

Photo Destination: Grand Teton National Park

by Photographer Raymond Klass

Located just South of Yellowstone National Park in Western Wyoming, the Grand Teton National Park is home to one of the most distinctive and striking landscapes in all of America. The rugged Teton Range rises sharply from the shores of Jenny and Jackson Lake, creating incredibly pronounced peaks. The steep slopes are filled with abundant wildlife, wildflowers, and some of the best hiking trails I've ever experienced.

One of the great features of this park is in its design. There is literally something for every type of visitor here. Those looking for solitude need only hike one of the extended trails to find it. For others, the short loops around Leigh, String, and Jenny Lakes will provide a wilderness experience and some fantastic photo opportunities. On larger Jackson Lake, visitors can launch boats and enjoy the cool water and beautiful panoramic views.

Beauty is all around you at this park, and all of it is close to the unique town of Jackson Hole. For photographers visiting the area, it is worth spending an afternoon just browsing the artisan galleries located throughout the downtown area. The National Museum of Wildlife Art is also located on highway 191 just South of the park, before you reach town.

There are limited accommodations in town, and I would recommend those looking to really experience the park consider staying at one of the many campgrounds, the Jenny Lake Lodge, or Jackson Lake Lodge. All are located within the park, and provide accommodations as close as possible to the prime locations you'll want to be sure and photograph.



Late sleepers beware, the Teton range runs North – South, with the majority of the part located on the East side of the range. This means that if you are looking for shots of the mountains illuminated by golden light, you'll have to get up early. It is also likely you'll want to find your spot early if you're visiting in the busy summer months – expect company at many of the popular spots.





For the first time visitor, start by driving the Teton Park Road from Jackson Lake Junction South to Moose Junction, then make a circle by heading North on 191 to Moran Junction. This will give you a great overview of the park and the distances you'll be driving.

No trip to the Tetons would be complete without a visit to the four iconic spots along Highway 191. From South to North, the first is slightly off the main Highway on Antelope Flats Road, and is known as the Moulton Barn. This is an amazing old barn that lights up golden in the morning, with a panoramic view of the entire Teton Range behind it. One can just imagine how farming in these fields would have felt for the early settlers of the region.

North of Moulton Barn on Highway 191, Schwabacher Road turns off to the left. Take the short dirt road here, and park at the unpaved end



lot. There is a toilet here for your convenience. Find the small footpath leading alongside the Snake River, and follow it until you see a Beaver Dam and finally a pooled up area with a magnificent reflection of the Mount Moran and Teton Range. Though it seems out-of-the-way, this is actually a



very popular spot, and if you're there for sunrise you'll see why. Don't forget your graduated ND filter.

Continuing North of Highway 191, you'll soon reach Snake Bend Overlook. Though the trees have grown since Ansel Adams was first here, this is the spot where his famous Teton image was taken. Walk to the North end of the parking lot – this is the closest you can get to the perspective he had. There is also a small footpath that follows the ridge at the South end of the lot, and this is worth exploring if you have the time.

Finally, no trip to the Tetons is complete without the view from Oxbow Bend, located just after Moran Junction, as you head back to Jackson Lake Junction. There is often wildlife present here both in the morning and evening. Watch for the amazing

reflections of Mount Moran and the Tetons.

If you are able to stay for a longer time in the Tetons, explore some of the trails or take the Ferry across Jenny Lake for a less strenuous experience. For those in search of an extended hike, the trail up to Lake Solitude is long but more than worth the effort.

Teton National Park is a place with an almost infinite number of possibilities. The key here is to keep your eyes open for the magic that is all around this incredible landscape. Photo opportunities vary from vistas to macro, and wildlife both large and small are often seen. Be prepared to fall in love with this location – a day trip here is just not enough, so plan on a couple days, or even a week if you can.