

Becca Cannon's Elopement Guide to CRESTED BUTTE



Locations to elope, hiking trails, restaurants,
activities, and more!



Welcome to CB

Tucked away in a quiet corner of the Colorado Rockies, Crested Butte is a place that feels both timeless and wildly alive. Once a humble mining town, it has held onto its soul through decades of change, choosing preservation, community, and creativity over polish and pretense. Today, it's known as one of Colorado's last truly authentic mountain towns—untamed, colorful, and deeply rooted in its landscape.

Crested Butte sits in the Gunnison Valley, surrounded on all sides by dramatic peaks, rolling meadows, and endless open sky. Unlike resort-heavy mountain towns, CB feels spacious and slow in the best way. There's a sense that nature leads here—seasons are felt fully, weather rolls in unapologetically, and the mountains dictate the rhythm of life.

Welcome to CB

The scenery is nothing short of cinematic. In summer, wildflowers blanket the valley in a way few places on earth can rival, earning Crested Butte the nickname “The Wildflower Capital of Colorado.” In fall, the aspens turn the mountainsides into waves of gold. Winter brings deep snow and quiet magic, while spring feels raw, moody, and incredibly intimate.

What truly sets Crested Butte apart is its spirit. This is a town of artists, athletes, free thinkers, and people who chose this place because it felt like home—not because it was easy or flashy. The downtown is lined with historic buildings painted in bold colors, cozy bars, local coffee shops, and spaces where conversations linger.

For couples choosing to elope here, Crested Butte offers something rare: space to breathe, to be present, and to celebrate your love without distraction. Whether you’re standing barefoot in an alpine meadow, exchanging vows beneath towering peaks, or holding hands as a storm rolls in, this place invites honesty, connection, and intention.

This guide was created to help you experience Crested Butte not just as visitors, but as part of the landscape—so you can craft an elopement that feels grounded, meaningful, and unmistakably you.

xoxo - Becca



Crested Butte

WHEN TO ELOPE

01

WHEN TO ELOPE

If you're not sure the best time of year to elope or when peak wildflower or fall foliage is, here's a breakdown of what each season is like. This is a great place to plan out the perfect date for your elopement!

Winter (November–April)

Winter in Crested Butte is long, snowy, and magical. Snow usually begins falling in late October or early November, with consistent snowpack building through the winter months. By December, Crested Butte feels like a true alpine winter town, with snow covering rooftops, trails, and mountain passes. Peak snowpack typically occurs in March, and snowfall can continue well into April. Many high-elevation roads and mountain passes are closed for the season, including Kebler Pass (on the Crested Butte side), Paradise Divide, and other backcountry roads. While winter limits access to hiking and remote locations, it offers stunning snowy scenery, cozy vibes, and fewer crowds outside of ski season.

Spring (April–June)

Spring in Crested Butte is often referred to as mud season, and it's the least predictable time of year. Snow begins melting in the valley in April, but higher elevations can remain snow-covered into June. Trails are often muddy, rivers run high, and many mountain roads remain closed. Trees are usually still bare through May, with the first hints of green appearing in early to mid-June at lower elevations. While spring can feel quiet and transitional, it's a beautiful time for couples who want solitude and moody mountain landscapes — just be prepared for variable conditions and limited access to alpine locations.

WHEN TO ELOPE

Summer (Late June–September)

Summer is when Crested Butte truly comes alive. Snow has typically melted from most trails by late June or early July, and the mountains turn lush and green. Trees are fully leafed out by late June, and the valley feels vibrant and alive. Crested Butte is known as the Wildflower Capital of Colorado, with wildflowers beginning to bloom in late June and peaking from early to mid-July. This is the most popular and colorful time of year, with rolling hills of lupine, paintbrush, and sunflowers. Most mountain passes and backcountry roads — including Kebler Pass, Paradise Divide, and Gothic Road — are typically open by early to mid-summer, depending on snowfall. Summer offers the best access to hiking, alpine lakes, and high-elevation elopement locations, though it's also the busiest season.

Fall (Late September–October)

Fall in Crested Butte is short but breathtaking. Aspen trees begin turning gold in mid to late September, with peak fall colors usually lasting about one to two weeks, often around the last week of September. Cooler temperatures arrive quickly, crowds thin out, and the valley takes on a quieter, more intimate feel. By early October, leaves begin to fall, and the landscape shifts toward late-season browns and golds. Snow is possible as early as October, especially at higher elevations, and mountain passes can close with little notice after early storms. Fall is ideal for couples seeking crisp air, dramatic scenery, and fewer people — just with the understanding that access can change quickly.

This seasonal rhythm is part of what makes Crested Butte so special. Each time of year offers its own beauty, pace, and personality — and choosing when to visit or elope here is really about deciding which version of the mountains speaks to you most.



Crested Butte

ELOPEMENT LOCATIONS

CB Upper and Lower Loop Trail



Location: Just west of Crested Butte in the Slate River valley area (easy access from town)

Distance: ~2.5–4.5 miles round-trip (varies by route and where you connect the Upper and Lower segments)

Elevation Gain: ~300–340 feet — gentle and beginner-friendly terrain

Estimated Time: ~1.5 to 3 hours depending on pace and if you stop for photos or wildlife

Difficulty: Easy (beginner-friendly and great for most hikers)

Trail Type: Loop (connects Lower Loop and Upper Lower Loop sections)

Emerald Lake



Getting There

- **Road Surface:** The first portion is paved, but as you pass Gothic the road becomes unpaved gravel and dirt and continues that way up toward the lake.
- **Vehicle Recommendations:** A high-clearance vehicle is recommended for the final sections since the road gets rough, narrow, and uneven in spots. Some AWD SUVs can make it in dry conditions, but larger vehicles, trailers, and low-clearance cars may struggle or get stuck.
- **Narrow & Steep Sections:** Near the lake the road may be one lane wide with steep drop-offs, so take it slow, yield to oncoming vehicles, and be prepared to park and walk a short distance if the road ahead looks sketchy or crowded.
- **Seasonality:** The road is typically open from late spring through early fall (usually mid-June through October), but snow can linger in higher elevations, and after wet weather the gravel surface can be muddy or rutted.
- **Passing & Parking:** There's limited parking near the lake, and parts of the road are narrow, so many visitors park earlier and hike a bit — especially if the road narrows or the surface looks rough.

Snodgrass/Teddy's Trail



Snodgrass Trail is located just north of Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte, easily accessed from Gothic Road as you head toward the historic Gothic Valley area. The trail runs between Gothic Road on the east end and Washington Gulch Road on the west, making it convenient for both short hikes and longer adventures. Parking is available at either end, with the easier and more common starting point near Gothic Road.

For elopements specifically, it's a very short hike from the parking area off of Gothic road to get to this little secluded hilltop with incredible sunrise views.

It is also located in a pasture with free roaming horses - if we're lucky we might get a few of those beauties in our pictures.

Paradise Divide



Paradise Divide is a gravel mountain pass that feels secluded and the perfect place for a private ceremony or sunset portraits. It's about a 45 minute drive on a gravel road with high clearance vehicles highly recommended.

There is no hiking involved which makes it great for easy access for small ceremonies or perfect if you want incredible views without hiking 10 miles.

This road is only accessible in the summer months from June-October when the snow melts.

Scarp Ridge Trail



Length: ~4.3–6+ miles round-trip depending on route and whether you do a loop or out-and-back.

Elevation Gain: ~1,250–1,920 ft depending on your route.

Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous — steady climbing as you gain ridge elevation.

Scenery: We'll be climbing a mountain to get to the top with 360 views of mountains, peak after peak. Wildflowers scattered throughout the trail in the summer time and best place to view the sunset. Although careful to avoid afternoon thunderstorms.

Vehicle: High clearance vehicle recommended.



Crested Butte

HIKING TRAILS

03

HIKING TRAILS

All places that are listed as Elopement Locations are some of my favorite places to visit even if you aren't eloping there. But here is also a list of my favorite trails with links to their All Trails routes that you can hike or potentially use for your elopement!

Upper & Lower Loop Trail – 4.5 mi loop with river views and wildflowers.

Snodgrass Mountain Trail – 5.8 mi moderate hike with ridge views.

Scarp Ridge + Mount Emmons – 4.5 - 8.2 mi moderate loop with wide alpine views. (Scarp Ridge alone is 4.5 miles and totally worth it for the views and wildflowers)

Caves to Point Lookout – 8.5mi hard out and back. A leg burner hiking in and out of the trees but eventually end with an incredible view of the mountains and valley.

Rustler's Gulch – 9mi out and back with some of the best views of wildflowers.

Green Lake Trail - 8.8mi Classic destination hike to a beautiful alpine lake (often combined with Baxter Gulch/Carbon trails).

Judd Falls - 2.2mi out and back to a popular waterfall. Perfect for a quick afternoon adventure.

Three Lakes Trail - 3.5mi one that is well worth the trip to its remote location.

Painter Boy - This loop is just one of the many, many paths you could choose to hike, walk, or run through this area.



Crested Butte

RESTAURANTS

04

Fine & Elevated Dining

Soupcon Restaurant

Intimate, French-inspired fine dining with seasonal ingredients — perfect for a date night or small celebration.

Two Twelve

Highly regarded chef-driven restaurant with a creative seasonal menu and sophisticated atmosphere — and can sometimes be reserved for private events or group dinners.

Elk Avenue Prime

Classic steakhouse with excellent wine and hearty elevated dishes; a local favorite for celebrations and can often accommodate larger parties.

IZAKAYA CABIN & Yukihana Sushi & Sake Bar

Upscale sushi options with refined fare and a great choice if you're craving something elegant.

Seasonal / Farm-to-Table

Sunflower CB

Seasonal, locally sourced menu with a slightly elevated vibe and excellent wines — great for a romantic dinner.

Breadery

Stylish spot with New American fare; they also have a private upstairs room that can host dinners for small parties



Tips for reception dinners: Many Crested Butte restaurants are small, historic spaces — so if you're planning for a group dinner (10–30 people), reserve early and ask about private space or group menus. Even casual spots will often work with you if you contact them well ahead of time.

Casual & Fun Dining

The Secret Stash - Beloved pizza joint; crowd-pleaser for casual post-wedding dinners and groups.

The Hideout - Well-liked American spot with burgers and comfort classics — relaxed vibe.

Bonez - A lively tequila bar and Mexican grill with bold flavors, creative tacos and margaritas, festive Dia de los Muertos-inspired decor.

Bruhaus - Local favorite with beer and hearty pub fare.

The Wooden Nickel - Classic bar-and-bistro that's great for laid-back group meals.

The Slogar Bar & Restaurant - A casual choice that's been mentioned by locals.

The Gourmet Noodle - Casual Italian diner-style spot.

A Bar Above - At the mountain base, great for relaxed dinner and drinks.

Butte Burgers - Great for informal, tasty burgers — fun for casual celebrations.

Plantain Tree - Highly rated Jamaican spot for something a little different.

Breakfast, Brunch, & Coffee

A Daily Dose – Smoothies, fresh juices, coffee & light brunch-style bites (great pick-me-up).

Rumors Coffee and Tea House – Cozy cafe for excellent coffee and tea (perfect for a casual breakfast or caffeine run, connected to a bookstore).

COFFEE LAB – Great specialty coffee in Mt. Crested Butte if you're headed toward the mountain.

McGill's – A downtown classic serving hearty all-day breakfast and brunch with American favorites like benedicts, burritos, pancakes, and more.

Butte Bagels – Locals rave about fresh-made bagels and bagel sandwiches — simple, delicious, and perfect any morning.

Paradise Cafe – Beloved spot for breakfast classics (think pancakes, huevos rancheros) with espresso drinks and hearty portions.

The Wooden Nickel – Serves brunch on weekends with comfort classics like baked pancakes and breakfast sandwiches in a relaxed setting.

Gas Cafe One Stop – Local favorite for breakfast sandwiches, coffee, and casual morning eats any time you need a quick bite.



Crested Butte

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

05

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

- Swim, paddle board, float in the rivers and lakes around Crested Butte.
 - Emerald Lake
 - Lake Irwin
 - Slate River
 - Meridian Lake
- Free concerts with the Alpenglow Concert Series
- Wildflower Festival
- Crested Butte Arts Festival
- Gunnison River Festival
- Concerts
- Gondola Ride
- Whitewater rafting/kayaking
- Horseback Riding
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Backpacking
- Camping
- Bars + Restaurants

Click here for a full CB summer schedule.





Crested Butte
VENDORS

06

VENDORS

FLORIST

Janniebird Farm

janniebirdfarm.com

@janniebirdfarm

Bramble and Bloom Floral

brambleandbloomfloral.com

@brambleandbloomfloral

Misty Mountain Floral

crestedbutteflorist.com

@mistymountainfloral



HMU

Natalie Duke Beauty

nataliedukebeauty.com

@nataliedukebeauty

New Moon Salon

newmoonsalon.com

@newmoonsaloncb

Desert Darlin Beauty

@desertdarlinbeautyco

BAKERIES

Cake Me Away

cakemeawaycolorado.com

@cakemeawaycolorado

Blue Sky Baking

blueskybakingco.com

@blue_sky_baking

Mountain Standard Baking

@bakedonmst



Crested Butte

MARRIAGE LICENSE

STEP BY STEP

HOW TO GET YOUR MARRIAGE LICENSE

- **Locate the Office:** Go to the Gunnison County Clerk & Recorder's office in Gunnison (not Crested Butte itself).
- **Schedule an Appointment:** Gunnison County usually requires appointments, so check their official website (gunnisoncounty.org/recording) or call them to book your slot in advance.
- **Gather Documents:** Both individuals need a valid government-issued photo ID (like a driver's license or passport).
- **Complete Application:** Fill out the application form (paper or online, depending on the county's current system).
- **Pay the Fee:** The fee is typically around \$30, payable by cash, check, or card (with potential fees).
- **Get the License:** You'll receive the license immediately (or it will be mailed if you applied remotely).
- **Use the License:** The license is valid for 35 days and can be used anywhere in Colorado.
- **Sign & Return:** You and your partner (and an officiant, if using one) sign the license, then return it to the Gunnison County Clerk's office by mail or in person within the validity period.

NOTE: Self-Solemnization - Colorado allows you to marry yourselves without an officiant or witnesses signing, if you choose.



Need help planning?

You don't have to have any of your day planned before reaching out to me. I'm here to help! We can start from square one together and I can hold your hand and guide you through the whole process. Reach out to get started without any expectation of a commitment so we can get to know each other and I can give you a great foundation for starting the planning process.

[Let's Chat - Start Here](#)