



AP Photo/Beth J. Harpaz

This Sept. 4, 2017 photo shows a view from the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park in Montana, showing a lake ringed by mountains and tall trees. As of early July, the famed road was fully open but much of it was closed late in the summer of 2017. Fortunately, the massive park offers many options for sightseeing, hiking and recreation.

Surprising Montana

See the vanishing glaciers and don't forget to carry bear spray

By **BETH J. HARPAZ**
AP Travel Editor

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, Montana — I had a lot of expectations heading to Montana last summer. I expected to check off my bucket-list dream of driving Glacier National Park's Going-to-the-Sun Road. I expected to be ready should I meet any bears because I'd brought "bear bells" to repel them. And I was sure I'd love the local meat pies called "pasties."

Wrong on all counts. The Going-to-the-Sun Road is fully open as of early July but when my husband and I arrived in early September of 2017, much of it was closed due to fires. In addition, the rangers told me my bear bells were more likely to attract curious bears than repel them.

And, sorry, Montanans: I tried one pasty in a cafe and another in a bakery, but for my palate, there's a reason the word pasty is pronounced so that it rhymes with nasty. The good news: All the other meals my husband and I had were terrific, from a park restaurant to Southern food in Whitefish.

I also found a hidden gem of a museum about Chinese immigrants in Butte, along with a freaky poison lake.

The saddest surprise of all? Glacier Park's glaciers are melting so fast, the National Park Service predicts they'll be gone in 12 years.

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Driving the Going-to-the-Sun Road was a trip I'd dreamed of for years. Unfortunately my 2017 trip coincided with fires that have become an annual late-summer plague here. Most of the road was closed.

But a wall of mountains kept the eastern part of the park smoke-free, so we headed there. Highlights included the Hidden Lake Trail, where you make your way along a winding path through a vast alpine meadow toward a backdrop of craggy mountains. The hikers appear so small in the open field beneath the looming mountains that it brings to mind one of those Japanese paintings with tiny human figures dwarfed by nature's grandiosity.

That night, we had an elegant supper at Many Glacier Hotel — including scrumptious bison chili and a huckleberry-flavored cocktail — before watching the sun set behind black mountain peaks ringing the lake on the hotel's doorstep. The next morning, we rose early for an 11-mile round-trip trek to Grinnell Glacier.

You can cut a few miles off the Grinnell Glacier hike by taking a boat to a trailhead, but we opted to do the whole thing by foot. We set out at dawn, wearing jackets for the chilly morning but shorts to keep our legs cool as the day heated up. The elevation here is 6,500 feet, including 1,600 feet gained along the trail, but we'd gotten accustomed to the altitude and felt fine.

BEARS AND THE GLACIER

The most unsettling thing about the hike was the sign at the start of the trail: "You are entering grizzly country ... There is no guarantee of your safety." That's why I'd brought



AP Photo/Beth J. Harpaz

This 2017 photo shows Big Hole National Battlefield in Wisdom, Montana. The park tells the story of how the U.S. Cavalry chased the Nez Perce tribe in a running battle over 1,500 miles as the Indians tried to flee to Canada in the late 1800s. The tribe camped here by a river and was massacred by soldiers who fired into tipis as they slept. A field of tipis stripped of their covers marks the haunting site.



AP Photo/Beth J. Harpaz

A mountain peak is seen behind tall trees in this 2017 photo from Glacier National Park in Montana. The National Park Service says that the park's glaciers are melting fast and will have disappeared by the year 2030.

bear bells. Too bad the ranger told me not to use them. Instead, she recommended bear spray, which we bought. Her other tip: Sing, clap and make noise. Bears usually keep away if they hear you. To my husband's dismay, I never shut up the entire trail. I sang Broadway tunes and "American Pie," recited Winston Churchill's "Never surrender!" speech and belted out this "Sound of Music" riff: "The hills are alive with the sound of bear songs."

In the end, we didn't see any bears. But we did see mountain goats grazing above us, moose wading in a turquoise lake below, and at the trail's turnaround point, the thing we'd come for: Grinnell Glacier, complete with floating icebergs. A sobering placard says that the ice sheets are a fraction of what they were 100 years ago and that they are expected to disappear by 2030.

BUTTE

Butte was a mining boomtown in the late 19th and early 20th century. Many of its attractions today speak to that era, like the 34-room Copper King mansion, built in the 1880s by William A. Clark, one of the richest men of his time. Today the mansion is a B&B with guided tours.

Butte's Mai Wah Museum tells

the story of its Chinese community, 2,000 strong at its height. It's housed in buildings that were part of Butte's Chinatown, with artifacts from the original Mai Wah noodle parlor, cheongsam-style dresses from a family exhibit and a 1901 directory that listed 35 businesses, from laundries to tailors to drugstores.

And don't miss the Berkeley Pit. This toxic lake, a mile long by a half-mile wide, was once an open copper mine. Today it's filled with water saturated with heavy metals and chemicals. For \$2, you can access a viewing platform to see the pool with its odd blue-green hue and hear the sirens going off to keep birds from landing. The woman in the gift shop who sells tickets jauntily announces to all comers: "There's only one rule: No swimming!"

WHITEFISH AND BIG HOLE

We all love trying authentic local cuisine, but after my aversion to pasties, I was open to other ideas. Rave reviews drew us to Tupelo Grille in Whitefish. Wait, gumbo and seafood in Montana? I can only tell you, it was outstanding. After dinner, we hit the Tuesday evening farmers market. It was huckleberry season, with plenty of treats for dessert.

AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

A s'more without the campfire

S'mores may conjure memories of warm nights and sleep-away camp, but it doesn't need to be summertime to capture the flavors of this treat; the combination of wheaty graham crackers, rich chocolate, and sweet, gooey toasted marshmallow is good any time of year.

We wanted to package s'mores into a neat blossom cookie, one that would give us all the flavor without the sticky, burned fingers. We made a basic butter cookie dough for the base and proceeded to boost its flavor by mixing in graham cracker crumbs.

To really highlight the sweet, whole-wheat flavor of the grahams and to add some crunch, we also rolled the balls of cookie dough in more crushed graham crackers. A halved marshmallow sat neatly on top of the baked cookie and, once melted, took on the same size and shape as the cookies.

To get a brulee on the marshmallows without the burn, we ran the baked and topped cookies under the broiler until the marshmallows developed a toasty-roasty top. At last we turned to the crowning touch: the chocolate.

Rather than use bar chocolate as with traditional s'mores, we thought we'd follow the dressed-up vibe of this cookie and top it with a Hershey's Kiss hat for the same chocolate flavor with a touch of flair.



Joe Keller/America's Test Kitchen via AP

A s'mores blossom cookie rivals (or betters) the taste of a s'more, no campfire required.

S'MORES BLOSSOM COOKIES

Servings: 24 cookies
Start to finish: 30 minutes

1 1/4 cups (6 1/4 ounces) all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup (3 1/2 ounces) sugar
8 whole graham crackers, crushed into fine crumbs (1 cup)

1 large egg, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
12 large marshmallows, halved crosswise
24 Hershey's Kisses, unwrapped
Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in bowl.

Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat butter, sugar, and 1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add egg and vanilla and beat until incorporated. Reduce speed to low, slowly add flour mixture, and mix until just combined.

Spread remaining 1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs in shallow dish. Working with 1 tablespoon dough at a time, roll into balls, then toss in graham cracker crumbs to coat; space dough balls evenly on prepared sheets. Bake, 1 sheet at a time, until just set and beginning to crack on sides, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cookies cool on sheets for 5 minutes.

Adjust oven rack 10 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Place 1 marshmallow half, cut side down, in center of each cookie. Broil cookies until marshmallows are deep golden brown, 30 to 45 seconds, rotating sheet halfway through broiling for even browning if needed. Transfer sheet to wire rack and immediately place 1 candy in center of each marshmallow, pressing down gently. Repeat with remaining cookies, marshmallows, and kisses. Let cookies cool completely before serving.

COOKING ON DEADLINE

Watermelon Strawberry Smoothie

By **KATIE WORKMAN**
Associated Press

Holy mother of summer, it's gotten HOT. My dog is sleeping in our shower because the tiles are cool. I'm testing recipes in the morning because I don't want my oven cranking all afternoon. And (this is how I know it's really hot), I may be coming close to drinking my daily recommended amount of water.

But water can get a little boring.

All this by way of saying, if you have a blender, get it out. Buy frozen berries and other frozen fruit, or freeze the fresh stuff yourself. Cut watermelon into chunks and stash those in the freezer.

Have some honey or agave or simple syrup on hand. Blend it all up, maybe with some crushed ice, or juice, or even some sort of milk or nut milk or yogurt for those of you who are into the creamier thing. Drink. Rinse and repeat.

After 5 p.m., you may also add liquor to the grownups' glasses. After 4 if it's a Sunday. After 3 if it's above 90 degrees Fahrenheit outside and it's a Sunday.



Cheyenne Cohen via AP

This May 2018 photo shows a watermelon strawberry smoothie in New York. This drink is from a recipe by Katie Workman.

Servings: 2
Start to finish: 5 minutes

2 cups frozen watermelon chunks
1 cup frozen strawberries
1/2 cup crushed ice
1 1/2 cups orange juice, preferably fresh
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon agave or honey, or to taste
Remove the watermelon and berries from the freezer and let sit at room temperature for 10 minutes to soften just slightly.
Place all the ingredients in a blender. Process until blended and thick. Serve in glasses with straws.