



Navigating the Rental Car System in Whitefish *Tips to Secure a Rental and Recommended Alternatives*

When planning your accommodations in Whitefish, reserving a rental car is a common box on many visitors' checklist. If you're planning a trip this summer, note that visitation in Whitefish and Glacier National Park is significantly higher in June through September, which impacts rental availability. This year, we highly recommend booking a rental as early as possible. For minimized congestion, discounted accommodations, and less demand for car rentals, consider visiting in the spring, fall, or winter.

We recommend checking in with [Budget Rent a Car](#) and [Dollar Car Rental](#), to find a rental as soon as your travel reservations are confirmed. Hertz, Enterprise, Dollar, Avis, and Alamo have rental kiosks at Glacier Park International Airport. Hertz and Dollar also have rentals available at the Whitefish Depot train station, should you arrive by train.

Due to a nationwide shortage, it may be more challenging and more expensive than normal to reserve a car, so here are some tips:

- **We recommend calling the [car rental agency's local number](#) to ensure the most up-to-date availability, rather than referring to a website. Many of the rental car companies have disabled their online booking for rental cars at Glacier Park International Airport due to high volume.**
- Car rental companies are giving a preference to longer rentals because they have limited staff to clean and service shorter rental windows.
- If you have a shorter stay, you can reserve for a longer rental window if that is available, but you won't receive a discount for returning your car early.
- Uber and Lyft are available at Glacier Park International Airport and throughout the Whitefish area, however, expect a potentially long wait for pick up.
- Many hotels have a shuttle service to get you to and from the airport (see below), but you should confirm this with your reservation.

If you aren't able to secure a car, you can visit Whitefish knowing there are alternatives to help you get around, while still being able to experience our most popular activities.

There are many local hotels who offer shuttles to and from Glacier Park International Airport, downtown Whitefish, and Whitefish Mountain Resort. We recommend calling ahead to check if these shuttles are operating with limited capacity, as many of them have been during Covid. Masks or other face coverings are required. Here is a list:

- [Grouse Mountain Lodge](#)
 - Shuttle to and from the airport, Amtrak station, and downtown Whitefish
 - Local shuttle
- [Best Western Rocky Mountain Lodge](#)
 - Airport/Amtrak courtesy shuttle available, 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
 - Local shuttle
- [Hampton Inn & Suites](#)
 - Free shuttle will take you to the airport and to downtown stores and dining.
- [The Lodge at Whitefish Lake](#)
 - Shuttle service to and from airport & Amtrak station
 - downtown Whitefish shuttles 7am-11pm, based on availability
- [The Pine Lodge](#)
 - Year round shuttle available with a 24 hour notice from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM for the airport and Amtrak station.
- [The Firebrand Hotel](#)
 - Shuttle service to and from airport
- [TownePlace Suites](#)
 - Shuttle service to and from airport, Amtrak station and downtown Whitefish

When you want to access terrain outside of the scope of your hotel's shuttle, **consider renting a bike, hopping on the SNOW bus*, or booking a trip with [Whitefish Tours and Shuttle](#)** (aka Whitefish Outfitters). Here's the skinny:

- Bike Rental Options:
 - [Glacier Cyclery & Nordic](#) and [Great Northern Cycle & Ski](#) both offer bike rentals and are conveniently located in downtown Whitefish. [Sportsman & Ski Haus](#) is just a few miles south of town off Highway 93 and is accessible via the Mountain Mall SNOW bus stop. **Heads up** — we recommend calling ahead to reserve your bikes!
 - Several hotels offer bike rentals on site, and [The Firebrand Hotel](#), [The Lodge at Whitefish Lake](#) and [Pine Lodge](#) offer complimentary cruiser bikes for rent on a first-come-first-served basis.
- [SNOW Bus](#): This complimentary transit is a great way to get around town, as the bus makes stops at several downtown locations and popular hotels.
 - The SNOW Bus will run May 29-31, June 5-6 and daily June 12 - September 6, Sept 9-12, Sept 16-19, 2021
 - Many hotels have partnered with the SNOW bus and offer stops at their location, including [The Lodge at Whitefish Lake](#), [Good Medicine Lodge](#), and [Garden Wall Inn](#).
 - You can also easily walk to the [Farmhouse Inn & Kitchen](#), [Firebrand Hotel](#), [Downtowner](#), [Whitefish Downtown Suites](#), and [The Flat](#), from the [Garden Wall Inn](#) stop, which is close to Central Ave.

- The full map of stops [can be found here](#) — and here is a [link to the Summer 2021 schedule](#).
- [Whitefish Tours and Shuttles](#): Their knowledgeable guides will pick you up, bring all the gear you need, and escort you through a day of adventuring. Winter or summer, they have trips planned to maximize each season's offerings. Some of our summer recommendations include:
 - [Flathead National Forest Day Hike](#)
 - [Full Day Glacier National Park Tour](#)
 - [Full day in Polebridge and Boat Tour](#)

Aside from enjoying numerous shops, restaurants, bars and cafes in downtown Whitefish, you can **walk to several well-located spots**. We recommend utilizing the shared use paths ([mapped here](#)) wherever possible, as they follow the Whitefish River and offer great views.

- Sunbathe and swim at Whitefish City Beach via the Whitefish [shared use trails](#).
 - Grab a snack at [Markus Foods](#) on your way! Their pre-made sandwiches from Pig & Olive are becoming quite popular.
- Across the street from one another, grab a bite at [Wich Haus](#) or [Piggyback BBQ](#) (check their website for their live music schedule)
- Enjoy local small-batch beer at [Bonsai Brewing Project](#) via Wisconsin Ave
- Cross the street to [Jalisco Cantina](#), indulge in a margarita and tacos—everything made from scratch

If you've secured a bike, here are some of our top spots that are **easily accessible on two wheels**:

- Hang out at the shores of the [Whitefish Lake State Park](#) via Whitefish [shared use](#) trails
- Enjoy a meal at [The Boat Club Restaurant](#) at the Lodge at Whitefish Lake via the paved path down Wisconsin ave
 - Make a day out of it: call ahead to reserve a boat from their [marina](#) and take a cruise out on Whitefish Lake
- Visit [Last Chair Kitchen & Bar](#) via the paved path down Wisconsin ave. Bring a headlight if you'll be riding back at night, some parts of the path are not as well lit.
- For more information on popular road rides, [check out this article](#). The Whitefish Trail is also a popular mountain biking spot, [read more here](#).