

Grand Loop Of Yellowstone National Park Yellowstone- Gibbon- Madison- Firehole Rivers

Total Estimated Travel around the entire loop (excluding
stoppage time)

162 miles ---4 hours 40 minutes

Camp Buffalo Bill to Fishing Creek General Store

(Fishing License, drinks, snacks, souvenirs, and flies)

34 Miles --- 55 minutes

Fishing Bridge to Hayden Valley

(Possible Buffalo and Other Game sightings and approximately two miles of
fishing along the Yellowstone River)

Haydon Valley to Gibbon Toilet Vault

22 Miles --- 37 Minutes

(Open Meadow Fishing)

Gibbon Toilet Vault to Gibbon Falls

5 Miles - - - 9 Minutes

(Fish in rather deep ravine near the falls)

Gibbons Falls to Madison Campground

5 Miles - - - 8 Minutes

(Fish the Gibbon Meadow, the Madison River, Confluence of Firehole and Gibbon)

Madison Campground to Firehole Canyon Loop

2.7 - - - 5 Minutes

(Primarily Scenic Waterfall with some Brown Trout Opportunities near the entrance)

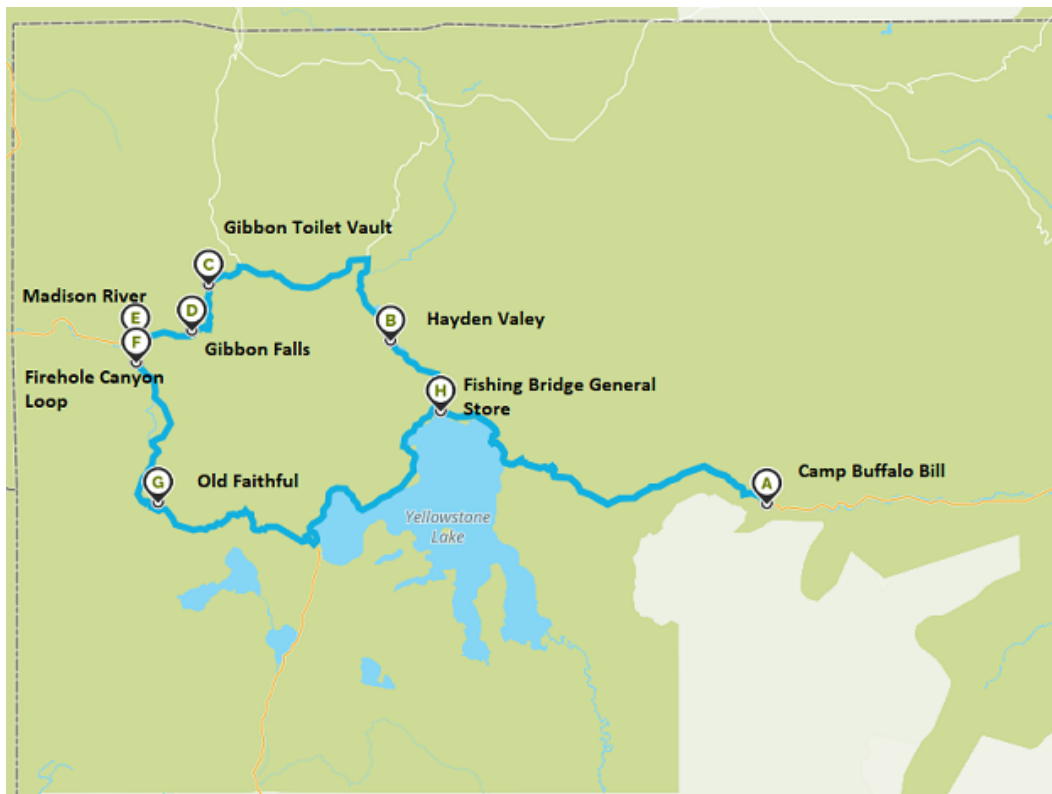
Firehole Canyon Loop to Old Faithful

16 Miles - - - 29 Minutes

(Primarily scenic with lots of Seismic Activity and Old Faithful/Old Faithful Lodge)

Old Faithful to Camp Buffalo Bill

74 Miles - - - 2 Hours





Built in 1931, this store is located near the Yellowstone River and the historic Fishing Bridge. This general store has groceries, ice cream, souvenirs, and apparel available for purchase. There is also a sit-down restaurant inside that serves burgers and sandwiches. This location is open only during the summer season.

Fishing the Yellowstone River- Yellowstone Lake to Upper Falls

This reach of river used to be one of the most popular and productive stretches of trout water in the entire world, but the introduction of Lake Trout changed all that. Still, opportunities exist for skilled anglers who like to spot and stalk their quarry. Given the large size of the river and relatively small fish population, this is a tough place to fish blind. The river here opens on July 15th and fishes best right out of the gates; don't bother after the first week or so of August, as most of the fish will have returned to the lake. There is no population of resident fish here so after the spawners have left it's game over.

Hatches are both plentiful and diverse in this section. The most important hatches are Green Drakes, PMD's, Caddis, and Yellow Sally's but you could very well encounter larger stonefly species or other varieties of Drakes. To be successful, the angler will have to both locate a rising fish and determine what insect it is feeding on. Since most fish are over 20", this can be a worthwhile endeavour. Longer, lighter leaders are required here than on the canyon stretches of river. Think 10ft of 4x or 5x as a starting point.

Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone

The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone is the section of river from the falls down to the bridge just east of Roosevelt Junction along the Northeast Entrance Road. This section of river contains resident fish only and has not been impacted by the situation in Yellowstone Lake. Fish populations are healthy and plentiful.

Fishing in the Grand Canyon kicks off during the first week of July when the water has dropped sufficiently and the Salmonflies and Golden Stones begin hatching. This reach of river hosts the longest hatch of the big stones in the Park, as I have witnessed them as late as August 6 during years of cool

weather and high water. They typically peter out during the later half of July, however. At this time, attractor dries and hopper patterns become the most productive choices. The fishing holds up well during August, though hot, bright afternoons often slow dry fly fishing and force the angler to dredge down deep with a streamer. As the weather cools in September, attractors and hoppers remain good bets, but look for hatches of Blue Winged Olives on cloudy days. Streamers become important during the cooler parts of the day, with the best dry action in the afternoons; the exact opposite of August. October is hit or miss on this section. Warm, Indian Summer weather brings similar fishing to September, but this section will shut down with the first real cold snap.

One interesting aspect of this fishery is how much the water drops throughout the summer. In early July, the water is high and the fish are shoved up against the banks. At this time, wading is not really even necessary as you would be walking on top of the fish. As the water drops, it gains more character and the fish start to spread out. Keep this in mind as your July honey hole is likely to be an ankle deep riffle in late September.



Hayden Valley – This valley, centrally located in Yellowstone National Park, is the first place to go to see wildlife in Yellowstone. As you drive along this beautiful, broad valley you are likely to see herds of bison, scattered elk (and the occasional herd), and the occasional grizzly bear. You are also likely to see waterfowl, including ducks, Canada geese and pelicans, swimming in or lounging near the Yellowstone River.

Gibbon Meadows to Gibbon Falls

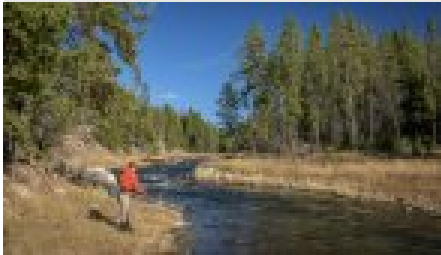


This is the upper half of the Gibbon Canyon, and is much more forgiving water than the meadows. This stretch used to be roadside, but the road was re-routed in 2009, forcing anglers to hike in from either end. Brown Trout are found here, with most fish in the 6"-12" range. This is again attractor dry country, and

the fish typically respond well in the pocket-water environment. The main draw of this stretch is it is one of the first spots in the region where you can toss attractor dries, as early as the first or second week of June. Warm water slows fishing in midsummer, but there is a nice window of 3-4 weeks of good fishing.

Choose flies that mimic a smaller stonefly or larger caddis, the most numerous bugs on this stretch.

Gibbon Falls to Mouth



Most of this stretch is still canyon water, although there is a decent sized meadow just upstream from the Madison Junction, where the Gibbon meets the Firehole to form the Madison. Most of this 5 mile stretch is visible from the road and the river runs 20' to 30' wide. Fishing is available for resident trout from late May to early July, with

migrants from Hebgen Lake arriving in October.

The lower Gibbon is often fishable with nymphs on opening day, with dry fly fishing kicking in closer to the middle of June. Resident fish run 6-14" on average, but are not nearly as numerous as on the Firehole. Choose stonefly nymphs with a small caddis dropper if you are going subsurface, and general attractors or terrestrials if you are fishing dries. Hoppers, ants, and beetles are especially important in the meadow, with attractors being more useful in the canyon water.

In the fall, large (16"-20") Browns and Rainbows from Hebgen Lake show up in this section of the Gibbon. While the fish are far less numerous than in the Madison, the crowds pursuing these brutes are far smaller as well. Nymphing or streamer fishing is best during the fall. I like a stonefly trailed by a baetis nymph if I am going to fish under an indicator. Streamer patterns vary, as you

are trying to illicit an aggressive response from the fish more so than matching any specific baitfish. The Gibbon lacks the many long, deep holes found on the Madison, so the hiding spots for the lake fish tend to be more subtle and harder to spot. Just remember that these fish are used a to a lake environment and do not want to fight the current any more than they have to.



The river runs under the Grand Loop Road at Biscuit Basin, approximately 2 miles north of Old Faithful. The next 10 miles of river, down to Firehole Falls, offer the best and most consistent fishing on the river. In this stretch the river is often visible from the road and there are numerous pull-offs and parking areas that provide access. I compare the river in this stretch to a large spring creek. Aquatic weeds are abundant and there are many long, slick glides where trout will often be found rising. Long, choppy riffles also provide ideal habitat and easier to approach fish.



At Firehole Falls, the river makes a dramatic change in character as it plunges into a deep canyon. There is only about a mile of fishable water below the falls before the Firehole meets the Gibbon to form the world famous Madison River. However, this stretch of river is important to anglers for two reasons. First, migrating fish from Hebgen Lake have access to this stretch, giving the angler a chance for a large trout. Second, this reach of water has a salmonfly hatch which, due to the thermal heating, is one of the earliest in the region. This section of river is accessed via the one-way Firehole Falls Drive, which branches off the main road just south of Madison Junction.