

Trail of the Mountain Spirits Scenic Byway

The Trail of the Mountain Spirits beckons. Go where the spirits of miners, homesteaders, Indians, Spanish explorers, and mountain men have left their marks. Cross the Continental Divide, experience the wild Gila River, walk amongst the ruins of ancients to sense life before history, and hear the sounds of solitude.

Length: 95 miles / 152.0 km

Time Allow: Take three hours to drive, or to six-eight hours to experience this byway.



Local Information

Trail of the Mountain Spirits Byway Inc.
575-536-9459

Visitor Services

Fees



There are no fees to drive the byway.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



Hike or backpack along a number of trails in the Gila Wilderness. Some areas offer mountain trails and ATC trails. Horseback riding is permitted on and off trails throughout the Gila National Forest. Canoeing is available along the Gila River.

Camping



Camping opportunities are available through Gila National Forest, the Gila Wilderness Area, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, and along the byway. There are extensive areas for backpacking in pristine wilderness areas.

RV camping with hookups is also available along the byway at public and private campgrounds, as well as in Gila National Forest. Visit [recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov/) for more information on nearby campgrounds.

Food



Cafés and restaurants are available along the byway and in Silver City, New Mexico.

Gasoline



Gasoline is available along the byway and in Silver City, New Mexico.

Information



Information is available at the following locations: * Silver City/Grant County Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center in Silver City * Gila National Forest Headquarters Visitor Center in Silver City * Gila National Forest ranger Stations * Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument Visitor Center Visit [this website](http://www.silvercity.org/events.mvc) for a calendar of events along this byway. You may also call 800-548-9378 for more information on the byway.

Lodging



Inns, hotels, and motels are available along the byway and in Silver City, New Mexico.

Special Considerations

The road through the Gila National Forest has many sharp turns requiring a slower driving speed.

This byway has a number of recreational activities, including canoeing, tubing, and biking. Horseback riding is permitted off trail throughout the Gila National Forest.

Restrictions

Due to the number of curves and remote nature of this byway, driving can be slow. The section from NM 15 to NM 35 is not recommended for RVs and trailers.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Spring and Fall are the most favorable times of the year for driving the byway and experiencing the its inspiring natural features and vistas.

High Season

Fall and spring are popular times to drive this byway.

Although rare, slower-moving sightseer traffic may be encountered on the byway during summer holiday weekends.

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

- Starting in Silver City at the junction of E Broadway St and NM-90, travel north on NM-90 to Hwy 180.

- Take Hwy 180 to junction with NM-15. Here the byway splits into two sections.

North Section

- Travel north on NM-15 through Pinos Altos.
- Continue north on NM-15 until byway meets up with East Section at junction of NM-15 and NM-35.

East Section

- Take Hwy 180 east and exit onto NM-152 east of Santa Clara.
- Continue on NM-152 until the junction with NM-35.
- Take NM-35 northwest through Mimbres and continue until byway meets up with North Section at junction of NM-15 and NM-35.
- From the junction of NM-15 and NM-35, take NM-15 north to byway terminus near the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument.

Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities

Albuquerque, NM (210 miles / 337.96 km, 3 hours 40 minutes)

Start:  I-25 southbound, Albuquerque, NM
N 35.076° W 106.639° [?]


Directions:

- Take I-25 south to Caballo.
- Get on NM-152 and go west to NM-35 in San Lorenzo where the byway begins.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of NM-152 and NM-35
N 32.799° W 107.932° [?]



Las Cruces, NM (109 miles / 175.42 km, 2 hours)

Start:  I-40 west-bound La Cruces, NM
N 32.282° W 106.771° [?]

Directions:

- Take I-10 west to Deming.
- Get on US-180 and go northwest to NM-61.
- Follow NM-61 northeast to NM-152.
- Continue on NM-152 to NM-35 where the byway begins.



Junction with byway: * Intersection of NM-152 and NM-35
N 32.799° W 107.932° [?]

Tucson, AZ (201 miles / 323.48 km, 3 hours 10 minutes)

Start: ● I-10 eastbound, Tucson, AZ
N 32.216° W 110.980° [?]

Directions:

- Take I -10 east to Lordsburg.
- Take NM-90 to Silver City.
- Take US-180 to NM-15 where the byway begins.



Junction with byway: * Intersection of 17th St and Silver Heights Blvd., Silver City, NM
N 32.783° W 108.266° [?]

Road Trip: The Trail of the Mountain Spirits Calls You

Departure: Silver City, New Mexico

Destination: Lake Roberts, New Mexico

Time to allow: 1 day

Take a journey of discovery into the Gila National Forest, pausing at overlooks to enjoy views of the rugged mountains and the diverse plant and animal life.

Day 1

- **Start: Silver City**

Since the days of the old west and Billy the Kid, Silver City has been big on adventure and hospitality. Walk around and see for yourself the welcoming atmosphere of this culture-filled city.



- **Stop 1: Wild Horse Mesa and Copperas Vista**



From previous stop: 40 minutes / 30 mi (48.0 km)

Directions: From Silver City, go north on NM-15 for approximately 22 miles until you reach Wild Horse Mesa. Copperas Vista is located approximately 8 miles north of Wild Horse Mesa along NM-15.

Suggested time at this stop: 2 hours 30 minutes

Wild Horse Mesa offers views of the Sapillo Valley floor and creek, the continental ridge and the Black Range to the southeast. Hike around for a few hours and see the diverse landscapes.

- **Stop 2: Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument**



From 20 minutes / 15 mi (24.0 km)

previous stop:

Directions: Leaving Copperas Vista, take NM-15 north until you reach the monument, located at the end of the road at Mile Marker 45.

Suggested 2 hours

time at this stop:

Come to the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument and catch a glimpse of the homes and lives of the people of the Mogollon culture who lived in the Gila Wilderness from the 1280s through the early 1300s.

- **End: Lake Roberts**



From 30 minutes / 24 mi (38.4 km)

previous stop:

Directions: Go south on NM-15 from Mile Marker 45 for about 20 miles until you reach the junction of NM-15 and NM-35. Go east for four miles on NM-35 until you reach Lake Roberts.

Make Lake Roberts your final stop. A pristine mountain lake, it is nestled in the pine-covered slopes of the nearby mountains. Relax and go boating or fishing, then watch the wildlife, which includes hundreds of bird species, mule deer, javalina, grey wolf, and mountain lion. If you're lucky, you can watch thousands of hummingbirds flow through the area feeding on the wildflowers on their annual migrations.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 69 miles / 110.4 km

Total Travel Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 4 hours 30 minutes