

INTRO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

With this tour we are introducing our brand new tour concept - The Day Tripper. It offers our riders a complete and in-depth experience of the Rocky Mountains. On this guided motorcycle tour you will stay at carefully selected hotels for several nights called the base. From here you will go on 3 or 4 separate day trips in north, east, south and west direction, each typically between 160 and 300 miles. This way of touring provides the traveler best possible coverage of the region. Colorado is a vast area to cover with hundreds of miles of mountain passes to conquer and curves of all angles to master; this type of tour is the best way of getting sound insight of an area loaded with beautiful scenery and perfect motorcycle roads - the Rocky Mountains.

THIS TOUR IS NOT FOR NOVICE OR INEXPERIENCED RIDERS! IF YOU SUFFER FROM VERTIGO, OR ARE A BEGINNER RIDER, THIS WILL BE THE WRONG TOUR FOR YOU.

DAY 1: Arrival Denver

Welcome to the Mile High City! Upon arrival you will check in at the trendy Curtis Hotel in downtown Denver. Get ready for the welcome dinner with your fellow mountaineers and your tour guides where the tour concept is discussed in detail. First analysis is made of who rides what at home, who has been here before and who hasn't and you'll get a good idea of how this group is going to interact. That's if you're on the guided tour, if you're doing this the self guided way you will unfortunately only have yourself or whoever was lucky enough to get invited by you and join you on this amazing ride.

DAY 2: Denver to Vail**100 miles / 160 km**

Wake up, it's time to pick-up your bike! After breakfast our transfer bus is waiting outside and will bring us to the amazing Thunder Mountain Harley-Davidson dealership in Loveland, Colorado. After we get acquainted to our motorcycles and bought first souvenirs we are on the road for an easy 100 miles to the beautiful town of Vail, known to many as one of the world's best winter sport places and celebrity hotspot. For the next five nights you will reside at The Tivoli Lodge, the best resort in town located right inside Vail Village where it's only footsteps to countless restaurants, bars and shops. You will love the atmosphere and top notch service and super friendly staff.

DAY 3: Day Tripper 1 > Aspen Loop**260 miles / 416 km**

Going Up - Independence Pass. Decisions, decisions ... riding the 12,095 foot Independence Pass in East/West direction offers a more thrilling view of the valley while descending into Aspen but a relatively short ascend to the summit. Riding it in West/East direction means a longer ascend and it is typically nicer to ride a curvy road with sharp turns uphill rather than downhill. We stop in Aspen for a coffee break and to see what all the fuss is about. The town has its name from the aspen tree; you'll see the tall skinny trees with their white trunks as you climb up higher and higher past the tree line to the top of the pass. Here it feels like being on a different planet and depending on weather conditions we'll encounter either stern, blue mountain light or a dark cloud cover amid the bald and breezy summit. After the scenic 2,000 foot drop through the switchbacks on the eastern side of the mountain range we run into Leadville, you guessed it: it got its name from lead deposits when settler came around 1860 to build the town. Check out the Tabor Opera House from 1879 which even attracted infamous characters like the James gang, Doc Holiday and Buffalo Bill. They got around these days, didn't they?

DAY 4: Day Tripper 2 > Steamboat Springs Loop**270 miles / 432 km**

After another refreshing night at the Tivoli Lodge in Vail you'll be ready to start the fourth day of your Colorado motorcycle tour. On the agenda for today is a 270-mile ride to Steamboat Springs and back. You'll start west on I-70 before turning onto Colorado State Highway 131 near the small town of Wolcott. This road means motorcycle paradise, curve after curve your bike's engine eats the miles and seems to enjoy every bite. Red and White Mountain will rise up on your left, and as you get closer to the highway you'll see Bellyache Ridge on your right. Further on up the highway is Stagecoach State Park. Views of the 771-acre reservoir created by Stagecoach Dam are possible, and you might even spot some of the area wildlife. Badgers, coyotes, elk, mule deer, and red foxes are all common, so keep your eyes out. Thorpe Mountain rises up after the park, and Lake Catamount will come into view shortly thereafter. The Yampa River spills into the lake from the north. The river is named after a plant eaten by the local Snake Indians, and is a major tributary of the Green River. You'll follow the Yampa all the way up Highway 131, seeing Quarry Mountain to the west. A few more miles will bring you to Steamboat Springs, a city with just 12,000 people. The town lies right at the base of Mount Werner, on the 40-mile long Park Range. This cool little town is a popular winter destination, and the Steamboat Ski Resort and Howelsen Ski Area get a lot of visitors once the snow begins to fall. Enjoy a nice lunch and a well-deserved rest. You've travelled 135 miles, and you've still got 135 more to go. On the way back the group will head over Rabbit Ears Pass, the 9,426ft pass that cuts through the continental divide at the southern reaches of the Park Range. From there the road takes you south past the Wolford Mountain Reservoir and on to Kremmling. From there you'll go across the 9,527ft Gore Pass before meeting up with the route back to Vail at Toponas. This loop lets you see all the great sights from a different direction, and a great dinner will be waiting for you back at Vail.

DAY 5: Day Tripper 3 > Estes Park Loop**290 miles / 465 km**

This is a long day, so those who don't feel like riding today can stay in beautiful Vail and enjoy some time off; but beware: you're missing out on an awesome day with epic riding and unforgettable scenery.

Yesterday you headed north-west, riding along on the western side of the Gore Range. Today you'll head north-east, getting a view of the other side as you tear down the road on your Harley. This portion of your Colorado motorcycle tour will take you up to Estes Park and back, and you'll travel 290 miles. It'll be quite a day, and definitely one worth bringing the camera on. You'll set out early, going back over much of the road you covered coming out from Denver. A ways after Idaho Springs you'll turn off I-70 and ride to the west of the 12,000 acre Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Many animals call this area home so keep your eyes open for black bears, elk, and maybe even a mountain lion. Lots of mountain peaks on the Front Range will be visible in the distance, and that crisp cool mountain air will have you feeling fresh and relaxed. Many small lakes dot the areas along the highway, and you might be able to spot quite a few. They include Dory, Braecher, Thorn, and Manchester Lakes. Several reservoirs will appear as you move farther north. The Los Lagos Reservoirs will be to the west of you, and a short time later the Barker Meadow Reservoir will come into view near the small town of Nederland. You'll probably see quite a few boats and swimmers taking advantage of the hot summer days at that reservoir's recreation area. Continuing on will show you more of the same great mountain and lake scenes. By the time you spot the Twin Sisters Peaks, you'll be zeroing in on Estes Park. Get ready for a big lunch and a good rest afterward, and then it's back down the highway to Vail. The route will take you west through Rocky Mountain National Park and then across the 12,183ft Trail Ridge that offers stunning vistas of the park and the world below us which seemingly shrinks in size as we climb higher and higher. Coming off of the ridge will take you to the small town of Granby which is near Lake Granby. From there you'll shoot west to Kremmling before taking a sharp turn south toward Silverthorne. On the way you'll pass the Green Mountain and Dillon Reservoirs. From there it's a scenic ride back to Vail. You'll have travelled 290 miles by the time you get back to the hotel, and there's still so much to see!

DAY 6: Day Tripper 4 > Buena Vista Loop**220 miles / 355 km**

You've been northwest and you've been northeast. So why not head south today? That's exactly what your group will be doing on this sixth day of your Colorado motorcycle tour. Yesterday saw quite the long ride, and today's will be a little lighter. But it certainly won't be light on great sights, and the way the forests and mountain ranges unfold before your eyes will just take your breath away. The Buena Vista loop starts off heading west on I-70. After a short time you'll turn south on Highway 24. Meadow Mountain and Battle Mountain will be on either side of you, and Bolts Lake will show up not long after. There's nothing like getting out on a Harley early in the morning and the drivers you pass will all be wishing they were you. After several dozen miles you'll be back in familiar territory around Leadville. Homestake Peak gives way to some lower elevations, and you'll know you're getting close when you spot Turquoise Lake on your right. The lake is formed by the Sugar Loaf Dam and supplies much of the area with water. Continue south past Leadville on Highway 24. The Arkansas River will come into view, and you'll follow it all the way to Buena Vista. The Mount Massive Wilderness Area will appear far to the west, and Mount Elbert will be the closest to you as you roar down the road. Twin Lakes will come up on your right, and shortly after that Clear Creek Reservoir. By this time you shouldn't be surprised by just how many lakes and mountain Colorado has, so just sit back and enjoy the view. Your last major landmark will be the two Buffalo Peaks to the east of you, and then it's just a short jaunt into Buena Vista. Don't idle too long; you'll soon be crossing the 9,346ft Trout Creek Pass. Hang a left and pass by Antero Reservoir as you head north to the town of Fairplay. From there you'll head into the Ten Mile Range that surrounds Breckenridge. Come down into the town via the 11,541ft Hoosier Pass. Sit back and relax in the town, chatting with your friends on all that you've seen. And get ready to see it differently when you hop back on your Harley for the ride back to Vail. You'll be spending your last night in the resort town, so live it up, but not too hard; you've still got a lot of riding ahead of you!

DAY 7: Vail to Durango**285 miles / 456 km**

If you enjoyed yesterday's ride, you'll love the trip in store for today. The group will start off early in the morning, and take the exact same route as yesterday. You'll head south on Highway 24 all the way to Buena Vista. But instead of stopping you'll continue on, seeing more of the beautiful state of Colorado. After Buena Vista is the town of Salida, the San Isabel National Forest is a short distance off. It contains 19 "Fourteeners", the peaks in Colorado that reach heights of 14,000 feet or more. There are 54 in all including the highest, Mount Elbert, which is located right in San Isabel National Forest. Continue on south by southwest and enjoy the other peaks in the area, including Antora, Bushnell, Cottonwood, Rito Alto, and Crestone Peaks. All should be visible in the distance as you charge on down the highway. After a few twists through the mountains you'll have a long straight stretch. The road heads south through farmlands, and off to the east is Baca National Wildlife Refuge. The area consists of rangeland and wetlands, but changes quite a bit. Don't be surprised that the area around you starts to look like a desert; further to the east is the 44,000 acre Great Sand Dunes National Park. At the town of Del Norte you'll meet up with the Rio Grande River, and the highway follows its path. You'll pass right by the Rio Grande National Forest, which covers a massive 1.8 million acres. At this point you'll start riding out of the desert and back into the mountains. The road twists and turns southwest toward Pagosa Springs. You'll ride over the amazing Wolf Creek Pass which reaches 10,850ft above the valley floor. From there it's onward to Durango. The city will be closing in when you see Lake Nighthorse, and then it'll be time to kick the shoes off for a bit and a well-deserved rest. You'll have travelled 285 miles through the state, and few people get to see so much on one day.

DAY 8: Day Tripper 5 > San Juan Skyway Loop**265 miles / 424 km**

It's time to get off the beaten path, and that's just what you and your group will do on this eighth day of your Colorado motorcycle tour. The morning starts off with you heading west on I-160. You'll pass by many small towns on the way, as well as the northern edge of Mesa Verde National Park. From there it's a great ride north past the McPhee Reservoir. The group will head into the San Juan Mountains accompanied by a sparkling river that invites us to stick our feet into the crystal clear water... You'll climb higher and higher as you pass by Anchor Mountain, Blackhawk Mountain, Elliot Mountain, Sunshine Mountain, and so many more. You'll stop into Telluride for a great lunch and a good stretch of the legs. From there the path cuts west by Whipple Mountain and Last Dollar Mountain before cutting back east near the small town of Placerville. At this point the famous Million Dollar Highway will be under your wheels, affording you some of the best views in the state. The Highway cuts through the Uncompahgre Gorge all the way up to the summit of Red Mountain Pass. The route begins around Ouray and there'll be plenty of twists and turns. The Million Dollar Highway isn't that long, only 25 miles or so, but it sure is scenic and worth every inch your Harley is travelling on it. From there the road will take you into Silverton. On the way you'll pass by Hayden Mountain, Red Mountain, and Anvil Mountain. Once there you can cool your engines for a bit before heading back to Durango for the evening. Of all the great riding days on the Rocky Mountain tour, this is probably the best and a feast for the motorcycle soul!

DAY 9: Day Tripper 6 > Four Corners Loop**270 miles / 432 km**

Rise and ride out of Durango first thing in the morning for this great scenic loop that will give you a different picture of southern Colorado. Starting out by heading west to Cortez you'll be able to see many of the great sights that you saw the day before, as well as quite a few new locales. Hovenweep National Monument lies just to the south/west of town and on the Cajon Mesa of the Great Sage Plain. The Monument has lots of old Paleo-Indian stone structures, some dating back more than a thousand years. If time permits the group will head on over to the Four Corners National Monument. We're cutting it rather short as the Mesa Verde National Park also beckons. After that the road leads back to Durango for another great evening. Relax with your new friends and just take a load off. You've ridden hundreds of miles over the past nine days, and you've still got quite a ways to go. This will be your last night in Durango, so enjoy it, and pick up any of those last minute souvenirs for family and friends. There is a great rooftop bar in the center of Durango's main drag that offers excellent comfort food and great beer. You're three-quarters of the way through your Colorado motorcycle tour, and you should be feeling great!

DAY 10: Durango to Mosca**250 miles / 400 km**

Today you'll begin your ride from Durango. You've got 250 total miles ahead of you, and you'll be able to check out some of those great sights that were far off in the distance on some of the earlier days, like the Great Sand Dunes National Park. Highway 160 beckons so charge out onto her and get your day started. You'll quickly leave Lake Nighthorse behind and then cut east away from the Animas River. A sharp turn north at the junction with Highway 172 will be your only break from going straight, until you get to the Crestview Memorial Garden. The journey heads east once again with slight twists and turns until you meet up with the Pine River. At that point you'll gradually shift north back into the mountains. Shaefer Mountain and Wickenson Mountain will be on your left far off in the distance, and after a while you'll see Pargin Mountain to your right. A few more miles will bring you to Chimney Rock. The Devil Creek State Wildlife Area is nearby, as well as Haystack Mountain. By the time you get to Pagosa Springs you'll have seen plenty of great scenery, and then it's onward to the south. You'll head through some arid areas on your way to Chama and then northward to Conejos. Continue on past Alamosa and then into Mosca. The town is right on the edge of San Luis State Park and the Great Sand Dunes National Park. Let's head into the park and check out the sand dunes! That'll be it for today, so get a good rest and be prepared to set out on your last day of riding tomorrow.

DAY 11: Mosca to Denver**180 miles / 288 km**

Today will be your last big ride, a total of 180 miles. You've come a long way since you started out 11 days ago, and covered hundreds of miles. Now it's time to head back to Denver. Enjoy this ride to the fullest; you may not be back in the Rocky Mountains atop a Harley again for some time. Take in the mountains, forests, rivers, lakes and streams. Breathe in the fresh Rocky Mountain air, and think back on all you've seen. Today will be a great day for a ride! You'll begin in Mosca and head north up Highway 285 alongside the Sangre de Cristo Range. The range will rise to an elevation of 8,000 feet at points, and extends for a distance of 75 miles. By the time you get to Salida you'll make a gradual turn around the range to head southeast. The San Isabel National Forest will greet you once again, and then near Beckwith Mountain the group will make a sharp turn north and then east. The Arkansas River will come up on you as you near Cactus Mountain, and then you'll head east once again toward Canon City. One of the best features of this day is Pikes Peak, home of the International Hill Climb. The climb is an annual race that takes place each summer up the steep road which is studded with hairpin turns. The current record is 9 minutes and 52 seconds, achieved by Carlin Dunn in 2012 on his Ducati Multistrada. Don't worry, you'll be able to take your time going up, so enjoy the spectacular views! From there it will be on into Colorado Springs and beyond. The road will get busier as you head further north through Monument, Castle Rock, and then into the suburbs of Denver. Your Colorado motorcycle tour will come full circle when you roar back into the Harley Davidson dealership at Thunder Mountain to return your bikes. After that it's back to the Curtis Hotel for an evening of reminiscing, laughs, and a final great time with your friends.

DAY 12: Departure**0 miles /0 km**

You've done it! What started as a simple idea several months or maybe even years ago has now come full circle. Did you think that you'd have seen so much when you first found California Sunriders? Sitting at the computer and checking out routes is one thing, but to actually feel the wind rush through your hair as you climb scenic mountain passes is quite another. Looking at pictures of crystal clear mountain lakes is great, but actually breathing in the air around those lakes is altogether different. And reading descriptions in no way prepares you for the awesome experience that you've just had. You've now tore through hundreds of miles of Colorado highways, gone over high mountain passes inaccessible during winter, and seen more national forests, parks, and monuments than you can shake a stick at. The group of riders that you've spent those 12 days with will stay with you a lifetime and you might even find yourself planning another great getaway with some of the same people. After all, there are plenty of motorcycle tours available, and you've just scratched the surface with the Rocky Mountain High Motorcycle Tour. Now would be a great time to begin planning next year's adventure, perhaps to the Canadian Rockies, Sturgis, the Pacific Coast, or even the Caribbean! There's also plenty of time to think of that later, too, so bask in your moment of glory for now. You've done more than most people with Harley's do, and you've lived the dreams of millions by getting out and tearing it up for more than a week. Congratulations! You've just had a great Rocky Mountain Harley experience! Bon Voyage, Auf Wiedersehen, Adios, Arrivederci and See Ya!