

# Trail Ridge Road/Beaver Meadow Road

Trail Ridge Road/Beaver Meadow Road is America's highest continuously paved road. Overlooks present peaks ranging from 12,000 to over 14,000 feet. Eleven miles of the route roam above tree line in the alpine tundra. Travelers may encounter forms of life and climatic conditions also found at the Arctic Circle.



Length: 48 miles / 76.8 km

Time Two hours to drive or a day to visit places along the

Allow: byway

## Local Information

### Rocky Mountain National Park Information Center

970-586-1206

### Trail Ridge Road/Beaver Meadow Road Status

970-586-1222

## Visitor Services

### Fees



Park entrance fees are required. Different fees apply per carload, pedestrian, bicyclist, motorcyclist, or commercial bus.

### Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



The road is very narrow and has no shoulder or guardrail. At different points along the route, the drop-off is up to 2,000 vertical feet. Extreme caution should be taken if biking this scenic road.

### Camping



Three **\*\*campgrounds\*\*** are open year-round: Longs Peak, Timber Creek, and Moraine Park. Timber Creek campground is not plowed once the snows begin, so you have to carry your supplies to your campsite. None of the campgrounds have water during the winter. The camping limit park-wide is seven days, June through September. However, Longs Peak campground (tents only) has just a three-day limit. The campgrounds fill early each day in the summer. There are no showers or recreational vehicle connections in any campground. Dump stations can be found at Moraine Park, Glacier Basin, and Timber Creek. Wood fires are permitted only in fire grates in campgrounds and picnic areas. Permits are required for fires outside of these areas. Firewood bundles are sold at the campgrounds. Pets are permitted in the campgrounds on a leash shorter than six feet. Reservations for Moraine Park and Glacier Basin family

camping, as well as Glacier Basin Group Area, are available during the summer. Call 1-800-365-2267 for more information.

### **Food**



Limited food services are available at Fall River Store, Alpine Visitor Center, and Fall River Pass.

### **Gasoline**



Gasoline is available.

### **Information**



Exhibits and ranger-led nature programs are available at Fall River Store, Alpine Visitor Center, and Fall River Pass.

### **Lodging**



There is overnight lodging along this byway.

### **Phone**



Due to the byway's high elevation, communication lines are hard to maintain. There is, however, a phone located at the Alpine Visitor Center for emergencies.

### **Restrooms**



Restrooms are located at Fall River Store, Alpine Visitor Center, and Fall River Pass.

### **Retail**



Souvenirs are located at Fall River Store, Alpine Visitor Center, and Fall River Pass.

## **Special Considerations**

You can't get fuel inside Rocky Mountain National Park, so be sure to fill up in the towns of Estes Park or Grand Lake. Beware of vapor lock, a common occurrence for vehicles from low altitudes.

Speed limits are generally 35 mph.

There is a National Park entrance fee to enter Rocky Mountain National Park.

Temporary closures due to snow and/or high winds may occur even during the summer months. Call 970-586-1222 for current information on the status of the byway.

If you are going into the backcountry overnight, you will need a backcountry permit, available at park headquarters or the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. Some areas are closed to overnight camping, and the danger of avalanches frequently exists, so plan your trip carefully. Check with park rangers for the latest information on the areas in which you plan to travel.

Hypothermia, the loss of body heat through exposure, is a danger that can be encountered *any* time of the year in this area.

Altitude sickness: High altitude may cause altitude sickness, characterized by shortness of breath, dizziness, headache, nausea, or sleepiness. Individuals with cardio-pulmonary diseases are cautioned about traveling on the road's higher elevations. Emergency oxygen and medical attention are available at the Alpine Visitor Center, located in the Fall River Pass (11,796 feet above sea level).

### **Restrictions**

#### **Rocky Mountain National Park:**

Parts of Rocky Mountain National Park, including a large portion of the byway, are closed during the winter from mid to late October until the Friday of Memorial Day weekend.

#### **Horseback Riding:**

Horses or any other trail stock are not permitted to travel cross-country. Ask a park ranger which trails are open for stock use.

#### **Fishing:**

You must have a valid Colorado fishing license. Use of live bait is prohibited except under certain special conditions. Review the special fishing regulations at park headquarters or at the nearest park ranger station before you fish. Fishing is not permitted in Bear Lake at any time. Also, some waters on the west side of the park are restricted to protect reintroduced Colorado River cutthroat trout. Other lakes and streams on the east side are also closed to protect the greenback cutthroat trout that is being reintroduced to its native habitat.

Wood gathering is prohibited.

### **Seasons**

#### **Best Time to Drive**

The byway is open to through traffic Memorial Day to mid- to late October. Most of the byway is closed by snow the rest of the year.

#### **High Season**

June, July, and August comprise the high season, with the heaviest traffic occurring between 10 am and 4 pm.

## 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 Trail Ridge Road/Beaver Mountain Road starts at the intersection of W. Elkhorn Ave and Moraine Ave in Estes Park, CO. From here, you can drive the north loop or the south loop:

#### North Loop

- Drive West on W. Elkhorn Ave to Fall River Rd.
- Continue west to S. Navy Hill to complete the loop.

#### South Loop

- From the intersection of W. Elkhorn Ave and Moraine Ave in Estes park, CO, drive south on Moraine Ave to Park Entrance Rd.
- Continue west to Fall River Rd.
- From here, drive west to US 34 west of Grand Lake, CO, where the byway ends.

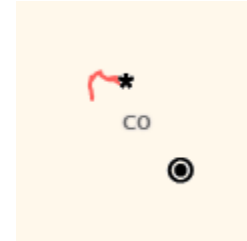
## Getting to the Byway



### Nearby cities

Denver, CO (70 miles / 112.65 km, 1 hour 30 minutes)

- Start:** ● On ramp to I-25 N from Colfax Ave., Denver, CO  
N 39.740° W 105.010° [?]
- Take I-25 north out of Denver.
  - Turn left at CO-66.
  - Stay to the right and continue on US-36.
  - The byway begins in Estes Park.



- Directions:** **Cheyenne, WY to Trail Ridge Road/Beaver Meadow Road**
- Follow I-25 south toward Denver.
  - Turn right onto US-34 west.
  - The byway begins in Estes Park.

**Junction with byway:** \* 103 E Elkhorn Ave. Estes Park, CO  
N 40.376° W 105.524° [?]

## Road Trip: Trail Ridge Must-See Tour

**Departure:** Fall River Entrance Station, Colorado

**Destination:** Milner Pass, Colorado

**Time to allow:** 1 day

Let Trail Ridge Road lead you on one of the most spectacular drives in the US. This 53-mile stretch of road peaks at an elevation of 12,183 feet above sea level. From various overlooks, view wooded valleys, immense mountain peaks, a stunning array of wildflowers, and arctic climatic conditions.

### Day 1

- **Start: Fall River Entrance Station**

Fall River Entrance Station marks the starting point for this itinerary.

- **Stop 1: Rainbow Curve Overlook**

**From previous stop:** same location

**Directions:** Follow US 34 from Fall River Pass.

At 10,829 feet, this overlook is more than two vertical miles above sea level. At this elevation, every exposed tree is blasted by wind, ice and grit into distinctive flag shapes. Tree branches here survive only on the downwind side of tree trunks.

- **Stop 2: Forest Canyon Overlook**

**From previous stop:** same location

**Directions:** Follow US 34 from Rainbow Curve Overlook.

A five-minute walk leads to a dizzying panorama of Forest Canyon and its tributary canyons, Hayden Gorge and Gorge Lakes.

- **Stop 3: Rock Cut Overlook**

**From previous stop:** same location

**Directions:** Follow US 34 from Forest Canyon Overlook.

At 12,110 feet, you are standing on the roof of the Rocky Mountains.

- **Stop 4: Fall River Pass and Alpine Visitor Center**

**From previous stop:** same location

**Directions:** Follow US 34 from Rock Cut Overlook.

Fall River Pass marks the dividing point between the Fall River and the Cache la Poudre River Drainages.

- **End: Milner Pass**

**From previous stop:** same location

**Directions:** Follow US 34 from Fall River Pass and Alpine Visitor Center.

Trail Ridge Road crosses the Continental Divide here, at the end of this itinerary.

### **Totals for Day 1**

**Total Distance Traveled:** 0 miles / 0.0 km

**Total Travel Time:** 0 minutes

**Total Stopping Time:** 0 minutes