

# Go West Young Dog, Go West.

Traveling with Dogs to National Parks and Discovering First Class Accommodations.

— by Pamela S. Hogle



It's easy to plan a multi-day vacation that takes in Yellowstone, the Black Hills and the Badlands in South Dakota while enjoying first class accommodations and ensuring that your dog enjoys the vacation as much as you do. On a cross-country driving trip from St. Petersburg to Lolo, Montana in May, we planned a five-day stop in the area with our two dogs.

Our first destination was Anise's BnB4Pets in Hot Springs, South Dakota. Owned and operated by Stephanie Anise, a true dog lover if I ever met one, the bed-and-breakfast offers two spacious, and very reasonably priced, suites. Ours had a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, living room with a daybed and fireplace. The property is incredibly dog friendly with several large fenced areas and miles of hiking just outside the door.

In addition to what she advertises as "the most dog-friendly accommodations in the Black Hills," Stephanie also offers dog daycare and boarding services, and has several dogs of her own, so there are sure to be other dogs on the property. She can also accommodate travelers with horses and cats. Pet owners are requested to send proof of their pets' current vaccinations before reservations will be confirmed. No extra fees are assessed for guest pets, but owners are responsible for any damage.

Guests are welcomed with homemade coffee cake and doggy treats. Stephanie prepares a delicious breakfast — we were lucky enough to get breakfast burritos one morning. Best of all,



Stephanie works with Karen's Kitchen, a local personal chef service. Karen prepares fabulous several-course dinners and leaves the food and all dishes and serving ware in the suite — she even accommodates special needs. Our vegetarian dinner was ready when we arrived and there was enough left over for another meal. Karen picks up the dishes the next day.

Ideally located for touring the Black Hills and the Badlands, Anise's is a great place to settle in for a few days. We visited Badlands National Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial as well as the Crazy Horse Memorial. At Badlands — and all National Parks — leashed dogs are allowed on paved and gravel roads and in campgrounds only, not on hiking trails. There is plenty to see even within these restricted areas. At Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse, pets must wait in the car, so consider the weather and their comfort before heading to these parks. Well-behaved pets can stay behind in a crate in your suite.

Wind Cave National Park and Custer State Park offer hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities — we saw our first bison in Wind Cave National Park, as well as antelope and many prairie dogs.



Winding roads through Custer State Park offer spectacular views and interesting rock formations. Dogs are welcome on paved roads, in campgrounds, and on some hiking trails.

Besides these parks, the Black Hills area offers plenty of entertainment for doggy visitors. Stephanie had prepared a list of additional dog-friendly sites and walks in the area for us. The town of Hot Springs offers visitors day spas, hot springs, art galleries, and the Mammoth Site — a museum built around the world's largest mammoth research facility. Contact Anise's BnB4Pets at [www.bnb4pets.com](http://www.bnb4pets.com) or call Stephanie at 800.794.4142.

From South Dakota, we headed into Montana for a visit to historic and beautiful Chico Hot Springs Resort, in Pray, Montana on our way to Yellowstone National Park. This dog-friendly resort offers lodge and cabin accommodations with an acclaimed restaurant on-site and a cozy, rustic lobby where guests can read by the fire or take advantage of free wireless internet. Canines are welcome to hang out with their families in the lobby, and perhaps nap by the fireplace. The main dining room features elegant meals with most of the produce grown locally in the resort's gardens and greenhouse. An outstanding wine list and dramatically delicious desserts round out the dining experience. Don't miss the flaming oranges. The breakfast buffet is also served in the main dining room. A poolside grill and the Chico Saloon round out the dining choices on site.

Photos left to right: Outdoor dining at Anise's BnB4Pets; A puppy enjoys the fresh air at Chico Hot Springs Resort; A cozy room at Anise's BnB4Pets; Dogs romp outdoors at Anise's BnB4Pets.

Of course, a main attraction at Chico is the hot springs pool, an outdoor pool big enough for swimming laps — filled with natural hot spring water. The larger pool is usually about 96 degrees and the smaller pool is about 103 degrees. Dogs are not permitted in the pool, but might enjoy exercising off leash on the vast lawns and hiking trails surrounding the resort. Guests can take trail rides on the



Chico horses year-round or, in winter, sign up for a two-hour or half-day dogsled trek with a veteran musher and team. For the less outdoorsy, the Day Spa offers a full range of luxury spa services, and there are numerous beautiful spots on-site to relax and enjoy the scenery.

Our room in the Fisherman's Lodge featured two queen-size beds and opened out onto a long grass area where our dogs enjoyed playing ball and relaxing. Other accommodations range from rustic cabins to family-sized cottages and chalets. Rates vary by room and by season, but start at about \$79. Chico Hot Springs Resort at [www.chicohotspings.com](http://www.chicohotspings.com) or call 800.468.9232.

From Chico, we drove about 30 miles to the Northeast entrance of Yellowstone, the world's first national park. We entered through the Roosevelt Arch, driving first to Mammoth Hot Springs before heading to our lodgings near Old Faithful. We visited in late May — even so, we drove through a snowstorm, found snow on the ground at higher elevations, and were unable to view the famous Yellowstone wolves because parts of the park were not yet open for the season.

Though much of the lodging at Yellowstone does not permit dogs, there are several dog-friendly cabins. Call the lodging office at 307.344.7311 and ask specifically for dog-friendly accommodations. They go fast, so reserve early for a spring or summer trip. Our dogs enjoyed viewing Old Faithful and driving through the park. The free-roaming bison with their calves sometimes come wandering onto the roadways, causing roadblocks with great photo opportunities. We sighted our first elk as we drove into the park on our first day there.

Wildlife, including bear and wolf, roam free throughout the park, so dogs must always be leashed. In addition, the boiling water in thermal pools and channels can be dangerous for a curious dog. Therefore dogs are only permitted on paved roads and within 25 feet of roads, parking areas, and campgrounds. Weather permitting, your dog can wait for you in the car while you hike. You'll need to get your meals to go, as dining rooms are not pet-friendly. Then take advantage of the abundant picnic sites throughout Yellowstone. Several kennels and dog daycare facilities are available in the towns surrounding Yellowstone, for travelers wishing to hike into the back country while their dogs take a day off. The Yellowstone Web site lists several: [www.yellowstonenationalpark.com](http://www.yellowstonenationalpark.com)



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