

# RE-DISCOVER COLORADO: CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAINS & PASSES

- DATES:** Arrival/Orientation meeting: Saturday June 22, 2019  
Ride June 23-28; Depart June 29
- LEADERS:** John Penick/Rosemarie Lueke; SAGS: Kathleen Schindler/Mayoma Pendergast
- RATING:** Advanced: 450 miles with approximately 30k elevation/climbing
- RIDERS:** 28 plus Leaders and SAGS
- PRICE:** TOTAL: \$1420.00 (Double Occupancy); \$400.00 due at Registration  
Balance Due: March 15, 2019  
Single Supplement fee: \$710.00 (subject to room availability)  
Standard Club Cancellation Policy applies.

## OVERVIEW

This Central Colorado Tour is an advanced, challenging scenic ride that packs in all of the classic climbs & passes you've ever heard of. The roar of roadside rivers, windblown wildflowers, and the striking views as you hit each summit are just a few of the pleasures that will make all the high-altitude grinding worthwhile. We'll gather in the small western town of Gunnison and travel counterclockwise through some of the most picturesque spectacular small towns in Colorado. We'll pedal on the "Top of the Rockies" Scenic Byway with over 115 miles of high mountain splendor as well as the West Elk Loop Scenic Byway. We also 'hop on' the Rio Grande Rail Trail along the Fryingpan & Roaring Fork Rivers in addition to the popular Summit County Paved Recreation Path System.

Bikes may be transported from Denver and return for \$100.00.

## TRAVEL & LODGING

The first night's lodging will be Saturday, June 21st, 2019 in Gunnison, CO.

The Inn at Tomichi Village will allow us to park vehicles here for the week, as we'll stay here on our final night together.

If flying, there are flights in to Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport; there are 2 free shuttle buses for this small town of barely 6,000. (One system travels north to Crested Butte, the other moves about in Gunnison) The Inn is about 1.5 miles east of town, you will have to take an Alpine Express taxi.

For flights into Denver, there are several bus companies that provide transportation to Gunnison (it's a college town); Arrow Stage Lines/Black Hills & Rocky Rides to name a few.

## WEATHER

The average temperature range is from 30 to 75 degrees as we explore terrain including mountains, foothills, riversides & canyons, & steep downhill descents.

**Day One: June 21, 2019 - arrive in Gunnison, CO**

**Accommodations: The Inn at Tomichi Village**

This college town (Western State Colorado University) sits at 7700' with a very friendly walkable downtown, and many offerings for coffee, food & drink. Check out TWISTED FORK on Main Street.

Our lodging (a mile & a half east of town) has a restaurant on site with local brews on tap, a welcoming outdoor patio with seating & fire pit. Rodeos have a long history here (more than 117 years) & are a well-respected annual event providing a rich western heritage.

**Day Two: June 23, 2019 - Gunnison to Buena Vista, 71 miles/5500 feet**

**Accommodations: Best Western**

We begin our awe-inspiring ride up the Taylor River drainage to the recently paved west approach to Cottonwood Pass. Along the way you'll see bighorn sheep high on the cliffs above the Gunnison River, fly fishing at it's finest in the Taylor River, groves of aspen, and the Collegiate Peaks above Taylor Park Reservoir. The views here will take your breath away! Stop at the summit for a 'photo op' —get your picture taken in front of the Forest Service sign: COTTONWOOD PASS : CONTINENTAL DIVIDE ATLANTIC OCEAN PACIFIC OCEAN 12,126' The road is flanked by fourteeners, has steep straightaways with beautiful curves. The sign welcoming you to Buena Vista reads "**Now this is Colorado**" !

**Day Three: June 24, 2019 - Buena Vista to Frisco, 72 miles/4655 feet**

**Accommodations: Holiday Inn**

Trout Creek Pass is 15 miles away with 1,549 feet of elevation gain. It divides the Arkansas River Valley from the South Park plateau. We'll ride through Fairplay (home of the World Champion Pack Burro Race) and Alma on the paved bike path to the east side of the highway before climbing Hoosier Pass. For 11 miles with grades ranging from 5.5% to 7.8% we'll gain 1,574 feet of elevation to the Continental Divide once again. The descent is steep and wildly curved, with switchbacks stacked on top of each other, allowing you to see the next curve from above. We'll ride the last 20+ miles through Breckenridge to Lake Dillon and to Frisco on the Blue River Recreation Path to our lodging.

**Day Four: June 25, 2019 - Frisco to Leadville, 69 miles/ 5555 feet**

**Accommodations: Silver King**

We start our ride up Vail Pass via the popular Frisco/Copper Mountain to Vail Rec Path that riders travel when doing the Triple Bypass ride here in July. It's a meandering ride through the woods following West Tenmile Creek up to Vail Pass at 10,600 feet. We'll head south through the little town of Minturn, (population 1100, founded in 1904) with 32 miles before arriving in Leadville. We'll climb Battle Mountain & Tennessee Pass, with remnants of Camp Hale & it's training grounds, and plaques & signs along the Tenth Mountain Memorial Highway. You'll pass by Ski Cooper, another training site for the 10th Mountain Division and one of the oldest & most affordable ski areas in Colorado.

**Day Five: June 26, 2019 - Rest Day**

**Accommodations: Silver King Inn & Suites**

The hotel is named after Horace Tabor, owner of the largest silver mine in the area. Leadville is a small, enchanting mining town established in the 1860's when gold was discovered here.

After the gold was all mined, silver was struck and a rich, colorful history began.

There is much to do this day! (or you can do nothing!) You can hike on the Rainbow Trail below Mt. Massive or Mt. Elbert (two of Colorado's highest fourteeners), offering panoramic mountain views; or if you really want to ride, there's the Turquoise Lake Loop (23.2 miles RT and 1705 feet elevation) and the Historic Mineral Belt Loop, an easy 12 mile ride through mining history.

Floyd's of Leadville (yes, Floyd Landis' cannabis store) is worth a visit, or The National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum is also located here.

**Day Six: June 27, 2019 - Leadville to Carbondale, 91 miles/3760 feet**

**Accommodations: Comfort Inn & Suites**

Heading south then east, we pass by a large reservoir and the town of Twin Lakes, on the National Register of Historic Places. Independence Pass is the 4th highest paved road in the state with a broad scenic summit strewn with wildflowers and spotted with pools. You are still riding on the Top of the Rockies Scenic Byway with the Hunter-Fryingpan Wilderness to the north. As we descend into Aspen, we'll access the Rio Grande Trail through Snowmass and Woody Creek for nearly 33 miles into Carbondale. And, for wine aficionados, the Catherine Store (disguised as a gas station) is known by locals in the Roaring Fork Valley for its wide selection, along with its 'Tut's Tomb of Wines' (Yes, there's actually a 2000 sq ft Museum of Rarities and Cult Wines inside!). Carbondale Beerworks is only a mile away from our lodging in the historic part of downtown.

**Day Seven : June 28, 2019 - Carbondale to Paonia, 61 miles/3635 feet**

**Accommodations: Rocky Mountain Inn and The Brass Hotel**

Today, we head out on the gorgeous West Elk Loop as we ascend McClure Pass in 25 miles and 2614 feet of elevation. The real attraction is riding along the Crystal River (you've all seen that mine photograph, right?). This beautiful canyon is cut into red rock, thick with pine, and always within view of spectacular white peaks that appear and disappear behind the nearby hills as you ride over the shadowed road. The pass is an abrupt division between the central mountains and the mesa and canyon country to the southwest, not to mention the differences between the resort towns to the north and the mining towns to the south. Somerset, is still an active coal mining town. We land in the little gem of a town called Paonia, with less than 1500 residents, it's no wonder we have two locations for our lodging. Numerous wineries & organic apple orchards dot the area.

**Day Eight: June 29, 2019 - Paonia to Gunnison, 86 miles/6920 feet**

**Accommodations: The Inn at Tomichi Village**

Out of Paonia we ride through Hotchkiss & Crawford before descending to the Black Canyon. The last day finds us cruising along the dark ax-cleft of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, at falcon height, enjoying empty roads on our journey back to our start. Riding along the cliffs with great cycling shoulders, you can marvel at the Blue Mesa Reservoir, Colorado's LARGEST body of water.

You will have pedaled past tumbling waterfalls, past roadside bouquets, past creeks that flow orange & poisoned from the skeletons of abandoned mines, & you will have had an amazing showcase of the iconic beauty of Colorado's Rocky Mountains.

We get to relax! No need to pack-up yet; stay & sit awhile in the grassy yard. We'll say our good-byes tomorrow to our old and newly acquired friends!

**For further information contact:**

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