

RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to RV Travel in **Idaho**

Speed limits, towing rules, NPS reservations, mountain-pass windows,
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

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RV travel in Idaho

Idaho is a quietly excellent RV state that gets overlooked between Yellowstone next door and the Cascades to the west. The Sawtooths, Hells Canyon, the Lochsa River corridor on US-12, and the Snake River Plain together cover everything from alpine to high desert in a long week. Distances between fuel are real -- the Lemhi and Clearwater corridors can run 60-80 miles between pumps -- and the panhandle gets serious winter from November through April. Plan around the snow and the short shoulder season and Idaho rewards you with empty National Forest roads, very cheap state-park camping, and almost no traffic.

Idaho by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	896
Established campgrounds	449
Dump stations	108
Propane refills	45
Potable water fill-ups	152
Laundromats	44
RV showers	46
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	30

Source: iOverlander community database (67% of Idaho spots verified in the last 24 months).

Driving rules

Interstate (cars)	80 mph (rural stretches; 75 mph elsewhere)
Interstate (trucks + towing)	70 mph
US/State highway (cars)	70 mph
US/State highway (towing)	65 mph
Built-up areas	25-35 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
RV passenger seatbelts	Required for front-seat occupants; under-18s in all seats
Cell phone use while driving	Hands-free only; hand-held banned statewide since 2020

Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-84	Main east-west corridor through Boise and the Snake River Plain. Easy big-rig grades; Pendleton-side climbs are in Oregon.
I-86 / I-15	Pocatello to Idaho Falls and on to Montana. Wind exposure on I-15 north of Idaho Falls.
I-90	Coeur d'Alene to the Montana line over Lookout Pass. Chains/M+S required Oct-Apr if posted.
US-95	The state's only continuous north-south route. White Bird Hill (US-95 south of Grangeville) is a 7% sustained grade with sharp curves -- doable in any rig but use low gears.
US-20 / US-26	Idaho Falls to West Yellowstone and through Craters of the Moon. Big rigs fine; high elevation means slow climbs out of Mackay.
US-93	Twin Falls to Salmon via the Lost River valley. Long fuel gaps; gorgeous.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
US-12 (Lochsa Highway, Lolo Pass area)	Two-lane, narrow shoulders, tight curves through old-growth corridor. Megaload-restricted historically; rigs over 40 ft are legal but tough. No truck stops between Kooskia and Lolo (100+ miles).
ID-21 (Banner Summit / Lowman to Stanley)	Steep grades and tight switchbacks above Lowman. Closed at avalanche zones some winters.
ID-75 (Galena Summit)	Open year-round but plowed-narrow in winter. Trailers over 35 ft tough on the switchbacks.
Magruder Corridor (FR 468)	Unpaved primitive road across the Bitterroots. Don't even think about it in a fifth wheel.

Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
Lolo Pass (US-12)	5235 ft	Open year-round but chains-required during storms. Two-lane all the way.
Lookout Pass (I-90)	4710 ft	Interstate-standard; M+S or chains may be required Oct-Apr.
Galena Summit (ID-75)	8701 ft	Open year-round; plows narrow in winter. Steep grades both sides.

Banner Summit (ID-21)	7056 ft	Closes some winters for avalanche control. Check 511 before attempting Lowman-Stanley.
Lost Trail Pass (US-93)	6995 ft	Idaho-Montana border. Chains/M+S Oct-Apr.
White Bird Hill (US-95)	4429 ft	7% grade, sharp curves; use low gears descending. Old road (slower, gentler) available.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Yellowstone NP (West Entrance via Idaho)	\$35/vehicle (7 days), \$80 America the Beautiful annual	All Yellowstone campgrounds reservable via recreation.gov; book 6+ months ahead. Idaho-side access via US-20 from Idaho Falls -- 110 miles.
Craters of the Moon NM & Preserve	\$20/vehicle (7 days)	Lava Flow Campground first-come, no hookups, RVs to 35 ft. Volcanic dust is fierce; close vents on arrival.
City of Rocks National Reserve	Free entry; camping \$13-23/night	Campsites reservable via reserveamerica.com (Idaho state-park system manages). Many sites tight for big rigs -- check site lengths.
Nez Perce NHP (multiple sites)	Free entry	Visitor center near Spalding; no camping on park property. Use Winchester Lake State Park or Hells Gate State Park.
Hagerman Fossil Beds NM	Free entry	Day-use only; no camping. Three Island Crossing State Park nearby for RVs.
Minidoka NHS	Free entry	Day-use historic site (WWII Japanese internment camp); no camping.

State parks

Idaho operates 30+ state parks; Ponderosa (McCall), Farragut (Coeur d'Alene), Henrys Lake, Bruneau Dunes, Three Island Crossing, and Heyburn all have full or partial hookup RV sites. Reservable up to 9 months ahead via reserveidaho.idaho.gov. Non-resident camping runs \$24-44/night with hookups; very good value. Many parks have separate non-resident vehicle fees (\$7/day or \$80/year annual sticker).

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: Idaho BLM lands cover the Owyhee Canyonlands (SW corner), the Salmon River corridor, and big chunks of the Snake River Plain. Free 14-day dispersed camping is the default on BLM land unless posted. The Owyhees are remote, signal-dead, and rocky -- carry recovery gear. BLM offices in Boise, Salmon, and Twin Falls publish current MVUM maps.

National Forest: Idaho has more National Forest land per capita than almost any state -- Sawtooth, Salmon-Challis, Payette, Boise, Caribou-Targhee, Nez Perce-Clearwater, Idaho Panhandle. Free dispersed camping along forest roads is standard; pack out everything. Fire restrictions kick in Jun-Sep

most years. Trailheads near Stanley, McCall, and the Sawtooth NRA fill up summer weekends.

Stay limit: 14 days at any one location (federal rule, applies to BLM and NF dispersed).

Tribal lands

Idaho has 5 federally-recognised tribes: Nez Perce, Coeur d'Alene, Shoshone-Bannock (Fort Hall), Shoshone-Paiute (Duck Valley), and Kootenai. Tribal lands are sovereign; dispersed camping is not permitted without permission, and some areas require tribal fishing/hunting permits separate from state ones. Fort Hall and Coeur d'Alene operate well-run RV parks with hookups. Always check current tribal-government websites for visitor rules.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Reliable in Boise, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Twin Falls, and along I-84/I-15/I-90. Sparse in the Sawtooth valley (Stanley has one seasonal supplier), the Salmon River corridor, and US-12. U-Haul and Tractor Supply locations in larger towns handle refills reliably; rural ranch-supply stores often do too if you ask.

Dump stations: Idaho state parks all have free dump stations for paid guests. Flying J / Pilot stops along I-84 and I-15 charge \$10-15. Forest Service campgrounds in the Sawtooth NRA and Payette NF have free dumps for guests. Boise, Twin Falls, and Idaho Falls have multiple commercial options.

Fuel: Diesel widely available along interstates. Long gaps to watch: US-12 Kooskia to Lolo (100+ miles, last reliable diesel in Kooskia), US-93 between Challis and Salmon (60 miles, station hours unreliable), Owyhee back roads (carry 5 extra gallons), and ID-21 between Lowman and Stanley (50 miles in summer, closed-impassable in winter). Idaho fuel taxes lower than neighbours -- fill up before crossing into Washington or Oregon.

Weather windows

Best months: Late June through September for the mountains; April-October for the Snake River Plain. Daytime highs 70-90 F in summer; nights drop into the 30s above 6,000 ft even in July.

Avoid: November through April for the Panhandle, the Sawtooths, and anywhere over 5,000 ft. Many forest roads are unplowed; ID-21, US-12 (Lolo Pass), and ID-75 (Galena) close or chain-restrict regularly. The southern Snake River Plain stays drivable year-round but gets ice fog and freezing rain.

Climate caution

Snake River Plain wind is genuinely dangerous between Mountain Home and Burley on I-84. Sustained 30-40 mph crosswinds with 60 mph gusts roll a high-sided trailer fast. Watch ID 511 and pull off when warnings post -- there are signed wind shelters at most exits.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol

Dial *477 (*ISP) from a cell phone for Idaho State Police non-emergency

Road conditions<https://511.idaho.gov>

How RV TripGen helps

We flag the long fuel gaps

RV Tripgen calculates fuel-stop spacing on US-12, US-93, and Owyhee back-country routes so you never end up at Lolo Pass with a quarter tank.

Snow-window pass closures, by route

RV Tripgen tracks seasonal closure dates for Banner Summit, Galena, Lolo, and Lost Trail and reroutes shoulder-season trips through lower-elevation alternates.