



## United States Travel Guide

### Description



Flag of the United States of America



default watermark

Hood River, Oregon

“The fact is, with every friendship you make, and every bond of trust you establish, you are shaping the image of America projected to the rest of the world.”

[Michelle Obama](#)

*Our United States page is designed a bit differently. It is a huge country with many various destinations that deserve attention. We divided it into East, Central, and West, along with an honorable mention.*

default watermark

**default watermark**



## Top Six Destinations on the East Coast

- **New York City, New York:** Known as “The Big Apple,” New York City is famous for its iconic landmarks such as Times Square, Central Park, and the Statue of Liberty. It’s a cultural melting pot with world-renowned museums, Broadway theaters, and diverse culinary scenes.
- **Washington, D.C.:** The capital of the United States, Washington, D.C., is home to many national landmarks, including the White House, the Capitol Building, and the Lincoln Memorial. The city also boasts a rich array of museums, particularly those in the Smithsonian Institution. Of course, there are those beautiful cherry blossoms in the spring.
- **Boston, Massachusetts:** Steeped in American history, Boston is known for its pivotal role in the American Revolution, with landmarks like the Freedom Trail and Boston Tea Party Ships. It’s also a vibrant city with prestigious universities, a dynamic arts scene, and the beloved Fenway Park.
- **Miami, Florida:** Miami is celebrated for its vibrant nightlife, beautiful beaches, and Latin American cultural influences, particularly in the Little Havana neighborhood. The city also features stunning Art Deco architecture in South Beach. It is also the gateway to the nearby Everglades and the Florida Keys.
- **Savannah, Georgia:** Savannah is a charming southern city known for its historic districts filled with cobblestone streets, oak-shaded parks, and antebellum architecture. The city’s waterfront and lively arts scene, along with its haunted history, make it a unique and memorable destination.
- **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:** Philadelphia, known as “The City of Brotherly Love,” is rich in American history. It is home to the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence and Constitution were signed. The city also offers a vibrant arts scene, diverse culinary experiences, including the famous Philly cheesesteak. Iconic landmarks such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art with its “Rocky Steps” is loved by tourists.

**default watermark**





## Six Destinations in the Central United States

- **Chicago, Illinois:** Known as “The Windy City,” Chicago is famous for its impressive skyline, which features the Willis Tower and John Hancock Center. The city offers world-class museums like the Art Institute of Chicago. Chicago is known for its beautiful lakeside parks and a vibrant culinary scene with deep-dish pizza and jazz music.
- **Nashville, Tennessee:** Nashville, often called “Music City,” is the heart of the country music industry, home to the Grand Ole Opry and the Country Music Hall of Fame. The city’s lively downtown area boasts honky-tonk bars, live music venues, and a rich history of musical legends.
- **Austin, Texas:** Austin is known for its eclectic live music scene centered around country, blues, and rock. The city also offers a vibrant arts culture, numerous outdoor activities at parks and lakes, and the famous slogan “Keep Austin Weird.”
- **New Orleans, Louisiana:** Famed for its vibrant nightlife, lively music scene, and distinctive cuisine reflecting French, African, and American cultures, New Orleans is an unforgettable destination. The city’s historic French Quarter is known for its colorful buildings, street performers, and the annual Mardi Gras festival.
- **St. Louis, Missouri:** St. Louis is home to the iconic Gateway Arch, which symbolizes the city’s role as the “Gateway to the West.” The city offers a rich history, beautiful parks, and attractions like the St. Louis Zoo and the Missouri Botanical Garden.
- **Kansas City, Missouri/Kansas:** Kansas City is famous for its jazz heritage, barbecue cuisine, and numerous fountains, earning it the nickname “City of Fountains.” Visitors can explore the historic 18th & Vine Jazz District, the National World War I Museum, and vibrant art galleries.

**default watermark**



## Top Six Destinations on the West Coast

- **San Francisco, California:** Known for its iconic Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco is a city of diverse neighborhoods and historic landmarks. Visitors can explore Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz Island, and the charming streets of Chinatown and Haight-Ashbury.
- **Los Angeles, California:** The entertainment capital of the world, Los Angeles is home to Hollywood, stunning beaches like Santa Monica and Venice, and cultural landmarks such as the Getty Center and Griffith Observatory. The city offers a vibrant arts scene, luxury shopping on Rodeo Drive, and a diverse culinary landscape.
- **Seattle, Washington:** Nestled between the Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains, Seattle is known for its iconic Space Needle, Pike Place Market, and vibrant coffee culture. The city also boasts beautiful waterfront parks, a thriving music scene, and stunning views of Mount Rainier.
- **San Diego, California:** Famous for its beautiful beaches, San Diego offers a laid-back vibe with attractions like Balboa Park, the San Diego Zoo, and the historic Gaslamp Quarter. The city's pleasant climate and scenic coastline make it perfect for outdoor activities and water sports.
- **Portland, Oregon:** Portland is celebrated for its eco-friendliness, extensive parks, and vibrant food scene, including numerous food trucks and craft breweries. The city also features unique attractions like Powell's City of Books and the International Rose Test.
- **Las Vegas, Nevada:** Known as "The Entertainment Capital of the World," Las Vegas is famous for its vibrant nightlife, world-class casinos, and elaborate shows. Beyond the Strip, visitors can explore the nearby Red Rock Canyon and the Hoover Dam for stunning landscapes.

default watermark

**default watermark**



## Six Honorable Mentions

- **Hawaiian Islands:** The Hawaiian Islands offer stunning landscapes, including pristine beaches, lush rainforests, and volcanic terrain. Visitors can enjoy activities like snorkeling, surfing, and hiking and immerse themselves in the rich Hawaiian culture and history.
- **Disney World (Florida):** Located in Orlando, Florida, Disney World is a world-renowned theme park complex that includes Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, and Disney's Animal Kingdom. It is a magical destination for families, offering a wide range of rides, entertainment, and attractions for all ages.
- **San Diego, California:** With its perfect climate, stunning beaches, and attractions like the San Diego Zoo and Balboa Park, San Diego is a top destination for outdoor activities. The city's laid-back vibe and vibrant neighborhoods offer a welcoming atmosphere.
- **Puerto Rico:** Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory in the Caribbean, is known for its beautiful beaches, vibrant culture, and historic sites like Old San Juan. Visitors can explore the island's rich heritage, enjoy delicious local cuisine, and experience warmth and hospitality.
- **United States National Parks:** The United States is home to 63 national parks, each offering unique natural beauty and outdoor experiences. From the majestic Grand Canyon to the geothermal wonders of Yellowstone, these parks provide opportunities for hiking and wildlife viewing.
- **Anchorage, Alaska:** Anchorage serves as a gateway to Alaska's wilderness, offering access to stunning landscapes, wildlife, and outdoor adventures. The city's cultural attractions and proximity to natural wonders like Denali National Park make it a unique destination.

## Did you know?

### Country Stats

- **Capital:** The capital city of the United States is Washington, D.C.
- **Population:** The United States has an estimated population of over 331 million people (2021).
- **Area:** The U.S.'s total land area is about 3.8 million square miles, making it the third-largest country in the world by land area.
- **President:** As of 2024, the President of the United States is Joe Biden.
- **Kind of Government:** The United States is a federal republic with a strong tradition of democratic governance, featuring a system of checks and balances among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
- **GDP:** The U.S. has the largest economy in the world, with a nominal GDP of approximately \$23 trillion (2021).
- **Median Household Income:** The median household income in the U.S. is around \$68,700 per year (2020).

- **Unemployment Rate:** As of early 2024, the unemployment rate is approximately 3.6%.
- **Life Expectancy:** The average life expectancy in the U.S. is about 77.3 years (2020).
- **Military Spending:** The U.S. spends over \$700 billion annually on its military, the highest in the world.
- **Internet Users:** Over 90% of Americans use the internet, totaling approximately 297 million users.
- **Higher Education:** The U.S. is home to over 5,000 colleges and universities.
- **Healthcare Spending:** The U.S. spends about 16.9% of its GDP on healthcare, the highest proportion among developed countries.
- **Obesity Rate:** Approximately 42.4% of American adults are considered obese.
- **Carbon Emissions:** The U.S. is the second-largest emitter of CO2, producing about 5.1 billion metric tons annually.
- **Renewable Energy:** Around 20% of the U.S. energy consumption comes from renewable sources.
- **National Parks:** The U.S. has 63 national parks.
- **Public Debt:** The national debt of the U.S. is over \$28 trillion.
- **Poverty Rate:** About 11.4% of Americans live below the poverty line.
- **Homeownership Rate:** Approximately 65.8% of Americans own their homes.
- **Literacy Rate:** The literacy rate in the U.S. is about 99%.
- **Electricity Consumption:** The U.S. consumes around 3,900 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.
- **Vehicle Ownership:** There are over 276 million registered vehicles in the U.S.
- **Agriculture:** The U.S. is one of the largest producers of corn, soybeans, and beef in the world.
- **Tourism:** The U.S. receives over 79 million international visitors annually.
- **Largest City:** New York City is the largest city in the U.S., with a population of approximately 8.4 million people.
- **Diversity:** The U.S. is one of the most ethnically diverse countries, with no single ethnic group constituting a majority.
- **Languages:** Over 350 languages are in the U.S., with English being the most common, followed by Spanish.
- **Life Expectancy:** Approximately 77.3 years (2020 estimate)
- **Literacy Rate:** 99%

## Fun Facts

- **Largest Economy:** The U.S. has the largest economy in the world, with a GDP exceeding \$23 trillion.
- **Diverse Landscapes:** The U.S. is home to a wide range of landscapes, from deserts and mountains to forests and beaches, spanning more than 3.8 million square miles.
- **Grand Canyon:** The Grand Canyon, located in Arizona, is about 277 miles long, up to 18 miles wide, and over a mile deep.
- **Alaska's Size:** Alaska is the largest state by area in the U.S., and it's larger than the next three largest states combined.
- **Hawaii's Isolation:** Hawaii is the only U.S. state composed entirely of islands and the most isolated population center in the world.
- **Statue of Liberty:** The Statue of Liberty, a gift from France. It has been welcoming visitors to New York Harbor since 1886.



- **National Park System:** The U.S. has over 400 national park sites, preserving stunning natural landscapes and historic sites.
- **Fourth of July:** Independence Day on July 4th celebrates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.
- **Largest Mall:** The Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, is the largest shopping mall in the U.S. and features an indoor amusement park.
- **Great Lakes:** The Great Lakes, which include Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, hold about 84% of North America's fresh surface water.
- **Longest River:** The Missouri River, at about 2,341 miles, is the longest river in the U.S.
- **Mount Rushmore:** Mount Rushmore in South Dakota features the carved faces of four U.S. presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.
- **First Presidential Election:** George Washington was unanimously elected as the first President of the United States in 1789.
- **Space Exploration:** The U.S. was the first country to land a man on the Moon with Apollo 11's mission in 1969.
- **Largest City:** New York City, with a population of over 8 million people, is the largest city in the U.S. by population.
- **Golden Gate Bridge:** The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco is one of the most photographed landmarks in the world.
- **English Language:** English is the most common language in the U.S., but there are also large communities speaking Spanish, Chinese, and many other languages.
- **National Anthem:** The U.S. national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," was written by Francis Scott Key during the War of 1812.
- **Hollywood:** Hollywood, located in Los Angeles, is the entertainment capital of the world and is synonymous with the film and television industry.
- **National Symbols:** The bald eagle, adopted as the national bird in 1782, is a symbol of freedom and strength in the U.S.
- **Largest Library:** The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., is the largest library in the world by collection size, with over 170 million items.
- **Longest Highway:** U.S. Route 20 is the longest highway in the United States, stretching approximately 3,365 miles from Boston, Massachusetts, to Newport, Oregon.

## United States Map

## Good to know before you go

- Tipping is a common and expected practice in the United States, often seen as a way to supplement the income of service workers earning lower base wages. In restaurants, it is customary to leave a tip of 15% to 20% of the pre-tax bill, depending on the quality of service. Tipping is also common for other service industries, including taxi drivers, hotel staff, and baristas, where a tip is 10% to 20%. In many cases, workers in these roles rely significantly on tips to make up the bulk of their earnings, as minimum wage laws for tipped employees can be lower than for non-tipped workers.  
The practice of tipping is deeply ingrained in American culture. While tipping is not mandatory, failing to leave a tip or leaving a very small tip can be seen as a sign of dissatisfaction with the service or as discourteous. Some establishments might include a service charge for large groups or special events.
- In the United States, dress styles are highly diverse and context-dependent. Casual wear, including jeans and t-shirts, is common in everyday settings and warmer climates. Business attire typically involves dress shirts, blazers, and dress shoes for professional environments. Sportswear is popular for both athletic activities and casual wear, reflecting a focus on health and fitness. For formal events, Americans often opt for evening gowns or tuxedos. Regional variations influence clothing choices, with colder areas favoring layered, warm clothing and warmer regions embracing lighter, more casual attire. Overall, American fashion is versatile and adapts to both the setting and individual preferences.
- Driving in the United States involves navigating a system of well-maintained roads and highways, with specific rules and practices that vary by state but adhere to some general national standards. The U.S. drives on the right side of the road, and vehicles typically have automatic transmissions. Speed limits vary by state and type of road, and they are generally posted along highways and urban roads. Most states require the use of seat belts for all passengers. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is against the law, with severe penalties.  
Traffic congestion can be a common issue in urban areas, particularly in large cities. Parking regulations are strictly enforced, and availability can be limited in busy areas. The U.S. also has an extensive interstate highway system, making long-distance travel relatively convenient. Additionally, the use of GPS and navigation apps is widespread, aiding in both daily commutes and cross-country trips. Drivers are to be aware of local traffic laws, which can differ significantly from state to state.
- The United States has a mixed record on environmental conservation, with significant efforts in some areas and challenges in others. On the positive side, the U.S. has established numerous national parks, wildlife refuges, and conservation areas to protect natural landscapes and biodiversity. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and various state agencies work to enforce environmental regulations, such as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, aimed at reducing pollution and protecting ecosystems. Additionally, there are numerous non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups actively working on environmental issues. However, challenges remain. Issues such as industrial pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change continue to impact the environment. There is ongoing debate over environmental policies, particularly regarding energy production, land use, and regulatory measures. While renewable energy sources are expanding, the U.S. still relies heavily on fossil fuels, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, while there are robust efforts and successes in environmental conservation, ongoing work, and policy adjustments are occurring to address the complex and evolving environmental challenges facing the country.
- The quality of life in the United States varies widely depending on factors such as location,

income, and personal circumstances. Overall, it tends to be high in relation to many other countries. The U.S. offers a high standard of living with access to diverse amenities, quality healthcare, and a wide range of educational opportunities. Major cities and metropolitan areas are home to world-class infrastructure, cultural institutions, and recreational facilities.

However, disparities exist across different regions and socioeconomic groups. While some areas enjoy excellent public services, high levels of safety, and a robust job market, others face challenges such as higher crime rates, economic inequality, and limited access to healthcare and education. Housing costs can be high in desirable urban areas, impacting overall affordability. Additionally, issues such as healthcare costs, income inequality, and variations in environmental quality can influence individuals' perceptions and experiences of quality of life in the U.S.

- In the United States, dining etiquette generally includes practices such as waiting for everyone to have their food before starting to eat. Keeping your elbows off the table while eating is normal. It is customary to use utensils properly, starting from the outside and working inwards with each course. It's polite to engage in light conversation and maintain a pleasant demeanor throughout the meal. At formal events, placing napkins on your lap and refraining from talking with your mouth full are also good manners.
- American cuisine features a blend of diverse and popular foods, including hamburgers, pizza, and hot dogs, which are staples at casual dining and fast food establishments. Fried chicken and apple pie represent classic comfort foods, while tacos and macaroni and cheese reflect the influence of various culinary traditions. Buffalo wings, bagels, and clam chowder highlight regional specialties, showcasing the wide range of flavors and influences that characterize American dining. Overall, these foods illustrate a rich tapestry of culinary preferences and traditions across the United States.
- In the United States, greetings are generally casual and friendly, reflecting the country's diverse and informal culture. Common greetings include a handshake, which is a standard gesture in both professional and social settings, often accompanied by a smile and eye contact. In more informal contexts, especially among friends and family, people might use phrases like "Hi," "Hello," or "Hey." Additionally, it's common to ask, "How are you?" or "What's up?" as a way of starting a conversation. In more formal settings, such as business meetings or official events, a more reserved "Good morning," "Good afternoon," or "Good evening" might be used. Overall, greetings in the U.S. tend to be warm and approachable, with an emphasis on friendliness and politeness.
- The family structure in the United States is diverse and varies widely, reflecting a range of cultural, social, and economic factors. Traditionally, the nuclear family, consisting of two parents and their children, has been a common family structure. However, modern American families increasingly include various configurations such as single-parent families, blended families with step-parents and step-siblings, and extended families living together or in close proximity. Additionally, there is a growing recognition and acceptance of diverse family forms, including LGBTQ+ families and non-biological family units formed through adoption or close personal relationships.
- Education and healthcare are of great value, with parents active in their children's upbringing and education.
- The political environment is often polarized, with the major parties being the Democratic and Republican parties, each with distinct ideologies and policy priorities. Socially, the U.S. is highly diverse, with significant cultural, racial, and ethnic variety, which influences ongoing debates on issues such as immigration, racial equality, and LGBTQ+ rights. The country experiences active public discourse and political engagement.

- When visiting someone's home in the United States, it's important to arrive on time and bring a small gift, such as flowers or a bottle of wine, to show appreciation for the invitation. Offering to help with tasks like setting the table or cleaning up is courteous, even if your assistance is declined. Complimenting the host on their home or the meal, respecting any house rules, and engaging politely in conversation is key to being a good guest. Following up with a thank-you note or message after the visit further demonstrates gratitude and respect for the host's hospitality.
- The crime situation in the United States is complex and varies significantly across different regions and communities. Overall, crime rates have fluctuated over the years, with some areas experiencing declines in certain types of crime, such as violent crimes, while others may see increases or persistently high rates. Violent crimes, including murder, assault, and robbery, tend to be more prevalent in urban areas. They are influenced by factors such as socioeconomic conditions and gang activity. Despite efforts from law enforcement, issues such as gun violence, drug-related offenses, and racial disparities in the criminal justice system remain significant challenges. Public perception of crime can also be influenced by media coverage and individual experiences.

## United States Essential Info

When visiting from a foreign nation, please make sure to get contact information from your country's embassy before coming to the USA .

Emergency Number 911

Country Code  
+1

Time Zone  
UTC -4 to -7

Adaptors for the United States  
Types A and B

Driving  
Right side

[Official United States Tourism Website](#)

## When to go to the United States

The best time to visit the United States largely depends on the specific regions you plan to visit and the activities you want to enjoy. Generally, spring (March to May) and fall (September to November) are considered ideal times to visit many parts of the country due to mild weather and fewer crowds. In the spring, you can experience blooming flowers and pleasant temperatures, while fall offers beautiful foliage and cooler weather.

For specific activities, summer (June to August) is great for outdoor activities and exploring national parks, though it can be hot and crowded in popular destinations. Winter (December to February) is

perfect for enjoying skiing or winter sports in regions like Colorado or the Northeast, while warmer states like Florida and California offer mild temperatures and a break from the cold. Ultimately, the best time to visit will depend on your interests and the weather conditions in the specific areas you plan to explore.

## Our Favorite Resources

*This resource section contains some Amazon affiliate links. If you use these links to buy something, we may earn a small commission at no additional cost to you. Thank you!*

### Travel Books/Guides

We suggest checking your online seller or local bookstore to find guides in your native language.

### Our favorite websites

1. [Official United States Tourism Office](#)
2. [U.S. Department of State Travel Government Site](#)

A citizen of a foreign country who seeks to travel to the United States generally must first obtain a U.S. visa. Visas are placed in the traveler's passport, a travel document issued by the traveler's country of citizenship.

Certain international travelers may be eligible to travel to the United States without a visa if they meet the requirements for visa-free travel. This website's visa section contains information on U.S. visas for foreign citizens seeking to travel to the United States. Being prepared is essential in all travel, but especially internationally.

3. [The Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Andorra Travelers Health Resource](#)

This CDC travel resource provides essential health information for your travels. Using their tool, you can determine which vaccines, medications, and health advice recommendations are needed for your visit. Also, check if your country offers the same information for your travels to the US.

### Our favorite apps

**Google Maps:** Trip and Holiday Organizer. The app instantly displays all your travel options, restaurants, activities, and accommodations when you enter any address, landmark, or city. We have come to rely on it when using public transportation; it has been flawless in getting us on the right bus or metro. Find it on your App Store.

**Duolingo-Language Lesson** Audio lessons that help improve your listening and speaking skills. Find

it on your local App Store.

**Google Translate:** We use this often to practice proper pronunciations of any language we encounter while traveling. As we always encourage, it is essential to learn the basics of greeting and thanking people in the local language. Google Translate was an easy app to use. If needed, you can enter text in English, and it will speak back in the language you need to aid in communicating with locals.

***Do you have a favorite United States travel resource? Share your favorites in the comments section at the bottom of this page so other readers can benefit.***

## **Our United States Photo Gallery**

default watermark

**default watermark**

















**default watermark**













**default watermark**





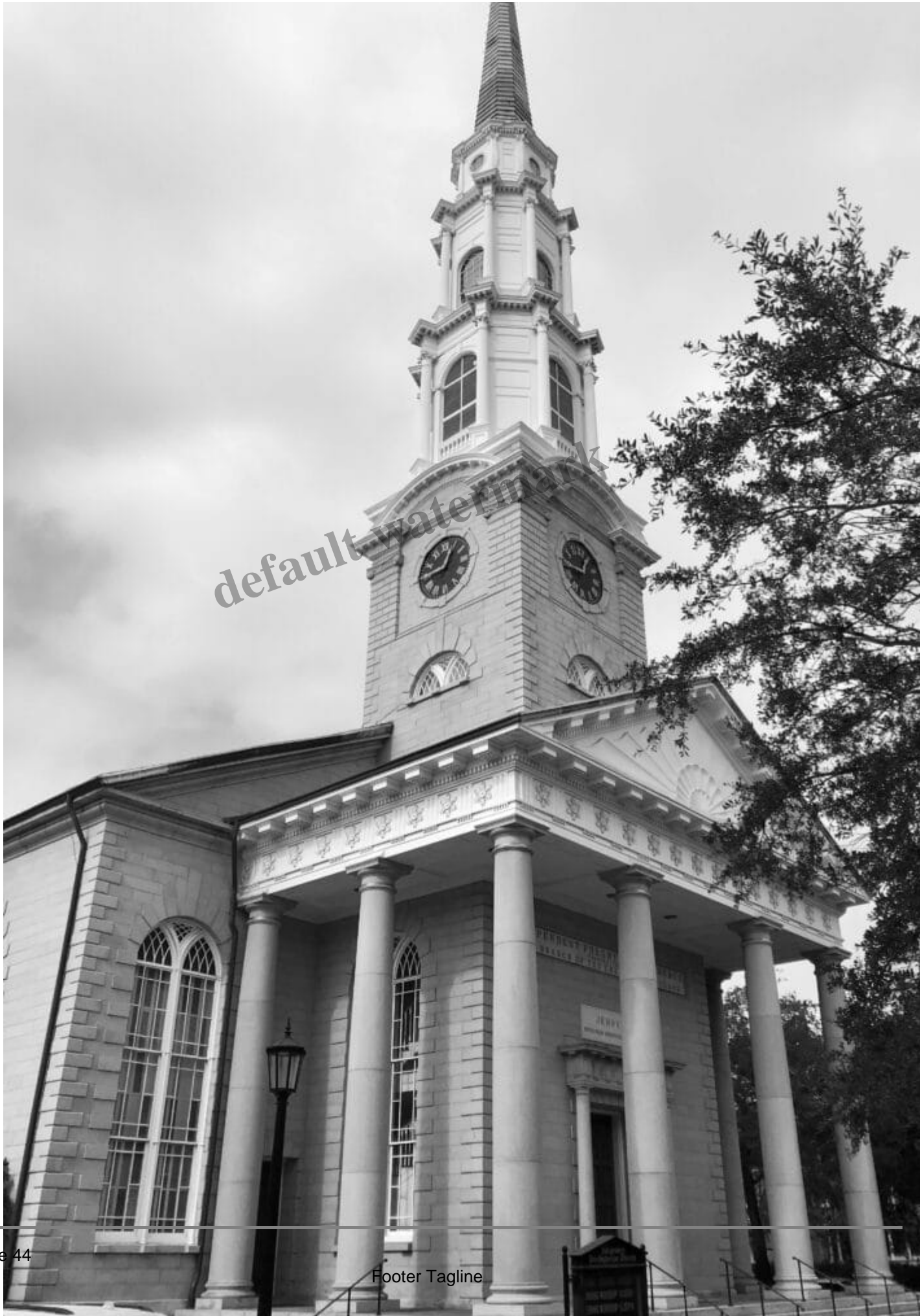








**default watermark**



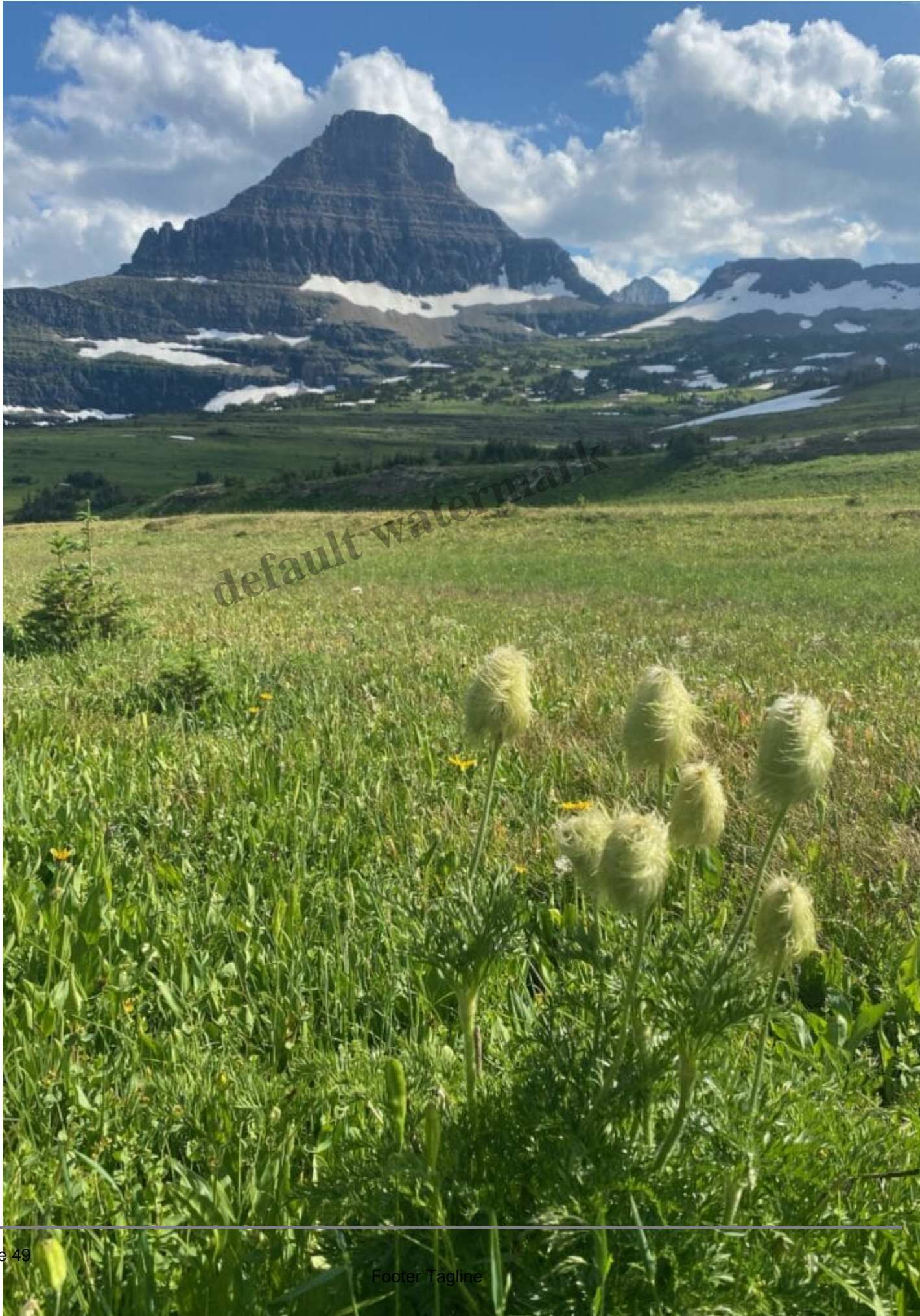






**default watermark**







default watermark







default watermark

**default watermark**



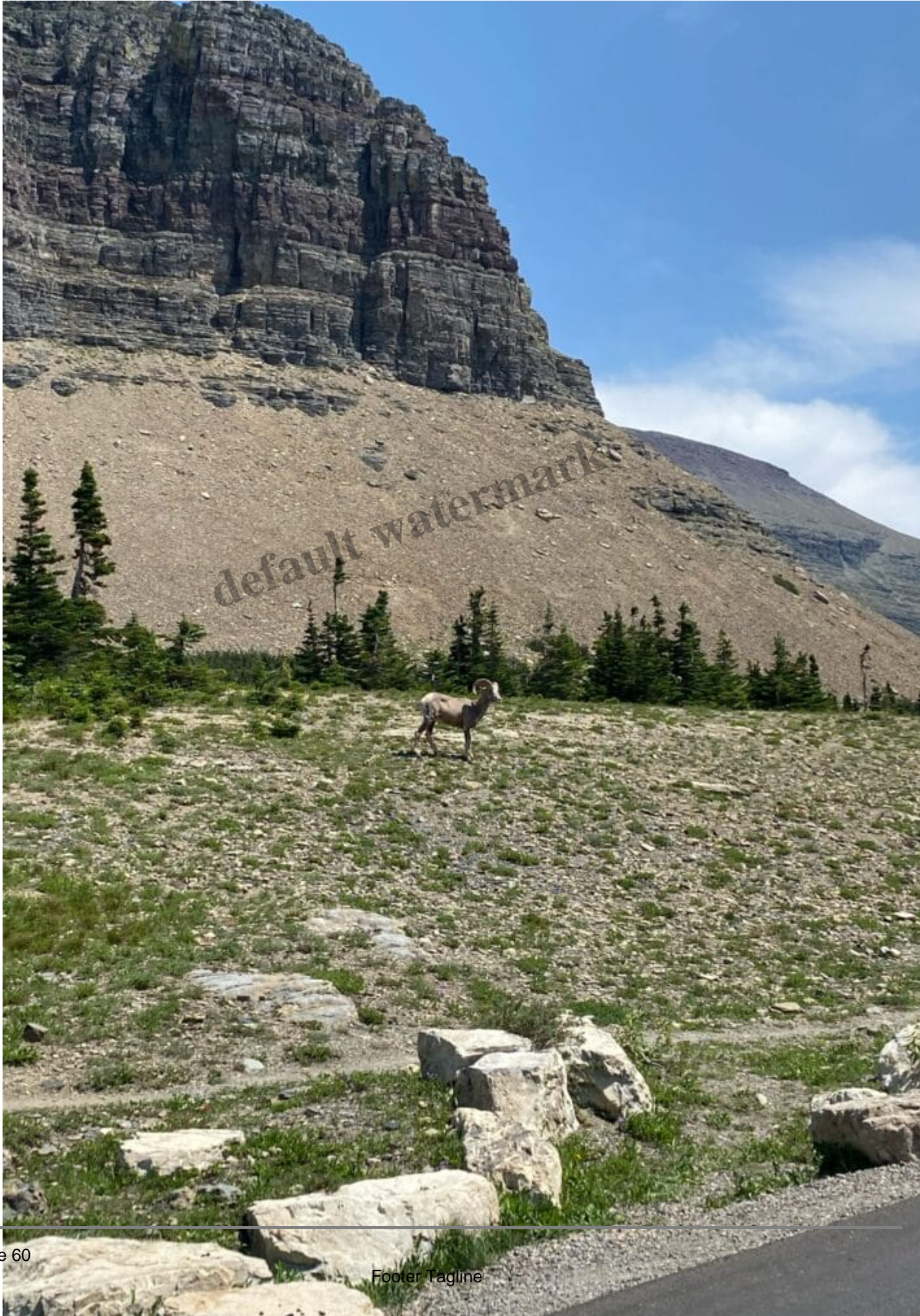




**default watermark**



**default watermark**



**default watermark**









**default watermark**









**default watermark**













**default watermark**





default watermark







**default watermark**



**default watermark**



**default watermark**









**default watermark**







**default watermark**





**default watermark**









**default watermark**











**default watermark**



**default watermark**







**default watermark**







**default watermark**



*default watermark*







**default watermark**





default watermark

**default watermark**





**default watermark**



**default watermark**











**default watermark**





**default watermark**







**default watermark**







Check out our most recent blog posts



## [Tokyo Unleashed: Delighting in the Fun Side of Japan's Capital](#)



## Cinque Terre: A Journey through Italy's Five Charming Villages



## [Exploring Trim Castle: History, Architecture, and Visitor Guide](#)





## [Level8 Luggage Review: A New Standard in Travel Gear](#)



## [Why Milk is the Perfect Hydration Boost for Plane Travel](#)



## [Iceland's Surprising Natural Wonders: Beyond the Famous Tourist Attractions](#)



**Imperial Hotel Tokyo: A Fusion of Timeless Elegance,  
Unparalleled Luxury and Historic Legacy**



## Europe Wine Wonders: The Most Unexpected Places to Sip and Savor



## Embracing Morocco's Customs and Traditions: A Guide for Visitors

**Date Created**

August 3, 2024

**Author**

contactwandererscompass-com