
A glacial lake and cool microbrews are just two reasons to head for the mountains this month.

By Elisabeth Kwak

PERFECT DAY

This little town is best known for Whitefish Mountain Resort, built on the ski slopes of Big Mountain to the north. But here's a secret the snow bunnies may not know: Summer is actually the best time to explore the community, which is just outside Glacier National Park. Huckleberries ripen on the hills, bears and moose wander through the grassy meadows, and the lakes finally warm up enough for swimming. Once the snow melts, the sidewalks of the artsy downtown are free of the parka-clad masses, though you might occasionally spot celebrities on respite from L.A. They're drawn here for the same reasons you are—to revel in summer and gulp the fresh air.



MONTANA'S

WHITEFISH



9 A.M. Have breakfast at **Loula's Cafe** (whitefishrestaurant.com), in the sun-filled Masonic Temple building. Tuck into an eggs-and-sausage plate, or break the rules and order the cafe's specialty: fresh-baked pie.

10 A.M. Hike the **Danny On Memorial Trail** (skiwitefish.com/danny-on) to the 6,817-foot summit of Big Mountain for sweeping views over Whitefish Lake, Glacier National Park, and on into Canada. The strenuous 3.8-mile trip takes you through a spruce/fir/larch forest and white puffs of beargrass blossoms.

12 P.M. At the top of Big Mountain, stop by Flathead National Forest's **Summit Nature Center** (skiwitefish.com/summit-nature-center) to check out exhibits on the Rockies' ecosystem. Hop on the resort's chairlift for a scenic ride down.

1 P.M. Whitefish's newest microbrewery, **Bonsai Brewing Project** (406/730-1717), serves tasty burgers and bowls—like smoked chicken and andouille sausage gumbo—along with small-batch beers. Snag a table on the patio and try a four-beer sampler.

2 P.M. Stroll the main drag of Central Avenue for antiques,



GETTING HERE
Whitefish is 132 miles north of Missoula via U.S. 93.

5.7-mile-long glacially carved pool—to **Les Mason State Park** (stateparks.mt.gov/les-mason). Lounge on the beach with the locals, do cannonballs off the diving raft, or rent a kayak or SUP (seamepaddle.com).

6 P.M. Revive with a cocktail made from house-distilled vodka, gin, or coffee liqueur at **Spotted Bear Spirits** (spottedbearspirits.com). The wood-paneled tasting room slings refreshing drinks accented with local fruits and herbs.

7 P.M. Head to **Latitude 48** (latitude48bistro.com) to share tapas-style plates like seared beef tips with chimichurri and watermelon salad. Afterward, walk up the street to **Casey's** (caseyswhitefish.com), and watch the sunset (around 9 p.m. in August) from the rooftop deck. ☽

Clockwise from above: Bonsai Brewing Project; Loula's Cafe; downtown Whitefish at the base of Big Mountain. Previous page: Whitefish Lake.



cheeky Montana T-shirts, and everything huckleberry flavored. Pop into **The Toggery** (toggerymontana.com), a 70-year-old store stocking lumberjack flannels and sporty dresses, and **Whitefish Pottery** (whitefishpottery.com) for handmade bowls, pie dishes, and platters.

3 P.M. Cruise up the eastern shore of Whitefish Lake—a



LOCAL LOWDOWN "The train ride from Whitefish to Glacier National Park takes you along a bluff high above Flathead River. It's amazing in the summer." —Jen Dolan, 20-year resident