

The Santa Fe Trail Scenic and Historic Byway Mountain Branch has a well developed auto tour route for tourists with interpretive signage at roadside stops, trails, and scenic overlooks to guide your discovery of the true stories and treasures on the Santa Fe Trail.

Day One- Trinidad Colorado

El Corazon de Trinidad National Historic District walking tour- *Trinidad sits at the bottom of Fishers Peak, a flat topped mountain used as a landmark for Santa Fe Trail travelers throughout history. Trinidad is the gateway to Colorado from New Mexico and is cradled between the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Great Plains. The Purgatoire River flows through the center of this little Victorian jewel on the Santa Fe Trail built by wealthy merchants, ranchers, farmers, miners and railroad tycoons. Take a walking tour through the historic opulent buildings built from locally quarried stone and designed by such greats as Bulgar and Rapp. Discover the stories of the Santa Fe Trail first used as a prehistoric highway for migrating dinosaurs and later a migratory route for buffalo and today's wildlife. Trinidad has been populated by Indians, explorers, trappers, traders, and merchants leaving behind a melting pot of cultures seeking prosperity and opportunity. Trinidad offers a vibrant arts and cultural community, and a historic shopping district. Museums, galleries, and quaint shops with treasures from the past and present are sprinkled throughout its brick streets. Take a free trolley tour from the Trinidad Colorado Welcome Center to get oriented. After researching the area stop at the Carnegie Library to pick up a copy of a "Walk through the History of Trinidad" then follow the bronze plaques located throughout the town and along the Purgatoire River to learn more of Trinidad's history and scenery.*

A.R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art- *150 E. Main, Trinidad. The museum is home to the largest collection of Arthur Roy Mitchell's iconic paintings of western scenes, as well as paintings by Harvey Thomas Dunn and Harold von Schmidt. Examine a fascinating collection of old west artifacts, Navajo rugs, American Indian pottery, Hispanic religious art and historical photography, along with a series of rotating exhibits.*

The Trinidad History Museum- *312 E. Main Street, Trinidad, 719-846-7217. Visit the homes of Trinidad's founders of early agriculture, ranching, and mining empires, and colorful characters including Kit Carson, Bat Masterson, Billy the Kid, and Mother Jones through exhibits, photographs and artifacts. Included is the Santa Fe Trail Museum, and nearby, the Hough-Baca House and Bloom Mansion. The two-story adobe Hough-Baca House was built in 1870, using Hispanic construction techniques and English design. The Bloom Mansion was built in 1882, and you can tour the parlor, dining room, and historic Victorian garden. A small entrance fee to visit the two historic homes includes an informative guided tour. A bronze statue of Kit Carson stands at nearby Kit Carson Park. Kids of all ages will love the*

Louden-Henritze Archaeology Museum- *600 Prospect, Trinidad, 719-846-5508. Located within the Trinidad State Junior College campus on the lower level of the campus library. The museum exhibits a local 1000-year old petroglyph, dioramas of Trincheran shelters, Native American artifacts and arrowheads, fossils, rock specimens and more.*

Day Two: Auto tour of the Santa Fe Trail on Comanche National Grasslands, overnight in La Junta.

Comanche National Grasslands- US Forest Service office- *1420 E. 3rd St. La Junta, CO 81050. 719-384-2181. Wildlife is plentiful on Comanche National Grasslands located just east of*

Trinidad on Hwy 350. Explore over 440,000-acres of some of the most pristine grasslands left in America for recreation. Visit Santa Fe Trail watering holes and stage coach stops and hike, bike, or horseback on the trails maintained in this historic Santa Fe Trail landscape of shimmering grasslands and hidden canyons protected by the USDA Forest Service. The original stagecoach trail was a vital thoroughfare in the 1800's. This byway actually parallels the old route, offering many opportunities to get out and experience it up close. Thirty-six granite stones were placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution in the early 1900's to mark the actual stagecoach trail. See how many you find throughout your visit to Colorado's Santa Fe Trail.

Iron Spring Historic Area on Comanche National Grasslands- Hwy 350 one mile south on CR 9. Iron Spring was the site of Indian attacks, a stagecoach stop and a watering hole used from 1861-1871. Trail ruts are visible just west of the interpreted site's parking area.

Timpas Picnic Area on Comanche National Grasslands - Located off Hwy 350 one mile south on CR9. Another stagecoach stop and water source for Santa Fe Trail travelers once bustling with restaurants, hotels, dance halls and shops. The site has an interpreted trail and an additional 3 mile hike from here on the original Santa Fe Trail leads to Sierra Vista Overlook. Look for the 36 granite stones placed on Colorado's Santa Fe Trail by the Daughters of the American Revolution in the early 1900's to mark the actual stagecoach trail. See how many you find throughout this drive.

Sierra Vista Overlook on Comanche National Grasslands- Hwy 350 then west on Hwy 71. An interpreted site which traces the original Santa Fe Trail. Travelers can catch their first look of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado on a clear day at this overlook.

Vogel Canyon - Hwy 350 to 109 for 13 miles, then west at the Vogel Canyon sign for one mile, the south for two miles. You'll find covered picnic tables with charcoal grills and hiking trails that explore the pinion pine forest and shortgrass prairie, as well as the remnants of homesteads. Vogel boasts Native American rock art that we ask visitors to please do not touch so they may be enjoyed for generations to come. Popular with horseback riders, there is hitching rails and horse trailer parking.

Picketwire Canyonlands on Comanche National Grasslands- Hwy. 50 to Hwy 109, right on CR 802, left on CR25, left on FR 500 to the gate. 150 million years ago, this area was a vast lake and dinosaurs roamed along its shoreline. Today, visitors at [Picketwire Canyon](#) can visit the largest dinosaur track site in North America boasting over 1,500 Brontosaurus and Allosaurus footprints. Bring your own 4-wheel drive and register for an 8-hour guided tour to the Dinosaur Tracks hosted by the US Forest Service. Book your online reservation at

<https://www.recreation.gov/tourParkDetail.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=74974>

It's the only motorized access into the canyons. Tours are offered Saturdays and some Sundays in May, June, September and October. Advance reservations highly recommended. You can also hike, bike, or horseback ride to Dinosaur Tracks, but keep in mind that the roundtrip is 11.3 miles. Beginning at the [Withers Canyon Trailhead](#), leave early in the morning as summer temperatures can reach over 100 degrees. Carry ample water and although relatively flat, due to the distance and heat this is considered a moderate to strenuous hike. Along the way, you'll see the ruins of an old Spanish Mission and cemetery and Native American rock art. If you continue past the dinosaur tracks, you'll come to the Rourke Ranch, an early 19th century ranch. Note hiking to the ranch adds another 7 miles to the roundtrip. Please enjoy and take photographs — but do not touch or damage the sites.

Day Three- La Junta

La Junta- Where the trail divides. La Junta means a junction where roads diverge to mountain passes or vast plains, and here all roads lead in and out of La Junta like stagecoach spokes. Sitting along the Arkansas River, La Junta offers outdoor recreation, hotels, camping, restaurants, and services.

Otero Museum Complex- Located on 3rd and Anderson in La Junta, 719-384-7406. Visitors can learn the story of La Junta through a vast collection of artifacts from pioneer life, railroad-related items, farm and ranching equipment, clothing, WWII memorabilia, a telegraph office, and photos. Other buildings include the Sciumbato Grocery Store which is stocked as it might have been in the 1920's, a gas station with gasoline pumps and a vintage 1927 Star touring car, Implement Shed and Blacksmith Shop, H. L. and Louise Boyd Coach House containing the original Concord Stage Coach 106, a replica of the Otero's first log cabin school originally built in 1876, and the Wickham Boarding House.

Koshare Museum, Trading post and Ceremonial Kiva- 115 W 18th Street, La Junta CO 81050, 719-384-4411. Located 18 blocks south of Highway 50 (First Street) on the campus of Otero Junior College. Head south on Colorado Avenue to 18th Street then one block west. Experience first-hand the uniqueness of a Boy Scout program that built a Museum. The Koshare Museum houses a Kiva Trading Post, and a renowned collection of Plains Indian and Southwest art and artifacts. The famed Koshare Indian Dancers perform authentic Pueblo Indian dancing during Winter & Summer Ceremonials in the Kiva. Visit their site to check for show dates.

<http://kosharehistory.org/>

Bents Old Fort- 35110 Highway 194 E., La Junta, CO 81050, (719) 383-5010. From La Junta, off U.S. Highway 50, take Highway 109 north 1 mile to Highway 194, then east on Highway 194, six miles to the fort. Experience the west as it was at this adobe castle on the plains known as Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site. This authentic 1840's trading post was reconstructed and is managed by the National Park Service. Living history activities take place at the fort daily. Visit <https://www.nps.gov/beol/index.htm> for more information about special events held throughout the year.

Day Four- Las Animas tour

J W Rawlings Museum- Located at 560 Bent Ave., at the only stoplight in Las Animas, Colorado. 719-456-6066. The Museum houses artifacts of Bent County from the days of Kit Carson through WWII. Exhibits include historic store fronts of the Post Office, The Candy Shop, Bent County Bank, Llewellyn Thompson (Ambassador to six Presidents), John W. & Dorothy Hoag Rawlings, and Kit Carson. The museum is home to Bent County Art Guild's Old Trail Art Gallery, and the Grand Hall and also houses the area's historical bells, including the Fort Lyon bell. Visit an old jail used when John Martin Reservoir was being built, explore the old ways of medicine and dentistry, and see a black-smith shop and much more!

Boggsville Historic Site- Located just off U.S. Highway 50, on Colorado Highway 101, 2 miles south of the City of Las Animas. 719- 456-1358. Experience the mix of Native American, Spanish, Mexican and Anglo cultures at Boggsville Historic Site. Boggsville was the first non-military settlement in Southeastern Colorado founded in the early 1860s. Boggsville was the first county seat of Bent County and home to Tomas Boggs, Bent County Sherriff, and John Prowers, Bent County Commissioner and was also Kit Carson's last home. Ranching and irrigated farming

flourished at Boggsville which provided a trading post and food for the region during the 1870's. Today, walk along a self-guided trail and discover two restored adobe houses. The 110-acre property features beautiful scenery, wildlife and bird-watching.

Fort Lyon – Hwy 50 to Hwy 183, one mile south of Las Animas. Contact the JW Rawlings museum for tours of the Kit Carson Chapel at Fort Lyon at 719-456-6066. Old Fort Lyon was the staging post used by Colonel John Chivington in 1864 to lead an attack by the 3rd Colorado Cavalry and other forces on friendly Cheyenne and Arapaho camps at Sand Creek Massacre. After a flood the fort was moved to its current location and completed by the Army in 1867. It was home to the Buffalo soldiers and the fort was charged with providing safe travel along the Santa Fe Trail. Visit Kit Carson Chapel at the site built from the stones of the surgeon's quarters where Kit Carson died. Bike the tree lined roads to Fort Lyon National Cemetery which began burials in 1907.

Day Five- Lamar tours

Bent's New Fort- Located 1.5 miles south, off Hwy 50, south on CR 35, left on CR JJ then south on CR 35.25 , for tours contact the nearby County Acres RV Park at 719-336-1031. After abandoning Bent's Old Fort, Bent built a new Fort in the winter of 1852–1853. The fort was a made of stone and used as a trading post and the Upper Arkansas Indian Agency from 1853 to 1859. Bent leased the fort to the U.S. Army leased 1860 and they abandoned it in 1866. Only the ruins remain of the trading post and visitors can take the NPS interpreted trail to the historic marker.

Amache Museum- 19 miles east of Lamar at 105 E. Goff Ave in Granada, 719-336-3483. The [Amache Museum](#) explores and examines this solemn period of history after Pearl Harbor was bombed. Observe the personal belongings of Japanese American internees, maps, letters, camp newsletters, film presentation, and more.

Amache Japanese Internment Camp- Located 1.5 miles from Granada off Hwy 50 to 385 west, south on CR 23.5, 719-336-3483 or for tours email Amache@usa.com. The site preserves the history of more than 7,000 Japanese, most of them American citizens, that were interned here between 1942-1945 after Executive Order 9066. Drive through the site guided by narrated podcasts through the interpreted trail to learn about the gardens, guard towers, barracks, mess halls, print shop and more. Learn about life at Amache and its rise to success through farming and agriculture.

Big Timbers Museum- Located at 7515 Hwy 50 in Lamar, 719-336-2472. Big Timbers Museum features exhibits of Western and Native American artifacts, a 10-star First National Confederate Flag, a WWI poster collection, a headdress worn in Buffalo Bills Wild West Show, antique clothing, wagons, buggies, cars, trucks, and so much more to discover of the Santa Fe Trail era.

Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site- Located off Hwy 50, north on 287, then east on Hwy 96, then north on CR54, north on CR 59 to CR W to the park entrance. Phone the NPS at 719-438-5916 for more information. In 1864 John Chivington led the Colorado Volunteers in a dawn attack on Black Kettle and peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes camped at Sand Creek. Two hundred Cheyenne men, women and children were slaughtered and their corpses were grotesquely mutilated. The massacre shocked the nation and brought a new wave of conflict to the high plains of the Santa Fe Trail. Interpretive signage and knowledgeable park rangers share a wealth of information to examine an important piece of American history. Situated in a

remote area, the 8-mile maintained gravel road can be tough on RV's or trailers. Have water and a full tank of gas.

Holly- *The drive continues to Holly ending at the border with Kansas. Holly is primarily a ranching and farming town where you'll find basic services to make your way back home. The second weekend in June is the Holly Bluegrass Festival at Gateway Park in June.*