



ROUTE 20 CONNECTOR PLANNER

Montana Route 20 Connector Planner

Use West Yellowstone as the decision point between a park-day stop, a short transfer to Island Park, and a longer continuation to Ashton.



Yellowstone park day -> West Yellowstone reset -> Idaho line -> Island Park -> optional Ashton continuation

Stop in town

Use West Yellowstone for fuel, food, lodging, and a clean end to the park day.

Short transfer

Continue to Island Park for a quiet overnight or one measured nature stop.

Longer continuation

Continue to Ashton when the day should finish in a conventional eastern Idaho town base.

This is a connector planner, not a full Montana road trip. Verify Yellowstone access, Idaho road conditions, wildlife, weather, lodging, and seasonal closures before travel.



Current Montana Route 20 guide

Scan for the gateway page, scenic drives, segments, and Idaho continuation.

Four-page connector planner - Revision: August 2026.



Why West Yellowstone matters

PLAN SEPARATELY

Yellowstone is its own day

Park roads, entrance access, construction, wildlife traffic, and seasonal closures can change the pace. Do not treat the park as an ordinary highway link.

RESET FIRST

Use West Yellowstone before adding more driving

Fuel, eat, sleep, and decide whether the group is still ready for a short Idaho transfer.

CHOOSE ONE CONTINUATION

Island Park or Ashton

Island Park offers a quieter forest-and-river setting. Ashton gives the day a clearer town-based finish and easier next launch toward Rexburg.

Stop for the night

West Yellowstone lodging

Next-day departure

Continue west

Island Park or Ashton

Latest acceptable arrival

Remove the rigid arrival time. Wildlife, park traffic, weather, and a late exit from Yellowstone can all make the connector slower than it looks.



STOP SELECTION

ONE PRIMARY STOP

Build one practical connector day

West Yellowstone

Gateway town for lodging, supplies, and the decision to stop or continue after the park.

Reset completed

Island Park

Dispersed forest-and-river corridor for lodging, meals, and one optional nature stop.

Chosen stop

Ashton

Conventional town base beyond the resort corridor with an easier launch toward Rexburg.

Arrival plan

One-stop rule

Choose Big Springs, Harriman State Park, or Henrys Lake only when access, conditions, and time support it. Do not stack all three.

Stop to skip

My connector plan

Keep the day proportional to the park exit.

Starting point

Primary destination

One optional stop

Lower-effort backup

Fuel / food plan

Lodging

Latest acceptable arrival

What gets cut first



BEFORE DEPARTURE

VERIFY LIVE DETAILS

Montana connector checks

Yellowstone exit checks

- ☐ Park road and entrance status
- ☐ Construction and seasonal closures
- ☐ Wildlife and traffic margin
- ☐ Fuel and food handled in town
- ☐ Driver energy honestly assessed

Idaho continuation checks

- ☐ Idaho road and weather status
- ☐ Island Park or Ashton lodging
- ☐ One nature stop selected at most
- ☐ Night driving avoided when possible
- ☐ Rigid arrival time removed

Contacts and reservations

Lodging

Primary stop

Roadside / emergency contact

Final connector decision

Stop in West Yellowstone

Continue to Island Park

Continue to Ashton

Final summary

One gateway, one decision, one safe arrival.

Departure point and time

End point

Primary stop

Backup



Continue with the current Montana state page

Use the online guide for the West Yellowstone decision point, Island Park and Ashton scenic drives, and the Idaho state handoff.

Revision: August 2026.