

# A BAR A Ranch

## GUEST GUIDELINES

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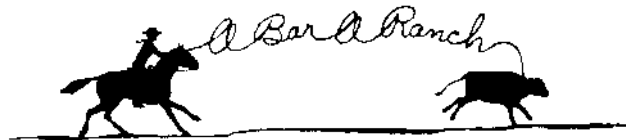
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# Welcome

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The A Bar A Ranch is located on nearly 100,000 acres surrounded by national forest and wilderness areas. The map included on the last page of this packet shows our location in the Medicine Bow Mountains of southern Wyoming.

Our guests are part of a long tradition. We first began operating as a guest ranch in the 1920s and many of our guests have been coming to the Ranch for generations. Whether you are new to the A Bar A or a long-time friend, we want you to feel like this is your home. If there is anything we can do to help plan your time at the Ranch, please let us know.

Two of the most popular pastimes for guests are fishing and horseback riding, but there are activities for all ages, including shooting, tennis, swimming, hiking, golf, and comfortable areas for reading and relaxing.

## **Location**

The A Bar A headquarters is located in south central Wyoming, about 15 miles north of the Colorado Border. Our property also extends about 20 miles south of the Colorado border. Most of our guests choose to fly into Denver and rent a car. It takes 3.5 to 4 hours to drive from Denver to the A Bar A. Directions are included in this packet and are also available online. We recommend following our directions to the A Bar A rather than using navigation apps on your phone or in your car, since these will sometimes guide you to a back gate rather than our front entrance. If you do follow your GPS, do not let it make you turn onto a dirt road until you reach the A Bar A overhead gate on Highway 230.

## **Weather**

The average daytime temperature in the summer is about 75 degrees. Humidity is generally about 20%. Nights are cool and in the summer the temperatures will range from the upper 40s to the mid 50s. During early June and in September, the days can be cooler (60 to 70 degrees) and nights frosty. In any season, plan on bringing a light jacket.

# Ranch Activities

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## **Hiking**

We have dozens of miles of beautiful hiking trails. Each week, Lissa Howe leads guests on explorations of these trails as a wonderful way to experience the landscape, learn more about the local ecology and history, and enjoy conversations with friends. Free trail maps are available in the office. Hikers do not need to worry about rattlesnakes, poison ivy, or poison oak; they do not occur here.

*Check "A Week at a Glance" in the office for guided hiking days/times.*

## **Skeet, Trap, and Sporting Clays Shooting**

We have .12, .20 and .28 gauge shotguns, and shells available at the range. Arrangements for shooting can be made at the Ranch office. Shooting instruction and use of the ranges is included as part of your stay. There is an extra charge for the shotgun, shells, and clay targets used (see our current tariff sheet for information).

Please note that because our ranges are near wetlands we use steel shot only. Our sporting clays range is for intermediate and advanced shooters only.

## **Swimming**

Our heated, filtered, outdoor pool is open daily. Lifeguard hours are posted. The pool is closed from 1:00-2:00 pm and after dark. If you want to do an early swim, feel free to roll back the pool cover if you arrive before the lifeguard. Towels are available poolside.

## **Tennis**

We have two all-weather tennis courts. High altitude balls are available at the Ranch store. Please bring your own racquet (we do have a few racquets available for you to borrow, if needed).

## **Golf**

The nine-hole, par-three course is fun and challenging. Clubs are available for your use, stored in the box by the first Tee, and balls are for sale in the Ranch store. An adult must accompany children under 12.

## **Yoga**

We offer yoga sessions for all levels and at no extra charge. Yoga mats are supplied. Check *Week at a Glance* in the office for the times and location of these sessions.

## **Massage**

One-hour massages are available for an extra charge. Please check with the office for schedule and sign-up.

## **Picnics and Cookouts**

Each week we schedule breakfast, lunch and dinner rides. There is an optional Tuesday morning breakfast ride (breakfast is also served in the dining room). The only way to get to this cookout is by horse or on foot. The Wednesday Big Creek lunch ride and Friday Slim's Draw dinner ride are served only as cookouts (the dining room is closed), but we provide transportation to these cookouts, or you can drive your own vehicle. Children in the Children's Program ride to the lunch and dinner cookouts on our 1946 vintage fire truck.

**All-Day Excursions**

Many families choose to organize their own all-day excursions. This can be done on horseback, hiking, or fishing. Just let us know and we would be glad to help you plan. Box lunches can be ordered from your server. There is a charge for each box lunch. We ask that you give us at least 24 hours notice.

# Children's Program: the "Gopher Hole"

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For many, the Gopher Hole is the highlight of the Ranch. No matter what your child's interests, he or she is sure have a great time! This is an educational adventure camp designed for children between the ages of 3 and 12. Children younger than 3 are welcome to participate, provided that they are accompanied by you or a babysitter. Our counselors are 19 or older, are trained in first aid/CPR, are certified life guards, and have many hours of training. Your child can expect safe care as well as fun and educational experiences.

## **Schedule**

The Gopher Hole is open from 9:00 am to 9:30 pm each day except Thursdays and Sundays, when it opens at 3:00 PM. Thursday is Family Day, which gives you a chance to do a longer activity with your children. On Tuesday mornings, the Gopher Hole opens at 7:15 am in order to give parents the opportunity to do the Bighorn Ridge Breakfast Ride if they choose. The program is closed in September; however, we can help arrange babysitting during that time.

## **Meals**

Your child is welcome to eat with the Children's Program for lunch and/or dinner. Children's Program dinner is a child-friendly meal served at 6:00 pm. Lunch is served at around 12:30 pm. Children are also welcome in the dining room for all meals. If your child would like to join you for meals rather than eat with the Children's Program, please communicate these plans to the Children's Program staff so they can notify the kitchen and dining room. Any additional children's cookouts will be listed on the weekly schedule so that you may plan accordingly.

## **Youth and Children's Program Activities**

In addition to regular activities, there are a number of special events planned each week. These may include: natural history and Western history activities; nature walks; treasure hunts; fishing in the specially stocked kids' pond; craft projects; outdoor games; archery; hiking, etc.

Horseback riding is a popular activity and your child will have the opportunity to ride every day except Sunday. The children's riding program is described in more detail in the Riding Program section (below). A full schedule of weekly activities for the Children's Program is available in the office and in the Gopher Hole (next to the pool).

Children who are ages 10 to 12 are welcome to participate in all Gopher Hole activities, and we also have special youth activities including hiking, service projects, shooting instruction, archery, orienteering, and other activities planned especially for their age group.

## **Babysitters**

The A Bar A is a family-oriented experience and you are very welcome to bring children younger than three years old. There is no charge for children younger than three years unless you use the hourly babysitting services mentioned below.

If you use our babysitters, there is an hourly charge. This service is provided by our Children's Program staff and is charged to your bill. This eliminates the need to pay your babysitter individually. Please do not tip individually, as each staff member receives a share of the tips fund as part of their work day.

If you bring your own nanny, they will stay in your cabin unless we have another room available. The discounted nanny rate is posted online or available at the office ("The Hub").

### **Know Where Your Children Are!**

If your children are not in the Gopher Hole program, you are responsible for them and should know where they are at all times. If they are not in the Children's Program, we will assume that they are reporting to you.

### **Children at Meal Rides**

During the Big Creek Lunch and Slim's Draw Dinner cookouts, children will be their parents' responsibility from the time the kids arrive on the fire truck to the time the fire truck departs. Please be sure they are safely aboard the fire truck for the return trip. If your child does not ride the fire truck, he or she is the parents' responsibility.

***One of the best parts of the A Bar A is the many generations represented. We look forward to sharing the ranch with your children and grand-children!***

## Teen Activities

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There are several teen activities planned each week. While freedom at the A Bar A is a privilege we all enjoy, please be aware of what your teenager is doing and where he or she is. We suggest that you consider setting a midnight curfew.

### **Gathering Places**

The LARIAT, our library and recreation room, is open most days from 9:00 am to 10:30 pm. Young children are welcome to use it with their parents. The TREE HOUSE is also available for youth and teen gatherings before 10:00 PM.

### **Schedule**

Check with the Gopher Hole and Office to see what the teen coordinators have planned. The program changes each week to meet the interests of the teenagers. A few activities they may do include: adventure rides, tubing on the river, archery, hiking, campfires, star/meteor shower gazing, photography, fly-fishing, shooting, and more.

# Riding Program

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Our riding program is designed to provide you with an experience that is safe for you and the horses. Head-to-tail riding is not the norm and we prefer to offer riders the opportunity to explore and find new trails. As your expertise with horses and our trails improves, those over 18 may choose to ride with or without a wrangler. This is a privilege that is offered by only a few ranches in the country.

Our wranglers are well prepared to guide you on rides, give you riding instruction, and help you to have a great overall experience on horseback. All wranglers have up-to-date First Aid training. Please visit the corral for more information about our riding program.

On Sunday evenings, a wrangler will greet you in the dining room to learn your riding preferences and abilities. After Sunday you may sign up for the next day's riding at the corral or in the dining room.

## **Children's Riding**

For those under the age of 13, we have a carefully selected group of children's horses. The Children's Program provides riding daily for those who wish to participate. All riders 6 through 12 years old will be observed by a wrangler on a first ride on Monday morning, and will be assigned an appropriate horse to match their skills and confidence levels. This is an important safety step and we appreciate parents' help facilitating it. Children under 6 years old may ride our lead ponies, which are available daily.

Children who demonstrate confidence and strong riding skills may be assigned to a "cross-over" horse. That is, a horse that may be used as a children's or adult horse. Children assigned to these horses may be included on family trail rides in addition to the Children's Program rides. This decision is up to the wranglers and they will do their best to make this possible. If your child would like additional riding instruction, please discuss this with the Head Wrangler.

### **Dinner Ride at Slim's Draw and Lunch Ride at Big Creek**

Regardless of skill level, a child must be at least 12 years old and assigned to a crossover horse to ride to the Friday's evening Slim's Draw and Big Creek lunch cookouts. **No exceptions.** This is because riders cross the river as will climb and descend steep hills. At Slim's, riders return after dark. The lunch ride takes a similar path and the long ride in the heat of day has proven to be difficult for younger riders.

### **Breakfast Ride at Big Horn Ridge**

Regardless of skill level, a child must be at least 10 years old and assigned to a cross-over horse to ride to the Breakfast cookout. **No exceptions.** This is because riders cross the river and climb and descend steep hills. An adult must accompany riders 12 and under.

## **Off-Ranch Riding Excursions**

We offer special all-day riding excursions that may involve transporting horses and riders to trailheads farther from ranch headquarters. Due to transportation and staffing needs, these wonderful trips have an additional cost associated with them. Please check at the corral for more information.

## Horse Safety

We provide well-trained, healthy, and reliable horses. Our wranglers do their best to protect you and your horse. Owning quality horses and hiring wranglers with strong skills and good judgment is just part of what we do to build a safe riding program. We ask that you respect the horses' needs and wranglers' judgment. You also need to practice good judgment. Your safety and that of others depends on it! Here are a few important guidelines that will help to keep you and others safe:

- To ride you must wear proper riding boots that are smooth soled with a heel. Hiking boots or tennis shoes are not safe and are not permitted.
- Unless mounting, please stay out of the corral where the horses are tied. A wrangler will bring your horse to you, help you mount, and make adjustments to the tack as necessary.
- We recommend use of a "stampede string" (available in the office) to hold on your hat.
- Walking, trotting, and loping are safe gaits when done properly. Please do not gallop or race.
- If the ground is hard (like the ranch road) or rocky, please walk your horse. This prevents injuries to the horse's feet and legs.
- Do not ride at faster than a walk when the barn is in sight. This keeps horses from getting "barn sour" and gives them a chance to warm up/cool down.
- Follow horses at least a horse-length back. This helps to keep you and the horse from being kicked by the horse in front of you.
- Do not lope two-abreast. Loping single-file prevents the horses from feeling like they are racing and helps riders stay in control.
- Make sure your cinch is fastened snugly. That is the strap that holds your saddle on.
- Don't let your horse graze at all while you are riding. This is a bad habit that makes them no fun to ride for you or the next person. They get plenty of grazing time when they are not being ridden.
- Dismount to put on a jacket. Flapping fabric can spook even the calmest horses.
- When a person is opening or closing a gate or has dismounted for any reason, the group must wait for that person to say that he or she is ready. Horses are herd animals and they become nervous when the group starts to leave them.
- Remember that your horse is not a machine. Give him frequent breaks and take in the view.
- No smoking on horseback. It is a safety and fire hazard.
- *Always feel free to ask questions. We are here to help!*



## **A Typical Week's Riding Schedule**

Regular riding hours are 9:00 AM-12:00 pm and 2:00-4:30. If you do not plan to be back by 12 pm let the wranglers know what time you expect to return.

On most days you are welcome to take an all-day ride. This can be arranged with the Head Wrangler. You may order a boxed lunch from the dining room staff by filling out an order form the day prior to your all-day ride.

### **Monday**

Orientation and First Rides. An optional corral orientation is conducted by Justin Howe. Meet at the corral at 9:30. The orientation is highly recommended, even if you have ridden at the A Bar A before. It is specifically designed for A Bar A riding conditions. You will learn about horse psychology, trail etiquette, safety, basic riding techniques that apply to our horses' training, and more.

Regular morning rides are scheduled from 9:30 am-12:00 pm. Afternoon riding is available from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm.

### **Tuesday**

Breakfast Ride. This optional ride departs from the corral at 7:30 am and riders return around 10:30 am.

Regular morning rides are also available from 9:30 am-12:00 pm. Afternoon riding is available from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. Please note that the Children's Program opens at 7:15 am on Tuesdays.

### **Wednesday**

Big Creek Lunch Ride. Riders leave the corral at 10:30 and return around 3:30.

### **Thursday**

Family Day. Morning rides from 9:30 am-12:00 pm. No Children's Program rides. Children may ride with their families. Arrange a riding time with the Head Wrangler. Wagon rides are offered on Thursdays; watch for Molly and Dolly, our Belgian mares, hitched to their hay wagon.

### **Friday**

Morning rides from 9:30 am-12:00 pm. No afternoon riding. Depending on the time of the summer, the Slim's dinner ride leaves at 4:00 pm or 4:30 pm. Riders arrive back around 9:30 pm. Check the "Week at a Glance" for details.

### **Saturday**

Morning rides from 9:30 am-12:00 pm. No regular riding in the afternoon. There is a gymkhana rodeo in the afternoon from 2:30-3:30 pm in the arena, with events and activities for all ages.

### **Sunday**

This is our arrival/departure day. Riding, shooting, and fishing guides are not available on this day.

Under Wyoming law, equine professionals are not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent and assumed risks of equine activities, pursuant to Wyoming statute 1-1-126. A Bar A, its wranglers and counselors are equine professionals. In almost anything you do that involves a horse, pony, donkey or other member of the equine family, you are a participant in an equine activity.

# Fishing Program

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The A Bar A has approximately 6 miles of private frontage on the North Platte River plus another 5 miles on Big Creek and 3 miles on Mullen Creek. At Big Creek Ranch, we have an additional 13 miles of private water. One and a half miles of Big Creek on the A Bar A is stocked and the remainder of our streams are native trout. We ask that you practice primarily catch-and-release fishing. If you do keep a fish, our guides will be happy to clean your fish and our chef will prepare it for your dinner. Please see the office and the “Liar’s Lair” (aka Fish Shack) for detailed information and to sign up for a guide.

We have an ongoing program of habitat improvement and fisheries management, which is a major factor in preserving the excellence of our fishing. Our guides are trained to provide excellent services for anglers of all experience levels, and experienced anglers enjoy the diversity and challenge of self-guided fishing on our streams and river.

## General Guidelines

- With the exception of the Children’s Fishing Pond, fishing on the ranch is fly-fishing only.
- You must carry a fishing license while fishing. These may be purchased at the office.
- Please don’t kill a fish unless you plan to eat it. Do not give fish to others, as doing so is illegal.
- Only touch fish when your hands are wet. Hold them gently but firmly and return them to the water in an upright position. Large fish are apt to be tired after a long fight. Cradle them underwater in an upright position with their heads facing upstream. Do this until the fish swims away on its own. This can take 3 or 4 minutes, sometimes more.
- Pinching hook barbs with pliers or other fishing tools takes almost no time and can save a fish’s life by simplifying hook removal.

## Catch Limits

By law, you are only allowed to keep two fish, one of which may be over 16 inches. Release all fish between 10 and 16 inches. We suggest catch-and-release fishing.

## Stream Courtesy

Since guests’ experience in trout fishing ranges from first-time fishermen to grizzled veterans, we suggest the following:

- Never start fishing closer than 100 yards to another person, unless he or she is fishing in the opposite direction.
- Do not reserve holes. Share the river and respect that others are there to fish as well. A good angler never cleans out a hole; he or she catches fish there and then moves on.

**Fishing Guides**

Our fishing guides provide group fishing lessons. Groups are usually 2-4 people. Our goal is to help you learn to fish successfully on your own. Sign up daily in the Office.

Fishing guides are available Monday through Saturday. They will provide transportation to and from the stream; provide information about stream conditions and fishing areas; and help you successfully cast, land, and release trout. While off the stream, they can be found in the “Liar’s Lair” or in the Office.

**Fishing Excursions**

Fishing excursions are offered through the summer and fall. These offer guests an opportunity to experience new waters, hone skills, and fish additional private water. At Big Creek Ranch, we have an additional 13 miles of streams as well as 45 acres of lakes, all of which are full of large fish. Our float trips are a way to fish more water and have a relaxing and fun day floating on the North Platte. These trips are offered at a reasonable cost and you can sign up for them in the Office.

**Fishing Equipment**

The Ranch provides rods, reels, and waders free of charge. Files, Sage rods, reels, and other fishing equipment may be purchased in the Ranch store.

**Family Day Fishing (Thursdays)**

Ask the guides about our family day fishing derby and casting contest for all ages!

# General Information

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## **What to Bring**

Depending on your activities, you will want to bring the appropriate outdoor clothing. If you plan to ride, boots are necessary and a Western hat is recommended (we have a nice selection of cowboy hats in our store). Being at the Ranch is a great opportunity to express your inner cowgirl or cowboy, and many guests dress Western during the day and in the evenings. We offer fishing clothing, Patagonia brand active-wear and outerwear, and some Western wear in our store. You will be most comfortable if you have several options for outerwear since our evenings are cool. Evening dress is casual to “Western fancy.” Suits and ties are not necessary!

**Consider leaving your bottled water at home.** Our well water is pure and delicious, right from the tap. Its source is the peaks of the Snowy Range, about ten miles from the ranch. It filters through deep layers of ancient fine- and coarse-grained gravels and is not only healthful, but it tastes better than the best bottled spring water. By reducing bottled water use, we also reduce landfill waste.

***No pets, please.***

## **Shipping Items to the Ranch**

Many guests choose to ship items to the Ranch. We will store them for you and bring them to your room upon your arrival. Please use the following address:

Your Name  
A Bar A Ranch  
820 A Bar A Ranch Road  
Encampment, WY 82325

## **Storing Items at the Ranch**

We are happy to provide storage space for you if there are items you would like to leave at the ranch between visits (e.g., cowboy hats and boots, bulky jackets, etc.). We store guests’ personal belongings in a dry, secure storage area and your things will be waiting for you in your cabin when you arrive.

## **Check-in and Check-out**

You may arrive at the ranch any time, but your room may not be ready until 3:00 PM. Checkout time is before 11:00 AM.

## **Cell Phones and Internet**

At the A Bar A our mission is to create an environment that provides opportunities for people to make deep connections, with themselves, with others, and with the land. In order to support this, we ask you to not use mobile devices in public areas.

We do not have cell phone service. We have WiFi available in the Library and Lariat. Private phone rooms are located off the office porch, in the ranch store, and in the Lariat. You may use mobile devices on the office porch, but please do not use FaceTime or video streaming.

We have the following requests for use of mobile devices:

- No mobile devices in the dining lodge (cameras permitted).
- No mobile devices in the Round Room after 6:00 PM.
- No FaceTime or voice-over IP calling in public areas.
- No drones.
- No cell phones or texting while on rides, hikes, or at cookouts.

### **Church Services**

Protestant services are held each Sunday in nearby Encampment. Catholic services are held each Sunday in Saratoga.

### **Tipping Policy**

Please do not tip individuals. We will automatically add a 15% gratuity to your bill, unless you tell us otherwise.

### **Hosting a Staff Member**

Our guests sometimes enjoy inviting staff members to join them for dinner. It is the staff member's responsibility to make sure that the office has been notified of your plans 24 hours in advance so that arrangements can be made with the kitchen and dining room, and so that you can be billed for his or her meal.

# Traveling to the A Bar A

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## **Driving directions from Denver International Airport to the A Bar A:**

### **Option 1: Through the Mountains and High Country (approximately 4 hours)**

This is a beautiful, mountainous route. Winter Park is a nice stop-over if you'd like to spread out your trip.

From Denver International Airport (DIA), take Pena Blvd. to I-70 West. Take I-70 West from Denver to Hwy 40. This goes over Berthoud Pass through Winter Park. Continue on Hwy 40 through Granby. About 3 miles from town, 40 intersects with Hwy 125. Turn right and continue through Walden and Cowdrey. About 3 miles north of Cowdrey, 125 turns to the west (left) toward Saratoga. Turn left there. You'll see white buildings with red roofs: the State Line Ranch. Follow this road into Wyoming where it turns to Hwy 230. Watch for the A Bar A Ranch sign on the right side of the highway, directly across from mile marker 112. Turn right onto our road and we're 8 miles in. At the 2-mile marker, you'll come to our air strip. Be sure to stop where the sign says "Whoa" and watch for airplanes landing or taking off.

### **Option 2: North through Fort Collins (approximately 3.5 to 4 hours)**

This is a lower-elevation route than Option 1, but is still beautiful.

From DIA, take Pena Blvd to E-470 North (to Fort Collins). This is a toll road and worth the fee. It will drop you off at I-25 just south of Fort Collins. Take exit 281 to Owl Canyon Road, just north of Fort Collins. Drive until you reach a four-way intersection, then turn right on N. Colorado Rd 11. Continue about 1/2 mile until you reach E Colorado Rd 72. Turn left. Follow this road until it meets Hwy 287. Turn right toward Laramie (about 50 miles from this point to Laramie). In Laramie get on I-80 west for 1 mile, exiting at the Snowy Range Road Exit (Hwy 230). Take Hwy 230 south towards Woods Landing. You will cross briefly into Colorado and Hwy 230 becomes Hwy 127. Watch for Hwy 125 north and turn right there. After about a half mile, you will see the State Line Ranch on your right. Stay on Hwy 125, which changes back to Hwy 230 when you again cross the Wyoming state line. Watch the mile markers on the left. Our sign is directly across from mile marker 112. Turn right onto the ranch road and follow it for 8 miles to the ranch.

## **Flying to Denver**

DIA is served by most major airlines. Charter planes are available at Denver's airport for direct flights to the Ranch airstrip. Call us if you would like suggestions of charter companies.

## **Our Airstrip**

The Ranch's own 5,704-foot paved airstrip is located 6 miles from the Ranch buildings at an elevation of 7,780 feet. There is a Unicom radio (frequency 122.8) and your cell phone will work at the airstrip if you need to call the ranch (307-327-5454). Use the Unicom before landing to arrange for transportation. Pilots should exercise great caution in approaching the runway since the main road to the Ranch cuts across the airstrip; and on occasion, the airstrip has deer, antelope, or cattle on it. When notified, we can quickly clear the runway. Flying time from Denver is under one hour. Planes up to a Gulfstream IV can utilize our strip. The Saratoga Airport is a short distance away and you can arrange for us to pick you up there for an extra charge. Pilots can get information and maps for both airstrips at <http://abararanch.com/guest-resources/airstrip-information/>.

# Traveling From the A Bar A to DIA

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## **Through the mountains and high country:**

This is a beautiful route that takes about four hours. Winter Park is a nice place to spend the night if you'd like to spread out your trip a little.

Turn left off the Ranch Road onto 230. Follow this road into Colorado to the first stop sign. This is a "t" and you will turn right on 125. Follow 125 through Walden continuing to Granby. Turn left on Route 40, through Granby, Winter Park and over Berthoud Pass where you reach I-70. Take I-70 East to Denver International Airport.

## **Through Fort Collins:**

This is a beautiful drive and takes between three and a half and four hours. If you're in a hurry, this one is the fastest route.

Turn left off the Ranch Road onto Route 230. Follow this route which changes back to 125 when you cross into Colorado. Travel 22 miles and you will see State Line Ranch (white building with red roof) on your left. At the stop sign turn left (North) to Laramie, which is the road through Medicine Bow National Forest. When you arrive in Laramie, get on I-80 East, go to the next exit which is 287 South. Follow 287 to Ft. Collins (about 50 miles). Exit left, follow 14/287 through Ft. Collins. The road winds a bit through town but it is well marked. Take I-25 South to 470 East (toll road). Turn off at 470 East. There are 2 toll booths. Go to Pena Blvd. to Denver International Airport.