

# Oregon Trail Historic Byway

*A Journey Through Time*



6 Days/5 Nights

Gateway City: Laramie, Wyoming



Before roads were paved, before railroad tracks were set, and before most people knew exactly what lay beyond the Rocky Mountains, if you wanted to head west, you boarded a wagon and took the Oregon Trail. Stretching 1,932 miles from Missouri to Oregon, it took up to five months to travel in its entirety, on a route that did not make for an easy journey. Food was scarce, weather was unpredictable, and the terrain was bumpy, wet, mountainous, and often dangerous. But despite these harsh conditions, in just the three years between 1849 and 1852, over 150,000 intrepid pioneers went “westernizing” on the trail. By the time the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869, nearly half a million settlers, farmers, miners, ranchers, and families had traveled west in search of fertile land, better jobs, and a new life. Today, there is no better way to experience the lasting pioneer spirit of America’s westward expansion than by following the original trail, a 57-mile route paralleling the North Platte River through southeast Wyoming. Deep gouges from thousands of wagon wheels are still visible, along with the names of travelers inscribed into landmark rocks along the way. Walk in the footsteps of history while following this iconic route of American pioneers.



### **Touring the Byway**

We recommend starting your journey in Laramie, a vibrant college town with deep Western roots. Discover the city's extraordinary architecture on the Historic Downtown Walking Tour, including the Laramie Railroad Depot and Union Pacific Footbridge, explore the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ivinson House at the Laramie Plains Museum and tour the Wyoming Territorial State Prison. Spend your first evening in a colorfully hand-crafted Victorian-style Inn.

On Day Two, smell the roses at the Williams Conservatory, and travel through human history at the University of Wyoming Museum of Anthropology, before heading for the Terry Bison Ranch in Cheyenne.

On Day Three, explore Cheyenne, the capital city which still retains its rugged pioneer spirit. Discover Wyoming history at the Wyoming State Museum, engage your inner cowboy at the Nelson Museum of the West, visit the last remaining grand railroad station on the original Transcontinental Route at the Cheyenne Depot Museum, and discover the drama and excitement of the rodeo at Frontier

Days Old West Museum before tucking in for the night at Wyoming's first luxury hotel.

Head north to Torrington on Day Four to get a glimpse of life in 1880 at the Homesteaders Museum, then get ready for a very historic drive as you turn onto WY-26, the Oregon Trail Historic Byway. Pause first in Lingle for the Rawhide Wildlife Habitat Management Area to experience what the Platte River looked like in pioneer times, and stop at the Fort Laramie National Historic Site, a major restocking location and political staging ground during America's era of westward expansion.

On Day Five, catch a breath of fresh mountain air at Guernsey State Park and hear more stories of westward expansion at the Wyoming Pioneer Memorial Museum. Register Cliff Historic Site is covered with names emigrants inscribed into the soft limestone. The Guernsey Trail Ruts, cut by thousands of wagon wheels, are physical reminders of the arduous journey taken by hearty pioneers.

Day Six has you learning more about the trails west at the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center and the region's dinosaurs at Casper College's Tate Geological Museum. From there, we wish you a safe passage if you're continuing on another Wyoming Scenic Byway, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



## DAY ONE



### **Laramie**

Situated on the high plains of southeastern Wyoming, Laramie, has been the site of human activity for more than 10,000 years. Native Americans hunted big game here before French-Canadian fur trapper Jacques La Ramee arrived in about 1817. Settlers began arriving in 1862 on Ben Holladay's Overland Stage line. Today, this diverse town is home to the only university in Wyoming, six museums, a historic downtown with quaint shops, unique boutiques, restaurants, breweries, and cafés; a "Gem City of the Plains" brimming with Western influence.

### **Historic Downtown Walking Tour**

As you explore this former "hell-on-wheels" town, imagine you just arrived on the train more than a century ago, walking where Laramie's first citizens made their mark. Pick up a brochure for the 33-stop walking tour at the Laramie Visitor Center which begins at Garfield and First Street and includes the Laramie Railroad Depot and Union Pacific Footbridge.

800 South Third Street, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-745-4195, Tu-Sat  
12:30PM-4:30PM

## **Laramie Plains Museum at Historic Ivinson House**

The Ivinson House, built for \$40,000 and today considered the historic crown jewel of Laramie, was complete with central heating, electric lights, and running water when it was finished in 1892. No one knows quite why the Ivinsons settled in Laramie. Edward was born in the Virgin Islands, schooled in Britain and immigrated to New York City, where he met his wife. Despite a 10 year difference in their ages (Edward was 23 and Jane 13 when they married), the marriage lasted 61 years. They moved from New York to Indiana, then to Illinois and Tennessee, and were planning to move to California, when Edward traveled to Cheyenne. After scouting for new business opportunities, he decided Laramie would be a better choice, even though in 1868 the town was just a collection of tents and temporary buildings. Ivinson opened a grocery store and they settled in. The beautiful three story Queen Anne Victorian residence they built now hosts an extraordinary collections of opulent Victorian fixtures, artifacts, and archives illustrating the history of Laramie, Albany County, ranching, and westward migration.

603 East Ivinson Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82070, Tu-Sat 12:30PM-4:30PM, Tours Hourly 1PM-4PM, Adults \$10



## **Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Site**

Starting in 1872, the Wyoming State Territorial Prison served as a penitentiary for 30 years, for both the United States and Wyoming, holding the likes of Butch Cassidy, the Hole in the Wall Gang, and other violent and desperate outlaws. Now a museum, you can discover the stories of these characters within the iron cells, 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 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





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Mad Carpenter Inn** 353 North Eighth Street, Laramie, WY, 82072, 307-742-0870 The Mad Carpenter Inn was lovingly restored with hand-crafted woodwork and sculptured ceilings, especially in two distinctive rooms Blossom and Whimsey.

### **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**

**Works of Wyoming** 300 South Second Street, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-460-3304, Unique fine art and gifts created by Wyoming artists.

**Rustic Cowgirl Edge** 208 Grand Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82070, 307-631-3551, Western apparel featuring leather goods, conceal purses, turquoise jewelry, clothing, scarves, and more.

**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.



## DAY TWO

### **Williams Conservatory**

Located in the Aven Nelson building on the campus of the University of Wyoming, the main greenhouse at Williams Conservatory is home to more than 600 exotic tropical, neotropical, temperate, and arid zone plants from around the world.

1000 East University Avenue, Laramie, WY, 82071, 307-766-4336, M-F  
10AM-4PM, Free



### **University of Wyoming Museum of Anthropology**

Housed on three floors on the university campus, exhibits in the main gallery follow the "Human Odyssey" from the evolution of humans in Africa several million years ago, to the spread of humanity throughout the world during the Late Pleistocene era, and ultimately to the New World. The gallery also hosts the Colby Mammoth Site, the Vore Buffalo Jump, and heritage of hunter-gatherers, the evolution the bison, and more.

12 East Lewis Street, Laramie, WY, 82071, 307-766-5136, 7:30AM-4:30PM mid-May-late Aug



## **Cheyenne**

Originally named for the Native American word meaning "aliens" or "people of foreign language," which the Sioux called them Dzitsistes: "those who roamed the open plains," Cheyenne was selected as a railroad town on the Transcontinental Railroad in 1867, beginning to flourish when thousands of men came to lay railroad tracks. At first, tents popped up to house grocery stores, banks, restaurants, and laundries. Later medical practitioners arrived and entrepreneurs built lodging. Cheyenne grew so quickly it was nicknamed the "Magic City of the Plains." Two years later, soldiers from Fort D.A. Russell (now Warren Air Force Base), and Camp Carlin arrived. As the train crews moved on, ranchers moved in, ushering in the cattle baron era and creating fabulously wealthy men who ultimately showered riches on the city. Today, Cheyenne is still infused with images of cowboys, rodeos, and the spirit of the Old West.



**Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Terry Bison Ranch**, 511-25 Service Road East, Cheyenne, WY 82007, 307-634-4171

Spend the afternoon at the dude ranch. Take a bison train tour to see the herd, go horseback riding or fishing, take a pony rode and do a self-guided walking tour of the property. Plan to stay in a cabin, dine at the Tombstone Cafe, or the Senator's Steakhouse and Saloon, and browse at the Trading Post.

## DAY THREE

### **Wyoming State Museum**

Permanent exhibits here trace Wyoming's history, major industries, paleontology, wildlife, and landscapes, while temporary exhibits include a changing gallery highlighting different Wyoming artists.

2301 Central Avenue, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-777-7022, M-Sat 9AM-4:30, Free

### **Nelson Museum of the West**

Founded to preserve the Western culture and "Cowboy Code" that Robert Nelson lived by in Wyoming in his youth, exhibits enhanced with artifacts and art illustrate the heritage of the Old West. The Military Memorial Museum exhibits hundreds of uniforms, saddles, firearms, and accessories.

1714 Carey Avenue, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-635-7670, M-F 9AM-4PM May, Sept and Oct., M-Sat 9AM-4PM in June, July and Aug, Adults \$10



## **Cheyenne Depot Museum**

Located in the historic 1880 Union Pacific Railroad building, the last remaining grand railroad station on the transcontinental route, the Cheyenne Depot Museum features the history of Cheyenne, the Transcontinental Railroad, and a narrow gauge UC&N Model Railroad.

121 West 15th Street, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-638-6338, M-F 9AM-5PM, Sat 9AM-3PM, Sun 11AM-3PM, Adults \$8

## **Frontier Days Old West Museum**

Intriguing Western artifacts, including one of the most extensive collections of carriages west of the Mississippi fill this museum which is focused on the history and lore of Cheyenne Frontier Days, the “World’s Largest Outdoor Rodeo and Western Celebration” that began in 1897. The first celebration that included pony races, bronco busting, and steer roping was so successful that it was expanded to two days with a parade the second year and now spans over 10 days each July.

4610 Carey Avenue, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-778-7290, M-Sun 9AM-5PM, Adults \$12





### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Historic Plains Hotel** 1600 Central Avenue, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-638-3311  
Located next to Downtown Cheyenne's Plaza, Wyoming's first luxury hotel is now a historic landmark.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Luxury Diner** 1401 West Lincolnway, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-635-1219 Casual diner dishing up breakfast, burgers, sandwiches, plus specialties like apple pie.

**The Albany Restaurant, Bar and Liquormart**, 1506 Capitol Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82001, 307-638-3507 Serving Cheyenne for 75 years.

**Bunkhouse Bar and Grill**, 1064 Happy Jack Road, Cheyenne, WY, 82009, 307-632-6184 Beers on tap, broad menu and dancing on Friday and Saturday nights.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**Eclectic Elephant** 112 W 18th Street, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-638-2588 A multi-vendor antique and collectible mall featuring 45 different shops who sell a wide variety of collectibles and curiosities.

**Cheyenne Artists Guild** 1701 Morrie Avenue, Cheyenne, WY, 82001, 307-632-2263 Art gallery and gift shop located in the Historic Van Tassell Carriage House.

**Wyoming State Museum Store** 2301 Central Avenue, Cheyenne, WY, 82002, 307-777-5320 Add touches of Wyoming to your home with glassware, pillows, locally made food products, stationery, framed prints, hand-crafted jewelry, and more.

## DAY FOUR



### **Torrington**

Settled in 1900 where the Oregon, Mormon, and Texas Cattle trails met at the North Platte River, Torrington was originally a water and coal station for the CB&Q Railroad. The growing city soon became the main source of civilization for nearby farmers and ranchers. By 1908 the town had a bank, three general stores, a pharmacy with a soda fountain, a land office, and two hotels.

### **Homesteaders Museum**

Learn about the heritage of Goshen County from the first settlement in 1834 though the homesteading era. Exhibits, archives, and interactive displays include everything from explaining the sugar beet industry, local farming, and ranching, to a one room schoolhouse and the first car in the county.

495 Main Street, Torrington, WY, 82240, 307-532-5612, M, Wed-Fri 10AM-3PM,  
Free

## **Lingle**

A "small, but proud" community set on rich farmlands along the North Platte River and Oregon Trail.

### **Rawhide Wildlife Habitat Management**

Wild lands covered with cottonwoods, willows, prairie grasses, sand reeds, wheatgrass, and blue grama grass, peacefully coexist with wetlands thick with cattails, rushes, and sedges. Together, they provide a natural environment teeming with white-tailed and mule deer, cottontail rabbits, red squirrels, wild turkeys, ring-necked pheasants, Canada geese, ducks, beavers, red foxes, raccoons, muskrats, turtles, toads, and snakes. At certain times of the year, bird watchers can see bald and golden eagles, hawks, owls, wood ducks, yellow-billed cuckoos, and more than 50 species of songbirds.

CanAm Highway, Lingle, WY, 82223, 307-745-4046





## **Fort Laramie**

The town of Fort Laramie was named for the important historic stop on the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails.



### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Fort Laramie American Grill** 302 Pioneer Court, Fort Laramie, WY, 82212, 307-837-2324  
Restaurant and bakery with small town charm.

### **Destination Distinctive Retail**

**Fort Laramie Frontier Trading Post** 105 Laramie Avenue, Fort Laramie, WY, 82212, 307-575-2105 This one-of-a-kind shop offers furs, beadwork, quill work, handcrafted leather work, Capotes, dance sticks, talk sticks, bone handle handcrafted knives, spears, civil war clothing, kepis, mountain-man hats, old African trade beads, and Native American artifacts.

**Haystack Hills Trading Company** 105 E Merriam Street, Fort Laramie, WY, 82212, 307-262-1457 This eclectic shop offers gift items, home goods, art, lighting and more.

## **Fort Laramie National Historic Site**

Located at the confluence of the Laramie and the North Platte Rivers, the 1834 Fort Laramie evolved into the largest military post on the Northern Plains, ultimately witnessing the entire sweeping saga of America's western expansion. Exhibits include panoramic images, maps, and narration. The striking 1875 Army Iron Bridge, built to provide reliable and safe passage over the North Platte River, a short distance from the fort, is one of the last remaining examples of a three-span bowstring through truss bridge in the United States.

965 Grey Rocks Road, Fort Laramie, WY, 82212, 307-837-2221, Open daily from sunrise until sunset, Visitor Center Memorial Day to Labor Day 9AM-7PM, Free



## **Guernsey**

In the 1840s, the land on which Guernsey is located was known as the “emigrant's wash tub” where pioneers washed their clothes, watered their animals and took baths. When New Yorker Charles Guernsey moved west in 1880, he bought the land, established a ranch, and founded the town, which was finally incorporated in 1902.



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Twisters Bed and Breakfast**, 84 North Wyoming Avenue, Guernsey, WY 82214, 307-331-3943 Newly built B&B alongside a locally owned restaurant.

**Cobblestone Inn & Suites** 703 West Whalen Street, Guernsey, WY, 82214, 307-836-2325 Comfortable hotel that features a miniature Oregon Trail, historic plaza, picnic tables, and playground.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Twisters Eatery** 84 North Wyoming Avenue, Guernsey, WY, 82214, 307-331-3943 Delicious, fresh home cooking for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

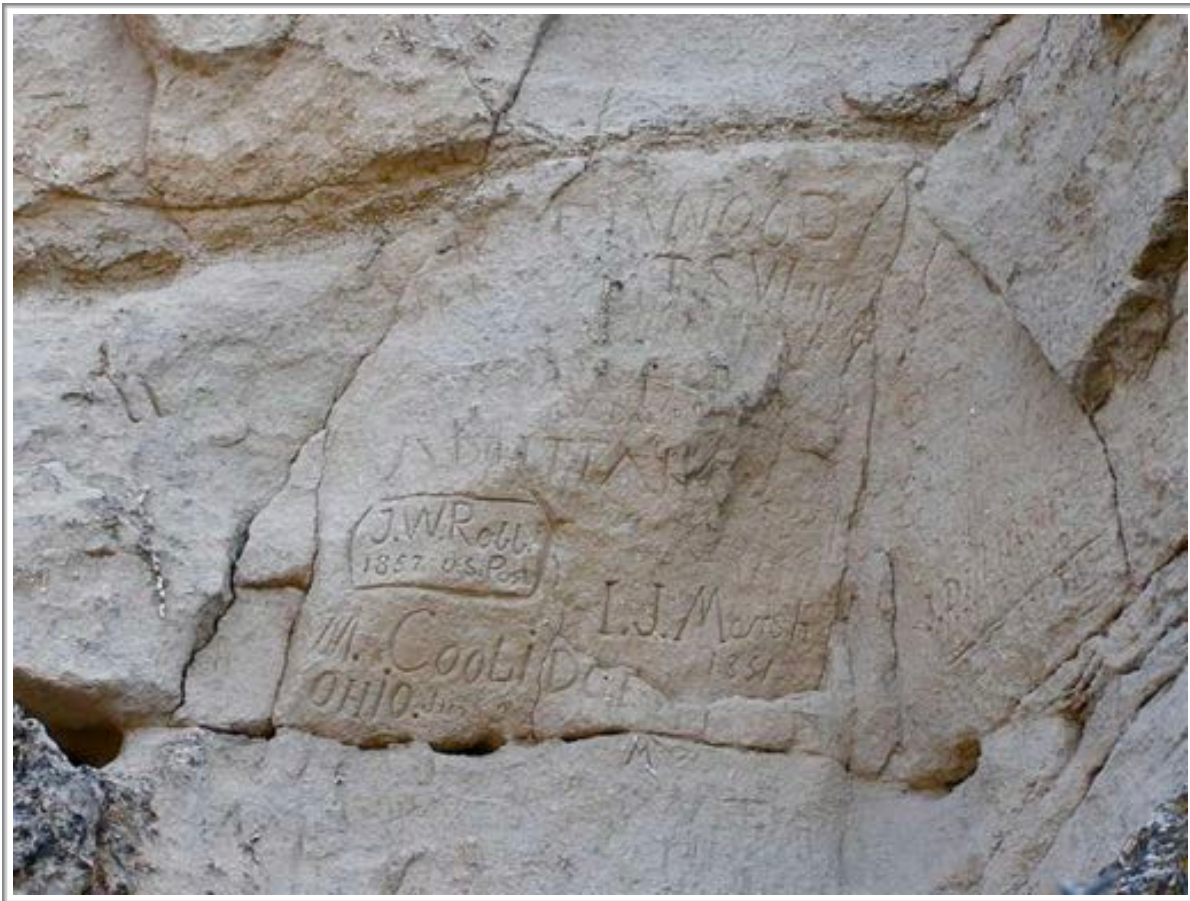
**Guernsey Lockman's Lunch Box** 262 East Whalen St, Guernsey, WY, 82214, 307-322-2344 Family owned restaurant serving lunch and dinner, plus ice cream shakes, malts, and sundaes.

## DAY FIVE

### **Register Cliff State Historic Site**

Register Cliff, an important landmark along the California, Oregon, and Mormon trails, was a stopping point for countless weary travelers who set up camp, rested, and pastured their animals. While here, emigrants inscribed their names, dates, places of origin, and messages on the soft sandstone cliffs, creating one of the best “trail registers in the desert.”

South of Guernsey, WY, 82214, 307-836-2334, Open sunrise to sunset



## **Oregon Trail Ruts State Historic Site**

This half-mile stretch of ruts gouged into sandstone by thousands of wagon wheels is the best-preserved set of ruts along the entire Oregon Trail route. First used in 1812, when a party heading east from Fort Astoria, Oregon passed through the area, fur trappers, traders, and missionaries continued to use the route on foot for nearly 30 years before the Bartleson-Bidwell Party became the first wagon train to use the trail in 1841. Thousands of wagon wheels, draft animals, and travelers wore down the sandstone ridges for another 30 years beyond that

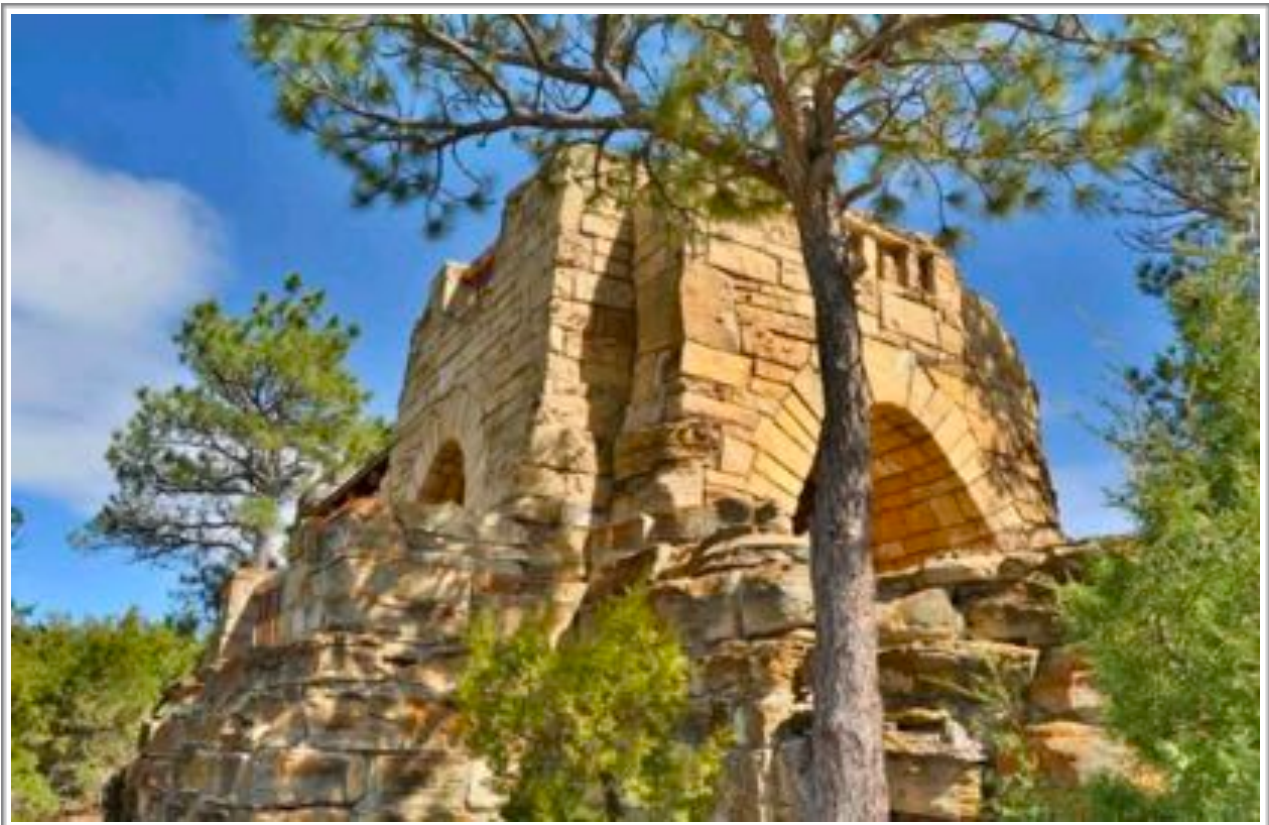
Oregon Trail Ruts State Historic Site, I-25 exit 92 to US-26 Guernsey, WY, 82214, 307-836-2334, Open sunrise to sunset



## **Guernsey State Park**

This 6,000-acre state park surrounding the Guernsey Reservoir features some of the finest examples of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) work from the 1930s in the Rocky Mountain area. Perched high on a cliff, the Guernsey Museum, now housed in one of the historic buildings, was constructed of hand-hewn timbers, hand-forged iron, split cedar shakes, and smooth flagstone floors. The Castle, as it is referred to, has a giant fireplace and winding steps, leading to an observation area for a spectacular view of the park. More than 10 miles of hiking trails loops begin delivering scenic views of the park, the reservoir, and dam at the Brimmer Point turnoff.

2187 Lake Side Drive, Guernsey, WY, 82214, 307-836-2334, 24/7 with appropriate permits



## **Douglas**

Lying along the Oregon Trail, the Bozeman Trail, and the Old Overland Trail, the town of Douglas, was founded on the extension of the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad and incorporated in 1887. Considered the "Home of the Jackalope," a mythical creature that is part antelope and part jackrabbit, the town was the site of many cattleman versus homesteader conflicts and political struggles.



## **Wyoming Pioneer Memorial Museum**

Located in a 1927 log structure on the Wyoming State Fairgrounds, this museum houses one of the largest collections of historical memorabilia in the area including many artifacts used by pioneers struggling to survive on the uncharted land.

400 West Center Street, Douglas, WY, 82633, 307-358-9288, April 1 - May 31  
Tue-Sat 8AM-4PM, June 1 - Labor Day M-Sat 8AM-5PM



## **Casper**

The city of Casper, named for nearby Fort Caspar, began when the Fremont, Elkhart and Missouri Valley Railroad arrived in 1888. Soon after, 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 moved to the corner of Center and Second Streets, where it is today. During its first years, Casper was rough-and-tumble, with numerous saloons and a raucous culture. Early sheriffs worked to keep order among rowdy cowboys and celebrating sheepherders. Casper became an oil boomtown and the center of the region's oil industry when the Salt Creek Oil Field was discovered in the 1890s. Today Casper has great restaurants and unique retail shops and is surrounded with recreational opportunities.





### **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 a short walk to an Oregon Trail historical marker, indicating where the first pioneer cabin was built in 1812.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Bourgeois Pig Coffee Shop** 112 West Second Street, Casper, WY 82601 307-337-2744

Luxury coffee and gourmet goodies.

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

**Sherrie's Place** 310 W Yellowstone Highway, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-235-3513 American restaurant serving hearty portions of breakfast and lunch classics.

### **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 SIX

### **National Historic Trails Interpretive Center**

Celebrating the Oregon, Mormon, California, Pony Express, Bridger, and Bozeman trails, the National Historical Trails Interpretive Center commemorates the early explorers and pioneers who traveled west and Native Americans who lived in the area. Hands-on interactive exhibits, multi-media programs, and virtual education opportunities illustrate westward expansion.

1501 North Poplar Street, Casper, WY, 82601, 307-261-7700, Daily 8AM-5PM,  
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 a Hall of Minerals.

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



### **Fort Caspar Museum and Historic Site**

This fully reconstructed frontier outpost includes a stockade, a replica of the Mormon ferry that operated in Casper from 1847-1849, and an Interpretive Center illustrating the region'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



### **Nicolayson 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 participate in the visual arts.

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