

**Route 1 - Cripple Creek, Guffey and Salida.** This route will give you a great introduction to the riding and sights in this part of Colorado. Your first stop should be in Cripple Creek - one of the four designated gambling towns in Colorado. Take some time to check out the museum, train ride, gold mine and other cool things to do and see in Cripple Creek. The gold mine is still in operation and produced over 14,000 pounds of gold in 2014. The mine has produced over 1.5 million pounds of gold since 1890 (\$37 Billion at 2012 prices).



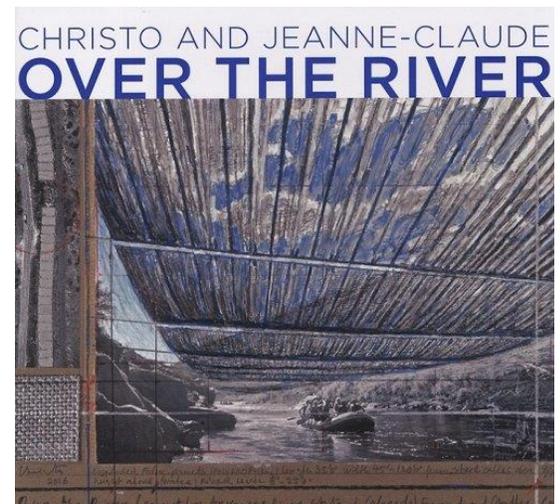
Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mine

If you have a minute, take a quick ride down to Victor on County road 67 (Butler G2), it is just a few miles, but a great set of twistys.

When you reach US-50, you will turn west and be riding along the Arkansas River (Butler G3). This river is not only beautiful, but is one of Colorado's premier white water rafting rivers. The artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude are still planning on draping the river (5.9 miles of it) with luminous plastic fabric as soon as all legal hurdles and objections from environmentalists are overcome. It is known as the ***Over The River Project***.

You should stop in Salida for lunch. Salida is one of those 'top 12' small Colorado cities to live in, and there are several great places to stop for lunch:

Pocos/ Sweeties/ Benson/ The Boathouse/ Fritz



You can reverse your route from Salida or better yet, think about riding up to Buena Vista (means Beautiful View) and making a visit to Cottonwood Pass. The ride to Cottonwood Pass will reward you with some excellent roads (Butler G1) and a spectacular vista from the 12,126 ft elevation of the pass. From the pass down to Taylor Reservoir is packed dirt, but is usually doable on a street bike. This pass was on the route of the USA Pro Challenge bicycle race in 2015. The picture is from Cottonwood Pass looking west.



USA Pro Challenge ascending Cottonwood Pass (Alan Schenkel)



Looking west from the pass (Harry Hemstreet)

You can retrace your route to Salida and pick up the return ride to Colorado Springs, or hop on US-24 at Johnson's Corner for a quicker return to the Springs.

If you return on US-50, you owe it to yourself to ride Skyline Drive (Butler G1) in Canon City - a short detour from the suggested return route. Or - do it on your outbound trek if you plan to visit Cottonwood Pass. Skyline Drive is a short bit of blacktop, but is a thrill a minute as you ride along the top of a hog-back with sheer drops on either side.

If you have the time, think about checking out the Royal Gorge Park (general admission \$23.00 per person). The park has a bit of a cheesy reputation among locals, but you can't beat the walk across the bridge. The Arkansas River canyon at this point is known as the Grand Canyon of Colorado - only about one sixth the depth though, so a bit of a stretch. If you feel brave, try the Skycoaster or the zip-line - nothing like swinging 955 feet above the canyon!

