

Alpine wonders draw summer multitudes, but amateur naturalists and wanderers may find sweeter serenity in the spring, fall, or winter. Marvel at giant larch trees as they golden in Seeley Lake during the Alpine Artisans Tour of the Arts in October. On her day in May, take mother to spy harlequin ducks and ouzels diving into the froth of McDonald Creek. The best party of the year, or at least the snowiest, would either be the Whitefish Winter Carnival in February or the Fernie Griz Days Festival in March. Fort Macleod welcomes Santa and his reindeer, alongside horse-drawn carriages, at Alberta's largest Santa Claus parade.

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Well-defined tastes of residents and visitors are fueling a robust local-food movement. Farmers markets are found throughout the region, integral to downtown summers in Fernie, Whitefish, Cranbrook and Missoula. Buy producer networks have formed to meet popular demand at community-minded restaurants. Inspired by foodie groups like Nourish the Flathead and PEAS Farm, young volunteers invest sweat equity in community gardens and greenhouses. Perennial favorites include Flathead Valley Creamery's artisanal cheeses, and the Flathead Valley Apple and Taber corn. Residents are borderline obsessed by wild treasures: huckleberries, saskatoons, morel mushrooms, freshly caught trout, and venison.

Common sense of life is served daily at Chris' Restaurant in Cranbrook, where the Flathead Valley Medicine Cafe in East Glacier Park. Locals take their guests to Nina's Hillside Garden in Kimberley and the Curry Bowl in Fernie. With an ethnic twist in Whitefish, Pescado Blanco serves locally grown food from several farms. In Missoula, the Flathead Valley Food Project serves wonderful ice creams with local ingredients and milk from Hutterite dairy farms.

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Lead project partners include National Geographic Maps and the Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council, with regional coordination provided by Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance and the Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau.

We gratefully acknowledge funding support for the reprint and redesign of this MapGuide from the following: Alberta Parks and Environment, Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance, Central Montana Regional Tourism, Flathead-Kootenai and Island of Lake Superior Chambers of Commerce, Glacier Country Association, Glacier County Regional Tourism, Kalispell Convention and Visitors Bureau, Kootenay Rockies Tourism, Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, Poudre Ridge Mercantile & Bakery, Southwest Montana Regional Tourism, Tourism Ferie, and Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Text by Steve Thompson and Shenna Pate; map notes by Anne Burmford, David Thompson, Steve Thompson, and Shenna Pate

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MAP & GUIDE

Catch melting ice fields while you can by taking

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