



Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway

The pioneers who settled the West were a hardy lot. After trudging across the American prairie pulling wagons laden with their worldly possessions, they arrived at the edge of the mountain frontier. It became Pike's Peak or Bust, where the mountain represented the gateway to the land of new possibilities. Many chose not to go further than the Front Range, taking advantage of the Homestead Act to acquire their own place. The discovery of gold in 1891 upended ranching, making the stories in the region intertwined and inextricably connected. More than 25 mining towns and 500 mines sprang up in the Cripple Creek and Victor Mining District. Today, these towns highlight the Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway, which travels roads built to connect the towns and serve as transportation routes for the gold. The Shelf Road was the first connecting the gold camps to the Front Range. Soon after, Phantom Canyon was completed. The Teller One Road follows a third stagecoach and wagon route. Ultimately, the Cripple Creek and Victor Mining District – known as the biggest Gold Camp in the world - produced over 21 million ounces of gold, more than the California and Alaska Gold Rushes combined. The fortunes rose and fell while the rest of life went on. Enjoy this very comprehensive mining story, told in a myriad of museums, in mines and in timeless, historic towns that still retain their frontier character, with a bit of ranching heritage thrown in. This is the only place on earth such a concentration of gold mines and it pervaded every facet of life.



Gold Belt Tour Heritage and History Experience



Driving the Byway

Plan to arrive in Colorado Springs in time to do a bit of exploring and take a trip up Pike's Peak. On Day Three, after spending a full day exploring Colorado Springs, you'll be heading for Florence, the Antiques Capital of Colorado. From Florence, it's on to Victor on Phantom Canyon Road to begin exploring the story of the Cripple Creek and Victor Mining District. Next up, Cripple Creek, to explore more of the story of mining in the Old West, tour a present day mine and ride the narrow gauge railroad. On Day Five, it's a short drive from Cripple Creek to Florissant on Teller One Road to visit one of the original ranches now a part of the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. From Florissant you'll be traveling on High Park Road to Canon City, and from there back to Colorado Springs on Shelf Road. At this point, you will have traveled all pioneer roads built to connect the mining towns with the outside world that make up the Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway.

Day One



Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs began as Old Colorado City, established in 1859 as the Territorial Capital of Colorado. When General William Palmer arrived 10 years later, he immediately recognized the enticing scenery could create a great resort town at the base of Pikes Peak. As the owner of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in 1871, he bought land next to Old Colorado City to create the Victorian spa resort town he envisioned. Palmer laid out broad streets and planted 10,000 trees to make Colorado Springs green and lush. By the end of the century, Colorado Springs had become the luxury community of tycoons who made their fortunes in the nearby gold mines.

Day One

Historic Walking Tour of Colorado Springs



The Historic Walking Tour of Colorado Springs (pdf included with the detailed itinerary) begins at the city's central intersection where the first stake of Colorado Springs was driven in 1871. The earliest buildings in the city are the architectural legacy of the railroads, the early health industry, mining, and tourism. The route includes a variety of architectural styles ranging from an 1874 church in the Gothic Revival style to a 1940's Modern-style office building. Extensions of the tour encompass an early residential subdivision, a north extension and a south extension for a full introduction to the city.

Tour begins at Cascade Avenue and Pike's Peak Avenue at the Antlers Hotel. Allow 2 hours.

Old Colorado City Historic District and History Center



Old Colorado City has been lovingly preserved to protect the fine old brick structures, quaint alleyways and territorial charm that provide a backdrop for small thriving shops, boutiques, galleries and restaurants with cuisine from all over the world. The Old Colorado History Center contains a remarkable collection of artifacts and photographs and written, oral and electronic histories of the original settlement.

One South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904
719-636-1225 Tuesday-Saturday 11AM-4PM, Winter
11AM-2PM, Allow 1 hour. Free.

Day One

Pike's Peak



No one can travel to Colorado Springs without climbing Pike's Peak! After Lewis and Clark returned from their coast to coast expedition through the upper reaches of the Louisiana Territory in 1806, a dashing young Army officer Zebulon Pike was dispatched to explore the southern region of the Territory. He named the first massive mountain he encountered on the Front Range Grand Peak. Deep snow prevented him from reaching the summit, yet in 1810, his published account literally put the mountain on the map. There are two main ways to ascend to the Peak, the first on Pike's Peak Highway, a spectacular toll road that winds up the mountain. The second is to have one of the tour companies whisk you up the mountain in a shuttle bus or Jeep.

To drive yourself: 19 Mile Pike's Peak Highway leaves from Cascade, CO, if you're driving yourself you can likely fit this in on the afternoon of Day One. Round trip with no stops 2-3 hours, Fill up the tank before leaving for Pike's Peak.

To let someone else drive, all tour departures leave in the morning. Adventures Out West, 719-578-0935, Departures at 7:55 AM and 8:25 AM Starting at \$139 per person.

Colorado Springs Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



Destination Distinctive Accommodations: Holden House Bed and Breakfast Inn 1102 West Pike's Peak Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 719-471-3980

Located right in the Old Colorado City Historic District, the 1902 Holden House was built by Isabel Holden, widow of a prosperous rancher and mine owner. The guest suites are all named for the mining areas in which the Holden family owned an interest. A full gourmet breakfast is served each morning along with a daily afternoon wine social. 24-hour coffee and tea service and a bottomless cookie jar are always available.



1 Lake Avenue, Colorado Springs 80906
855-634-7711

Dining at the Broadmoor

Everyone who can, should experience dining at the Broadmoor at least once in a lifetime. From the day The Broadmoor opened in 1918, Spencer Penrose created dining experiences that celebrate modern innovations while honoring the culinary traditions of the American West. For a true fine dining experience, like you will find nowhere else, you can dine at the Penrose Room, Colorado's only Forbes 5-Star and AAA Five Diamond Restaurant. For a bit more casual experience, try the Summit, which showcases regional cuisine with a classic twist, complemented with a wine and cocktail program. The Lake View Terrace serves breakfast and The Grill serves lunch.

Day Two



Garden of the Gods

In an area where spectacular scenery is a regular thing, the Garden of the Gods stands out among its rivals, in what is considered one of the most extensive pictures of the earth's history. More than 300 years of geological history is revealed at the biological melting point between the grasslands of the Great Plains and the sandstone landscapes of the Southwest.

1805 North 30th Street, Colorado Springs, Co 80904
719-634-6666 7 Days 9AM-3PM, Free Allow 3 hours



Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site

Step back in Colorado ranching history, at the Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site, a living history museum at the Garden of the Gods. Walter Galloway acquired the ranch through the Homestead Act, working as a day laborer until he could purchase the property for \$1.25 an acre. The entire family resided in the homestead cabin, cooking over an open fire, washing laundry by hand, and gardening without farm equipment until the 1875 Victorian family home was constructed. Interpreters dressed in period appropriate clothing offer tours, demonstrations, and hands-on learning.

3105 Gateway Road, Colorado Springs, CO
Phone and Email: 719-578-6777, Located in the Garden of the Gods, Allow 2 hours, \$8 per person



Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum

The massive 1903 former El Paso County Courthouse was transformed into the Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum to hold a collection of fine arts, artifacts and archives. Exhibits such as "This Shall be the Land for Women," Evidence: The Story of General Palmer," and The Story of Us" reveal the fascinating history of this region.

215 South Tejon Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719-385-5990, Tuesday-Saturday 10AM-5PM Allow 2 hours. Free.

Day Three



Florence

Florence began in 1870, as an orchard, two stores and a small railroad depot to accommodate the trains hauling coal from Coal Creek. When oil was discovered in 1881, the town boomed with 50 oil wells and 60 new homes and businesses. When gold was discovered in 1890, a road to open Phantom Canyon was built to haul out the ore, along with a narrow-gauge railroad known as the Gold Belt Line. By 1898, Florence had eight reduction mills to process gold, seven oil refineries and five brick factories. Today Florence is widely known for antiques and art galleries, coffee shops and boutiques, yet still boasts the oldest oil producing field in the country. Colorado Springs to Florence –40 miles.

Day Three



Antiques Capital of Colorado

For treasure hunting, Florence hosts 15 antique shops and seven art galleries housed in the quaint historic district. The galleries hold new monthly showings, concerts, art demonstrations and year-round classes.

Begin at 103 West Main Street, Florence, Allow 1 hour, Typical Store Hours 7 Days, 10AM-5PM.



Florence Pioneer Museum

Take an authentic look at the area's history where a display of the pieces and parts and collections inspired by Florence and surrounding mining towns, pull it all together.

100 East Front Street, Florence, CO 81226
719-784-4047, Regular hours, Tuesday-Friday 1PM-4PM, Saturday 10AM-3PM, Museum willing to open by appointment during other hours. 719-784-1904 to make arrangements. Allow 1 hour. \$5 per person.

Day Three



Victor

Known as the City of Mines since gold was discovered in 1890, Victor was fueled by a fever that spread like wildfire. Thousands of prospectors flocked to the area, transforming the ranching region around Pike's Peak into a flurry of mines, towns, and riches. The streets of Victor were literally paved with gold, since only the best ore was worth sending on and the rest used for paving materials. Today, in this quiet, authentic 1890s mining town, the streets are lined with historic buildings that appear like they just stepped out of yesteryear. Florence to Victor 37 miles.

Day Three



Victor Lowell Thomas Museum

Originally the Tomkins Hardware Store, the Victor Dry Goods Store, the Hackley Hotel, the post office, the bank and a hardware store, the Victor Lowell Thomas Museum has a long history. It was the only fully brick structure that survived the 1899 fire. Displays in Victorian rooms filled with original furnishings and household equipment feature Victor's colorful history in ranching, gold mining and railroading. A one ton ore car, miners lamps, tools and a miners cabin are also on display.

298 Victor Avenue, Victor, CO 80860 719-689-5509, 7 Days 10AM-5PM, Allow 1 hour, \$7 per person



Victor Gold Mining Camp and Ag Museum

The Victor Gold Camp Ag and Mining Museum looks much like the rugged structures you'll find in a mining camp. More than a showcase for antique equipment, the museum hosts a fully operational steam-powered machine shop, a blacksmith shop and assay office (the place where gold was tested for purity), along with one of the best collections of antique tractors, tools, techniques and equipment from the gold rush in the country. A complex system of pulleys and belts power machines, and a blacksmith forge with hammer and anvil illustrate how work was done before electricity.

102 South Second Street, Victor, CO 80860 719-689-3461, Wednesday-Saturday 10 AM-5PM, Allow 1 hour, \$5 suggested donation.

Day Three



Cripple Creek and Victor Mine Tour

When volcanoes erupted and intruded through rocks a billion years ago, gold deposits were spread over seven square miles in the Cripple Creek area, where mines are still in operation. Put on a hard hat and tour this modern day real, working surface gold mine in operation since 1976. It's a chance to see giant haul trucks, shovels and drill rigs in action in today's world.

1280 Colorado 67, Victor, CO 80860 719-689-2977,
Summer Only, 2 hour tour, Reservations 719-689-5509, \$11
per person



Destination Distinctive Dining Lunch

The Side Door Restaurant
321 Victor Avenue, Victor Hotel
Victor, CO 80860
719-689-5883

Grab a bite of lunch somewhere between your visits in Victor, at the restaurant located in the historic Victor Hotel, specializing in Rocky Mountain comfort food with a little altitude.

Day Three



Cripple Creek

It took carpenter Winfield Scott Stratton 15 years to find gold. Finally discovering it on July 4, 1901, he named his claim Independence, eventually selling it for \$11 million, to become one of the 30 millionaires who resided in Cripple Creek. Spencer Penrose, the owner of the C.O.D mine, used his profits to build The Broadmoor Hotel. These are among the stories you'll discover in Cripple Creek, the capital of the Victor and Cripple Creek Mining District. Victor to Cripple Creek—5 miles

Cripple Creek Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



Destination Distinctive Accommodations: Carr Manor Boutique Hotel and Bed and Breakfast 350 East Carr Avenue, Cripple Creek CO 719-689-3709

One of 17 original schools in the Victor and Cripple Creek Mining District has been transformed into the Carr Manor. The beautiful 1896 brick building features original high ceilings, stained glass windows, and elegant antiques.



Maggie's Restaurant 300 East Bennett Avenue Cripple Creek, CO 80813 719-689-3517

Even though Maggie's is located in the Colorado Grande Casino, there is a separate entrance and quality food including vegetarian.

Day Four

Cripple Creek Heritage Center



The first best stop in Cripple Creek, the center, equipped with 21st century technology, was designed to be reminiscent of the town in its heyday. Audio, video and hands on exhibits reveal the story of Early Explorers, Cripple Creek's First Residents, Faces from the Past, the Railroads and the Gold Camp Lifestyle, moving from the humble beginnings as a 15 person gold camp to today, surrounded by walls featuring stunning views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

9283 Colorado 67, Cripple Creek, CO 719-689-6556, Seven Days 9AM-5PM, Allow 30 min, Free

Cripple Creek District Museum



The complex includes the 1893 Trading and Transfer Building, the 1895 Midland Terminal Railroad Depot, and the Assay Office, filled with reminders of Cripple Creek's gold mining, along a cabin that belonged to Balance Le Coq is furnished historically accurate. A second cabin reflects the living quarters of a miner during gold rush days.

5th and Bennett Avenue, Cripple Creek, CO 719-689-9540, 7 Days, 10AM-5PM, Winter 4PM, Allow 2 hours, \$8 per person.

Outlaws and Law Men Jail Museum



It's become the hottest selfie spot west of the Mississippi – where you can find yourself in a cell where the “miscreants and troublemakers” hung out during Gold Rush days. The promise of easy fortunes brought everyone to town: local burglars, robbers, highwayman, the “Wild Bunch” gang and other vigilantes bent on disrupting life. The original cells are intact and police logs and other very authentic items are on hand.

136 West Bennett Avenue, Cripple Creek, CO 80813
719-689-6556, 7 Days, 10AM-5PM, Allow 1 hour, \$3 per person

Day Four

Old Homestead House Museum



It was once the most famous brothel in Cripple Creek, known for impeccable service, high powered customers and glamorous madams. When \$3 dollars a day was a good wage, the brothel charged \$250 a night! Today, it is filled with velvet bedspreads and handmade furniture.

352 Myers Avenue, Cripple Creek, CO 719-689-9090,
Friday-Sunday, Noon –5PM, 30 minute tour, \$7 per person.



Cripple Creek and Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad

When the Cripple Creek and Victor Narrow was re-started to serve visitors in 1967, it had not hauled gold ore in decades. Instead it became a labor of love of the Birmingham family who operate the railroad just as their father who was an engineer for the Union Pacific Railroad like his grandfather before him. The coal-fired narrow-gauge locomotives have been completely overhauled and the ticket office rescued from the old Midland Terminal line. Not being able to locate an authentic water tower, John had one constructed of wood.

520 East Carr Avenue, Cripple Creek, CO 719-689-2640, 7
Days, 10AM-5PM, Starts every 70 minutes, \$15 per person



Cripple Creek Donkey Herd

Don't be alarmed or surprised when you see donkeys walking down the streets of Cripple Creek. The current donkey herd that roams around town are descendants of the donkeys that worked in the mines. When miners left, the donkeys were let loose to roam. A Donkey Derby Day, during which donkeys are led through a series of obstacles on Bennett Avenue is held each year to raise funds for feed and veterinarian services for the herd.

Day Five



Mollie Kathleen Mine Tour

A tour of the Mollie Kathleen Mine is a complete contrast to the tour of the present day mine in Cripple Creek. You'll descend 1,000 feet below ground to see 1890s hard rock gold mining and ride a skip through the four phases of mining it took to extract the gold. See how gold veins appear in their natural state and learn about the rugged process that was needed to extract the gold ore from underground.

9388 Colorado 67, Cripple Creek, CO 719-689-2466, 7 Days 10AM-5PM, 1 hour tour, \$20 per person



Florissant

The tiny town of Florissant, population 104, is mainly the entry point for the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Some of the richest and most diverse fossil deposits in the world lie beneath this grassy mountain valley in central Colorado, along with petrified redwood stumps up to 14 feet wide and thousands of detailed fossils of insects and plants. Cripple Creek to Florissant—18 miles



Iron Tree Restaurant, Bakery and Brewery

37 Costello Avenue
Florissant, CO 80816
719-748-0124

Grab a bite of lunch at this American Brew Pub located right in Florissant.

Day Five

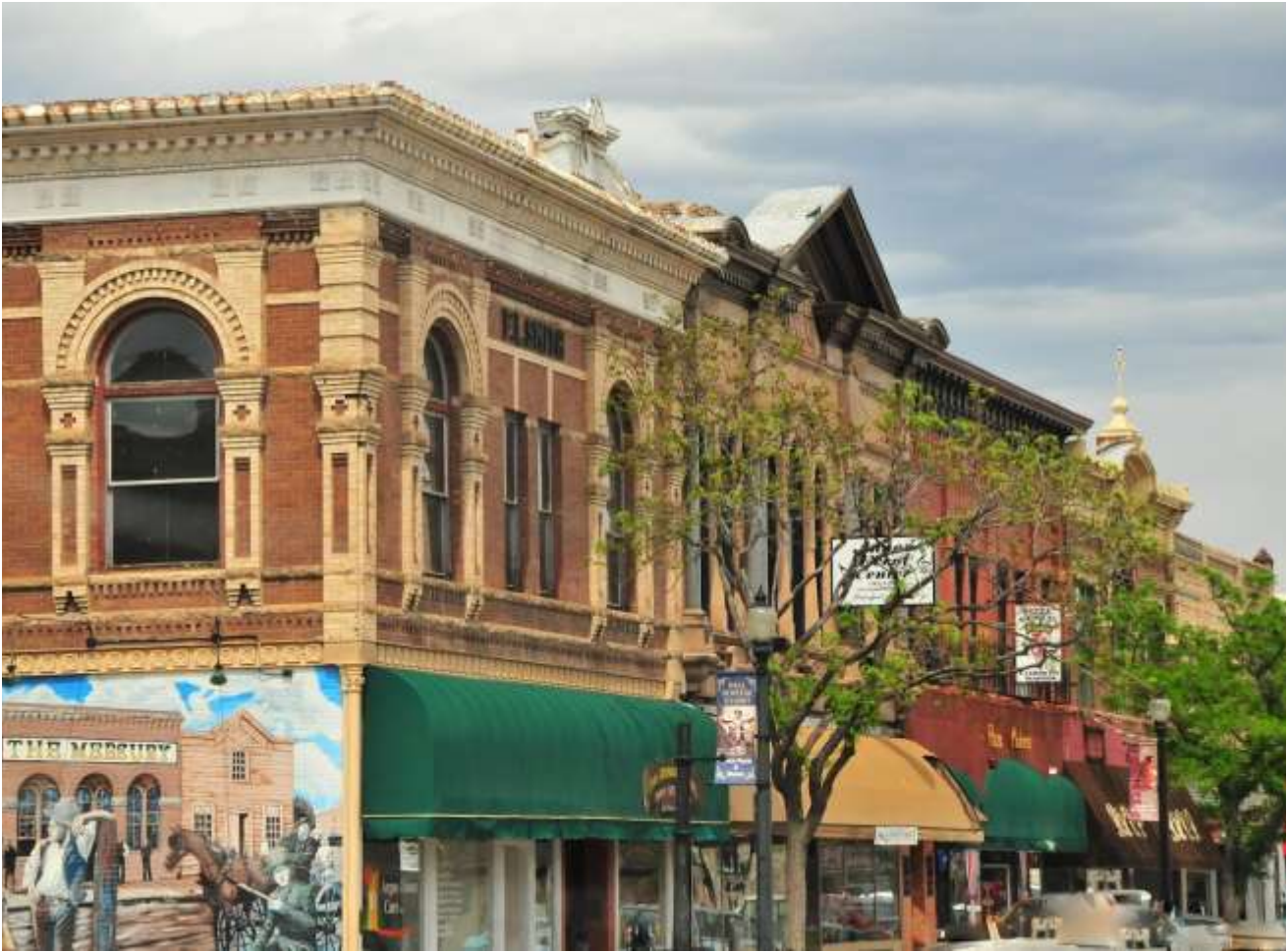


Hornbek Homestead/Florissant Fossil Beds

Discover the very interesting story of Adeline Hornbek. Originally from Massachusetts Adeline arrived with her husband Simon Harker to farm and raise cattle in Colorado. When Harker died in 1864, Adeline faced life with three young children and managed to make a living from crops and livestock. She purchased the homestead in 1866, buying 80 acres for \$100. Two months later she married Elliott Hornbek and had a son. In 1875 when Hornbek disappeared in mysterious circumstances, once again Adeline Hornbek became the sole support for her family, continuing to manage a successful ranch and raise her children.

15806 County Road 1, Florissant, CO 80816
719-748-3253, 7 Days, 9AM-4:30PM, Allow 2 hours to
also explore the Fossil Beds, \$10 per person

Day Five



Canon City

Canon City was supposed to be the commercial center for mining in South Park and the upper Arkansas River. In spite of no minerals were ever found, a mining company began constructing the town in 1860. Oil was discovered six miles north, producing the first commercial well west of the Mississippi. Florissant to Canon City—50 miles

Day Five



Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center

The Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center tells the story of this fascinating town, including the history of Downtown Canon City, Digging It: Fossils of Fremont County and a fireplace that incorporates dinosaur fossils, petrified wood, minerals and part of a stalactite. The center also holds thousands of research files, local newspapers, city directories, cemetery records, yearbooks and archival documents from local businesses. The museum, housed in the former 1927 Municipal Building was constructed with fireproof materials, with extra structural strength, on the condition that the second floor would always be a museum.

612 Royal Gorge Boulevard, Canon City, CO 81212
719-269-2036, Wednesday-Saturday, 10AM-4PM, Allow 2 hours. Free.

Canon City Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



Destination Distinctive Accommodations: Royal Gorge Cabins 45054 West US Highway 50, Canon City, CO 800-748-2953

Select a well appointed single king or 2 bedroom cabin, or go for a more rustic “glamping” option with first class amenities, outstanding guest services and incredible mountain views.



Whitewater Grill 45045 West US Highway 50 Canon City, CO 81212 719-269-1009

Dine conveniently right at your accommodations in the rustic western style bar and grill, with views of the surrounding Sangre de Cristo mountain range.

Day Six



Royal Gorge Railroad

It was the discovery of silver in Leadville that led to the race to build a railroad through the entire area. Beginning in Canon City in 1877, by the 1890s, the Royal Gorge region was used as a passenger route for transcontinental travel, with as many as four trains a day. It soon became today's scenic leisure train following the winding, tumbling Arkansas River deep within the soaring 1,000 foot granite cliffs of Colorado's Royal Gorge.

330 Royal Gorge Railroad, Canon City, CO 81212
719-276-4000, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Trains, 9:15 AM, 12:30 PM and 3:30 Departures, 6:30 PM Departure on Weekends, a selection of special trains. Allow 3 hours.
From \$49 per person.
