

Seminole/Alcova Scenic Backway

Journey Through the Windswept West



3 Days/2 Nights

Gateway City: Casper, Wyoming



No one knows exactly how the Seminoe Mountains got their name. One account says it is an Americanized spelling of the name Basil Cimineau Lajeunesse, who guided expeditions along the Platte River in the 1840s. Others say the mountains were named after Basil's brother Charles, a trader/trapper, nicknamed "Simonot." No matter which story is true, the Seminoe's were the site of an 1868 gold discovery, which led to a subsequent rush, a boom town, and an old Miner's Route followed by prospectors on their way back from California. That route today is known as the Seminoe/Alcova Scenic Backway, a 64-mile road that winds through some of south-central Wyoming's most rugged country. Paralleling the North Platte River, the byway passes stark deserts and antelope-grazed prairies, which transform into lush plains and rich sandstone mountains in the blink of an eye. From dusty roads and colorful canyons to the bighorn sheep who drink from the river's crystal-clear waters, the Seminoe/Alcova Scenic Backway offers an unparalleled journey through Wyoming's windswept west, and a one-of-a-kind trip.



Touring the Byway

We recommend starting your journey in Casper, a picturesque town in the heart of Wyoming. Travel back in time to the days of intrepid pioneers at the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center, tour a reconstructed 1865 military post at Fort Caspar Museum, explore Wyoming's diverse ecology at the Werner Wildlife Museum, and see some of the state's best Western Art at the Nicolaysen Art Museum. Spend your first evening relaxing at an area ranch.

On Day Two, make sure you gas up before leaving Casper, because there are no stores or filling stations along the backway. It begins in Alcova, a small town with big scenery, at the intersection of WY-220 and County Road 407/Kortes Road. Head south on County Road 407 with a stop at the Alcova Dam and Reservoir, before hiking the Cottonwood Creek Dinosaur Trail, where you can try to spot fossils. After passing the ponderosa pine-dotted Pedro Mountains to the west, you can follow the Miracle Mile, a seven mile stretch of free-flowing North Platte River. Then a steep and winding section of the backway greets you as you drive

through the Seminoe Mountains, to the Seminoe Dam, a concrete arch that rises 295 feet above the canyon floor. Next up, Seminoe State Park with abundant wildlife and the Haystack Mountains with sweeping views of open sagebrush country. The backway ends in Sinclair, a high desert town, with a Civil War cannon at the former Parco Hotel.

On Day Three, head east on Interstate-80 to Laramie, with a stop at Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site, an 1868 railroad fortress. As you cross the North Platte River one last time, see 100 years of history come to life at Elk Mountain Museum.

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



Casper

Casper, named for nearby Fort Casper, began when the tracks of the Fremont, Elkhart and Missouri Valley Railroad arrived in 1888. Soon after the railroad arrived the town became an important shipping point for cattle and wool, from the earliest buildings at A and McKinley streets. When the railroad platted lots further west, the center of town became the corner of Center and Second streets, where it is today. During the its first years, Casper was a rough-and-tumble town with numerous saloons and raucous culture. Early sheriffs worked to keep order among rowdy cowboys and celebrating shepherders. Casper became an oil boomtown when the Salt Creek Oil Field was discovered in the 1890s. Originally planned as a stopping point on the expanding Wyoming Central Railway, Casper instead became the center of the region's petroleum industry. Today's Casper has great restaurants and unique retail shops, in a city surrounded with recreational opportunities.

National Historic Trails Interpretive Center

Celebrating the Oregon, Mormon, California, Pony Express, Bridger, and Bozeman trails, the National Historical Trails Interpretive Center commemorates the Native American history of the region, as well as early explorers and pioneers who traveled the corridors west. Hands-on, interactive exhibits, multi-media programs, and virtual education opportunities illustrate the historic westward expansion.

1501 North Poplar Street, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-261-7700, Daily 8AM-5PM,
Free



Fort Caspar Museum

This fully reconstructed frontier outpost includes a stockade, a replica of the Mormon ferry that operated here from 1847-1849 and an interpretive center illustrating Casper's first 100 years. Exhibits are enhanced with authentic objects from the museum's collection, complemented with interactive videos.

4001 Fort Casper Road, Casper, WY 82604, 307-235-8462, May 1-Sept 30,
8AM-5PM Adults \$4



Carper College Museums

Casper College hosts three different museums in Casper:

Werner Wildlife Museum

Founded in 1964 by Herman Werner, this museum at Casper College has grown from the original 36 exhibits to almost 400 birds, fish, and animals. The main focus is on wildlife native to Wyoming, complemented by wildlife from around the world. The Lair is an interactive area for children, as well as a garden, bird feeding station, and picnic area. You'll also find

405 East 15th Street, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-235-2108, M-F 10AM-4PM, FREE

Tate Geological Museum

The Tate houses a collection of over 6,000 fossil and mineral specimens gifted by Marion and Inez Tate. Highlights include Dee the Mammoth, an 11,600-year-old Columbian Mammoth which lived in the American West during the Pleistocene, or Ice Age, the skull of Nicole the Torosaurus, the Mesozoic Marine, exhibits featuring the underwater world that existed in Wyoming during much of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods, and the Hall of Minerals.

2332 Lisco Drive, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-268-2447, M-F 10AM-4PM, Sat 10AM-3PM

Western History Museum

Specialized archives which provide access to the collections that reflect aspects of Western and Wyoming history. Materials include research, notes, photographs, maps newspapers, with information about the City of Casper, Casper Mountain, Natrona County, cabins, camps, and forts, including unique collections such as that of the Oregon-California Trails Association.

125 College Drive, Casper, WY 82601, 307-268-2680

Nicolaysen Art Museum

More than 25,000 square feet of galleries are filled with contemporary art from the central Rockies and high plains. The Discovery Center is a hands-on art studio, where everyone can celebrate the visual arts.

400 East Collins Drive, Casper, WY 82601, 307-235-5247, Tu-Sat 10AM-5PM,
Adults \$5





Bridle Trail

The trailhead begins in Rotary Park in Casper and offers spectacular views of the Garden Creek Falls, the city below and the surrounding countryside. The main loop is almost five miles long, rising over 1200 feet, with a 'tunnel' about midway known as "split rock". The average hiker can complete the outermost loop in about 3 hours but it requires much stamina and cardiovascular health. If you're pressed for time and energy, opt for a shorter loop on the west side of the Park.



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Red Butte Ranch, 8550 South Bessemer Boulevard, Casper, WY 82604, 307-472-3784

Nestled among the trees along the North Platte River, this authentic ranch stay comes with an Oregon Trail historical marker, indicating where the first pioneer cabin was built in 1812.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Fire Rock Steakhouse 6100 East Second Street, Casper, WY 82609 307-234-2333 Bold flavors grilled over open flame.

Backwards Distilling Company 214 South Wolcott Street, Casper, WY 82601, 307-337-1255 High quality spirits amazing sensations.

Racca's Pizzeria Napoletana 430 South Ash Street, Casper, WY 82601, 307-337-2444 Classic Italian.

Branding Iron 129 West 2nd Street, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-333-6804 An up and coming gourmet burger restaurant located in downtown.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Mustard Seed 120 West 1st Street, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-337-3301 Casper's best destination for distinctive gifts, one-of-a-kind clothing and decor, an indulgent bath and body collection, culinary tools, gourmet food items, and more.

Floral Rhino 139 South Center Street, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-265-0063 A wonderfully eclectic ever-changing collection of jewelry, belt buckles, purses, scarves, candles, witty greeting cards, wall art, gift books, home décor, kitchen items, laptop covers, phone holders, pillows, aprons, and seasonal items.

DAY TWO



Alvoca

This small Wyoming town southwest of Casper was originally planned as a health resort to take advantage of the hot springs on the floor of the steep walled canyon. Today, Alvoca, named for the coves in the course of the river, has about a hundred residents, a post office, and school.

Alcova Dam and Reservoir

Alcova Dam was completed by the Bureau of Reclamation in 1937, creating the reservoir that boasts a small sandy beach and a marina restaurant. Sitting four miles southwest of Pathfinder Dam, Fremont Canyon has beautiful rock walls rising high on either side, where you'll be rewarded with stunning geological views of the Goose Egg Formation and its surrounding sandstone and limestone topography. is from County Roads 406/407. Alvoca, WY, 82620, 307-261-5671

Cottonwood Creek Dinosaur Trail

This 7/10 of a mile trail, doable, but steep in some places, provides a fascinating glimpse of how Wyoming may have looked during the late Triassic and early Jurassic periods. The site features interpretive signage explaining the geological evolution of the region, as well vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant fossils recently found in their natural settings and left "in situ" to view. The trail also leads through Jurassic Sundance and Morrison period formations. Still a very active fossil discovery site, the skeleton of a medium-sized dinosaur called *Camarasaurus* was discovered by fifth grader from Casper in 1991.

Following the road around the east side of lake, after passing the Black Beach turnoff, turn right at the dinosaur sign for the parking area.



Miracle Mile

This famed seven mile stretch of the North Platte River which was named by broadcaster Curt Gowdy on the American Sportsman, is rapid white water flowing over Kortes Dam into beautiful Miracle Mile Canyon that slows at it reaches lower elevations.

Seminoe Dam Overlook

Located directly upstream from the Kortes Dam, the Seminoe Dam, rising 295 feet above the narrow canyon formed by the North Platte River cutting through the mountains, holds back 20,000 acres of water. The overlook can be found along County Road 351 as it forks to the west, with a short walk to the east to reveal a nice view of the reservoir.

County Road 351, Sinclair, WY, 82334, 307-328-0115, \$7 Per Day, Per Vehicle

Seminoe State Park

Adjacent to the reservoir, Seminoe State Park was a gold prospecting site during the late 1800s. Local wildlife includes bobcats, mule deer, skunks, raccoons, moose, elk, mountain lions, bighorn sheep, rabbits, and bald eagles. Enjoy a picnic at the tables alongside the reservoir.

County Road 351, Sinclair, WY, 82334, 307-320-3013, \$7 Per Day, Per Vehicle



Haystack Mountains

After leaving Seminole State Park, a paved portion of the byway travels about 15 miles through mostly open, arid sagebrush country, with the Haystack Mountains ever present.

Sinclair

Originally constructed as a Spanish Colonial Revival style planned community in 1924, the Producers and Refiners Corporation also built a large oil refinery here. A decade later, it was sold to Sinclair Oil and the name of the town changed. The center of town, hosting the historic red tile roofed Parco hotel with a Civil War cannon out front, used to blast holes in the side of oil storage tanks when fighting oil fires, was designated the Parco Historic District in 1987. The large fountain in the town plaza honors Parco's founder, Frank E. Kistler.





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Hampton Inn Rawlins 406 Airport Road, Rawlins, WY, 82301, 307-324-2320 Relax in the cozy confines of a comfortable hotel.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Su Casa Café 705 West Lincoln Highway, Sinclair, WY, 82334, 307-328-1745 Large menu of made-from-scratch choices.

Aspen House Restaurant 318 5th Street, Rawlins, WY, 82301, 307-324-4787 Surf 'n' turf, pasta, and other standards served in a restyled Victorian home.

Cactus Jacks 1602 Inverness Boulevard, Rawlins, WY, 82301, 307-324-7427 Authentic barbeque with no shortcuts, in-house smoked prime rib and T-Bone Tuesdays.

Anong's 210 Fifth Street, Rawlins, WY 82301 Classic Thai cuisine.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Windswept Goods 410 West Cedar Street, Rawlins, WY, 82301, 307-321-2667 A unique retail experience featuring rustic Wyoming home decor, gifts and clothing.

DAY THREE

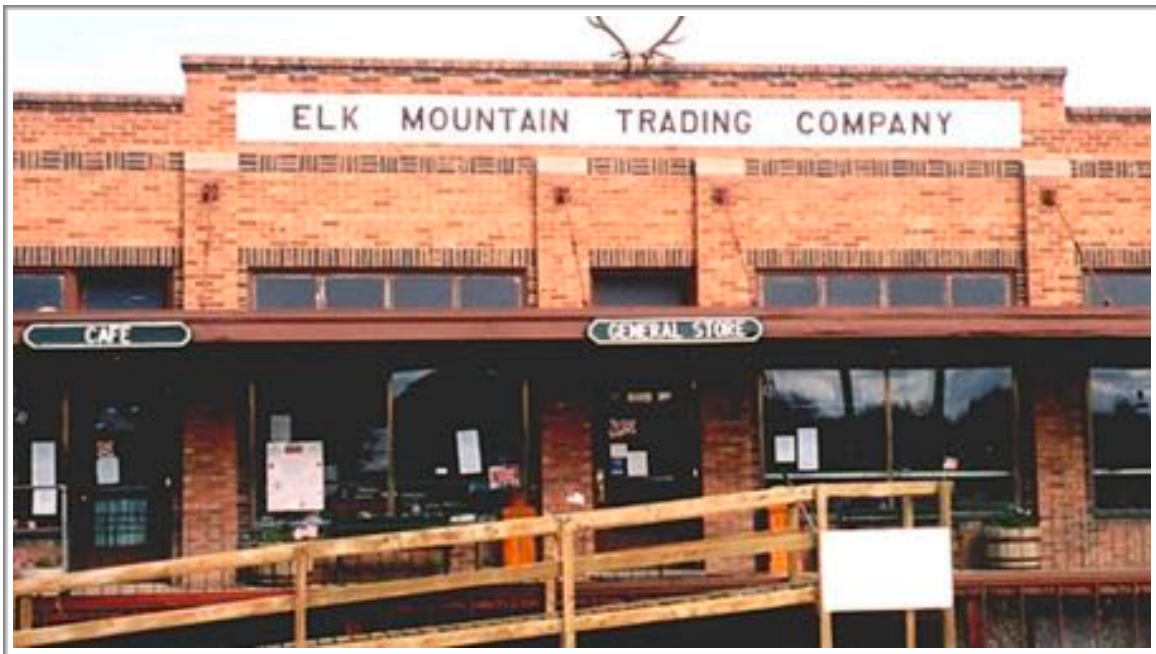
Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site

Established in 1868 to protect the newly built Union Pacific Railroad, 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, Adults \$8

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, blending a rich diversity of cultures and traditions. Though many of the settlements in the area are now ghost towns, Elk Mountain, itself 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



Destination Distinctive Dining

Alibi Wood Fired Pizza, 404 South Fourth Street, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-745-9738 Wood fired pizza and artisan bakery, using all natural meats.

Sweet Melissa's, 213 South First Street, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-742-9607 Vegetarian comfort food.

Prairie Rose, 410 South Second Street, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-745-9738, Breakfast all day.

Crowbar and Grill, 202 South Second Street, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-460-2756, Craft cocktails with burgers, pizza and special fries.

Destination Distinctive Retail

The Bent and Rusty, 308 South Second Street, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-460-9265 Largest craftsmen's cooperative in the United States with 100 crafters with 650 years combined experience.

Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Site

Starting in 1872, the Wyoming State Territorial Prison served as a penitentiary for both the United States and Wyoming for 30 years, holding the likes of Butch Cassidy and the Hole in the Wall Gang and other violent and desperate outlaws. Now a museum, you can discover the stories within the iron cells, plus the prisoners' dining area, guard's quarters, infirmary, women's quarters, laundry room, warden's office, and various exhibit galleries. New exhibits include: Found During Restoration: Artifacts Uncovered, N. K. Boswell: Warden and Lawman, Innocent or Guilty? Women Inmates of the Wyoming Territorial Prison, and a new exhibit on Butch Cassidy. The prison industries building broom factory was used to raise revenue and in some cases, as a rehabilitative strategy.

975 Snowy Range Road, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-745-3733, May 1-Sept 30, Daily 9AM-4PM, Oct 1-Apr 30, W-Sat 10AM-3PM

