ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

Explore three national parks and one national monument on this breathtaking, 1,300-mile road trip that starts in Denver.

STORIES BY TORI PEGLAR
Spend your first day of this incredible 1,300-mile, round-trip route in the Mile High City, checking out the art and food scene before heading west from Denver to Rocky Mountain National Park.

In the park, take Trail Ridge Road, the country's highest paved road over the Continental Divide (see pages 23-25). From there head to Cheyenne and Laramie, Wyo., for the start of your deep dive into the Old West. Take in the views of the Snowy Range Mountains before stopping in Saratoga, Wyo., for a dip in hot springs and Rawlins for unique dining. From there, visit Lander and Riverton before reaching Jackson and Grand Teton National Park. Head north to explore Yellowstone before exiting the park's South Entrance to Kemmerer, Flaming Gorge, Vernal, Craig, and Dinosaur National Monument on your return route to Denver.
# Mile-High Fun

From fine art to trendy restaurants, Denver is continually evolving.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Reason to Go</th>
<th>Quirky Fact</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM</strong></td>
<td>See the paintings of Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still, one of the 20th century’s most important painters.</td>
<td>Before the museum opened in 2011, this private artist hid most of his work from public view for more than 30 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COORS FIELD</strong></td>
<td>See a baseball game at 5,280 feet.</td>
<td>Forty-five miles of underground wiring under the field melts snow.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DENVER ART MUSEUM</strong></td>
<td>You’ll be wowed by the interior and exterior of this architectural icon with an impressive collection and interesting exhibits.</td>
<td>Free Family Backpacks full of artmaking supplies, games and puzzles keep kids busy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HISTORY COLORADO CENTER</strong></td>
<td>Visit this highly interactive, family-friendly museum that covers Colorado history with a hands-on approach.</td>
<td>Feel the wind on your face as you virtually ski down Steamboat’s famed Howelsen Hill ski jump.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DENVER ZOO</strong></td>
<td>See rare and endangered animals.</td>
<td>In the Meet and Greet program, you can touch a rhino and feed a giraffe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNION STATION</strong></td>
<td>Beautifully restored in 2014, it’s the best train station lobby to have a cocktail. Trendy restaurants surround it.</td>
<td>A nod to urban beekeeping, there are four beehives on the roof.</td>
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PARK ENTRANCE PRIMER

Spanning the Continental Divide, Rocky Mountain National Park is filled with alpine lakes, the headwaters of the Colorado River and dozens of peaks that reach 12,000 feet and higher. Access the park through four entrances, three on the park’s east side and one on the west.

BEAVER MEADOWS ENTRANCE
On the park’s east side lies the Beaver Meadows Entrance, the most direct entrance from Estes Park, a town that sits right outside Rocky Mountain National Park. An hour’s drive from Boulder and two hours from Denver, the lively Estes Park is the closest town to the park on the east side.

Open year round, the Beaver Meadows Entrance is the most popular and is accessed by Hwy. 36. Stop by the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center to get information, books, maps and backcountry permits, as well as catch the park bus. The park bus system enables you to avoid the stress of looking for parking spots.

FALL RIVER ENTRANCE
If driving Trail Ridge Road or Old Fall River Road is on the top of your list and you have limited time, enter the park via the Fall River Entrance on the park’s east side. Like the Beaver Meadows Entrance, it’s just a few minutes from Estes Park’s downtown.

You’ll reach Trail Ridge Road, a 48-mile road that reaches a high point of 12,183 feet, faster than those waiting in line at the Beaver Meadows Entrance during summer and fall. Get to the Fall River Entrance by driving 5-10 minutes on Hwy. 34 west from Estes Park. Stay on Hwy. 34 as it becomes Trail Ridge Road to enjoy a spectacular tour of the park’s incredible alpine landscapes.

WILD BASIN ENTRANCE
Because the Wild Basin Entrance is about a 30-minute drive south of Estes Park, most park visitors never even see the Wild Basin area. But it’s a great entrance for those traveling the Peak-to-Peak Highway from Nederland, Colo., who don’t want to join the crowds in Estes Park. Park staff advise not to drive RVs here. The last stretch to Wild Basin is a narrow, gravel road that becomes a single lane in places. However, if you are traveling in a car, Wild Basin is a wonderful area to explore with eight lakes and three waterfalls. To reach the Wild Basin Entrance from Estes Park, head south on Hwy. 7. If you get to Allenspark, you have gone too far.

GRAND LAKE ENTRANCE
This entrance brings you away from the traffic of Estes Park to one of Colorado’s most authentic towns, Grand Lake. It’s the only entrance on the park’s west side and is just minutes from Grand Lake.

Tucked in the folds of the Rocky Mountains and anchored by a stunning lake, this town is lined with locally owned shops, restaurants and hotels. You won’t find major grocery stores here [although you can drive 25 minutes to Granby and shop at its City Market]. What you will find is an old-fashioned charm combined with great activities like hiking into the park, relaxing at the beach and paddle boating and kayaking on Grand Lake.
ROCKY'S TOP SIX

Here are some of our favorite things to do in Rocky Mountain National Park.

1. WATCH THE SUNRISE
Watch up early to get to Bear Lake, a 1.1-mile one-way hike around the lake, to catch the sunlight rising over Hallett Peak and Flattop Mountain. Arrive 30 minutes before dawn.

2. CLIMB LONGS PEAK
If you’re a strong hiker who has trained extensively, head to Longs Peak, the park’s tallest mountain at 14,259 feet. Summing can take up to 15 hours, so start really early [many begin long before dawn with headlamps] to beat afternoon storms.

3. GO HORSEBACK RIDING
Saddle up with Sombrero Ranches at the Moraine Park and Glacier Creek stables.

4. WATCH WILDLIFE
Spot moose in the Kawuneeche Valley along the Colorado River and in the willows west of the Continental Divide.

5. HIKE FROM GRAND LAKE
Adams Falls trail is a .3-mile hike along the East Inlet Trail. If you continue on the trail, you’ll find yourself in a large valley with a river, small ponds and incredible views. You can walk for miles before turning back.

6. SEE THE SUNSET
Stop at the Alpine Visitor Center at the top of Trail Ridge Road and take a short hike up for an amazing Rocky Mountain sunset.
LOCALS IN LARAMIE
Here’s where to go and why from these enterprising locals.

Rebecca Walsh
Owner, Basecamp

When Rebecca Walsh opened her retail store Basecamp in Laramie, Wyo., in 2017, she saw it as one more step in her quest to create a stronger outdoor community.

She’d already had launched her website, Hike Like A Woman, to connect women with volunteers who lead group hikes across the country. Opening the doors to Basecamp was really a physical extension of Hike Like A Woman.

“We do more than just sell clothing and gear,” says Walsh. “It’s a place where we have workshops and clinics and start adventures. My ultimate goal is to help people get outdoors and explore and Basecamp helps facilitate that.”

And she loves that within a short drive from town, she can hike through the prairie, the forest or through a high alpine meadow. The surrounding terrain is so diverse and so rugged and beautiful it’s great for outdoor recreation. But if you ask her to pick her favorite trail, you may just stump her.

“I can’t pick just one, but my staff and I all spend a lot of time on the Happy Jack/Tie City trail network and at Vedauwoo,” she says. “Curt Gowdy State Park is great, too. The Snowy Range is close to town, too, if I have just an hour or two, I head to Happy Jack.”

If guests are in town, Walsh takes them to Vedauwoo Recreation Area to hike amongst the gigantic boulder formations. And there’s the awe-inspiring, traffic-free Snowy Range Scenic Byway where she pulls over to bring visitors on a hike to the top of Medicine Bow Peak.

For Walsh, people make her world go round.

“I always feel good when someone who might be intimidated by the thought of going backpacking or cross-country skiing for the first time wanders in the store looking for advice and encouragement,” she says. “It’s so fun to chat with them and help them plan and get ready for an adventure.”

Read the full interviews at MyYellowstonePark.com and learn more about Laramie at visitlaramie.org.

Jennifer Small
Owner, Golden Prairie Bakery

Realized Her Dream: Opened her bakery in October 2017. “I grew up in a family-owned country inn where my father was an old-school apprentice-trained chef.”

Favorite Thing to Do in Laramie: “We have seen some great shows at the Gryphon Theatre. It is a very beautiful, small venue.” Less than one mile from downtown, the theater is on the north side of the Historic Laramie Plains Civic Center.

Recommends: The Snowy Range to see Medicine Bow Peak.

Favorite Thing to Do in Laramie: “We have seen some great shows at the Gryphon Theatre. It is a very beautiful, small venue.” Less than one mile from downtown, the theater is on the north side of the Historic Laramie Plains Civic Center.

Recommends: The Snowy Range to see Medicine Bow Peak.

Essential Information: Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. “You may stop by during the week while we are producing. We always have items available.”

Kari Kilmer
Manager, Vee Bar Guest Ranch

Realized Her Dream: As the oldest granddaughter of co-owner Lefty Cole, Kari started working as a wrangler at Vee Bar at age 14. She continued working there in the summer through college as she fell in love with Brent Kilmer whom she met in college. The two have managed Vee Bar since 2006.

Why She Loves Laramie: The sports and cultural opportunities offered through University of Wyoming, plus the mountains, western culture and heritage.

Favorite Thing to Do at the Ranch: “I am very happy to be raising my kids at the ranch. We go riding, walking, bike riding and more as a family. We also work together. Our kids come to work with us all the time.”

Recommends: Sporting events at the University of Wyoming

Best aspect of Vee Bar Ranch: “Vee Bar touches our guests in the most unexpected ways, whether it is overcoming a fear of riding, spending time together as a family or providing the right dose of adventure and relaxation.”
LARAMIE

The Gem City of the Plains

Exploring Albany County could take a lifetime, but experiencing the majesty it has to offer only takes a moment. Before starting out on your adventure, check out Laramie’s local outfitters to ensure you have what you need for your next trip to Laramie.

All Trails Lead to Laramie!

REQUEST A VISITOR GUIDE - WEB: VISITLARAMIE.ORG • CALL: 307-745-4195
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH
LARAMIE, WYO., TO SARATOGA, WYO.
98 miles and 1 hour and 35 minutes

POW E R TO THE PEOPLE

In southern Wyoming, you’ll discover a string of towns that make up Carbon County. They’re woven together by ranching, coal, oil and a growing wind turbine industry. Break up your drive by stopping at these small-town attractions.

SOAK IN HOT SPRINGS.
In Saratoga, choose between two different hot springs experiences. The Hobo Hot Springs are free mineral pools and open 24 hours a day. At Saratoga Hot Springs Resort, only guests can access the teepee-covered mineral pools and 70-foot mineral hot spring pool.

DRIVE SCENIC BYWAYS.
The 73-mile Seminoe-Alcova Back Country Byway brings you by a patchwork of prairie country and high desert en route over the Seminoe Mountains. The south end starts in Sinclair and ends in Alcova about 30 miles southwest of Casper. Or enjoy the solitude you’ll find on the 29-mile Snowy Range Scenic Byway, which travels along Hwy. 130 through the Medicine Bow National Forest, a hidden gem that many travelers miss.

SPEND THE NIGHT IN A HISTORIC HOTEL.
Spend the night at the historic Hotel Wolf and Restaurant in Saratoga, which was built by Frederick Wolf in 1893. Grab a regional microbrew and the best burger around in the saloon.

ENJOY LOCAL FOOD.
Hit Lollypops in Saratoga for breakfast or ice cream and to connect to WiFi. For fine dining, stop by the Aspen House Restaurant, established in 1905 in downtown Rawlins for blackened ribeye or vegetarian dishes. Buck’s Sports Grill and Anong’s Thai Cuisine in Rawlins also are popular among locals.

Learn more about Carbon County at wyomingcarbon-county.com.

Find Your Inner Cowboy

Want to get away from it all on your Yellowstone vacation?
Make reservations at one of the West’s top 100 dude ranches and ranchers’ Association ranches offers something for everyone. Better yet, you can leave daily meal planning, cooking and logistics to the ranch staff, allowing you more time to connect with your family, have fun and relax.

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WHITEWATER RAFTING
Join us on a whitewater rafting trip through the scenic Wind River Canyon. Guiding the canyon for 20 years, they offer a variety of trips from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Wind River Canyon Whitewater & Fly Fishing is a Native American-owned business based in Thermopolis.

SLOT MACHINES & TABLE GAMES
Come on in and play some of our 800 slot machines or one of our table games. Leisure or pleasure, alone or with a group, you’ll have a great time at our casino. Get ready for a fun time!

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH
SARATOGA, WYO., TO RIVERTON, WYO.
164 miles, 2 hours and 39 minutes

NATIVE EXPERIENCE
From seeing Native American dances to rolling the dice, there are a number of things to do at the Wind River Hotel & Casino.

Catch a rare glimpse into Northern Arapaho culture in Riverton, Wyo.

Every Tuesday evening in the summer, travelers can watch the Northern Arapaho Experience, an hour-long performance that showcases traditional and non-traditional Native American dances at the Wind River Hotel & Casino.

“You’ll see everyone from a two-year-old to an elder dancing,” says Jackie Dorothy, marketing director of the hotel and casino.

The weekly dance performance is just one of a collection of unexpected experiences you’ll have when you stop by or stay at the hotel. Although the Wind River Casino is the largest in the state, you’ll find much more than gambling here. A small museum in the lobby, staffed by elders, showcases Northern Arapaho history. Three restaurants offer a variety of food, including the Buffalo Restaurant that offers everything from pizza cooked in a wood-fired oven to BBQ. In addition you can book “Adventure Packages” that involve a hotel stay paired with rafting, golfing or a dinosaur dig.

“What we are is a destination,” says Dorothy, noting the hotel and casino have come a long way since opening 20 years ago as a bingo hall. “You can stay at our hotel, and it’s just a day trip to Jackson, Cody and Yellowstone National Park.”

Stop by the Wind River Hotel & Casino at 10269 Hwy. 789 in Riverton or go online to windriverhotelcasino.com.
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Sponsored by the Carbon County Visitors' Council

BLAIRHOTELS.COM
In the heady Gold Rush days in South Pass City, Wyo., where 12 saloons, a collection of hotels and two breweries sprouted up almost overnight, legislator William Bright had a revolutionary idea: women in Wyoming should have the right to vote.

A saloon keeper and mine owner, Bright championed a bill for women’s suffrage in 1869, and it passed in the territorial legislature that year, making Wyoming the first government in the world to offer women full voting rights.

Today, the historic mining town is a three-hour drive from Grand Teton National Park. You can drive the Wyoming Women’s Suffrage Pathway on Hwy. 28 to visit South Pass City State Historic Site, a vibrant historic ghost town with 40 restored structures and interpretive exhibits nestled along the banks of Willow Creek. As you explore it and pan for gold, you may find yourself wondering what compelled Bright to push for female voting rights 50 years before the federal government did so.

Some say Bright’s wife convinced him to introduce the bill, stressing the equal rights for the other half of humanity. While recognizing the tough, pioneer women on Wyoming’s wind-swept frontier as equals certainly was a motivating factor, there was something else. In 1869, more than 6,000 men lived in the territory, grossly outnumbering the 1,000 women. They needed wives.

After receiving the right to vote, women quickly took on leadership roles. In South Pass City, 55-year-old Esther Hobart Morris became the nation’s first female justice of the peace in 1870. Down the road in the historic gold mining town of Atlantic City, you can spot bullet holes in the ceiling of the Atlantic City Mercantile, providing a window into Morris’ job listening to civil cases amid a period of lawlessness. As you dine in the mercantile-turned-restaurant-and-bar, you’ll also see mining tools, lanterns and historic photos hanging from the walls.

Beyond South Pass City, explore the nearby towns of Lander, Riverton, Dubois, Hudson, Shoshoni and Wind River Indian Reservation nestled against the majestic Wind River Mountain Range. Women here continue Morris’ legacy, playing critical roles in their communities.

Take, for instance, Jessie Allen, ranch manager of Allen’s Diamond 4 Ranch, and Sarah Woltan, owner of Bear Basin Adventures, both of whom offer all-women’s horse-packing, yoga and fly-fishing adventures. Or chef Jenna Ackerman, who owns The Middle Fork restaurant in Lander, and is committed to serving sustainably raised, fresh food. You may even catch a workshop with Echo Klaproth, a fourth-generation rancher, writer, teacher and ordained minister from Shoshoni who was named Wyoming’s sixth Poet Laureate in 2013. Or see women performing traditional Native American dance styles on Tuesday nights at the Wind River Casino and Wednesday nights at the Museum of the American West.

Learn more at windriver.org.
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GO BEYOND YELLOWSTONE
1. BREAKFAST IN THE MURAL DINING ROOM
Start the day with breakfast at the Mural Dining Room in Jackson Lake Lodge for a delicious breakfast with unforgettable views. The floor-to-ceiling panoramic windows offer outstanding views of the Tetons.

2. GET A HUCKLEBERRY MILKSHAKE
Stop at the Pioneer Grill in the Jackson Lake Lodge for the best milkshake ever. After you take a sip, you’ll understand why bears seek out huckleberry bushes to feast.

3. DRIVE TETON PARK ROAD
Spot wildlife and stop for a picnic on this 21-mile scenic drive in the park. It stretches from Moose to Jackson Lake Junction.

4. VISIT MORMON ROW
Founded in the 1890s by Mormon settlers, this community was once home to 27 homesteads. Today see T.A. Moulton’s much-photographed iconic barn. Drive north from Jackson on Hwy. 191 past Moose Junction, turn right onto Antelope Flats Road and drive for 1.5 miles. A trail brochure and interpretive sign can be found at the parking lot.

5. JACKSON LAKE BOAT CRUISE
Go on a scenic boat ride for a breakfast, lunch or dinner cruise on Jackson Lake where you’ll fuel up on great views and food on Elk Island. Being on Jackson Lake gives you a whole different perspective.

6. HIKE TO TAGGART LAKE
This beautiful 3-mile round-trip trail cuts through sagebrush flats and forests before rolling into Taggart Lake. You’ll gain 350 feet of elevation on this trail rated “easy.” From the lake, you’ll have great views of the awe-inspiring, 13,770-foot Grand Teton.

GRAND TETON’S TOP SIX
Here are some of our favorite things to do from hiking to exploring some of Grand Teton’s most iconic treasures.
Early in 2019, Congress decided Yellowstone National Park was worth more than gold.

And when it did that by passing the Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act, it protected the world’s first national park from the immediate threat of two companies interested in mining gold near the park. But the act is not just a short-term stop gap. It protects 30,370 acres of land near Yellowstone’s North Entrance from large-scale mining in perpetuity.

“We are over the moon,” says Caroline Byrd, executive director of Greater Yellowstone Coalition, an environmental organization that worked closely with locals, legislators and business owners to fight the gold mines. “It’s a huge victory.”

Since 1983, the organization has focused on protecting the 20 million acres surrounding Yellowstone that form one of the world’s last intact ecosystems. It’s home to migrating animals like elk and moose. It’s a haven for grizzly bears and wolves.

“This truly is a unique place on the planet,” Byrd says. “We like to call it ‘the wild heart of North America.’”

What tips does the organization have for travelers journeying into this wild heart? Carry bear spray and know how to use it when you are hiking. It’s also important to follow campground rules on how to store your food, so bears don’t get habituated to human food and trash. Bears that get into trash become “problem” bears that often have to be euthanized.

“We work hard to keep people safe and bears wild,” she says.

Learn more about the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and how you can help protect Yellowstone at greateryellowstone.org.
THE BIG SIX

Right next to Grand Teton National Park, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort offers a ton of fun.

1. VIA FERRATA
WHY GO: Unlike the world-renowned expert climbing routes in the Tetons, the Via Ferrata makes mountain climbing accessible for families and individuals looking for adventure. Accompanied by a guide, you’ll secure yourself to cables and move across a mountain face by way of metal ladders, rope walkways and ledges.
TIP: Book in advance a full-day climb (five hours) with lunch included or a partial-day climb (three hours) that enables you to sample some of the routes without lunch. You’ll start with a one-hour practice route to get you ready for the rest of the Via Ferrata.

2. AERIAL TRAM AND CORBET’S CABIN
WHY GO: Ready for views without having to hike? Take the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort aerial tram to Rendezvous Mountain at 10,450 feet.
TIP: Stop in at Corbet’s Cabin at the top for mouth-watering waffles with Nutella, sugar and/or bacon. A favorite is the Traditional with brown sugar, butter and a side of bacon.

3. GRAND ADVENTURE PARK
WHY GO: This is paradise on Earth for kids and for every adult who has continued to cultivate their inner child. Your Grand Adventure Pass enables you to access the bungee trampoline, the 25-foot-high Aerial Adventure Course known as “The Ropes,” the gondola, tram and 25-foot rock climbing wall.
TIP: Kids ages 5-7 must be accompanied by a paying adult on the ropes course.

4. DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK
WHY GO: Feel the rush of biking downhill on fun mountain trails without having to sweat uphill. The five-minute Teewinot lift will bring you and your bike to the top.
TIP: Rent your bike at JH Sports or Teton Village Sports in Teton Village. And if it’s your first time mountain biking, set yourself up for success by taking a one-hour introduction course.

5. HIKE THE WILDFLOWER TRAIL TO BRIDGER GONDOLA
WHY GO: Get amazing views, pass fields of wildflowers and take breaks on benches tucked in the shade on this must-do hike to the top of Bridger Gondola.
TIP: It’s always free to ride down the gondola or tram, so hike away, knowing you don’t have to hike down.

6. PARAGLIDING
WHY GO: You’ll see incredible scenery as you paraglide over the Jackson Hole area, flying with a tandem professional pilot from Jackson Hole Paragliding.
TIP: No previous experience is necessary, but you must weigh between 40 and 220 pounds and be physically fit enough to run. It is recommended you book in advance.

Learn more about Jackson Hole Mountain Resort at jacksonhole.com.
Located at the southern end of the Bridger-Teton National Forest with the Ham's Fork River flowing through town and the Green River nearby, the Kemmerer area is a fisherman's paradise! Area reservoirs also offer plenty of fishing. Be sure and visit Fossil Butte National Monument - located 15 minutes from town. Some of the world's best preserved fossil fishes are found in the flat-topped ridges of southwestern Wyoming. You can also contact area fossil quarries and “fish” for 52-million year old fish.

The last weekend in July it's all about the MUSIC - Oyster Ridge Music Festival to be exact! Wyoming's largest FREE Music Festival and home of the Wyoming State Flatpick Guitar Championship has been happening in Kemmerer's downtown Triangle Park for 23 summers now.
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH
JACKSON, WYO., TO KEMMERER, WYO.
161 miles, 2 hours and 49 minutes

LOST IN TIME
Visit Fossil Butte National Monument after leaving Yellowstone.

BY VINCENT GUIEB

Want to see a 52-million-year-old fish, turtle or crocodile fossil?

Head to the Kemmerer/Diamondville area (pronounced “Kemmer”) in southwest Wyoming to discover these fossils on your own at one of the area’s private quarries that serve as 52-million-year-old limestone graveyards. At these private facilities, visitors can dig through layers of time, uncovering fish, plants, birds, insects and crocodiles.

Fifteen miles west of Kemmerer is Fossil Butte National Monument. View more than 300 fossils and interactive displays at the visitor center, hike the outdoor trails or drive the scenic route and have a picnic. Remember it is forbidden to remove fossils or disturb artifacts in the national monument.

During the summer, you can go on a guided tour, see fossil preparation demonstrations or tag along with a paleontologist in the scientific collection of fossils on Fridays and Saturdays.

The area also has a rich, more recent history of coal mining, railroads and bootlegging. Take a stroll through historic Herschler Triangle Park to see the nation’s second J.C. Penney store. James Cash Penney opened it in 1902. His original house in Kemmerer is a public museum.

Visit the Crafter’s Cottage for locally made crafts and learn about Wyoming history at the Fossil Country Frontier Museum. Then grab a bite at a local favorite like El Jalisciense and have a drink at The Stock Exchange, a functioning bar since 1902.

Learn more at fossilbasin.org and kemmerer.org. Read the longer article online at myyellowstonepark.com.
The dinosaurs may have been prehistoric but they knew what they were doing. They found a scenic oasis of adventure and stayed so long it caught them off guard, and they’re still here. Dinosaur National Monument is their final resting place. See what they saw and go beyond the bones to experience everything the area has to offer.
Looking to avoid crowds and see one of the country’s most spectacular national monuments?

Head to Vernal, Utah, to explore Dinosaur National Monument. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the John Wesley Powell expedition to explore the Colorado and Green rivers, the latter of which flows through the monument. You’ll see ancient Native American rock art of animal-like figures, abstract designs and human-like figures whose meaning is still a mystery. You’ll also find unmistakable dinosaur bones embedded in the monument’s sandstone walls.

The area’s extensive dinosaur fossils have locals bragging their town was established 150,000,000 years ago. See some of the ancient residents at Utah Field House of Natural History State Park Museum. A giant Diplodocus stretching 90 feet from tail to tip will greet you at the door. Inside, learn about the area’s dinosaurs and how to tell fossils apart from pebbles. Step into the Fossil Lab to discover scientists working with dinosaur bones. And don’t miss the Dinosaur Garden where 17 full-sized replicas of prehistoric animals loiter.

A highlight is Red Fleet State Park 13 miles north of Vernal on Hwy. 191 where you can walk on a rolling, 1.5-mile trail to 200-million-year-old dinosaur tracks. Go early in the morning or late afternoon as the tracks are difficult to see when the sun is directly above you. There’s camping here, and the park rents kayaks, canoes and paddleboards to explore the Red Fleet Reservoir.

Head to Betty’s Cafe, 416 W. Main St., for a reasonably-priced breakfast. For craft beer and a gastro pub menu, dine at Vernal Brewing Co. Beers are named after area attractions like Little Hole Lager [a Green River boat takeout] and Allosaurus Amber.

Stop by the Utah Field House of Natural History State Park Museum, 496 East Main St., for more area information or visit dinosaur.com.
Western Colorado
See wild horses and the eastern side of Dinosaur National Monument near Craig, Colo., on the way back to Denver.

1. **Explore Dinosaur National Monument**
   **WHY GO:** Two-thirds of this striking national monument are in Colorado’s Moffat County, making the area a must-see.
   **TIP:** Head to the Quarry Exhibit Hall where you can see 1,500 dinosaur fossils on a cliff wall and touch fossils from 149 million years ago.

2. **Raft the Green or Yampa Rivers**
   **WHY GO:** The confluence of the Green and Yampa rivers is in the monument amid gorgeous canyons.
   **TIP:** Jump on a raft with OARS or Adventure Bound Expeditions.

3. **Visit Deerlodge Park**
   **WHY GO:** See hundreds of elk year-round at this area on the monument’s eastern edge. There are restrooms and eight camping sites that accommodate trailers.
   **TIP:** To get there, go west from Craig on Hwy. 40 to mile marker 44. Take the Deerlodge Park Road north for 12 miles, following the paved road to the campground.

4. **Stop at Sandwash Basin**
   **WHY GO:** See one of the country’s last remaining herds of free-roaming wild mustangs.
   **TIP:** Sand Wash Basin is located 45 miles west of Craig, Colo. Drive west on Hwy. 40 past the town of Maybell. Turn north on Hwy. 318 and drive approximately 15 miles. Turn right on County Road 75 to enter the basin.

Learn more at Moffat County Tourism Association, 250 Victory Way in Craig or at visitmoffatcounty.com.

Utah’s Best Paddling Trails
Fall between Yellowstone and Utah’s Mighty 5 are over 90 miles of exhilarating paddling trails where towering cliffs rise above and monsters: hunt beneath.
Endless adventure at www.visitflaminggorge.com