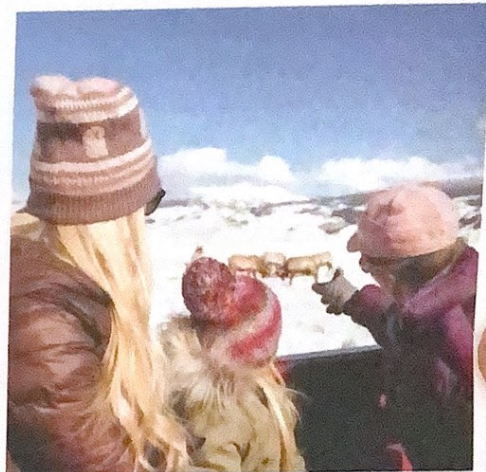


Stop for an Instagram-worthy photo op under the famous elk-shed arch in downtown Jackson Hole.

Get up close with grazing elk by taking a horse-drawn sleigh through the refuge where animals spend the winter.

No trip to Jackson is complete without taking a photo under the iconic elk antler arches in the downtown square. Made from more than 2,000 antler sheds each, these historic arches are supported by a steel framework and held together almost entirely by gravity. Each spring, local boy scout troops visit the elk refuge to collect the shed antlers, and in May, the community celebrates Elkfest, where antlers are auctioned off to support the refuge. Don't miss posing at the arches to commemorate this tourist tradition!

Round out your Jackson trip with a visit to nearby Yellowstone National Park. Although access can be limited due to weather conditions, a winter trip to this revered national park will reveal more animal activity and fewer human visitors, making the experience even more magical. Most roads are closed to personal vehicles, but a snow coach tour allows views of the magnificent park scenery and wildlife from the heated comfort of a bus. Tours include visits to Old Faithful, steamy geysers, hot springs, and wildlife including eagles, bison, elk, deer, fox, and wolves.



### Dine like Royalty

Adventure-packed days require adequate sustenance, and Jackson Hole cuisine doesn't disappoint. The best little-known breakfast spot in town, The Virginian, serves up a hearty morning meal that rivals Grandma's cooking. French toast, biscuits and gravy, corned beef hash, and eggs any style, all made from scratch with local ingredients, will fuel your adventures all day. This lodge with "western grit and a modern twist," as described by Sue Muncaster of the Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board, boasts a lively saloon and fire pits.

For lunch or an afternoon snack with a nostalgic twist, try Jackson Drug Co., an old-school soda fountain with rich history. Since 1919, generations of the same family have operated in the Jackson area. Today, the great-granddaughters of the original drug store owner have reinvented the store and restaurant. Grab a snack, a sandwich made with ranch-raised beef, or an old-fashioned malt with small batch ice cream while taking in the historic architecture.

After exhilarating hours in the crisp air and fluffy snow, you'll be ready for some invigorating nightlife. The Mangy Moose is a casual spot with nightly live music where you can indulge in a Wyoming bison burger with jalapeno huckleberry compote, elk bratwurst, or even a bison tenderloin, along with traditional sandwiches and tavern fare.

Another popular spot to refuel is Snake River Brewing where you can sample craft beers in the oldest brewery in Wyoming. Their menu includes a tasty elk Bolognese

pasta and a hearty bison chili sure to warm you up on the coldest of evenings. Pair your meal with a Cowboy Gold or Jenny's Lake Lager from their award-winning beer lineup. You can also check out the StillWest Brewery, or try some cocktails at Hayden's Post, located at Snow King.

Find lively music at The Wort Hotel Silver Dollar Showroom, where the house band, One Ton Pig, has been entertaining guests for over 15 years. Although they're best known for Blue Grass Tuesdays, the venue also hosts a variety of live music all week long.

Before turning in for the night, stop by legendary watering hole The Million Dollar Cowboy Bar on the square in Jackson. Since 1937, this local spot has seen celebrities, presidents, and cowboys alike sharing cold beer and country music. Legends such as Willie Nelson, Tanya Tucker, and Waylon Jennings have graced the Million Dollar Cowboy stage. They also serve bar food and steakhouse options if you get hungry while boot scootin'.

## SNAKE RIVER BREWING IN JACKSON HOLE OFFERS TASTY PUB CUISINE AND COLD LOCAL BREWS



There are plenty of beverage options to explore at breweries and bars around Jackson Hole, including unique locally brewed beer.



## Shop 'till You Drop

Outdoors enthusiasts and art aficionados alike can find perfect souvenirs and useful gear in Jackson. Retail options abound with everything from kitschy tee-shirts to luxury jewelry and high-end western artwork on the streets of downtown Jackson. If you're on the hunt for outdoor gear, numerous shops such as Teton Mountaineering and JD Highcountry Outfitters offer local-approved equipment and clothing.

Jackson style is a hybrid of western wear and outdoor tech that's both fashionable and utilitarian. Local shops carry cowboy hats, boots, pearl snap shirts, and jeans to outfit you in classic apparel with serviceable, stylish pieces that will help you bring a piece of Jackson back home. Stop by Kemo Sabe's store on the square for high-end apparel in-



**SHOP EVERYTHING  
FROM OUTDOOR GEAR TO  
TRADITIONAL WESTERN  
ATTIRE AND MORE IN  
JACKSON HOLE.**

cluding luxury western boots, hats, jewelry, and more to flesh out your wardrobe. For the cowboy in your party, swing into Mountain Man Toy Shop for high quality knives, tomahawks, and axes.

## Cozy Accommodations

Jackson lodging runs the gamut from rustic to luxury with hotels, lodges, and cabins galore. There's a place for every winter vacation, from a couple enjoying a romantic getaway to friends on a party trip. For the adventure lover, ski resorts like Snow King, Grand Targee, and Jackson Hole Mountain offer ski-in and out options.

If you'd prefer a traditional hotel, choices range from Super 8 and Motel 6 to funky in-town spots such as Modern Mountain and Antlers. Maximize your travel points without losing that Wyoming feel at chains like Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites or try the Four Seasons for a three-bedroom mountain-side residence where you can truly indulge.

AirBnB and VRBO options take rustic and unique to the next level. From a downtown condo or a restored historic cabin to a ranch guest house or a home located 15 miles off the beaten path, you can find an option to fit your travel mood. Close to town nightlife or out on a snowmobile friendly backcountry trail, there's accommodations for everyone in Jackson.

"Jackson Hole is one of the premier destinations for those looking for a Western experience," says Andrew Kruger, communications manager for Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce. "Whether it is hitting the slopes to experience our world-class skiing, exploring Yellowstone on a winter snow coach tour, or tapping your feet to bluegrass or country music at one of our famed bars in Town Square. We have something for everybody."

Winter vacation dreams come true in Jackson, Wyoming. Where else can you enjoy world class skiing, backcountry snowmobiling, a sleigh ride through an elk herd, legendary national park geysers, hot springs covered in frosty snow, and top of the line cuisine, shopping, and nightlife all on the same trip? Indulge your snowy vacation fantasy and make plans to visit Jackson! ☺