

GRAND MESA NATIONAL FOREST

DAY TRIP

After today you can say, “I stood on top of the largest flattop mountain in the world—and I could see forever ...” The snow-crested mountains of Utah and Colorado, the dramatic Book Cliffs, and the long, fertile Uncompahgre Valley define the view from atop this 10,000-foot mesa. Grand Mesa has far and above its share of natural wonders packed into its 40-mile length. Over 200 trout-filled lakes, reservoirs, and lush trails tempt the traveler at every turn. Winter sports include downhill skiing and snowboarding at Powderhorn Ski Area, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing.



150 MILES ROUND TRIP
4 HOURS TO ALL DAY

Head north from Montrose on U.S. Highway 50 to Delta. Head east on State Highway 92 for four miles, then north on State Highway 65 to Cedaredge and the Grand Mesa.

Cedaredge is in the heart of the Surface Creek valley’s orchard country. Over 75% of Colorado’s prized apples are grown here, where an annual Apple Festival is celebrated in October. Make a short stop at one of the orchards or fruit stands to get succulent peaches, apples, apricots, pears, or cherries to feast on during your trip.

When you have completed your tour of the Grand Mesa, take the same route back to Montrose, or try Lands End Road for the most scenic and hair-raising route off of the Mesa. This gravel road, with 55 switchback curves, leads down the west side of the Mesa to U.S. Highway 50 and affords spectacular views.

At U.S. Highway 50, turn left and travel about 19 miles south to Escalante Canyon for a short side trip. The Canyon was named after Spanish missionary explorers Dominguez and Escalante who traveled this route in 1876 in search of an easy route between Santa Fe and California.

After visiting Escalante Canyon, return to U.S. Highway 50 and turn right for the return trip to Montrose.





Planning Your Trip

All of the Montrose scenic day trips have been designed to enhance your stay in the Black Canyon country. The following few precautions will help ensure a delightful adventure.

Before you begin your tour, it is a good idea to fill your gas tank, plan where you will lunch, and check weather and road conditions for the route you are taking. Several of the trips include stretches where no services are available.

Prepare for a variety of weather. Montrose enjoys 250 sunny days each year, making good water supplies, sunscreen, and lip balm essential equipment. Summer showers and high-country breezes can come up unexpectedly, so take a jacket and rain gear along.

High-clearance or four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended for traveling unimproved roads. Avoid these roads during or immediately following heavy rain. Cell phone service can be lost in remote areas so be sure to inform someone of your planned route and your expected return time.

The Montrose area offers many roads leading to or along magnificent scenic highways. Take your time and explore some of the wonders that make Montrose a special place.

Additional Day Trips

- Curecanti National Recreation Area
- West Elk Loop Scenic Byway
- Black Canyon National Park
- San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway
- Silver Jack Reservoir and Owl Creek Pass

Montrose Visitor Center

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