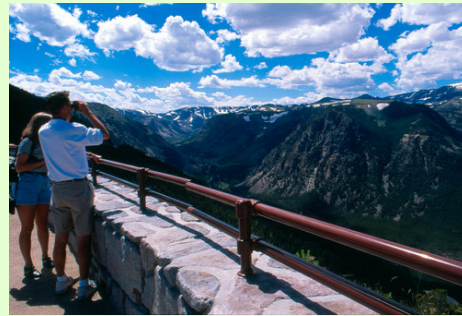


Beartooth Highway

Providing visitors access to Yellowstone Park's northeast entrance, the Beartooth Highway makes its way across the rugged Beartooth Mountain Range in Montana and Wyoming. The road is the highest elevation highway in the Northern Rockies and provides dramatic views, unlimited outdoor recreation opportunities, and unparalleled wildlife watching.



Length: 68.7 miles / 109.9 km

Time Two hours to drive or three to hours to experience the
Allow: entire byway

Local Information

Montana

Cooke City Chamber of Commerce

406-838-2495

[Send E-mail](#)

Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce

888-281-0625

[Send E-mail](#)

Wyoming

Buffalo Bill's Yellowstone Country

800-393-2639

Cody Chamber of Commerce

307-587-2777

[Send E-mail](#)

Wyoming Travel & Tourism

800-225-5996

[Send E-mail](#)

Visitor Services



Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

A growing number of visitors experience the byway and its surrounding areas with bicycles, motorcycles, ATVs, and hiking trails. There are hundreds of miles of designated trails that are easily accessible from the byway for those who are interested in getting out of their vehicles and enjoying the backcountry. Although the byway can be biked from end to end, stretches of the route require careful and cautious travel.



Camping

There are full service campgrounds located in the three Beartooth All-American Road gateway communities of Cooke City and Red Lodge, Montana, and Cody, Wyoming. Visit area chamber of commerce websites for information about full service RV campgrounds available in and around Cooke City and Red Lodge, Montana and Cody, Wyoming. Thirteen National Forest campgrounds along the Highway offer 226 campsites. These campgrounds begin 5 miles south of Red Lodge and continue on to Cooke City. Forest Service campgrounds have parking spurs, tables, fire rings, and vault toilets. The lower elevation campgrounds are usually open by Memorial Day weekend; however, the campgrounds near Beartooth and Island Lakes may not be open until mid to late June, depending upon snow conditions. For detailed information on Forest Service campgrounds visit these web pages: [Custer Beartooth Ranger District - National Forest](<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/custer/recreation/campgrounds.shtml#bt>) [Shoshone National Forest campgrounds along Beartooth Highway](<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/shoshone/recreation/camping/campgrounds2.shtml>) [Forest Service Campgrounds near Cooke City, Montana - Gallatin National Forest](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/?page=recreation/areas/camp_picnic) For information regarding a nearby campground, visit ReserveUSA.com at [Limber Pine Campground](http://www.recreation.gov/camping/Limber_Pine_Mt/r/campgroundDetails.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=71535&topTabIndex=CampingSpot).



Food

Red Lodge, Cooke City and Silver Gate in Montana offer a variety of dining and food services. In addition, the Top of the World Store, located along the Highway in Wyoming between Beartooth and Island Lakes, sells groceries.



Gasoline

Red Lodge, Cooke City, and Silver Gate in Montana offer gasoline and service stations. Gasoline is also available at the Top of the World Store, located in Wyoming between Beartooth and Island Lakes.



Information

There is an authoritative information center along this byway.



Lodging

Lodging Red Lodge and Cooke City in Montana, and Cody, Wyoming all offer lodging services. Guest ranches in the Upper Clarks Fork area will take reservations for overnight trips or longer stays. Contact area Chambers of Commerce for information: Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce: 888-281-0625 Cooke City Chamber of Commerce: 406-838-2495 Cody Country Chamber of Commerce: 800-393-2639



Restrooms

Rock Creek Vista Point, 20 miles south of Red Lodge, is a Montana Dept. of Transportation Rest Area. It has several overlooks, a large parking lot and restroom facilities.



Retail

Red Lodge, Cooke City, and Silver Gate in Montana and the nearby city of Cody, Wyoming, offer a wide variety of business and vendors. The Top of the World Store in Wyoming has food, gasoline, and other traveler supplies, and is open year-round in order to serve winter travelers. Wyoming and Montana fishing licenses are also available at this store.

Special Considerations

Alpine climate is rigorous, and severe weather conditions can occur any month of the year. For example, during the summer temperatures range from the 70s on sunny days to below freezing during sudden snowstorms.

Restrictions

The Wyoming part of the byway is generally open seasonally from Memorial Day weekend to mid-October depending on snowfall. To check road conditions and opening and closing dates travelers should call the Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce at 406-446-1718. The road is normally plowed by Memorial Day, but closures are common through June due to spring snow storms. From the opening near Memorial Day, the road is seldom closed more than one day to remove the snow.

It is not uncommon to experience blizzard type conditions both in the spring and the fall, especially at higher elevations. When these events occur, travel is slowed considerably or the highway is closed until it can be reopened by maintenance crews.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Driving from Red Lodge to Cooke City (east to west) in the morning and west to east in the afternoon will reduce glare.

High Season

Summer

Off Season

The byway is generally closed due to snow from October through April.

Shoulder Season

Check with the local ranger station or the Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce before traveling the byway in May, September, or October.

Spring

US 212 West from its junction with WY 296 into Cooke City and Yellowstone National Park opens in early May for the spring/summer travel season and remains open into October as snow conditions allow.

Summer

US 212 South over Beartooth Plateau to its junction with the Chief Joseph Scenic Highway (WY 296) opens the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and remains open until mid-October as snow conditions allow.

Winter

US 212 West from its junction with WY 296 to Pilot Creek Trailhead and Parking Area is open year-round and accessible for winter recreation. The Pilot Creek Trailhead provides parking for snowmobile trailers for over-snow access to Cooke City.

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

- From Red Lodge, Montana, visitors will travel south on US Highway 212, the Beartooth All-American Road, and continue for the next 68.7 miles along the full

length of the Beartooth Highway to the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Red Lodge is easily accessible from Interstate 90, which traverses the southern portion of Montana. Exit 367 at Laurel, Montana, will lead visitors to Red Lodge.


- From Cody, Wyoming, visitors will travel north on WY 120 for 17 miles to the junction of WY 120 and WY 296 - the beautiful Chief Joseph Scenic Highway. Follow WY 296 for 47 miles to its intersection with The Beartooth All-American Road - US Highway 212. A right hand turn at the intersection will take visitors to the Beartooth Plateau and down the Beartooth Highway "switchbacks" into historic Red Lodge, Montana. A left turn leads visitors to Cooke City and Silver Gate, Montana, and the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park.
- From the Cooke City, Montana area, visitors who leave Yellowstone National Park through the northeast entrance will find themselves on the Beartooth All-American Road. The Road travels through the historic mining communities of Silver Gate and Cooke City, Montana, and continues on for 68 breathtaking miles past the Beartooth-Absaroka Wilderness and over the Beartooth Plateau at an elevation of 10,970 feet and to Red Lodge, Montana. 17 miles from Cooke City, visitors will find the junction of US 212 and WY 296 - the beautiful Chief Joseph Scenic Highway that leads south to Cody, Wyoming.

Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities


Billings, MT (60 miles / 96.56 km, 1 hour 5 minutes)

- Start:**  I-90 southbound, Billings, MT
[N 45.764° W 108.489° \[?\]](#)
- Directions:**
- Take I-90 southwest to Laurel.
 - Get on US-212 and go southwest to Red Lodge where the byway begins.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of US-212 and MT-78 (3rd St.), Red Lodge, MT
[N 45.195° W 109.247° \[?\]](#)



Bozeman, MT (131 miles / 210.82 km, 2 hours 40 minutes)

- Start:**  I-90 eastbound, Bozeman, MT
[N 45.696° W 111.042° \[?\]](#)
- Directions:**
- Take I-90 east to Livingston.



- Exit onto US-89 and go south to Mammoth in Yellowstone National Park.
- On Grand Loop Rd., go east to Tower Junction.
- Take NE Entrance Rd. east to Montana where it becomes US-212, the Beartooth Highway.

Junction with byway: * US-212, entrance to Yellowstone
N 45.003° W 110.001° [?]

Cody, WY (62 miles / 99.78 km, 1 hour 30 minutes)

Start: ● Intersection of Belfry Hwy and 16th St.,
Cody, WY
N 44.532° W 109.056° [?]

Directions:

- Take WY-120 north and go west on WY-296
- Continue along WY-296 until you reach US-212 (the byway).

Junction with byway: * Intersection of Crandall Rd/Chief Joseph Hwy and US-212
N 44.930° W 109.726° [?]



Road Trip: Exploring "America's Most Beautiful Highway"

Departure: Cooke City, Montana

Destination: Red Lodge, Montana

Time to allow: 1 day

Drive one of the nation's wildest byways through high-elevation zones, in alpine tundra, and past clear mountain lakes. Please be aware that the byway closes during much of the winter due to heavy snowfall.

Day 1

- **Start: Cooke City**

Begin your Beartooth Highway exploration in the small but adventurous town of Cooke City. Learn something about the mining history of the town as you stock up on whatever you need at a trading post, fill up your tank at a local gas station, and watch for the plentiful wildlife as you head out.



- **Stop 1: Clarks Fork Trailhead**



From previous stop: 5 minutes / 3 mi (4.8 km)

Directions: Head east on Highway 212 from Cooke City. The trail head is on the left side of the road.

Suggested time at this stop: 2 hours

A major trail head facility for entrance into the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, Clarks Fork Trail head makes a great rest stop. The site has a large parking lot, restrooms and modest picnicking amenities.

- **Stop 2: Crazy Creek Cascade**

From previous stop: 25 minutes / 15 mi (24.0 km)

Directions: Take the small pullout on the left side of the byway.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Pull over on the east side of the road for the Crazy Lakes Trail. Legend attributes the stream's odd name to the story of a Native American woman who went crazy, ran from her home in Clarks Fork Valley, and died along the flowing waters. Whether or not you believe the tale, you can still appreciate impressive view of cascading Crazy Creek only half a mile from the parking area. After you enjoy the trail and accompanying view, stop by the picnicking and camping facilities directly across the highway at Crazy Creek Campground.

- **Stop 3: Lake Creek Falls**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

Directions: Continue along Beartooth Highway and watch for signs on the left side of the road.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

A 200-yard hike will take you to a foot bridge over the falls of Lake Creek. The original bridge was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Depression Era, but makes for a prime photo opportunity today. Glance over the side for a look at the creek's rushing waters, which have cut deep between confining granite walls.

- **Stop 4: Clarks Fork Overlook**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.5 mi (0.8 km)

Directions: The pullout is just across the highway from Lake Creek Falls.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

From this point, you can see Clarks Fork of Yellowstone Canyon, Wyoming's only designated Wild and Scenic River. You can also see the aftermath of the 1988 Clover Mist Fire which spread nearly 400,000 acres from its origin in Yellowstone.

- **Stop 5: Clay Butte Fire Lookout Tower**

From previous stop: 10 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

stop:

Directions: Take turnout on left side of the highway, the trail to the lookout is about a mile and a half.

Suggested time at this stop: 2 hours

stop:

Once an old fire lookout, this watchtower, a one mile hike off the byway, affords panoramic vistas of mountains over 11,000 feet as well as the overall Beartooth Plateau. Inside the lookout, check out interpretive displays of the 1988 wildfires that threatened homes and businesses in Cooke City.

- **Stop 6: Top of the World Resort**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

stop:

Directions: Continue eastward on the Beartooth Highway until you reach the Top of the World Resort.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

stop:

Stop off at the Top of the World Resort to stock up on snacks for the road, souvenirs and gifts for your friends, and gas for your vehicle. Take a gander at the local artwork, and ask about the many outdoor equipment rentals available before continuing on your journey.

- **Stop 7: West Summit Overlook**

From previous stop: 20 minutes / 10 mi (16.0 km)

Directions: Follow 212 to the pull-out on the right side of the road.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

stop:

Take in 360-degree views of the mountains and the Beartooth Plateau and experience the harsh conditions to which plant and animal life must cling during the brief summer season.

- **Stop 8: Rock Creek Vista Point Rest Area**

From previous stop: 25 minutes / 15 mi (24.0 km)

Directions: Continue along the route heading northeast, past the switchbacks. The vista point is on the east side of the byway, and a picnic area is on the west side.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

This fully developed rest area has interpretive panels portraying the history of the road and mining in the Rock Creek Valley and about alpine wildlife and ecosystems. Stretch your legs on short hiking trail that takes you to a ridge with an outstanding view.

- **Stop 9: Red Lodge Mountain Ski Area**

From previous stop: 25 minutes / 15 mi (24.0 km)

Directions: Follow the byway to Ski Run Road and follow it for six miles.

Suggested time at this stop: 2 hours

If you're in the area during wintertime, be sure to stop in at Red Lodge Mountain Ski Area. With 8 lifts, a terrain park, and a 2,400 vertical drop, there are great runs for everyone. During the summer the resort offers a variety of outdoor recreation as well.

- **End: Red Lodge**



From previous stop: 20 minutes / 10 mi (16.0 km)

Directions: Return along Ski Run Road to the Beartooth Highway. Head north.

Red Lodge, Montana is filled with tourists amenities. Check out the diverse dining options or take in the unique art galleries. Visit the Nature Center or live cowboy-style at a guest ranch. Overwhelmed with options? Stop in at the visitor center to plan further adventures in the area.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 83.5 miles / 133.6 km

Total Travel Time: 2 hours 31 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 8 hours 55 minutes