

# Montana

The following is an excerpt from the article **Paradise Found: Yellowstone to Glacier on Montana Highway 89**, originally printed in the April 2006 issue. Tear it out and take it with you, or print the PDF version you can find at [ridermagazine.com](http://ridermagazine.com).

# GREATROADS

In the background, Going-to-the-Sun Road clings precariously to the western flanks of Logan Pass in Montana.



A bevy of bison graze near the foot of Mount Holmes in Yellowstone National Park.


- The winding, narrow Kings Hill Scenic Byway portion of Highway 89 swoops through numerous tight sweepers, climbing and descending through small mountain valleys studded with rock formations. The highway reaches its pinnacle at 7,400 feet, crossing the Little Belt Mountains before descending in more tight sweepers along Belt Creek.

- Highway 287 continues for 18 miles alongside the glorious Rocky Mountain Front, hugging the contours of the land in short, straight sections interspersed with short twisties that climb up and over the numerous hills.



The famous stone arch portal at the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park at Gardiner, dedicated by Teddy Roosevelt in 1903.

- Highway 287 converges with Highway 89 at the tidy, tree-lined ranching town of Choteau. From here the Rockies, ever-present on the western horizon, change from a wall of cliffs to a parade of peaks as you approach the crown jewel of the continent that is Glacier National Park. Here, the stunning vistas command your attention, so do the almost constant twists as the narrow, two-lane highway ascends into alpine heaven through stand after stand of quaking aspen trees.

- On Going-to-the-Sun Road, you'll twist and sweep the entire way, but slowly, behind a line of cars and trucks and trailers and, yes, motorcycles steered by folks like you, people who love this planet enough to venture out and place themselves in it. So forget the thrill of the perfectly executed curve for now, and let yourself focus instead on the breathtaking peaks, waterfalls, the wildflowers, the bighorn sheep and, if you're really lucky, the grizzly bears foraging for huckleberries in the alpine meadows of brilliant green. 

Yellowstone National Park, on the south end of Montana, is a veritable three-ring safari and special-effects razzle-dazzle where, no matter what you're taking in, there's something else you're missing. Glacier National Park, on the north end of Montana, is the same way.

- Winding along Going-to-the-Sun Road, a traveler's head bobs from side to side ogling mountain goats grazing on the hillside, then Bird Woman Falls tumbling graciously down the cliff, then the parade of snowcapped peaks constantly vying to eclipse one another.

- On a road trip to Glacier from Yellowstone, the ability to juggle an array of stimuli comes in particularly handy, because Highway 89—which links the two parks—is a veritable cornucopia of geographic, cultural, visual and social contrasts. If variety is the spice of life, then Highway 89 is a habanero chili.



Steam vents, geysers and fumaroles all collaborate to create the alien landscape in the Porcelain Basin area of Norris Geyser Basin in Yellowstone Park.



MAP BY BILL TIFTON/COMPARTMAPS.COM