

High Country Minturn-Leadville Guided Driving Tour

Round Trip Distance: 115 Miles

Driving Time: 3 Hours

Car Difficulty (1 to 10): 5

Driving Difficulty (1 to 10): 5

Maximum Altitude: 11,320 (Freemont Pass)

Altitude Change from Breckenridge Altitude: 1,700 Feet

Overview: The Minturn-Leadville Driving Tour is approximately 115 miles and 3 hour driving time. Our trip will take us north on Route 9, then west on I-70 with a climb to 10,602 feet over Vail Pass. We will exit I-70 at exit 171 and take US Route 24 south to Minturn for a brief rest stop; be sure to bring a camera because views of the valleys below are incredible

From Minturn, we will continue on US 24, designated as the 10th Mountain Division Memorial Highway, for approximately 22 miles to Mile Marker 160 for a brief stop at Camp Hale. Highway 24 through this region is also a the Top of the Rockies National Scenic Byway. The web site is <http://www.topoftherockiesbyway.org/map.htm>.

Camp Hale was established in 1942 to provide winter and mountain warfare training during World War II. The site was acquired by purchase from private owners and by use permits from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. The cantonment (or living area) area for Camp Hale was constructed in Eagle Park, east of Highway 24 between Leadville and Red Cliff, Colorado. The camp was established here because of the natural setting of a large, flat valley bottom, surrounded by steep hillsides suitable for training in skiing, rock climbing, and cold weather survival skills.

Military use of Camp Hale included the 10th Mountain Division, the 38th Regimental Combat Team, 99th Infantry Battalion, and soldiers from Fort Carson conducting mountain and winter warfare training exercises from 1942 to 1965. Throughout this time, the Army tested a variety of weapons and equipment at Camp Hale. From 1959 through 1965, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) secretly trained Tibetan soldiers at Camp Hale. In July 1965, Camp Hale was deactivated and control of the lands returned to the Forest Service in 1966. There is also a web site will more information regarding the 19th Mountain Division at <http://www.10thmtndivassoc.org/>.

After our stop at Camp Hale, we will continue south over Tennessee Pass at 10,232 feet to the intersection of State Route 91. We will turn right, heading south into the town of Leadville.

We will stop for Lunch in Leadville. Lunch is not provided, and there are many eating facilities available in Leadville.

The “Gravity Drag” Event will also be conducted in Leadville. The Time and Location of the Gravity Drag will be provided later.

Maps, Brochures and detailed directions are available in the Hospitably Area. Please Review the High Altitude Driving Tips and Staying Healthy Tips Handouts.

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There are many 14,000 Peaks just west of Leadville viewable from downtown. Most prominent is Mt Massive, Colorado's Second Highest Peak at 14, 421 (12 feet lower than Mt Elbert, which is about 10 miles south of Mt. Massive).

We will assemble 1 ½ hours after we stop in the Parking Lot located at the corner of Harrison Avenue and 3rd Streets in Leadville, for our return trip to Breckenridge. If you would like to stay in Leadville for other activities and return later, please let your Tour Leader know. For those who would like to take the Leadville Self-Guided Walking Tour, brochures will be available.

When leaving Leadville, we will travel north on State Route 91 through Birdseye and into the White River National Forest prior to going over Freemont Pass at 11,320 feet. Mount Bross (14,172), Mount Democrat (14,148) and Mount Lincoln (14, 286) may be visible to the east as we climb to the switch-back on the way to Freemont Pass. We will continue north on State Route 91 past the town of Kokomo, and at Wheeler junction we will enter I-70 East. We will then travel east on I-70 approximately 5 miles to exit 201 then take State Route 9 south returning to Breckenridge.

For more information regarding Leadville, visit their web site at <http://www.leadvilleusa.com/index.ihtml>.

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