

# Pioneer Historic Byway

Begin at Franklin, Idaho's first city, and then travel up the Bear River to northern Mormon settlements, military campaigns, and the first Yellowstone route. Relive the byway's pioneer saga and walk Oregon Trail ruts in emigrant footsteps. See major geologic and natural sites, massacre sites and Chesterfield, a Mormon "ghost town."



Length: 127 miles / 203.2 km

Time to Allow: 2.5 hours to drive or 4.5

hours to enjoy the byway

## Local Information

### Bear River Heritage Area

435-713-1421

[Send E-mail](#)

### Pioneer Country Travel Council - Idaho

208-776-5221

[Send E-mail](#)

### Preston Area Chamber of Commerce

208-852-2703

[Send E-mail](#)

## Visitor Services

### Fees



None

### Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



There are no specified biking or hiking trails.

### Camping



There are several private RV parks and resorts in Caribou National Forest.

### Food



Groceries, convenience stores, cafes, and fast food restaurants can be found in most of the byway communities.

### Gasoline



Gasoline is available.



### Information

Visitors will find informational plaques and signs along the byway to tell the stories of historic places. Map boards of the byway are located at Portal Entry points in the towns of Franklin, Soda Springs, and Freedom, Wyoming. Byway Brochures and travel information are available at the following places:  
\* The Preston Area Chamber of Commerce, 49 N State St \* Bergy's Cafe, 4 N Main St. Grace, ID \* Soda Springs City Hall, 9 W 2nd S \* Soda Springs Geysers Park Information Center 116 S Main - brochures and information.



### Lodging

Lodging services can be found in Preston and Soda Springs.



### Phone

Public phones are available along this byway.



### Restrooms

There are toilet facilities along this byway.



### Retail

There are places to shop along this byway.

## Special Considerations

US 91 is a two-lane road with some passing lanes. Idaho 34 is a two-lane road with one moderately steep grade between Wayan and the Wyoming border. This is a heavy snowfall area with most winter travel being made on a snow floor. The section of Idaho 34 between Soda Springs and the Wyoming border may occasionally be closed in the winter.

## Restrictions

The section of Idaho 34 between Soda Springs and the Wyoming border may occasionally be closed in the winter.

## Seasons

### Best Time to Drive

The best season to travel the Pioneer Historic Byway is May 1 through October 31.

### High Season

The Logan to Jackson Bike Race is held on the second Saturday in September with over 1000 racers and their support crews and vehicles.

# Map and Directions



## Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

## Driving Directions

The primary 127-mile byway route is located on four separate highway segments: US 91 from Franklin to Preston, SH 34 from Preston to Soda Springs, US 30 at Soda Springs, returning to SH 34 from Soda Springs to Freedom, Idaho/Wyoming.

## Getting to the Byway



### Nearby cities

**Idaho Falls, ID** (88 miles / 141.62 km, 1 hour 40 minutes)

**Start:** ● Elm St., Idaho Falls, ID  
N 43.490° W 112.039° [?]

**Directions:**

- Take US-26 northeast to Alpine Junction, WY.
- Merge onto US-89 and go south into Star Valley, WY.
- Take WY-239 west to State Line Rd.
- Follow State Line Rd. north to ID-34 where the byway begins.

**Junction with byway:** \* Idaho-Wyoming border  
N 42.996° W 111.043° [?]



**Salt Lake City, UT** (100 miles / 160.93 km, 1 hour 55 minutes)

**Start:** ● I-15 northbound, Salt Lake City, UT  
N 40.761° W 111.913° [?]

**Directions:**

- Take I-15 north to Brigham City, UT.
- Get on US-91 and go north to Franklin, ID where the byway begins.

**Junction with byway:** \* Utah-Idaho border  
N 41.999° W 111.813° [?]



## Road Trip: Bear River Mormon Settlements & Ghost Towns

**Departure:** Franklin Historic District, Idaho

**Destination:** Soda Springs, Idaho

**Time to allow:** 1 day

Experience the history of Mormon settlement in part of the Upper Bear River Valley. Brigham Young sent settlers north from Salt Lake City up the Bear River and into Cache Valley, establishing communities along the way. In 1860, they founded Franklin, Idaho's first town. This was followed by settlements in Preston, Thatcher, Grace, Soda Springs, and Chesterfield. The story of settlement is captured in unique historic buildings, difficult irrigation projects, and Chesterfield, a Mormon "Ghost Town." A full day is needed for the 110 mile journey, with an overnight stay at the Historic Enders Hotel and Geyser View Restaurant in Soda Springs. Spend the next day in town, exploring carbonated springs, the Captive Geyser, and a historic segment of the Oregon/California Trail. Plan your trip between June through October for the best weather, colorful scenery, activities, and events.

### Day 1

- **Start: Franklin Historic District**

As the first town and Mormon community in Idaho, Franklin offers historic buildings, museums, monuments, and recounting of events that provides a traveler insight into the history of Mormon settlement in this region of the West. Gateway to Pioneer Idaho



- **Stop 1: Preston-Oneida Stake Academy**



**From previous stop:** 20 minutes / 9.1 mi (14.6 km)

**Directions:** Drive north on US 91. At Milepost 8.4 enter Preston, Idaho. Travel north 0.75 miles on US 91 to Oneida street, turn right (east) 1/2 block to PHB Site #2-Oneida Stake Academy.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 30 minutes

The Academy typifies the Mormon self-sufficient culture and desire to establish their own society in this region of the West, which included education. Besides being a beautiful and unique architecture, it remains as a tribute to that effort.

- **Stop 2: Last Chance Canal**



**From previous stop:** 45 minutes / 39.9 mi (63.8 km)

**Directions:** Drive from Preston to Grace, ID. From the south entrance of Grace, drive 2.1 miles to Telford Road, Milepost 46.4, a graveled Caribou County road. Turn right (east) onto Telford Road and go 1.5 miles to Last Chance Canal.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 1 hour

This site is the point on the Bear River where water was first diverted by Mormon settlers to develop an agriculture industry in Gem Valley.

- **Stop 3: Chesterfield**



**From previous stop:** 45 minutes / 25.5 mi (40.8 km)

**Directions:** Retrace your route back to SH 34. Turn right (north) onto SH 34 and go 4.0 miles to the US 30/SH 34 junction. Go straight (north) through the US 30/SH 34 junction and stay on paved Caribou County, Old Highway 30. It will veer to the left (west) and take you 10 miles to Bancroft, ID. At Bancroft, turn right on the paved County Road, Chesterfield Highway, cross the railroad tracks, and go 10.0 miles to PHB Site #9, Chesterfield Townsite.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 2 hours

Chesterfield was a Mormon Townsite founded in 1879 and located on the Oregon-California Trail. It was abandoned in the 1920s because of the harsh climate. It is being restored as an example of early Mormon settlement. Guided tours are available from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Monday thru Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm.

- **End: Soda Springs**



**From previous stop:** 1 hour / 28 mi (44.8 km)

**Directions:** Reverse the travel route from Site #9 and return to the junction of US 30 and SH 34. Drive east 7 miles to the first traffic light in Soda Springs, turn left (north) onto Main Street and proceed 1.5 blocks to the junction of Main and 1st South street. Turn left, west, into the access road to Geysers Park. Go 100 feet to the Geysers parking lot.

**Suggested time at this stop:** 3 hours

Soda Springs was established by Mormons in 1871. It contains numerous sites and information about Mormon emigration. It is also replete with early explorer information, Oregon-California Trail stories, and numerous geologic springs, from which it derives its name.

### **Totals for Day 1**

**Total Distance Traveled:** 102.5 miles / 164.0 km

**Total Travel Time:** 2 hours 50 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 6 hours 30 minutes