

Red Gulch/Alkali Backcountry Byway

The Route of Ancient Creatures



4 Days/3 Nights

Gateway City: Cody, Wyoming



Over 167 million years ago, you would have been walking with dinosaurs on the shore of the Sundance Sea, where patches of deep ocean water alternated with dry land and areas covered with limy mud. Perfectly preserved dinosaur tracks were discovered here in 1997, completely changing the views of the formation of the sea and the paleo-environment that existed in the Middle Jurassic period in North America. Today, you can view dozens of dinosaur tracks at the Red Gulch Dinosaur Tracksite on the Red Gulch/Alkali Backcountry Byway, Route 49 between Shell and Ten Sleep. Along the Red Gulch Road, you can also see the red hills of the Chugwater formation, formed 230 million years ago, when the sea did cover most of Wyoming. Later, rugged, steep canyons, caves and unique table rocks were eroded by water and carved by wind. The massive Big Horn Mountains looming overhead were mere kids, at 60 million years old. Along the route, time comes closer with the evidence of Paleo-Indian mammoth hunters who passed this way 12,000 years ago and the piles of rocks left by shepherders in the 1800s, as they tended their flocks on the hillsides. This is likely the most unusual scenic byway in all of Wyoming. Take your time, explore the ancient history and savor the remoteness of the place.



Touring the Byway

We recommend beginning your journey in Cody, where you can take the historic downtown walking tour, visit the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and Old Trail Town, before spending the evening at the historic Irma Hotel.

On Day Two, you'll be off to Greybull, where you can tour the Greybull Museum, the Bighorn Basin Geoscience Center and the Museum of Flight and Aerial Firefighting, before a night's rest at the historic Greybull Hotel.

Day Three takes you to the Red Gulch Dinosaur Tracksite and the Medicine Lodge Archeological Site, before traveling to Worland and ultimately, to Thermopolis. Here, you can visit the Hot Springs County Museum and the Wyoming Dinosaur Center before enjoying Hot Springs State Park. Spend the night at a local hotel.

Leaving now to return to Cody, you can tour the Legend Rock State Petroglyph and the Meeteetse Museums along the way. Once in Cody, visit the Cody Heritage Museum, By Western Hands Museum and Gallery and enjoy the Dan Miller Country Music Review.

From there, if you're traveling another Wyoming Scenic Byway, we wish you safe passage, or a safe and pleasant journey home,



DAY ONE



Cody

As he explored the region in the 1870s as an Army scout, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody was so impressed with the grand scenery surrounding Yellowstone National Park, that, after taking his Wild West Show all over the world, he returned to start the town in 1896. Several streets in the historic downtown are still named after other investors and founders: Beck, Alger, Rumsey, Bleistein and Salsbury. The construction of a dam on the Shoshone River brought federal money pouring in, spurring Cody to grow and prosper even before oil was discovered in the Oregon Basin in 1912. By the time Cody passed in 1917, his namesake town, deemed the “Rodeo Capital of the World,” was well on its way.

Historic Downtown Walking Tour

Experience Cody's storied Wild West downtown where bison once roamed and teepees dotted the landscape. Hear stories about the historic buildings, "Buffalo Bill," his career, his family, daughter Irma, the Cody Stampede Rodeo Office, the Chamberlin Inn whose guests have included Ernest Hemingway, the Cody Trading Company and the Cody Post Office with the same facade and interior details as when it was built in 1927, on an audio tour describing each stop.



Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Often referred to as the “Smithsonian of the West,” the Buffalo Bill Center of the West weaves together stories of the Yellowstone region and the American West in five different museums. Immerse yourself in the geology and natural environment of the region at the Draper Natural History Museum. Get to know William F. Cody in the Buffalo Bill Museum. Experience the traditions, values and culture of regional Native Americans at the Plains Indian Museum and enjoy artists’ depictions of the West at the Whitney Western Art Museum. The Cody Firearms Museum houses more than 4,000 firearms used in the American West.

720 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-4771, May 1-Sept 15
8AM-6PM, Adults \$22 (Tickets good for 2 consecutive days)



Old Trail Town

Explore a rare collection of ghost-town relics, authentic buildings, and historic furnishing in this reconstructed frontier town where Cody started. Original cabins used by outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, and a Wyoming saloon frequented by Cassidy's "Hole-in-the-Wall Gang" were moved to the site, along with the cabin of "Curley," a Crow scout who helped guided Custer and the U.S. 7th Cavalry to the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. Several pioneer graves on the property include mountain man John Johnson, portrayed by Robert Redford in "Jeremiah Johnson."

1831 Demaris Drive, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-5302, May 15th-Sept 1st M-Sun
8AM-6PM, Adults \$10





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

The Irma Hotel, 1192 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-4221

Opened in 1902, the Irma has been a symbol of neighborliness and good cheer for over 100 years. As they say, everyone from Colonel Cody to princes and potentates, Indian chiefs and cowboys “came as they were” to the Irma. You can too.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Trailhead Bar, Grill, and Wood-Fired Pizza 1326 Beck Avenue, Cody, WY 82414, 307-578-8510 Laid back eatery serving classic Italian.

Proud Cut Saloon 1227 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-527-6905 Buffalo burgers and traditional American classics with a full bar.

Irma Hotel Restaurant 1192 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-4221

Famous for its Prime Rib, the hotel also has a full menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and daily summer buffet. The famous cherry back bar was a gift from British Queen Victoria to Cody.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Bighorn Gallery 1167 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-527-7587

The gallery features western landscapes and wildlife art, by local, artists regional, and national artists, in a wide variety of media including and paintings, sculpture, fine jewelry and original graphics.

Timmer Gallery 1371 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 586-604-6314 Art studio and gallery featuring contemporary landscapes and unique gifts by artist Brian Timmer.

Cowtown Candy Company 1323 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-587-8212

Delectable treats, popcorn and fudge.

DAY TWO



Greybull

Greybull takes its name from a local Native American legend that claimed a very revered great albino buffalo once roamed the area, which they considered a sign from the Great Spirit. Native American arrowheads, fossils and semiprecious stones can be found around town. The Greybull Visitor Center has a host of information about the area and beyond, so don't hesitate to ask for information or recommendations.

521 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2100, M-F 9AM-4PM

Greybull Museum

This museum houses war memorabilia, Native American artifacts, antique dishes, cookware, fossils, photos and large ammonite fossils, which date from the Mesozoic era when the Greybull area was part of a large inland sea.

325 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2444, M,W, F 1PM-4PM,
Free

Bighorn Basin Geoscience Center

Dedicated to the display of the northern Bighorn Basin's natural resources, the center includes the Museum of Ancient Life displaying fossils in their appropriate geologic context and reproductions in the context of the environment that was prevalent in the timeframe the animals existed. The museum also features a 40-foot mural depicting the landscape, flora and fauna of the Bighorn Basin 150 million years ago, enhanced with a display of actual fallen trees, rocks and plantings. Be sure to watch the movie about the first dig in the Basin and touch a few fossils.

534 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2259, M-F 10AM-4PM Free



Museum of Flight and Aerial Firefighting

Preserving the history of Aerial Firefighting, the museum displays many types of aircraft and fire-retardant drop systems have been utilized to combat forest fires since the late 1920s.

2534 Hiller Lane, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2100, mid-May to Oct
M-Sat 9AM-5PM Suggested Donation \$3





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

The Historic Hotel Greybull 600 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-202-0329

This 1916 hotel has been lovingly restored to its previous grandeur to offer up true western hospitality.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Speakeasy Steakhouse 600 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-202-0329 Featuring special recipe prime rib, ribeye steaks, seafood, pasta, and homemade desserts.

The Tippy Cow 540 1st Avenue South, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2007 Daily American specials in a friendly western atmosphere.

Lisa's Western Cuisine & Spirits 200 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-4765 Authentic Western and Southwestern Cuisine in a great setting near the Greybull River.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Big Horn Antiques and Gifts 1336 North 6th Street, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-765-2023 Take a stroll down memory lane as you browse antiques, gifts, and one-of-a-kind items.

Crazy Woman Trading Post, 529 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY 82426, 307-765-2916

Wyoming Scene, 513 Greybull Avenue, Greybull, WY 82426, 307-622-034

DAY THREE



Red Gulch Dinosaur Track Site

Featuring hundreds of dinosaur tracks, this assemblage of fossil dinosaur footprints was discovered in 1997. It is the largest site in Wyoming and one of only a few worldwide from the Middle Jurassic Period (160 million to 180 million years old). The site features a boardwalk, interpretive signs, picnic tables, benches and trails. Travel approximately eight miles east of Greybull WY on US Highway 14 to the Red Gulch/Alkali National Back Country Byway turnoff. Head south on that Byway approximately five miles, Greybull, WY, 82426, 307-347-5100

Medicine Lodge State Archeological Site

Medicine Lodge is one of Wyoming's premier archeological sites where rock art, both petroglyphs carved into the rock and pictographs, painted on the rock, cover the face of a 750-foot sandstone bluff. It is believed that early residents occupied the site over 10,000 years ago. Interpretive signs along the base of the bluff guide you through the history of the Medicine Lodge site and the surrounding region. The site also includes a 12,000 acre portion of the former Wickwire Ranch that became the Medicine Lodge Wildlife Habitat Management Area.



Worland

First settled in 1900, Worland was moved from one side of the Big Horn River to the other to accommodate railroad tracks that were laid here. The Washakie Museum provides insights into the history of the region.



Thermopolis

Find yourself in “hot water” in this town, whose name is literally Greek for “hot city” that hosts the world's largest mineral hot spring, appropriately named “The Big Spring.” The springs are open to the public for free as part of an 1896 treaty signed with the Shoshone and Arapaho Indian Tribes. Dinosaur fossils were found on the Warm Springs Ranch in 1993, and the Wyoming Dinosaur Center was founded soon after. With the exception of being able to enjoy the hot springs at Hot Springs State Park, most of the hot springs in Thermopolis are for viewing rather than for soaking.

Hot Springs County Museum

Considered by some to be the best western history museum in Wyoming, Hot Springs County Museum tells the stories of the region's people, including the life of the Arapahoe and Shoshone, and pioneers who came to the region. The Wyoming Rural School Experience, a 3 ½ hour living history activity where visitors act as the pupils from the 1920s, dress in costume, sit at wooden desks, practice lessons on slates, and play a recess game in the historic one-room Middleton School, brings the pioneer frontier to life. Other exhibits include a bar frequented by Butch Cassidy and other outlaws, a model of early Thermopolis, an old country store, jail cell, photography shop, seamstress shop and more. The main museum building was constructed as a garage in the early 1900s and over the years has housed a Coca Cola bottling plant, a bowling alley and the Technical College of the Rockies. 700 Broadway Street, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-5183, M-Sat 9AM-4PM, Adults \$6



Wyoming Dinosaur Center

Providing outstanding hands-on geologic and paleontological experiences, WDC displays one of the largest and most unique fossil collections in the world. It is also one of the few dinosaur museums in the world that is near a rich fossil-bearing excavation site. The Thermopolis Specimen of Archaeopteryx is the only real specimen of this genus outside of Europe.

110 Carter Ranch Road, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-2997, M-Sun
8AM-7PM, Adults \$12 and up



Hot Springs State Park

Government Indian Inspector James McLaughlin negotiated a purchase price of \$60,000 for a 100-square-mile portion of the Shoshone Reservation in 1896, but the hot springs portion was ceded through an agreement that allowed them to be open to the public. Hot Springs State Park also features a managed herd of bison (feeding usually at 8:30AM); a suspension foot bridge across the Big Horn River, a mineral terrace, flower gardens and terraces made of naturally forming travertine caused by the flowing mineral hot spring. The springs flow at a constant temperature of 135 °F which is moderated to a therapeutic 104 °F in the State Bath House. 220 Park Street, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-2176, Daily 6AM-10PM, Bath House 8AM-4PM, \$7 per day, per vehicle.





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Best Western Plus Plaza Hotel 116 East Park Street, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-2939

A historic hotel in a beautiful location in Hot Springs State Park next to the Big Horn River.

Destination Distinctive Dining

One Eyed Buffalo Brewing Company 528 Broadway Street, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-3555 An upbeat, friendly establishment serving fresh, fun food.

Black Bear Café 111 North 5th Street, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-3221 A home town café offering traditional breakfast, lunch, and brunch options.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Discover Thermopolis 541 Broadway Street, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-3921 Variety store where you can take home a unique piece of Thermopolis.

White Horse Country Store 180 U.S. Highway 20, South St, Thermopolis, WY, 82443, 307-864-3047 If a cowboy needs it, chances are you'll find it here.

DAY FOUR

Legend Rock State Petroglyph Site

Also a unit of Hot Springs State Park, Legend Rock is 29 miles northwest of Thermopolis. The rock itself is 1,312 feet long near vertical cliff with more than 92 prehistoric petroglyph panels and over 300 petroglyph figures. It has been a sacred site for Native Americans for thousands of years. In order to preserve and protect the site, it was acquired by Wyoming and now encompasses a visitor center and interpretive trails.

Legend Rock State Petroglyph Site, 2861 Cottonwood Road, Thermopolis, WY 82443, 307-864-2176



Meeteetse Museums

This unique complex features the Belden Museum with historic western photographs by Charles Belden, the Olive Fell Gallery, the "Little Wahb the Grizzly" and Wolves Exhibit, Thomas Molesworth furniture, the legendary Meeteetse Mercantile and Mike Crocker's Grand Slam of North American Wild Sheep, among others. A newly restored bank building houses the Bank Museum with vintage office furniture, the bank vault and safes, an early telephone switchboard, dictaphones and photographs.

1947 State Street, Meeteetse, WY, 82433, 307-868-2423, Tu-Sat 10AM-4PM, Free



Cody Heritage Museum

Cody history here begins in prehistoric times Cody history moving chronologically from settlement through the 1950s. Exhibits feature founders Bill Cody, George Beck, Nate Salsbury, H.M. Gerrans, George Bleistein and Bronson Rumsey, ranching and agricultural history, early Cody businesses, the oil, gas, and railroad industries and cowboy history. The Heritage Garden surrounding the historic De Maris House, is a living exhibit of native plants, pollinator plants, wildflowers, grasses and a bronze sculpture which memorializes the original pioneers who built the town.

1092 Sheridan Avenue, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-586-4272, Tu-Sat 10AM-4PM & Sun 12PM-4PM



By Western Hands Museum and Gallery

Legacy artisans who produce a wide range of functional and decorative arts including beadwork, fabric, carving, leatherwork, saddles, bags, bits and spurs, and jewelry that preserve the unique regional western style of the late 1880s.

12th Street, Cody, WY, 82414, 307-586-1755, W-Sat 10AM-5PM



Dan Miller's Cowboy Music Revue

Dan Miller and his Cowboy Music Revue, who deliver first-class musicianship and a family friendly show, have been entertaining audiences from around the world for 18 years, including visitors from over 70 countries. The doors open at 3:15 and the show begins at 3:30, allowing you to enjoy the music and still have dinner and catch the Cody Nite Rodeo.

1601 Stampede Avenue, Cody, WY 82414, 307-899-2799, Matinee shows selected days, Adults \$20, Couple \$35