

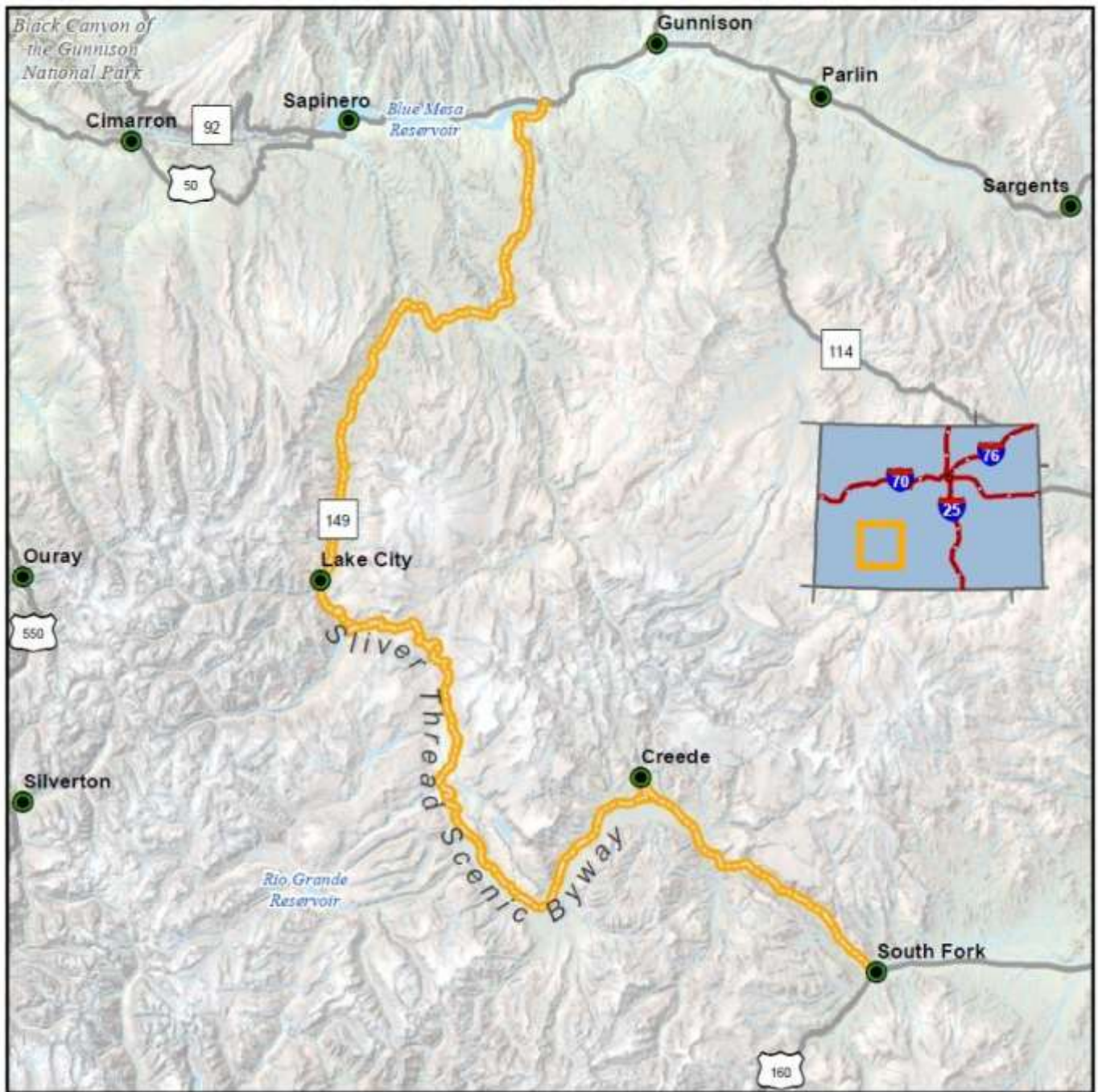


## Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway

For 10,000 years, the Ute Indians hunted game wearing narrow paths in the San Juan Mountains. Horses widened these trails allowing the Utes to travel greater distances. Private enterprise moved in building toll roads over the rugged and treacherous terrain, widening the paths for 20 more years. The 1880s brought trains to haul supplies wearing tracks deeper into the soil for another fifty years. By the early 1920s, automobiles replaced both. The Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway weaves through these historic routes. Following the old Barlow and Sanderson stage route, signs of past miners, explorers and early settlers can still be found. On the road, you'll feel as though you're a stagecoach passenger on a trek through the wilds of the 1800s, passing through a canvas of untouched mountain wilderness, forests, deserts, historic Wild West-era structures and desolate reminders of the mining boom. Filled with relics of days long past traced back to the Ute Indians, there is no guarantee what a traveler may find. The only requirements for this journey is to keep a watchful eye in order to see the rich past flourishing in the communities of today.

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## Stage Routes to Silver Experience



### Driving the Byway

Your journey begins in the free-spirited mountain town of Crested Butte. After exploring for a day, on Day Two, you'll be headed Gunnison and then the dramatic canyons of the Curecanti National Recreation before reaching Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. This spectacular National Park is a not to be missed experience. By the time you have explored the entire Park, you will be only eight miles from Montrose, which is not on the Byway, but will be better for an overnight stay than backtracking all the way to Gunnison in the evening. That way, if you didn't have the opportunity to explore both the North and South Rim Roads of the Black Canyon, you can explore the rest today on the way back to the Byway. On the road to Lake City, you'll be surrounded by the splendor of several 14,000 foot mountain peaks, awaits. Spend the night in Creede, a city that was born on the wings of a flourishing silver market. On Day Four, if you didn't have the opportunity to explore all of Creede yesterday, you can do that before driving the rest of the Byway through Wagon Wheel Gap, and finally South Fork. We've added a bonus stop in Del Norte at the end of the drive, which will also be a good place to stop for lunch.

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## Day One



### Crested Butte

The quaint 1880s mining town of Crested Butte is the wildflower capital of Colorado. As a supply depot for hard rock mining, by 1882, Crested Butte was home to five hotels, a bank, saloons and restaurants, livery stables, sawmills, doctors, lawyers and the Union Congregational Church, which is still standing. It was named one of the Dozen Distinctive Destinations of the National Trust in 2008. Stroll downtown where locally owned shops and restaurants are housed in beautiful late-1800s-era storefronts.

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## Day One

### Historic Walking Tour of Crested Butte



The historic walking tour (pdf included with the detailed itinerary) of Crested Butte begins at the Crested Butte Heritage Museum and end at the Union Congregational Church, with 40 stops in between. Enjoy strolling this very quaint and impeccably preserved historic town.

Tour begins at 331 Elk Avenue Allow 1 hour

### Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum



The 1883 building that houses the Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum still displays the original coal stove and merchandise displays of Tony's Hardware, the longest running business in Crested Butte. Changing exhibits feature forgotten pieces of local history, including a model of the town and the railroad, coal mining history, skiing history in the Butte, and more.

331 Elk Ave, Crested Butte, CO 81224 970-349-1880  
7 Days 11AM-5PM. Allow 1 hour, \$5 per person

### Crested Butte Creative District



Completely intertwined in downtown Crested Butte, the Crested Butte Creative District encompasses the Center for the Arts, 16 artist-owned studios and galleries, three co-op galleries, 10 performance venues and a year-round schedule of creative events. It is a community identity that sets Crested Butte apart from other mountain towns.

507 Maroon Ave, Crested Butte, Co 81224 970-349-5338  
Regular retail hours generally 11AM-6PM Allow 1 hour

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## Crested Butte Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations: The Ruby of Crested Butte** **624 Gothic Avenue, Crested Butte, CO 81224 970-349-1338**

The Ruby celebrates the life of Ruby Elkourie, the former owner's grandmother who lived by the motto "a stranger is just a good friend you haven't met yet." She was the embodiment of The Ruby – colorful, authentic and connected, truly Crested Butte. Attention to detail, impeccable service, and outstanding breakfasts are the order of the day.



### **Coal Creek Grill @ Forest Queen Hotel**

129 Elk Avenue  
Crested Butte, CO 81224  
970-349-6645

The Coal Creek Grill is housed in the 1881 building of the Forest Queen Hotel, the only lodging on Crested Butte's Elk Avenue. In its early years, it was reported to have been part of the Main Street red light district with a saloon downstairs and brothel on the second floor. Legend has it that a lovelorn lady named Elizabeth, commonly known as Liz, who gave all her money to a gambler who left town with it, still haunts the hotel. Shortly afterwards she threw herself out of a second story window into Coal Creek.

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## Day Two



### Gunnison

Gunnison is a quintessential Western ranching and rodeo town, which feels like a cattleman's town. Originally summer hunting grounds for the Ute Tribe, subsequent waves of migration shaped the community, when gold and silver were discovered in the area. Gunnison still holds the oldest rodeo in Colorado, along with authentic hoedowns. Crested Butte to Gunnison– 27 miles

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## Day Two

### Historic Walking Tour of Gunnison



It is amazing that this small quaint town includes 38 locations in the historic walking tour (pdf included with the detailed itinerary). Beginning on Main Street, the route continues through the neighborhoods on Virginia Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue, through the Red Light District and back to Main Street.

Tour begins at 102 South Main Street Allow 1 hour

### Pioneer Museum



Located on a 14-acre campus, the Pioneer Museum has created its own frontier town at the base the W Mountain. In this cultural jewel you can explore two frontier schools with their original furnishings, a red dairy barn and pole barn, a Denver and Rio Grande Narrow Gauge train engine and caboose at a railroad depot, a log cabin chapel, water tower, several cabins, the Odd Fellows lodge building, Gunnison's first post office, 10 additional whole buildings filled with displays, outdoor displays on the south and east end of the grounds and the Andy Mallett Antique Car Museum with 55 vehicles.

803 E. Tomichi Avenue, Gunnison, CO 81230  
970-641-4530 7 Days 9AM-5PM Allow 2 hours, \$10 per person



### Curecanti National Recreation Area

Curecanti National Recreation Area is the gateway to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, the massive canyon it took the Gunnison River millenniums to carve out.

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## Day Two



### Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

It all started about 60 million years ago when some metamorphic rock was lifted up, only to be buried by two erupting volcanoes. About two million years ago, the Gunnison River found its way through a crack in the rock and Mother Nature began using the forces of wind and water to keep the crevice growing. Little by little the black rock gave way, creating the massive plunging vertical cliffs that are now the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Even though fewer people know about the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, it ranks right up there with America's most famous parks. The steepest cliffs, oldest rock and craggiest spires host a sculpted vertical wilderness that is not to be missed. There are two views of the Black Canyon. To get to the North Rim Road, take Colorado Route 92 to Crawford State Park. The North Rim is reached by a gravel road from the east end of the State Park. The road provides access to six overlooks to canyon walls that are almost vertical; some of the most impressive views in the Park. The South Rim is reached by traveling west on US Route 50 to Colorado Route 347, which takes you to the South Rim Visitor Center and 12 overlooks. Be sure to stop at Gunnison Point, Chasm View, Painted Wall and Sunset View. The Visitor Center is located at Gunnison Point.

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## Montrose Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations: Canyon Creek Bed and Breakfast 820 East Main Street, Montrose, CO 81401 970-249-2886**

The quaint, charming 1909 Canyon Creek Bed and Breakfast is located right in historic downtown Montrose, near unique shops, great restaurants and historic theatres. The owner returned to Montrose after spending six years on Martha's Vineyard, to create the warm inviting home in which to welcome guests.



### **Ted Nelson's Steakhouse**

103 Rose Lane  
Montrose, CO 81401  
970-252-0262

Ted Nelson who has proudly served delicious meals to connoisseurs in the Montrose, Colorado area for decades, has recently opened a new location to carry on the tradition.

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## Day Three



## Lake City

Somewhere high up in the Colorado mountains, in the back of the beyond, valuable ore was discovered in Lake City in 1871 creating the most isolated silver camp in the state. When the Ute Indians ceded the land in 1874, the Hotchkiss and Golden Fleece mines opened, along with a sawmill, stagecoach and post office. The rush was on and by end of 1876, Lake City boasted 14 general stores, seven saloons, three bakeries, two banks, two breweries, five blacksmiths, two brickyards, four Chinese laundries, and numerous other businesses for its booming population. Gunnison to Lake City- 54 miles

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## Day Three

### Lake City Historic Walking Tour



Explore Lake City's more than 200 historic homes, outbuildings, barns, churches, public buildings and motor courts and the oldest operating courthouse in Colorado (pdf provided with detailed itinerary). A large portion of the buildings were constructed in the late 1800s during westward expansion, including rare wood-framed commercial buildings and the first church built on the Western slope. There are 34 interpretive plaques with detailed information, stories, and photographs of the historic structures in the Lake City Historic District. Numerous shops and restaurants line a 500-foot boardwalk. Proud of their role in history of the Old West, this remote mountain town have worked hard to preserve the timeless structures for the ages.

Tour starts at 115 South Gunnison Avenue, Allow 1 hour

### Hinsdale County Museum



Housed in the historic Finley Block, the Hinsdale County Museum celebrates Lake City's past, with a donated collection of photographs and other materials that relate to early history.

130 North Silver Street, Lake City, CO 81235  
970-944-2050 F, St and M 10AM—5PM, Tu– Th 10AM-5PM Allow 1 hour, \$5.00 per person

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## Day Three

### Hard Tack Mine and Museum



Born out of a desire to preserve the mining history of this beautiful city, underground mine tours, and exhibits work to bring mining heritage to life. The Hard Tack Mine was originally intended to serve as an underground transport tunnel for the Hidden Treasure Mining Company's ore production, which ultimately produced more than a million and a half dollars in silver ore. Once the location of a mill, offices, a bank, boarding house, commissary and schoolhouse, when metal ore production declined in the 1930's, the surrounding community died out.

3700 CR 20 / Henson Creek, Lake City, CO 81235  
970-944-2506 7 Days 10AM-5PM, Allow 1 hour \$13 per person



### Climb Elevated Eatery

808 Gunnison Avenue  
Lake City, CO 81235  
970-944-5566

Located in the most remote county in the continental United States, Climb Elevated Eatery features consistently delicious comfort food made from scratch, that is as farm to table as possible in this remote location.

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## Day Three



### Creede

At one point in Creede's 1890 boom, more than 300 people were moving in each day. But the boom was short lived when silver prices dropped in 1893 and the next years brought major floods and fires. Though never again reaching its 1893 population, Creede survived through boom-and-bust cycles for the next 100 years. Today it is a quaint, old mining town with a past of ghosts and fortune, far enough up in the mountains that it seems to have escaped the last century. No chain restaurants, no box stores, no malls, no stoplights, just a mountain escape surrounded by the canyons, cliffs, and creeks with an underground fire station, museum, and scenic drive past old mining artifacts. Lake City to Creede-50 miles

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## Day Four

### Creede Historical Museum and Library



Housed in the Old Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot, the Creede Historical Museum has collected the first hand-drawn fire wagon, early pioneer utensils, a horse-drawn hearse, gambling equipment, a large photo collection, early newspapers, and a treasure trove of memorabilia and other artifacts providing great insight into the lives of the homesteaders, prospectors, miners, entrepreneurs, lawmen and notorious characters who lived here. An Historical Library with research information, books and photos is located in a small cabin next to the museum.

15 South Main Street, Creede, CO 81130 719-658-2004

### Bachelor Loop Historic Tour



The Bachelor Loop Historic Tour is a 17-mile drive that takes you to mining locations, where Nicholas Creede struck it rich at the Holy Moses in 1889 and ghost towns, like Bachelor that was once home to 1200 people, rivaling Creede in size, all in the historic mining district above Creede. Follow Main Street out of Creede as it weaves its way up through the ragged canyon. A number of interpretive stops and points of interest provide direction along the route.

Allow 1.5—2 hours

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## Day Four

### Creede Underground Mining Museum



Located at the beginning of the Bachelor Loop, few museums are as authentic as the Creede Underground Mining Museum. In the museum completely built underground in an actual mine, you will receive a first-hand taste of the miner's subterranean experience in 22 alcoves blasted out of solid rock specifically for the purpose top housing demonstrations and exhibits. Exploring both early silver mining techniques and more recent technology, the Underground Mining Museum provides fascinating insight into a very important part of mining culture in the American West. An exhibit hall with minerals and artifact displays provides a colorful prelude to tours guided by experienced hard rock miners. The local fire station was built into the mountain next door to the museum.

#9 USFS Road 503, Creede CO 81130 719-658-0811  
7 Days, 9AM-4PM. Allow 2 hours, \$7 per person

### Last Chance Mine



True to its name, The Last Chance was the last major strike in the area. After many unsuccessful tries, the prospector was about to give up when he was grubstaked with \$25 and three burros. During another unsuccessful search, his burros wandered off to Bachelor Ridge and refused to budge. Frustrated, he decided to prospect right where he was and chipping away at a rock he uncovered a weathered outcropping of lead-silver mineralization in amethyst quartz. Renniger gave that discovery the name Last Chance. After remaining closed for decades, rock hound and mining -history buff, Jack Morris, recently reopened the mine for visitors, which is also again a source of Amethyst Vein material for collectors and lapidaries.



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## Creede Destination Distinctive Accommodations and Dining



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations: The Creede Hotel** **120 North Main Street, Creede, CO 81130 719-658-2608**

Located on picturesque Main Street, right in the middle of town, The Creede Hotel is the oldest lodging and dining establishment in town. The Hotel offers Bed and Breakfast accommodations throughout the summer, and a restaurant open daily. After dinner, guests can stroll next door to enjoy a performance at the nationally-acclaimed Creede Repertory Theater.



### **The Antlers Rio Grande Riverside Restaurant** **26222 Highway 149** **Creede, CO 81130-9513** **719-658-2423**

A unique fine dining experience along the sparkling waters of the Rio Grande River in the San Juan Mountains, The Antlers offers indoor seating in an historic 1896 lodge and seating on a canopy-covered riverside deck. The menu includes American and European cuisine along with special creations prepared daily by lead Chef Max Farinelli, who hails from Turin, Italy.

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## Day Five



### Wagon Wheel Gap

Miner Charles Baker lost a wagon wheel here while fleeing from the Ute Indian. The wheel was found stuck in the mud and the location named “the place where the wagon wheel was found” later shortened to Wagon Wheel Gap. The town became an important supply town and stage stop between South Fork and Lake City.



### Rio Grande National Forest Interpretive Site

This Interpretive facility is a rest stop on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway. Interpretive signs explain the geology of the gap and how it was named.

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## Day Five



## South Fork

Centered in a thickly forested area, the coming of the railroad to South Fork brought cheap transportation to bring out the area's abundant resources. Sawmills sprang up to supply ever-growing mining districts. Loggers worked hard to harvest Douglas Fir and Pine for railroad cross-ties, mine props, and structural timbers. Unlike other mining towns, cattle and sheep were also introduced and the massive production of cauliflower, lettuce, potatoes and peas were shipped north to Denver. Soon sawmills were turning out lumber and roofing materials for new houses, barns and businesses, including a store, log cabins, an expanded hotel, community building, and a museum of the lumber industry. By 2001, the sawmills had closed and visitors and skiers had discovered South Fork. Creede to South Fork—23 miles

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## Day Five

### Rio Grande County Museum and Cultural Center



Explore the history and culture of Rio Grande County and San Luis Valley at the Rio Grande County Museum and Cultural Center in nearby Del Norte. A large collection of artifacts, photographs, and more chronicle the lives of the first settlers, plus Native American petroglyphs, Pfeiffer's Grave, Fremont's camp, wagon tracks and the Old Spanish Trail.

580 Oak St, Del Norte, CO 81132 719-657-2847

Tuesday-Friday 10AM-4PM, Saturday 10AM-3PM, \$2 per person

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