

WEST ELK LOOP



The West Elk Loop is the second longest byway near Montrose and includes a 30-mile stretch of unpaved, dirt road over Kebley Pass. A high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle is recommended to tackle the pass, which remains open until late fall when snow makes the route impassable. The West Elk Loop is ideal for accessing the North Rim of Black Canyon National Park and features a number of organic farms and wineries.

Start your adventure by heading east on U.S. Highway 50 for 38 miles (46 minutes) east of Montrose. Turn on State Highway 92 W at Blue Mesa Reservoir. This trip may be broken into sections for a shorter trip. Please see westelkbyway.com for detailed information about the byway and road conditions.

Miles: 205 Approx. time: 6 hours

GRAND MESA



Discover the largest flattop mountain in the world, explore Plateau Creek canyon, and venture out to Land's End Overlook where the views will leave you breathless. Grand Mesa is a destination for wildflower viewing and, with over 200 lakes, fishing becomes a call to action. Access the Mesa by heading north from Montrose along U.S. Highway 50 W for 22 miles (27 minutes). Turn right onto State Highway 92 E at Delta, follow for 4.5 miles (7 minutes) and turn left on State Highway 65 N.

Miles: 63 Approx. time: 2 to 4 hours



A number of organic farms, wineries, and farm-to-fork restaurants may be found along most of southwest Colorado's Historic and Scenic Byways. See coloradowine.com for more information about wineries and codot.gov/travel/scenic-byways for more information on Colorado's Scenic Byways.

Planning Your Trip

The following precautions will help ensure a delightful adventure:

- Before beginning your tour, fill your gas tank, plan your lunch, and check weather and road conditions along your route. Several trips include stretches where no services are available.
- Prepare for a variety of weather conditions. Water supplies, sunscreen, and lip balm are essential equipment. Summer showers and high-country winds can come up unexpectedly, so take along a jacket, extra clothes, and rain gear.
- High-clearance or four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended for traveling unimproved roads. Avoid these roads during or immediately following heavy rain or snow.
- Cell phone service can be lost in remote areas, so be sure to inform someone of your planned route and expected return time.

Montrose Visitor Center

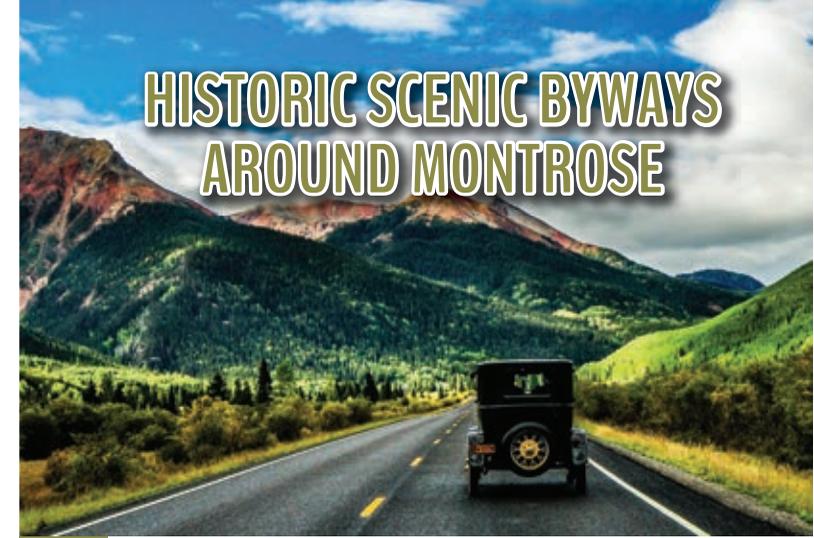
107 S Cascade Ave
970.497.8558 or
855.497.8558

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HISTORIC SCENIC BYWAYS AROUND MONTROSE



DAY TRIP

Exploring western Colorado's historic and scenic byways is an adventure all its



own. With a number of exceptional designated scenic byways at its doorstep, Montrose is the perfect base camp for unforgettable excursions featuring diverse landscapes on high alpine highways, subtle mountain off-road paths, and desert sand-stone routes.

Byways can rise as high as 12,000 feet and dive into more than 10,000 years of human history. Aside from remarkable scenery that will keep you reaching for your camera, the byways boast a plethora of highlights: Colorado wineries, organic produce, bison and elk farms, and wildlife viewing. Discover historical placards along the way. Nostalgic treasures include the historic Hanging Flume, the historic Yankee Girl, the Gateway Automobile Museum, Black Canyon and Mesa Verde National Parks, the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, the Anasazi Heritage Center, and much more.

Exploring new territory can be intimidating, so a Montrose Visitor Center guest services concierge is ready to help map a route and prepare a picnic basket for the adventure. Call the Visitor Center at 855.497.8558 to get your journey started. Or stop in at 107 S Cascade Ave in the heart of Historic Downtown Montrose.



ALPINE LOOP



The Alpine Loop Scenic Byway is an outstanding example of a back country byway system. It meanders along breathtaking high alpine mountain passes reaching an elevation of 12,000 feet and travels near several abandoned mines and ghost towns such as the historic Animas Forks. The byway connects the towns of Lake City, Ouray and Silverton and serves as a haven for hikers and off-road enthusiasts. Explore high alpine roads; navigate tight switchbacks; and photograph landscapes laced with wildflowers, waterfalls, gentle streams, and wildlife.

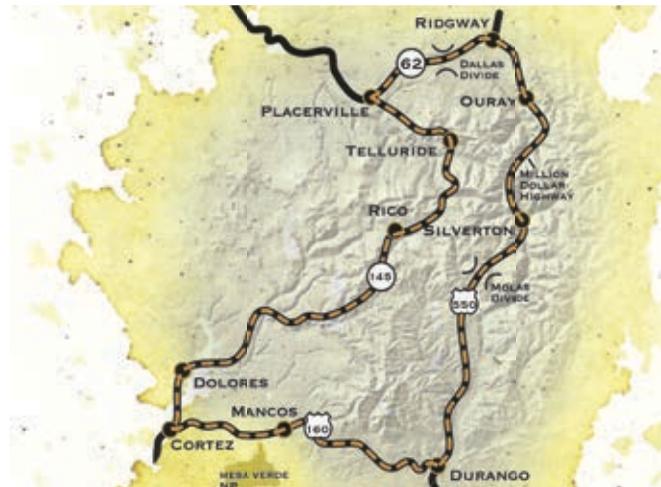
Only experienced drivers should attempt the Alpine Loop. There are a number of companies offering guided tours of the byway. A high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle is required to tackle this unpaved, rocky route, which remains open until late fall when snow makes the route impassable. Roads can be muddy and weather conditions can change quickly. There are no services along the route, and cell phone service is unreliable.

To access the Alpine Loop from Montrose, follow U.S. Highway 550 south for 40 miles, (50 minutes). The staging area is well marked. There are a number of routes to choose from to return to Montrose. See the following link for a detailed information: blm.gov/dwld

Miles: 63
Approx. time:
4-6 hours



SAN JUAN SKYWAY



The San Juan Skyway is set in one of the highest mountain ranges in the U.S. and has been described as one of the most beautiful drives in America.

The byway visits bustling historic towns, rises as high as 11,000 feet, and contains 2 billion years of geological history and 5 million acres of spectacular national forest. It winds its way along the Million Dollar Highway where the historic Yankee Girl Mine head frame rests. Railroad enthusiasts will want to plan to watch the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad train come to Silverton and then stop in Durango to tour the train museum. Follow the byway to the Four Corners and explore the ruins at Mesa Verde National Park. Then head to Telluride and enjoy one of Colorado's most active mountain towns. There are a number of services along the route.

The Skyway begins in Ridgway, 30 miles, (30 minutes) south of Montrose along U.S. Highway 550 S. Follow the highway for 109 miles, (two hours and 30 minutes) to State Highway 160 W. Turn on State Highway 160 W in Durango. Follow it for 45 miles, (50 minutes) to Cortez. Follow State Highway 145 N for 72 miles, (one hour and 35 minutes) to reach Telluride. Continue on State Highway 145 N for 13 miles, (15 minutes). Turn right on State Highway 62 E and continue 12 miles, (30 minutes) to U.S. Highway 550 N back to Montrose.

Miles: 236
Approx. time:
6 hours



UNAWEEP-TABEGUACHE



Dive into history with the Unawep-Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway. The route hosts a variety of attractions such as the historic Hanging Flume, the Gateway Automobile Museum, ruins of Driggs Mansion, and more. Desert bighorn sheep, bald eagles, and elk live along the route. There are minimal services along this byway.

Unawep Canyon knives through the soft red sandstone of the Uncompahgre Plateau that dates all the way back to Precambrian times. Ancient rivers eroded the rock away, exposing hundreds of millions of years of the geologic record, including fossils of dinosaurs and early amphibians.

The Hanging Flume is a 10-mile-long flume that clings to sheer canyon walls above the San Miguel River. Built during the Colorado mining rush, it carried eight million gallons of water per day to gold mines before being abandoned in 1893.

Access the byway by following U.S. Highway 550 S for 30 miles, (30 minutes). Turn right on State Highway 62 W at the stoplight in Ridgway. Follow Highway 62 W for 26 miles, (30 minutes) to State Highway 145 N. The highway merges with State Highway 141 N in 47 miles, (55 minutes). After 107 miles, (two hours and ten minutes) of travel you will turn right onto U.S. Highway 50 S. Travel 51 miles, (55 minutes) south to Montrose.

Miles: 133
Approx. time:
5 hours

