

# Snowy Range Scenic Byway

*The Great Sky Road*



5 Days/4 Nights

Gateway City: Laramie, Wyoming



Over 2 billion years ago, the white-capped Snowy Range Mountains were nothing more than specks of quartzite sand along a vast ocean. Then, the Earth's tectonic plates shifted, groaned, and collided with one another, such intense pressure was the sand that it metamorphosized into sandstone. It tilted along with the plates, forming an ancient mountain range which was soon buried underneath layers of time and rock. As the plates continued their tectonic dance, a younger and more fertile mountain range directly underneath the original ridge emerged. Millions of years of erosion, wind, and rain exposed the sparkling quartzite peaks we now call the Snowy Range. This fascinating geological history is on view along the Snowy Range Scenic Byway, a 29-mile road that traverses southeastern Wyoming's majestic Snowy Range Mountains. As you climb up and over the state's second highest mountain pass, discover a landscape that morphs from sagebrush prairies and lodgepole pine forests into an alpine tundra where snowfields glisten with the remains of last year's squall. Soar to nearly 10,000 feet in elevation on the route once named "the great sky road" and surround yourself with lush wildflower meadows that dot the valleys like confetti. Unbelievable landscapes, dramatic views, and spectacular geology are yours to experience along the route.



### **Touring the Byway**

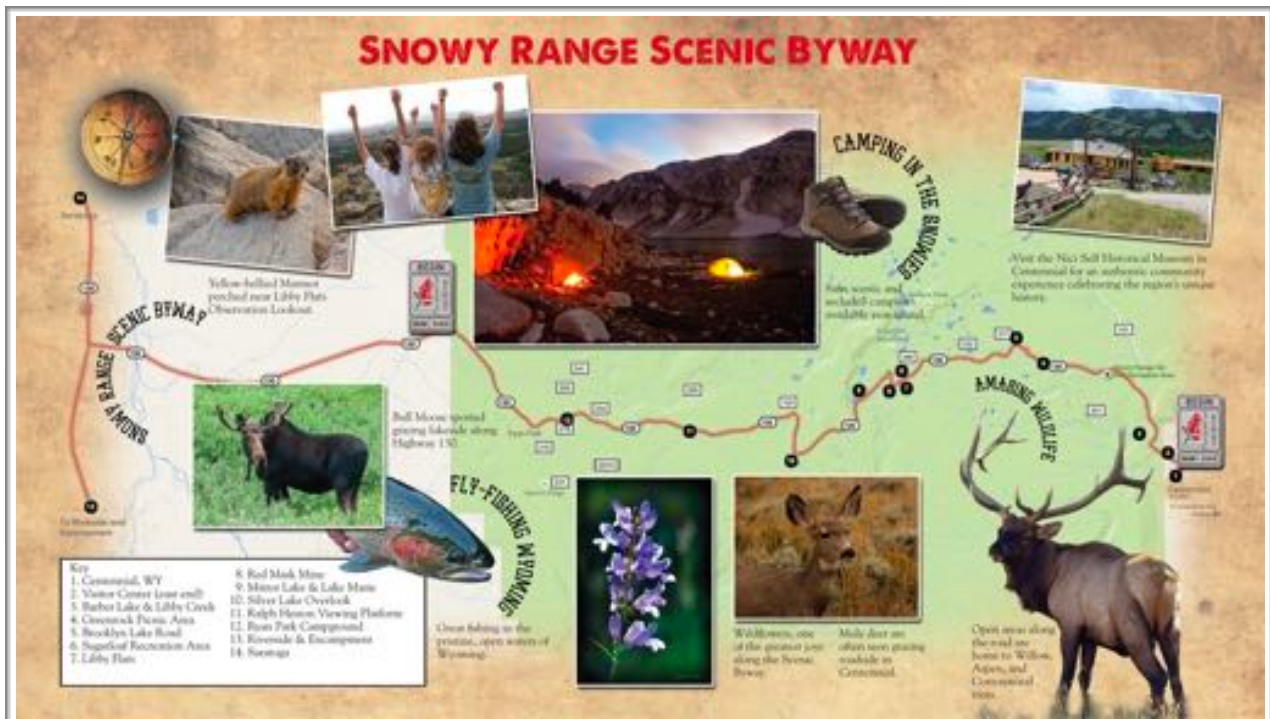
We recommend starting your journey in Laramie, a spirited town with deep Western roots. Discover the city's wild past on the Legends of Laramie Walking Tour, explore the 19th century Iverson House at the Laramie Plains Museum, and travel through time and space at the Geological Museum and Planetarium, both located on the beautiful University of Wyoming campus. Spend your first evening in a colorfully hand-crafted Victorian-style Inn.

On Day Two, travel to Centennial, a quaint mountain town full of rich history, tasty food, and local characters. Learn of the region's unique past at the Nici Self Historical Museum, catch a breath of fresh pine forest air on the Libby Creek Trail and at Barber Lake, and hear about the care of wild horses at Deerwood Ranch Wild Horse EcoSanctuary before relaxing on the porch of a historic hotel. Make sure your gas tank is full before you leave Centennial, because you're in for a real treat on Day Three as you begin your drive on the Snowy Pass Scenic Byway! Twist



and turn your way through the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest, past crystal clear alpine lakes like Brooklyn Lake, Mirror Lake, and Lake Marie, reach an elevation of over 10,000 feet at Snowy Range Pass, the apex of the Byway, and enjoy panoramic views of three different mountain ranges at the Libby Flats Observation Area. Afterwards, enjoy a full range of exciting experiences and dining opportunities at Saratoga Hot Springs Resort.

On Day Four brings you can explore Saratoga, a small town with big scenery, learn about the area’s diverse geological history at the Saratoga Museum, and take a dip into healing thermal waters at Saratoga Hobo Hot Springs. Continue north on WY-130 for the Overland Trail Historical Marker, which memorializes the famous 19th century wagon trail, then head east on transcontinental I-80 for a stop at Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site, an 1868 railroad fortress. As you finish up this amazing tour, on Day Five see over one hundred years of history come to life at Elk Mountain Museum and if you did not dine there last evening, have a bite to eat at the Crossing Cafe at the Elk Mountain Trading Company. From there, we wish you a safe passage if you’re continuing your journey on another Wyoming Scenic Byway, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



## DAY ONE



### **Laramie**

Situated on the high plains in southeastern Wyoming, Laramie, which has been the site of human activity for more than 10,000 years, is surrounded by forests and mountains. Native Americans hunted big game here before French-Canadian fur trapper Jacques La Ramee arrived in about 1817. Settlers began arriving in 1862 on Ben Holladay's Overland Stage line. Today, this diverse town is home to the only university in Wyoming, with six museums, a historic downtown with quaint shops, unique boutiques, restaurants, breweries, and cafés. You'll find the "Gem City of the Plains" brimming with Western influence and hospitality.

### **Historic Downtown Walking Tour**

Explore the historic remnants of this former "hell-on-wheels" town, where Laramie's first citizens made their mark, while imagining you just arrived here more than a century ago when the train comes in. Pick up a brochure at the Laramie Visitor Center for the 33 stop walking that begins as Garfield and First Street.

800 South Third Street, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-745-4195, Tu-Sat  
12:30PM-4:30PM

## **Laramie Plains Museum at Historic Ivinson House**

The beautiful three story Queen Anne Victorian the first “trophy” house built in the University Historic District, by Edward and Jane Ivinson in 1892 which led to the historic architecture of Laramie of today. The residence hosts an extensive collection of artifacts and archives illustrating the history of Laramie, Albany County, the American West, Victoriana, Ranching and westward migration. 603 East Ivinson Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82070, Tu-Sat 12:30PM-4:30PM, Tours Hourly 1PM-4PM, Adults \$10





### **University of Wyoming Planetarium**

A facility of the University of Wyoming Department of Physics and Astronomy, The UW Planetarium is a unique place to explore the night sky, using a Spitz starball, a precisely constructed optical/mechanical system that projects an accurate view of the night sky as viewed from anywhere on Earth.

North 16th Street and East Gibbon Street, Laramie, WY, 82072, 307-766-6506, Adults \$5

### **University of Wyoming Geological Museum**

The museum presents a view of the diverse geology of Wyoming with more than 50,000 cataloged fossil, rock, and mineral specimens. A 75-foot Brontosaurus skeleton dominates the museum's exhibit hall. "Big Al," is the most complete Allosaurus fossil ever found. Samuel H. "Doc" Knight, the legendary Wyoming geologist, painted one of the museum's large murals and the large, copper-plated Tyrannosaurus rex that stands outside.

200 North 9th Street, Laramie, WY, 82072, 307-766-2646, M-Sat 10AM-4PM, Free

### **Williams Conservatory**

Located in the Aven Nelson building on the campus of the University of Wyoming, the main greenhouse is home to more than 600 exotic plants from tropical, neotropical, temperate, and arid zones around the world.

1000 East University Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82071, 307-766-4336, M-F 10AM-4PM, Free





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Mad Carpenter Inn** 353 North Eighth Street, Laramie, WY, 82072, 307-742-0870 Featuring Blossom and Whimsy, two imaginative rooms, The Mad Carpenter Inn was lovingly restored with hand-crafted woodwork and sculptured ceilings.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

Wyoming's Rib & Chop House 2415 Grand Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-460-9090, Enjoy premium steaks, fresh seafood and award-winning baby back ribs in a relaxed, casual setting.

**Born in a Barn** 100 East Iverson Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82070, W-M 307-460-3604 Woodsy, old-school sports bar specializing in creative burgers and wings.

**J's Prairie Rose Café** 410 South Second Street, 307-745-8140, Laramie, WY, 82070, M-Th Cheery pink establishment known for breakfast burritos & other hearty fare in a cozy, retro room.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**The Curiosity Shoppe**, 206 South Second Street, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-745-4401, M-Sat Offers a variety of locally sourced gifts and housewares, one-of-a-kind artwork, furniture, and gifts.

**Works of Wyoming** 300 South Second Street, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-460-3304, Unique fine art and gifts created by Wyoming artists.

**Rustic Cowgirl Edge** 208 Grand Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-631-3551, Western apparel featuring leather goods, conceal purses, turquoise jewelry, clothing, scarves, and more.



## DAY TWO

### **Deerwood Ranch Wild Horse EcoSanctuary**

Visit the first Bureau of Land Management certified private working ranch, hosting beautiful wild Wyoming horses, in a variety of terrain.

599 WY-11, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-399-9956, By appointment, reserved 48 hours in advance. Adults \$40





## **Centennial**

This quaint mountain town of 300 residents, is the gateway to Wyoming's beautiful Snowy Range Mountains. Early Plains Indians passed through here looking for wood for teepee poles and bows, before a railroad tie camp was established in 1868. The first homestead was staked out in the valley in 1870, and gold was discovered in 1875. Both the town and the mine were named in honor of America's 100th birthday. As mining declined, ranchers and loggers kept the town alive until the railroad from Laramie to Centennial and breathed new life into the old work camp site. A newspaper, bank, hotel, fish hatchery, store, and two saloons were constructed in 1876.

## **Nici Self Historical Museum**

The Centennial Depot, which also served as the post office and grocery store, was built in 1907 for the Laramie, Hahns Peak and Pacific Railway. Exhibits include the history of mining, lumbering, railroading, and ranching, in the area, plus a 1944 UPRR caboose, beehive burner, one-room schoolhouse, and more.

2734 WY-130, Centennial, WY, 82055, 307-742-7763, Th-M 12PM-4PM, FREE

### **Libby Creek Trail**

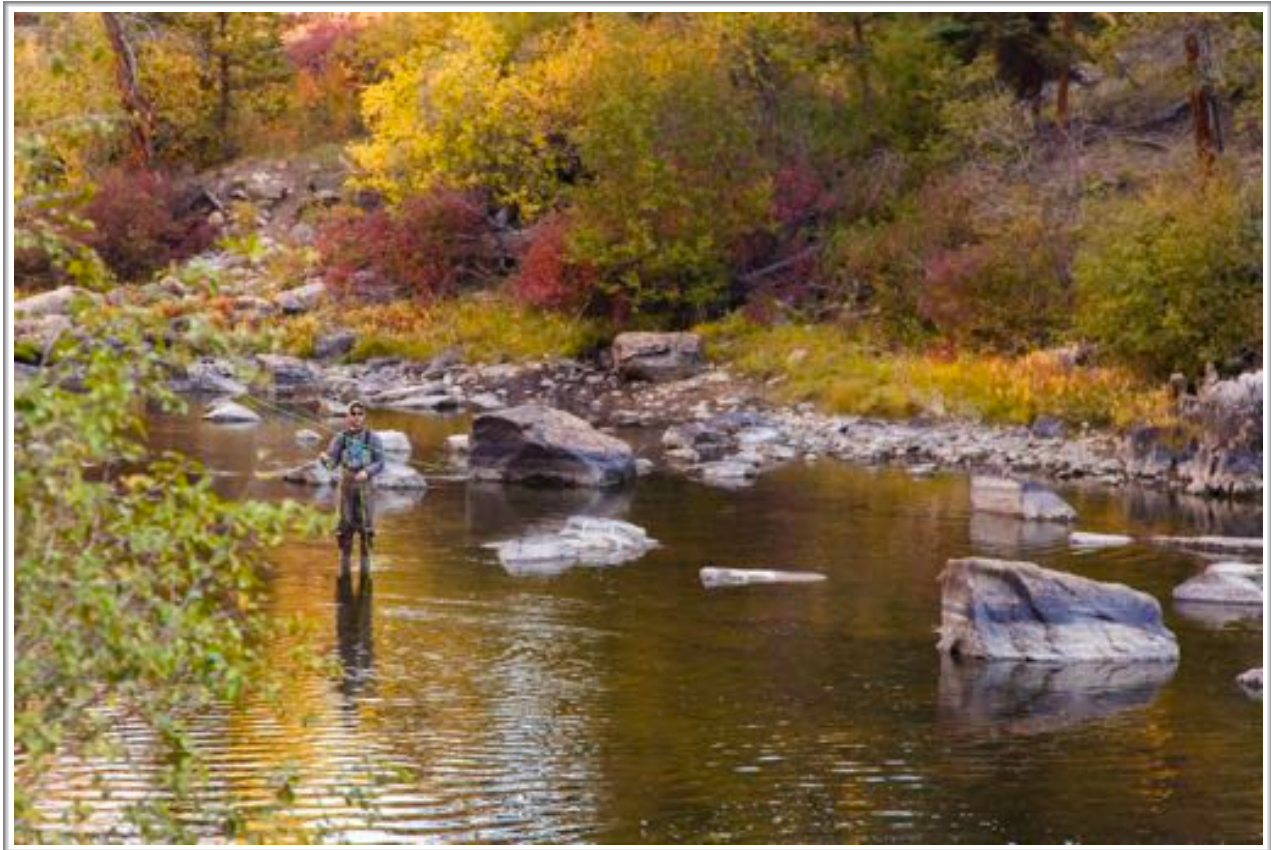
The stunning landscapes along this four-mile loop trail start from the Green Rock Trailhead and climb fairly quickly to the ridge mostly through forest with intermittent views of meadows, flowers, streams, and forested hillsides.

Centennial, WY, 82055

### **Barber Lake Trail and Picnic Site**

A perfect picnic stop with restrooms.

Forest Road 351, 6AM-10PM, \$5 Per Vehicle







### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Mountain View Hotel** 2747 WY-130, Centennial, WY, 82055, 307-742-3588

This lovingly restored, 115-year-old historic hotel boasts 7 guest rooms and suites with modern accommodation amenities, plus a cafe for breakfast and lunch and espresso bar.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Bear Bottom Bar & Grill** 2768 WY-130, Centennial, WY, 82055, 307-742-2410 A fun family-owned restaurant including a cafe, tavern, rooftop deck, and backyard band-shell.

**The Old Corral Steakhouse** 2750 WY-130, Centennial, WY 82055, 307-745-5918 Known for great steaks since the 1940's, the restaurant also features a Coffee Corral Drive-thru during morning hours.

**The Trading Post** 2753 WY-130, Centennial, WY, 82055, 307-222-6750

Delicious cuisine created with local ingredients and passion for good ol' home cookin'.

## DAY THREE

### **Snowy Range Visitor's Center**

The perfect stop for information while driving the Snowy Range Scenic Byway, built from beetle-killed pine salvaged from trees on site. There is a pollinator garden, short walking trail, picnic tables, interpretive signage and maps.

Range Road, Centennial, WY, 82055, 307-742-9730, Th-M 9AM-5PM

The visitor center is at the forest boundary 1 mile west of Centennial.

### **Brooklyn Lake**

Tucked away in the forest, this small, picturesque lake, at an elevation of 10,500 feet, lies in the shadow of the snow-capped Browns Peak.

National Forest Service Road 315, lake and campground open seasonally July 15-October 1

### **Libby Flats Observation Area**

Enjoy views south to Rocky Mountain National Park, west toward Medicine Bow Peak, the Sierra Madre Mountains, and Mt. Zirkel Wilderness Area, and east toward the Laramie Mountains.

160-194 WY-130, Centennial, WY, 82055



## **Snowy Range Pass**

At 10,895 feet, majestic Snowy Range Pass is said to be the state's second highest. The road itself, built in the 1870s as a wagon road, and paved in the 1930's, was originally called the "Great Sky Road." The pass is named for the large amounts of snow that remain at high elevations during the summer months. Even though the road to the summit, with awe-inspiring sweeping views, is a two-lane paved road, with a steep incline, it is suitable for all vehicles.

## **Medicine Bow Peak**

Soaring to 12,018 feet, the highest peak in the Snowy Range is visible from Snowy Range Pass. Before John Frémont's expeditions of 1833-1834, Native Americans used the mountain passes as travel routes. Engines and other fragments of the United Airliner Flight 409 that crashed here in 1955 are still present. A memorial known as "Disaster Wall", was placed in 2001.

## **Mirror Lake**

If you brought a picnic with you, enjoy it at the picnic tables here with a side of scenic views, before taking the short easy walking trail to the West Lake Marie Trailhead.





## **Lake Marie**

A short trail traces the perimeter of the lake, while another trail leads to the mountaintops here.

## **Brush Creek Visitor Center**

The Visitor Center is home to the Brush Creek Trailhead and a historic cabin built by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

5556 WY-130, Saratoga, WY, 82331, 307-326-5258, Weekends 9AM-5PM





**Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Saratoga Hot Springs Resort**, 601 Pic Pike Road, Saratoga, WY 82325, 800-594-0178

Make this unique western resort, the perfect place to relax, your home base in the area.

**Historic Wolf Hotel**, 101 East Bridge Avenue, Saratoga, WY, 82325, 307-326-5525 This special property listed on the National Register of Historic Places has been restored to its original charm.

## DAY FOUR



### **Saratoga**

If you're a lover of quaint towns, this jewel of a town located between the Snowy Mountain Range and Sierra Madre Range, will be a favorite. Saratoga's famous mineral hot springs and thermal waters were well known to Native Americans before 1838, when the first settlers, mountain men and trappers worked their way west. They quickly began "taking the waters" for health, adding a bathhouse to accommodate visitors.

### **Saratoga Museum**

Housed in Saratoga's original 1915 Encampment Railroad Depot, exhibits range from Wyoming's pioneer settlers to an original one-room cabin featuring a blacksmith collection.

104 Constitution Avenue, Saratoga, WY, 82331, 307-326-5511, Tu-Sat  
10AM-2PM



## **Saratoga Hobo Hot Springs**

The original inhabitants of the valley believed the springs had healing power.

Today you can enjoy healthy relaxation in water ranging from 101-119

degrees. The bath house is complete with showers and restroom facilities.

300 East Walnut Avenue, Saratoga, WY, 82331, 307-326-8335, 24hr access, Free



### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Firewater Public House** 110 East Main Avenue, Saratoga, WY, 82331, 307-326-3473 A community pub in a newly remodeled historic building offering high quality comfort food and a unique whiskey selection.

**Snowy Mountain Brewery & Pub** 601 Pic Pike Road, Saratoga, WY, 82331, 307-326-5261 The third oldest brewery in Wyoming, is also the epicenter of Saratoga Hot Springs Resort. Indulge in a wide variety of specially crafted pub-style menu items and craft brews.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**Studio T Art Gallery** 113 E Bridge Avenue, Saratoga, WY, 82331, 307-703-5204 An artisanal art gallery created in 2015 by local stained glass artist Trisha Kauffman.

**Crowned Buffalo** 115 West Bridge Avenue, Saratoga, WY, 82331, 307-326-5831 Gifts and flowers including clothing, jewelry, home goods including candles and signs specializing in Wyoming and Saratoga apparel.

### **Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site**

Established in 1868 to protect the newly built Union Pacific Railroad from attacks, this frontier Army post served as a hub for both the military and Wyoming's lumber and livestock industries. Though many of the foundations are still visible, very few structures are intact.

North Platte River at the Union Pacific Railroad crossing off I-80 at Exit 228, 307-320-3013, Daily 9AM-7PM, Free





**Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Historic Elk Mountain Hotel** 102 East Main Street, Elk Mountain, WY, 82324, 307-348-7774 The hotel, originally built in 1905, is situated among the cottonwoods, along the banks of the peaceful Medicine Bow River.

**Destination Distinctive Dining**

**The Crossing Cafe at Elk Mountain Trading Co.** 205 Bridge Street, Elk Mountain, WY, 82324, 307-348-7478 Delicious homestyle meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.



## DAY FIVE

### **Elk Mountain**

A quaint, little town nestled in the cottonwoods along the Medicine Bow River, Elk Mountain was named after Sioux Chief Standing Elk. Trappers of the Ashley-Smith expedition first traveled through here in 1825, paving the way for Medicine Bow Valley settlements. Immigrants from Finland, Sweden, and other European countries traveled here to work in the timber, mineral, and ranching industries, bringing a rich diversity of cultures and traditions. Though many of the settlements in the area are now ghost towns, Elk Mountain has adapted through changing times.

### **Elk Mountain Museum**

From the time the trappers of the Ashley-Smith expedition arrived, settlements here have played an important role in opening the way for travelers making their way west. Collections and displays include the famous Garden Spot Pavilion, the historic Elk Mountain Hotel, Old Carbon, Percy, Fort Halleck, the legendary tie-hacks, Elk Mountain schools, pioneer ranches and the characters that made it all happen.

105 Bridge Street, Elk Mountain, WY, 82324, 307-348-7037, W 1PM-7PM, F-Sat 10AM-5PM

