



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Best Time to Travel is Now



GARY HATT

“ Last month, I visited Yellowstone National Park. I didn't drive my bus into the park, I parked it in Baker's Hole Campground, a Forest Service campground in West Yellowstone, just outside the west gate of the park and drove my toad into the park. I noticed that it would be relatively easy to drive a 40 or even a 45-foot bus throughout the park, even with a toad as I saw several big rigs in there, so that should not be an issue.

However, I drove through one of the campgrounds inside the park and noticed that most of the RV spaces are too small to accommodate a 40-foot-long bus. After talking to one of the past employees of that particular campground, he told me that there are only a few spaces large enough for anything much longer than a 30' long RV as these campgrounds were built several years ago when most people were tent camping.

I stopped at several of the roadside attractions in the park. There were a few that when I drove through the parking lot I discovered that there were no available parking spaces. Sometimes it could take several minutes just to drive through a parking area as people were vying for spaces only to find none.

That brings me to the title of this note, the best time to travel is now. There are fewer RVers on the road in September, as most of the kiddos are back in school. That means more spaces available, especially in the state and national parks.

While many RV parks book up a year in advance,

for the most part, you can just drive in and get a pretty good choice of spots after Labor Day, especially during the week. There are fewer families in the parks which equates to more mature people who are quieter and go to bed earlier at night, rather than staying up partying all night like some of the younger generations.

When you travel in September, and even November, you can find parking spaces at many of the more popular attractions inside Yellowstone and other parks. The rest areas along the major routes are not all filled up with RVers, so if you need to take a cat nap during the day, or want to stay over at night, you can usually find a space if you arrive before 6:00 PM or so.

Truck stops are quicker to get in and out of. After Labor Day, the slower seasonal RVers are gone, so you can usually slip in and out of a fuel aisle quickly, as you are dealing with mostly professional truckers by then, who are getting paid by the mile, so they spend as little time as possible at the pump, and when they are finished, they pull ahead to let you in to fuel up.

So bottom line, if you travel in the fall, the weather is cooler, there are fewer bugs, you don't have to monitor your engine temperature when climbing hills so closely, and there are more opportunities to find places to park your bus. So, get out there and put on some miles on your bus and see the country this fall.

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Published By

Bus Conversion Magazine
172 Rainbow Drive #7283
Livingston, TX 77399-1072
(657) 221-0432

Publisher

Gary Hatt
Gary@BusConversionMagazine.com

Editorial

Jorge Escobar
Senior Editor and Art Director
Jorge@BusConversionMagazine.com

Admin/Subscriptions

Sandra VanDenburg
Sandra@BusConversionMagazine.com

Contributing Authors

Jeff Silver
Larry Plachno
Gary Hatt
Rosetta Jamison

Online Discussion Forum

www.BusConversions.com/bbs/
Phil Lyons - Chief Forum Moderator
Phil@BusConversionMagazine.com

Forum Moderators

Nick Badame
Paul Lawry

Website

www.BusConversionMagazine.com

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