



SCENIC-DRIVE COMPANION

Cody to Yellowstone East Entrance Scenic Drive

A bounded half-day east-approach drive for travelers based in Cody who want Wapiti Valley and the Yellowstone boundary without turning the outing into an improvised park-interior plan.



Cody base -> Wapiti Valley -> Yellowstone East Entrance boundary -> return to Cody.

Cody

Use it as the practical base for fuel, food, lodging, and the start of the drive.

Wapiti

Use one planned valley stop when you want the middle of the drive to feel intentional.

East Entrance

Use it as the boundary finish, not the start of an unplanned park loop.

Check Wyoming 511 for the Cody-side highway and the National Park Service road-status map for the East Entrance and park interior. Check again the morning of the drive.



Current trip page

Scan for the online itinerary, connected segments, and place guides.



TRIP AT A GLANCE

HALF-DAY OUT-AND-BACK

Bound the scenic drive before leaving Cody

Faster

Turn around at a legal valley stop before the entrance when access, weather, or daylight is poor.

Standard

Drive to the boundary and back with one or two short valley pauses.

Slower

Add a named Wapiti Valley attraction, picnic, or hike and give the outing most of a day.

Before departure

Check two systems and settle the base.

- ☐ Check Wyoming 511 for the Cody-side highway.
- ☐ Check National Park Service road status for the East Entrance and park interior.
- ☐ Fuel in Cody and carry water and food.
- ☐ Identify any Wapiti Valley stop in advance.

- ☐ Keep the East Entrance as the boundary finish unless a separate park itinerary already exists.
- ☐ Allow for wildlife, construction, scenic traffic, and photo stops.
- ☐ Use legal pullouts only.
- ☐ Protect a comfortable return to Cody.

Chosen version

Wapiti stop

Road-status check time

Return-to-Cody target



Half-day out-and-back from Cody

8:00-8:30 A.M.

Leave Cody prepared

Settle fuel and the road check before driving west.

8:30-10:00 A.M.

Follow the North Fork Shoshone River

Use one or two legal pullouts or a preselected Wapiti Valley stop. Do not stop on an unsafe shoulder for wildlife or a photograph.

10:00-10:45 A.M.

Reach the East Entrance area

Finish at the boundary and turn around only where permitted. Enter the park only if a separate Yellowstone itinerary already accounts for the time beyond the gate.

10:45 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

Return through the valley

Use the return for the stop skipped westbound, then reach Cody for lunch or an afternoon attraction.

The exact clock matters less than protecting a comfortable return. Start earlier when summer traffic, heat, smoke, or a timed Cody activity matters.

Cody departure

Wapiti stop / pullout

Boundary arrival

Return target



Change the depth without changing the safety rules

Eastbound after Yellowstone

Reverse the sequence when leaving the park through the East Entrance. Treat Cody as the destination and first full-service reset.

Keep Wapiti proportional

Use modest valley pauses if the park day already ran long, and do not assume every valley business will still be open at arrival time.

Cut order

Remove scenery extras before practical margin.

1 Cut optional pullouts

The drive remains scenic without stopping at every opportunity.

2 Shorten the Wapiti stop

Keep one deliberate pause rather than several small obligations.

3 Turn around before the entrance when conditions require it

The faster version is valid when access, weather, or daylight is poor.

4 Never cut the road-status check, fuel margin, or daylight

Those controls define whether the drive is still a good idea.

Eastbound arrival plan

Cody reset / overnight



FINAL PLAN

READY TO DRIVE

Keep the gateway sequence bounded

Boundary rule

U.S. 20 reaches the East Entrance on the Wyoming side. Yellowstone interior travel needs a separate plan.

Current-condition rule

Most Yellowstone roads are seasonal, and weather or incidents can change access after projected opening dates. Check again the morning of the drive.

Wyoming 511 result

NPS road-status result

Fuel / water settled

One Wapiti Valley stop

Turnaround point

Return-to-Cody target

Notes from the road

**Current trip page**

Use the online scenic-drive page for the Cody-Wapiti-East Entrance segment, the East Entrance place guide, and the west re-entry trip from West Yellowstone into Idaho.

Revision: August 2026.