

Three Hours to FUN

When you need to get out of town, year-round adventures are a short car ride away.

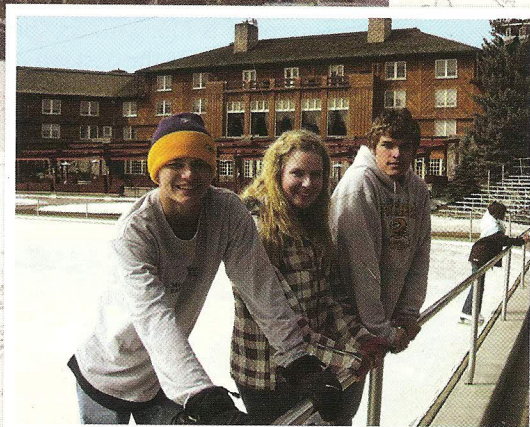
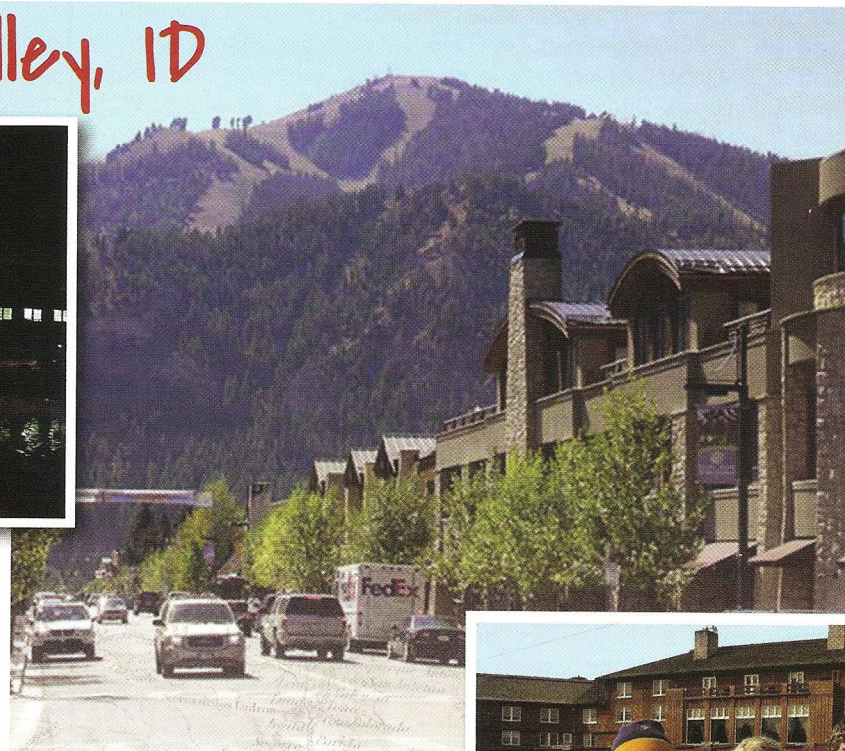
By Alisa Clickenger

Whether it's your home town or the start of your journey, Idaho Falls is the ideal place to start your western adventure. Nestled in the Snake River Valley, Idaho Falls is just three hours from Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons to the east, the Sawtooth Mountains to the north, and the Wasatch Range in the south. Local destinations like Sun Valley, Glenns Ferry, and Virginia City, Montana attract travelers from all over the globe with our famous western hospitality.

Sun Valley, ID



Distance from Idaho Falls=
160 miles
Estimated Travel Time
from Idaho Falls= 3 hours



In 1936 the Union Pacific Railroad conducted a search for the ideal location for a winter destination resort in an effort to increase ridership on the railway. They selected the Sun Valley area after a nationwide search for its abundant sunshine, healthy snowfall, and moderate elevation. Famous for being the home to the world's first ski chair lift, skiing isn't the only sport that the area is known for.

Famous as a Mecca for outdoor enthusiasts, Sun Valley is also known for horseback riding, hiking, whitewater rafting, mountain biking, rock climbing, and fly fishing. Winter sports other than downhill skiing include snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and ice skating at the renowned Sun Valley Ice Rink. Helicopter skiing in the magnificent Sawtooth Mountain range is also an option.

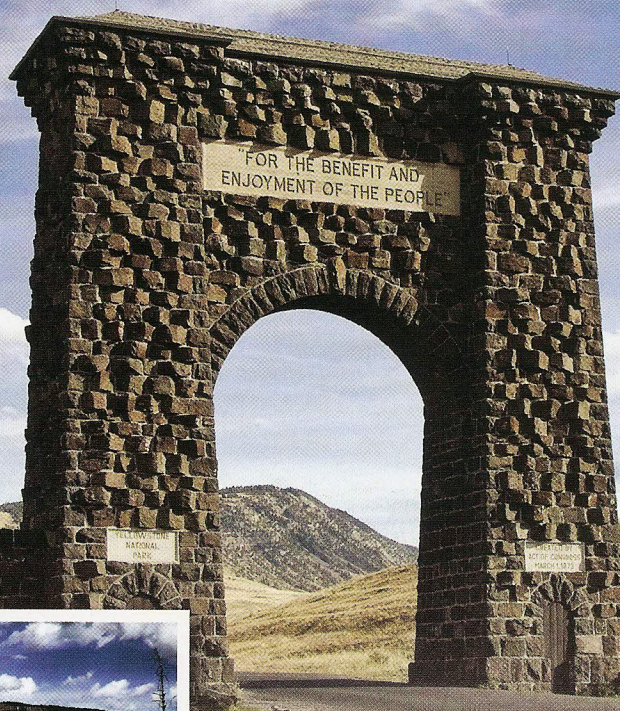
In Sun Valley there is great shopping, fine and casual dining, and the area's art galleries are some of the most unique in the west. There are year-round live theatrical performances, including musicals, plays, poetry/staged readings, operas, and lectures. Sun Valley is family friendly with classes and recreational facilities for adults and children alike.

Winter is the high season in Sun Valley, and winter hotels run from \$100-\$300 per night. Condos range from \$150-\$1,500 depending on location and amenities, and private homes can also be rented for \$1,800-\$3,000 per night. In the summer expect to pay five to ten percent less, and look for promotions to save 10 to 20 percent off in the shoulder seasons. Sun Valley has a central reservations line you can call at 800-634-3347. Sun Valley General Information can be reached at 208-726-3423.



Yellowstone National Park

(WY, ID, MT)



Distance from Idaho Falls= 160 miles
Estimated Travel Time from
Idaho Falls= 3 hours



The oldest of our National Parks, Yellowstone is known for its biodiversity, its wildlife, and for its geothermic features. Yellowstone National Park is about 3,500 square miles of mountains, canyons, alpine lakes, rivers, and natural wonders. Home to hundreds of species of elusive and endangered animals, Yellowstone is perhaps most famous for its bison, elk, grizzly bears, and wolves. Yellowstone Park is one of the last, nearly intact, natural ecosystems in the temperate zone on earth.

Old Faithful is one of the Park's major attractions. Quite predictable in its eruptions, every 91 minutes the geyser shoots between 3,700 and 8,400 gallons of boiling water over 100 feet in the air. Other Yellowstone activities include wildlife viewing, hiking,

ing, fishing, camping, horseback riding and llama packing, backcountry skiing, and snowmobiling.

There are lodging options both inside and outside the Park. Inside Yellowstone expect to pay from \$103-\$197 per night. Lodging needs to be booked well in advance because of the popularity of staying within the Park. Outside the park there are more options, and those range from \$60-\$200 per night. Camping is also available inside and outside the Park, but only in approved camp locations.

Yellowstone National Park is exceedingly family friendly, and the National Park Service offers a Young Scientist as well as the Junior Ranger program. The entrance fee to Yellowstone National Park is \$25 per private, non-commercial vehicle (\$12 for visitors arriving on foot.) A \$50 park annual pass provides entrance Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks for one year, and the Interagency Annual Pass (\$80) admits two people to Yellowstone and all other National Parks and Monuments for one year. The National Park Service web site (www.nps.gov/yell) is the most accurate and up-to-date source for all Yellowstone activities, closures, and road construction.



Glenns Ferry, ID



Distance from Idaho Falls= 210 miles
Estimated Travel Time from Idaho Falls= 3.5 hours

Photo: Department of Parks and Recreation

Home to one of the most famous river crossings on the Oregon Trail, Glenns Ferry has been hosting travelers for almost two centuries. Pioneers forded the Snake River at Three Island Crossing, just two miles south of the ferry, until 1869. Now it's the site of the Three Island Crossing State Park, with the Oregon Trail History an Education Center. And the second weekend each August, this is where the Three Island Days are held.

Another draw to Glenns Ferry is the beautiful Carmela Vineyards. Thirty acres of Idaho vineyards surround the winery on a slope overlooking the Snake River. Open year round, Carmela Vineyards has a restaurant, the winery, RV Park, lounge, spa, and even a golf course. Wine tours are conducted on weekends only, from 1-4 p.m. The tour includes a look into the wine cellar, wine education, and a wine tasting afterwards. (The cost is \$15 per person with a 4 person minimum.)

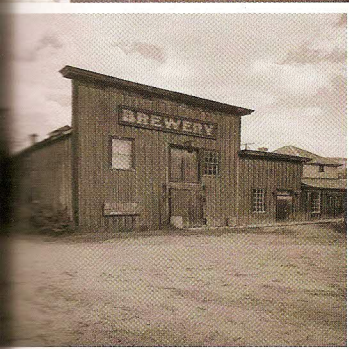
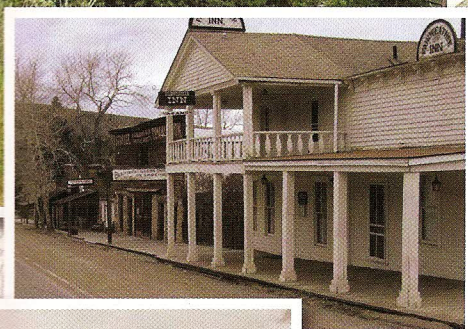
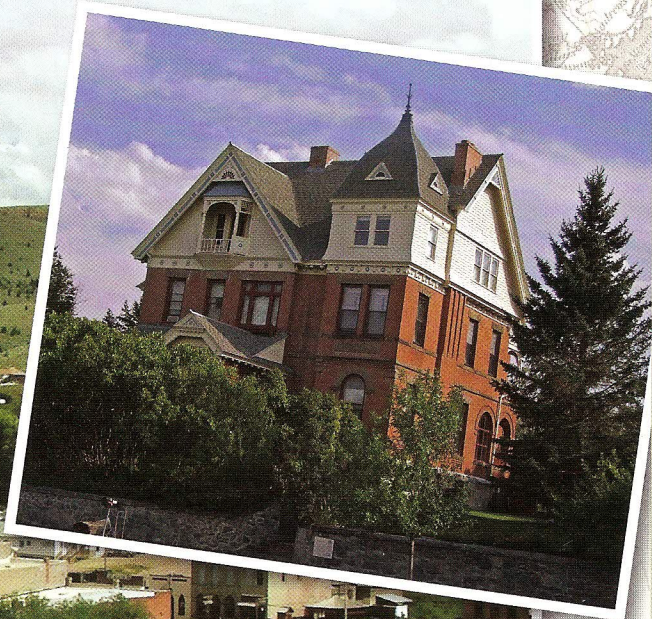
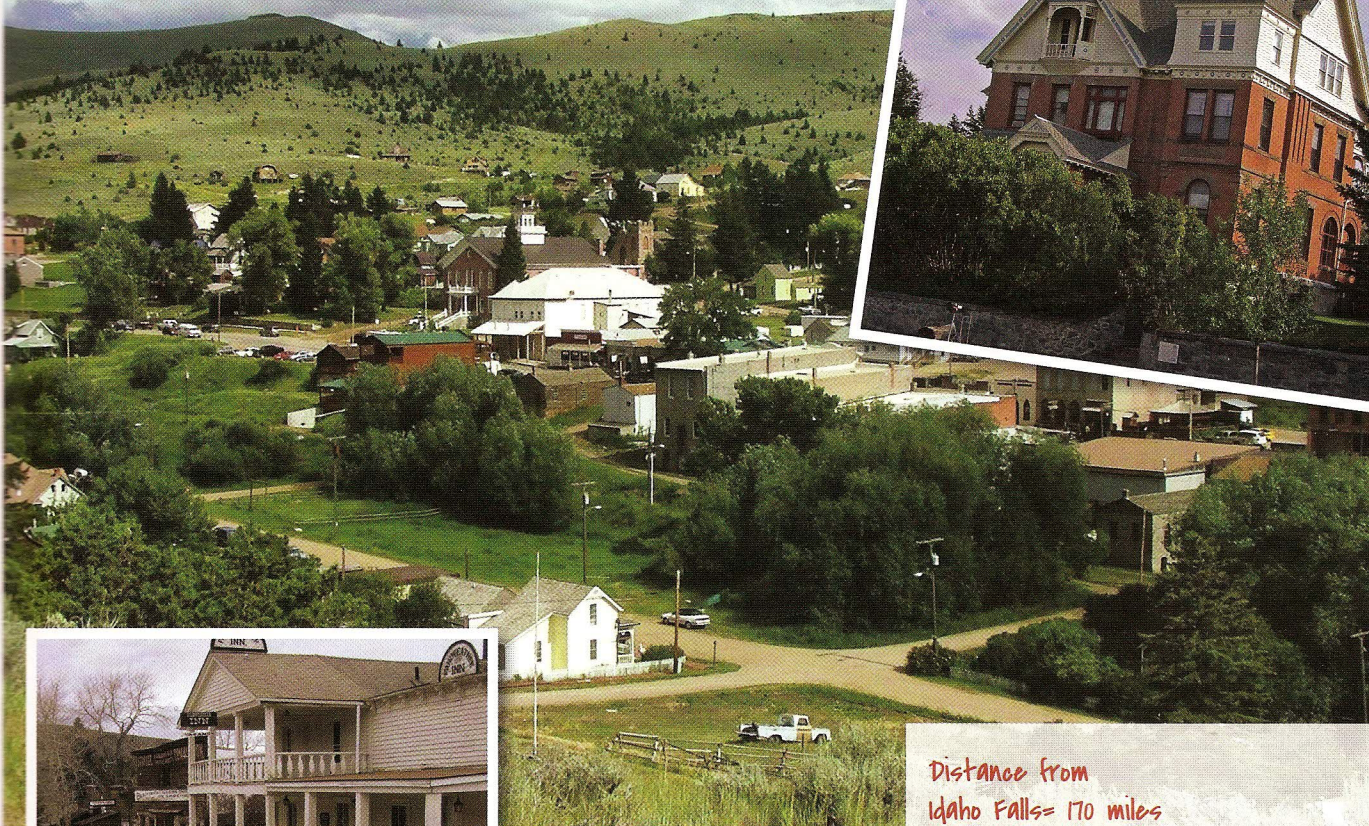
Lodging in Glenns Ferry runs from \$50-\$150 per night. Cabins are available at Carmela Vineyards; there is a Bed & Breakfast in Town, a quaint cabin for rent on the river, and Hanson's Café and Motel. You can also camp at the RV park, tent camping is welcome. Chain hotels are also found nearby. Dining is available year round at Carmela Vineyards as well as Hansons Café.

Glenns Ferry offers activities for the whole family with a fun Fourth of July celebration, Elmore County Fair and Rodeo in July, a car show mid September and a holiday fair and Christmas Parade the day after Thanksgiving. Adult entertainment includes live vaudeville acts every Friday and Saturday in June, July, and August at the opera House. The town also boasts a community based City Market in the summertime to support local agricultural producers, artisans, and crafters.



Photo: Department of Parks and Recreation

Virginia City, MT



Distance from
Idaho Falls= 170 miles
Estimated Travel
Time from
Idaho Falls= 3 hours

In 1863 Bill Fairweather discovered what would prove to be one of the richest gold deposits in North America. Where they discovered it they named Alder Creek, and the town that sprang up around it was called Virginia City. Virginia City became the capitol of the Montana Territory in 1865, and it was the site of many "firsts" in Montana's colorful history; the first territorial capital, the first public school, and the first newspaper (the Montana Post.)

Virginia City provides an extraordinary glimpse into the architecture and daily life of the 1860's, since many of the original buildings are still preserved. In the 1940s Charles Bovey began buying the buildings and properties of the area and preserving them, and in 1961 Virginia City was designated a National Historic Landmark. Now managed by the Montana Heritage Commission, the State has done a wonderful job in restoring and maintaining the buildings and thousands of artifacts.

Bring the family because there is much to do and explore in Virginia City and Nearby Nevada City. There is an historic train ride between the two towns, living history in each town, and several live music events throughout the summer. Don't be afraid of ghosts though, Virginia City is said to be haunted. They even offer a ghost tour. There's a wide variety of dining options, and rooms run from \$75-\$175 per night in the area. In 2013 Virginia City celebrates 150 years of striking gold at Alder Gulch. **IFL**