



Yellowstone National Park: Heart Lake and Mount Sheridan

Spend a few nights in Yellowstone National Park on this 23.1-mile out-and-back complete with lakeside campsites and spectacular summit views.

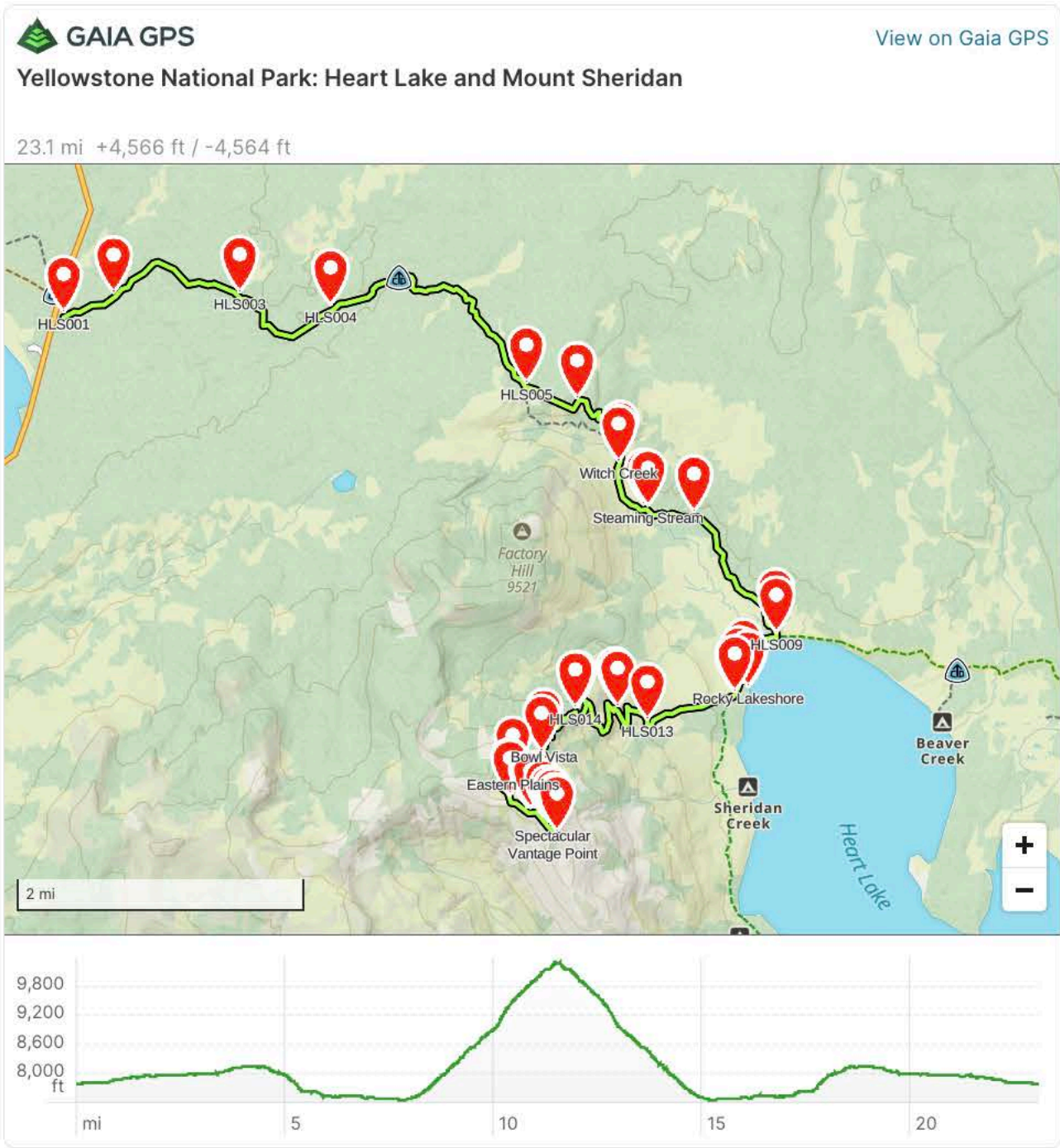
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Let the crowds wait for Old Faithful: Experience the rugged side of Yellowstone National Park by trekking past steaming creeks and old-growth lodgepole en route to the sprawling Heart Lake and the regal Mount Sheridan on this 23.1-mile out-and-back.

From the trailhead, hike northeast along Heart Lake Trail. The path weaves through lodgepole forests (singed in the 1988 Yellowstone fires), passing the occasional fumarole and hot spring along the way. After 7.3 miles on the flat, well-maintained path, you'll hit the Heart Lake Ranger Station before reaching the shores of the colossal lake just minutes later. At the Y-junction, follow Heart Lake Trail around the western edge of the lake and spend the night at one of the lakeside campsites (reservations required).



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Day two: Tackle the hardest section of the trip—a 3.5-mile scramble up Mount Sheridan. The route starts with a switchback climb through a fallen lodgepole field and ends with a traverse through Engelmann spruce along the mountain's ridge. At the summit, take in sweeping panoramas of Heart Lake, as well as glimpses of Yellowstone, Lewis, and Shoshone lakes; the Absaroka and Teton ranges are perched majestically in the background. When you've had your fill, turn around to begin the trek back to your campsite and the trailhead.

-Mapped by Jeff Chow

MAPS USGS Mount Sheridan (\$8, store.usgs.gov); Trails Illustrated Maps: Old Faithful, Yellowstone Lake (\$10, natgeomaps.com)

GUIDEBOOK Hiking Yellowstone National Park, by Bill Schneider (\$17, falcon.com)

PERMITS Backcountry permits are required for all overnight stays. Obtain in person no more than 48 hours in advance of your trip (307-344-2160; nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/backcountryhiking.htm). Reserve campsites in advance by mail or in person (\$20 fee; nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/backcountrytripplanner.htm).

SEASON Most entrances (except the North and Northeast entrances) close in November and late March/early April to prepare roads for winter and summer seasons. Interior park roads are only open to over-snow vehicles during the winter season. Check for road closures at nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/hours.htm

WEATHER Get the forecast for Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks at crh.noaa.gov/riw/?n=ynp_gtnp

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