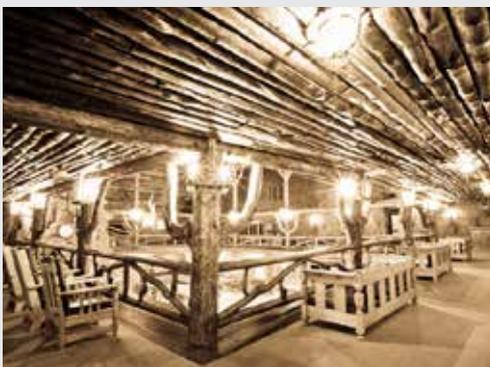




OLD FAITHFUL INN



Possibly the most iconic building in all of the National Park system and a landmark against which all Western lodges are judged, the Old Faithful Inn was the brainchild of architect Robert C. Reamer. Designed to capture Yellowstone National Park's majestic landscape and to fit seamlessly into its natural environment, the Inn is a shining example of an architecture style known as National Park Service Rustic, or "Parkitecture."

Built at the behest of the Yellowstone Park Association (an organization backed by the Northern Pacific Railroad) to accommodate the increasing number of tourists entering from the West entrance and to combat the rise of competitive tourist companies trying to take root in the southern end of the park, construction on the Inn began in 1903.

Having said, "To be at discord with the landscape would be almost a crime. To try to improve upon it would be an impertinence," Reamer designed the Inn to be built at least partially using wood and stone procured from nearby locations like the Firehole Canyon and Black Sand Basin. Despite the frigid temperatures in the uninsulated structure, artisans such as carpenters, stonemasons and ironworkers toiled through the winter so that the hotel could open in June 1904. The new building boasted modern conveniences like electric lights and steam heat and featured 140 rooms that could sleep 316 guests. Later, east and west wings were added, pushing the seven-story structure's length to nearly 700 feet.

The Inn's lobby, which is open to the public, remains its most recognizable feature. The expansive atrium features exposed beams, tiers of balconies, and log staircases as well as a massive 15½-foot-wide rhyolite fireplace fronted by a handcrafted metal clock with a face 5-foot in diameter and a 14-foot pendulum. In total, it has been said over ten thousand logs were used in the Inn's lower story and more than 500 tons of stone make up the fireplace.

Now over one hundred years old, the Old Faithful Inn, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, is operated by park concessionaire Xanterra and is open May through October with seasonal guided tours available daily. Whether enjoying the rustic coziness of the great room or using it as a home base to explore the wonders of the Upper Geyser Basin, the Inn continues to remind today's visitors that being in the park is about being one with nature, even when you are indoors.