

Colorado: Aspen to Vail, Valleys of the Rockies

Bike Vacation Only

Aspen, Vail, Breckenridge, Glenwood Springs: for Colorado cycling, these are the places you absolutely cannot miss. VBT brings you the Big Four—with carefully-planned bike routes featuring even terrain and downhill riding—mostly on car-free bike paths. Pedal the Roaring Fork Valley to Glenwood Springs—catching glimpses of bighorn sheep on the high, red, canyon walls above. Snap photos of the awe-inspiring double peaks of Maroon Bells and discover a bygone era at Ashcroft Ghost Town. Spin along the shores of the mighty Colorado River, then stroll quaint cobble-stoned streets in the charming town of Vail. Your Colorado trip leaders can point out the best spots to quaff a local microbrew, shop for handcrafted cowboy boots, or check out live music along the way.

Cultural Highlights

- Ride among alpine peaks and breathe bracingly clean air as you discover the majestic beauty of the Colorado Rockies
- Enjoy easy, hand-selected routes that take advantage of descending canyons, valley floors, recreational trails, and paved bike paths
- Marvel at the breathtaking views of “The Bells,” twin 14,000-foot summits mirrored in sublime reflection at Maroon Lake
- Cycle the gradual descent through the Roaring Fork Valley on the car-free Rio Grande Trail from Aspen to Glenwood Springs
- Learn about early settlers and the history of the 19th-century Colorado Silver Boom during an interpretive walk through a deserted mining town

What to Expect

This tour offers mostly easy terrain on primarily paved, car-free recreational paths with the occasional rolling hill and the opportunity for longer rides. The VBT support vehicle is always available.

Tour Duration: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 6-42 miles

Average Cycling Time: 1-5 hours

Group size: 14-20 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

June 80°/36°, July 74°/38°, August 78°/46°, September 71°/36°

Average Rainfall (in.)

June 1.4, July 1.1, August 1.6, September 1.4

DAY 1: Arrive in Aspen / VBT Bicycling Vacation begins

VBT offers complimentary car service from Aspen/Pitkin County Airport (ASE) to the Annabelle Inn, departing the airport at 12:00 p.m.

After settling in, meet your trip leaders at 3:30 p.m. for a safety and bike-fitting session. Your Colorado bike tour begins with a warm-up ride through the town's Victorian west end. Aspen's residential history is on full display along these charming streets. You return to Annabelle Inn via a scenic riverside bike path. Tonight, get to know your fellow travelers and learn about the upcoming week during a casual reception hosted by your trip leaders. Later, stroll into town for an included dinner at one of Aspen's acclaimed restaurants. After, you'll want to take your time, and maybe a detour, on the walk back to the inn, savoring the stunning mountain views and colorful shops in this idyllic, car-free village.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-up ride — 6 miles

What to Expect:

Ride directly from the inn across town to Cemetery Lane Trail, a tree-lined dedicated bike path with stunning mountain vistas. Views of the Roaring Fork River are a constant companion on this easy familiarization ride.

Cumulative Distance Range: 6 miles

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2: Maroon Bells / Castle Creek Valley

This morning, you shuttle to the White River National Forest and the foot of the Elk Mountains. Here you view one of the most photographed sites in North America and one of Colorado's most magnificent

vistas – Maroon Bells. These two towering peaks, at about 14,000 feet, are mirrored in the glassy surface of Maroon Lake, creating a spellbinding tableau. There'll be time to enjoy an easy walk along the lake's shore and savor the views in this most pristine alpine environment.

After breaking for a hearty lunch, continue on to explore Ashcroft Ghost Town, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This historic mining town was bolstered by a silver boom, then crushed by a sudden bust, in the late 1800s. You step back in time during a fascinating interpretive walk among the restored remains of the saloon, post office, and hotel.

Later, an afternoon of cycling takes you through majestic groves of aspen trees and past sloping hills. Your route follows the gentle contours of Castle Creek Valley. Enjoy an 11-mile descent that delivers you back into Aspen.

The evening is yours to explore Aspen. Perhaps you'll board the Silver Queen Gondola in the heart of the village for a silent ride up to the 11,000-foot summit of Aspen Mountain. Dinner is on your own at one of Aspen's many restaurants. It is highly recommended that you make restaurant reservations well in advance of traveling to Aspen.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Maroon Lake Scenic Trail Walk — 1.5 miles

Afternoon: Ashcroft to Aspen — 16 miles

What to Expect:

The Maroon Lake Scenic Loop Trail is well-marked and features level terrain. Traverse a meadow to the far end of Maroon Lake. Walk past a beaver pond and cross a creek before retracing your steps around the shore back to the parking area.

Begin your ride "up valley" on Castle Creek Road. A gentle, 11-mile descent brings you to the head of the Marolt Trail. Then you follow the recreation path past the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum and continue through Aspen to your hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3: Rio Grande Recreation Trail / Optional river rafting

Today, you ride the length of the Roaring Fork Valley, and do so almost entirely on a car-free recreation path. Throughout the day, you lose about 2,100 feet in elevation over 44 miles, a gentle downhill ride on the Rio Grande Trail past breathtaking brick-red canyon cliffs. Along the way, you may stop at your leisure for lunch in the down-to-earth mountain enclave of Carbondale, set where the Roaring Fork and Crystal Rivers meet.

At the ride's end, you arrive in Glenwood Springs and your home for the night, the venerable Hotel Colorado. While the guest rooms are modest by today's standards, the hotel is ideal for our short visit and boasts a rich history and lovely setting.

This afternoon, you may choose to raft the Colorado River on an easy float trip.

After a rewarding day amid the splendor of Colorado, you enjoy dinner on a private terrace at the hotel. After, stroll across the pedestrian bridge to downtown Glenwood Springs—just minutes away—where you may catch some live music and soak in the local ambiance under starlit skies.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Aspen to Carbondale — 29 miles

Afternoon: Carbondale to Glenwood Springs — 14 miles

What to Expect:

Following a final spin through downtown Aspen, hop on the Rio Grande Trail, an entirely car-free recreational path, all the way to Glenwood Springs. Open views and brick-red canyon cliffs paint the landscape as you descend the valley to Carbondale for lunch. Afterward, cycle or shuttle to Glenwood Springs.

Cumulative Distance Range: 29 — 43 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4: Hot Springs / Glenwood Canyon Recreation Trail / Vail Village

After breakfast, walk next door and join locals for a sociable morning at the town's enormous hot spring pool, said to be the world's largest. It spans more than two city blocks and has drawn visitors since Glenwood Springs was first on the map. This is the perfect muscle-soothing pause as you have reached the mid-way point of the week.

Alternatively, choose to cycle east directly from your hotel onto the Glenwood Canyon Trail, a magnificent car-free bike path that cuts through a towering gorge. The Colorado River is your constant companion this morning as you climb slightly uphill out of the canyon, watching for bighorn sheep and bald eagles high on the jagged canyon walls. Finish your ride at the canyon's edge in Dotsero before continuing onto Vail.

After, a short shuttle brings you to your final destination of the week – Vail Village. The iconic resort town sings with Colorado splendor. Mountains rise in every direction as Gore Creek courses through the village, complete with quaint cobblestone streets. Enjoy an exploratory ride along the Gore Creek Trail before lunch and a sampling of local craft beers at your hotel.

You check in to your delightful accommodations just steps from the base of Vail Mountain. Opened as one of Vail's first great European-style lodges in the 1960s, Tivoli Lodge has been reinvented from the ground up, yet remains steeped in old-world charm and suffused with Tyrolean tradition, ambiance, and hospitality. Dinner is on your own, with many wonderful options along the pedestrian streets outside your door. On many Wednesday nights in June, July, and August, Vail Valley Music Festival events unfold throughout the town.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Glenwood Canyon Recreation Path — 18 miles

Afternoon: Vail Villages Ride — 9 miles

What to Expect:

Choose your own adventure this morning. Opt for a relaxing hot springs soak or cycle east from Glenwood Springs on the car-free Glenwood Canyon Recreation Trail. Unlike rides on previous days, you will experience a gradual increase in elevation as you make your way out of the canyon. Your afternoon

ride features the Gore Creek Trail—the best way to get acquainted with the ins and outs of Vail Village.

Cumulative Distance Range: 9 — 27 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Vail Pass / Breckenridge

After breakfast, shuttle to the top of Vail Pass, then ride down the east side to Breckenridge. This is the spectacular Ten Mile Canyon National Recreation Trail, a paved bike path offering incredible alpine views all around. You cycle downhill to Copper Mountain Village, then follow a more gradual descent to Frisco, a quaint small town with curious cafés and shops. Your final stretch passes the tranquil Dillon Reservoir and delivers you into Breckenridge, which boasts the largest historic district in Colorado. There'll be time to linger in "Breck," grabbing some lunch and browsing the scenic main street.

Shuttle back to Vail for an afternoon at leisure so you can further explore the town. This evening, celebrate your Colorado cycling tour over a memorable farewell dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Vail Pass to Frisco — 13 miles | Frisco to Breckenridge — 9 miles

What to Expect:

Following a short shuttle to the top of Vail Pass, begin a gentle yet breathtaking descent to Copper Mountain Village, then to the town of Frisco. Shuttle from there or continue on the bike path past scenic Dillon Reservoir up to Breckenridge. You gain some elevation on this more moderate stretch of the route. You ride today on a paved, car-free bike path.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 — 22 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6: Departure

Relax over an included breakfast at the lodge this morning before saying goodbye to your trip leaders and fellow travelers.

VBT has made arrangements for a shuttle from the inn to Eagle County Regional Airport (EGE) departing at 9:00 a.m. and arriving at the airport at approximately 10:00 a.m. If you drove to the start of the tour, your trip leaders will also drive you back to Aspen, arriving at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Annabelle Inn (Days 1-2)

Conveniently located in Aspen's west end just a few blocks from the heart of downtown, family-owned Annabelle Inn combines the comforts and conveniences of home with the cozy ambiance of a charming mountain lodge. Featuring unique and individually-designed rooms, two hot tubs with mountain views, and a fireplace lounge and observation deck, the lodge will be your home away from home while in Aspen. A central courtyard with outdoor firepit adds to the appeal of this charming oasis in Colorado's celebrated mountain town.

Hotel Colorado (Day 3)

Since 1893, the Hotel Colorado has opened doors to travelers from every corner of the earth. The Victorian-style resort, known to many as the "Grande Dame of the Rockies," was the cornerstone of Glenwood Springs when the town was founded. Built by a silver baron, the air-conditioned hotel is adjacent to the town's famous natural hot springs pool. It includes two restaurants and two bars and offers patio dining at the Courtyard Cafe. A Polo Lounge and Coppertop Bar provide great atmosphere for relaxing and dining in the heart of Glenwood Springs.

Tivoli Lodge (Days 4-5)

First opened in the 1960s as one of Vail's first great European-style lodges, the Tivoli Lodge is steeped in old-world charm and Tyrolean tradition, ambiance and hospitality. Completely renovated in 2006, the family-run lodge reopened with modern and upscale amenities and spacious, air-conditioned well-appointed rooms. Enjoy the warm and rustic ambiance in the expansive hotel lobby and the inviting

Brown Hound Lounge. Set on the eastern edge of Vail Village, Tivoli Lodge enjoys a quiet location just steps from Vail Mountain, shops, and restaurants.