



Time Travelers in Colorado's Canyons & Plains

5 days

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COLO-ROAD TRIPS

—K TO 5TH GRADE—

EDUCATIONAL ITINERARIES

Get ready to take the kiddos' learning to new heights with Colo-Road Trips Educational Itineraries, trips crafted with plenty of hands-on learning, educational adventures and, of course, stops for ice cream. Each was designed with kids from kindergarten to 5th grade in mind, but the activities, outings and accommodations will be enjoyed by children of all ages ? yes, that's you Mom and Dad. Supplement your trip with trivia, educational videos and games ? or just hop in the car and go!

During this trip to the Canyons and Plains region, kids will travel back in time and discover the region's diverse history. While the trip centers on the history of the Santa Fe Trail, it also includes other intriguing subjects like Native Americans, frontiersmen, adventurers and the earliest inhabitants ? the dinosaurs!

[Get more educational Colo-Road Trips >>](#)

Grab Your Supplies

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While all that is truly needed is your kid's sense of adventure, a notebook, a writing utensil and plenty of colored pencils will come in handy.

Day 1

ACTIVITY

Welcome to Trinidad: Trinidad Welcome Center

Become a local! Start your trip off with a stop at the Colorado Welcome Center. Pick up a map of the city and, if the Trinidad Trolley is running, hop on for a free 45-minute tour of the area's downtown.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

All the Places You Will Go!

While at the Trinidad Welcome Center, explore the path you will take during your road trip. [Get activity](#).

Extra Credit

Extra Credit

Do You Have a Future Cartographer On Your Hands?

Spend some more time at the Trinidad Welcome Center exploring the maps and orient yourself for the trip.

[Get extra credit activity](#).

LUNCH

Las Animas Grill, Trinidad

This is the perfect spot to enjoy wings five different ways, burgers, fish and chips and more. Coloring books and cookies keep the kids preoccupied while you wait on your meals!

ACTIVITY

Life on the Santa Fe Trail: Trinidad History Museum

Explore Trinidad's past and place in the American West. The museum complex includes the 1870s adobe Baca House, the 1882 Victorian-style Bloom Mansion and the new "Borderlands of Southern Colorado" exhibit.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Channel Your Inner Detective!

Explore Trinidad's past and its deep-rooted history in the old American West with a trip to the Trinidad History Museum. [Get activity](#).

Insider's Tip

Cool Down:

On a hot day, nothing is better than an old-fashioned ice-cream cone from [Tutti Scoops](#), with 16 rotating flavors, malts, shakes and other frozen delights.

DINNER

Trinidad Smokehouse

Need to please lots of different appetites? The Trinidad Smokehouse offers delicious hickory-smoked barbecue along with burgers, comfort food and grilled cheese.

ACTIVITY

Art Cartopia Museum

Snap your best selfies at the one-of-a-kind Art Cartopia Museum. On display are photo-worthy vehicles that have been transformed into works of art, like the double-height Burning Man Phoenix and the psychedelic Aurora Porsche Alice. It's always free and open all year long.

LODGING

La Quinta Inn and Suites

Family-friendly and pet-friendly with an indoor pool, a viewing deck of the mountains and complimentary breakfast bags make this the perfect hotel for families on the go.

Day 2

BREAKFAST

Bob & Earl's Cafe

Providing great food since 1993. Here you can leave the mood of the Interstate behind, and pick up the quieter rhythm of a historic two-lane road on Hwy 12.

ACTIVITY

Life in the West: A.R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art

Featuring the paintings, illustrations and sketches of Trinidad-native Arthur Roy Mitchell, this impressive collection includes more than 350 of his works, Spanish folk art and Native American pieces.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Ever Wanted to Be an Art Critic?

Here's your chance. At the A.R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art, find questions to ask, details to notice and different ways to think about artwork. [Get activity](#).

Trivia

Trivia

How Much Do You Remember?

As you head out for lunch, review your trip to Trinidad with five trivia questions. [Get trivia.](#)

LUNCH

Tees Me Treat Me, Trinidad

While you wait to enjoy lunch in the restaurant's large courtyard, pick up a few souvenir t-shirts in the lobby ? sizes are available for the whole family!

Insider's Tip

Hop on the Road:

Head northeast on Hwy. 350 toward La Junta to embark on the next learning adventure.

ACTIVITY

Transportation on the Santa Fe Trail: Comanche National Grassland

Comanche National Grassland covers more than 440,000 acres in southeastern Colorado ? part of the nation's Great Plains ? filled with canyons, historic trails, wildlife and much more.

COTREX

[Map the Trail](#)

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Discover the Comanche National Grassland.

This National Historic Trail site has wagon ruts, trail markers and exhibits that detail life along the Santa Fe Trail. [Get activity.](#)

Extra Credit

Extra Credit

Become an Ecosystem Explorer.

Learn about the ecosystems and wildlife found in Comanche National Grassland. [Get extra credit activity.](#)

DINNER

Mexico City Cafe, La Junta

Great Mexican food with a big dose of fun! Enjoy the colorful decor inside and traditional Mexican dance shows on the outdoor patio.

ACTIVITY

Tarantula Migration

Autumn evenings in La Junta come alive in the most unusual way. It's tarantula migration season! Head toward Comanche National Grassland to spot these large, leggy arachnids on their annual march to find their mates. Don't worry, they're harmless!

LODGING

Holiday Inn Express, La Junta

Still need to burn off some energy before settling in for the night? Little ones will have a blast swimming in the heated indoor pool.

Day 3

BREAKFAST

Christine's, Rocky Ford

Christine's is housed in a former church, with plenty of outdoor seating and space for the tykes to roam. This dining gem has all the classics, but don't pass up the chance to try their famous cinnamon rolls.

Insider's Tip

Support Local Farmers:

Stop by roadside produce stands like [Knapps Farm Market](#), located off of Hwy. 50, to support local farmers. Make sure to get some famous Rocky Ford melons – the perfect sweet snack for epic road trips.

ACTIVITY

Trading Along the Santa Fe Trail: Bent's Old Fort

Step back in time at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, a reconstructed 1840s adobe fur trading post on the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail. This is where traders, trappers, travelers, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes came together in peaceful trade terms. Today, the fort comes to life as living historians recreate the sights, sounds and smells of the past with guided tours, demonstrations and special events.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Imagine You're a Trader on the Santa Fe Trail.

Find a living historian at the Bent's Old Fort and learn more about the way each group lived back in the day. [Get activity.](#)

Trivia

Trivia

How Much Do You Remember?

Reflect on your trip to Bent's Old Fort with five trivia questions. [Get trivia.](#)

LUNCH

Lucy's Tacos, La Junta

Stop by this food truck in downtown La Junta for fresh tortillas and even fresher ingredients. Get there early to avoid lines, and snag a patio table so your kids will have space to stretch their legs. Fuel up and get ready for your next adventure.

ACTIVITY

Become a Dino Tracker: Dinosaur Tracks at Picketwire Canyon

Located in the Comanche National Grassland, just south of La Junta, these primitive canyons are home to North America's largest dinosaur tracksite. The round-trip hike to the dino tracks is 11.2 miles, so plan to head out early and take plenty of water ? about a gallon per person.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Ready For an Off-Road Adventure?

Become a dino-tracker during a guided tour of Picketwire Canyon to view dinosaur tracks and rock art.

[Get activity.](#)

DINNER

Delicia's Tamal House

Locally owned business serving authentic Mexican food-Tamales, chile rellenos, burritos and ALL menu items prepared FRESH All Day, EVERY DAY.

ACTIVITY

SoCo FroYo

After a long day, treat the kids to frozen yogurt at this self-serve shop with a variety of flavors and toppings to customize their treat just the way they like it.

LODGING

Hampton Inn, La Junta

Centrally located near local attractions, parents will enjoy the complimentary breakfast while youngsters will enjoy the indoor pool.

Day 4

BREAKFAST

Copper Kitchen, La Junta

Snag a booth at this locals' hangout, and enjoy tot-friendly offerings such as french toast, pancakes, biscuits and even pigs-in-a-blanket.

ACTIVITY

Life at the Turn of the Century: John Rawlings Heritage Center

This eclectic local museum is full of historic exhibits focusing on life in Bent County, including early 1900s storefronts of a post office, barbershop, jewelry store, candy shop and the Bent County Bank.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Whoever Guesses Right Wins!

Get ready to play ?I, Spy? at the John Rawlings Heritage Center. [Get activity.](#)

LUNCH

Carmen's

An authentic Mexican Restaurant serving up an ocean of flavor on its menu and outdoor seating.

ACTIVITY

From Fur Trading to Ranching: Boggsville Historic Site

Visit this restored mid-19th-century settlement where Native Americans and pioneers peacefully joined together. With Old West reenactments during the summer months, the former Santa Fe Trail trade stop travels the paths of Kit Carson and Wild Bill Hickok.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Learn About Thomas O. Boggs.

Learn how Boggsville became the center of commerce and agriculture for the region after the decline of the

fur trade. [Get activity.](#)

DINNER

BJ's Burgers, Lamar

Youngins and the young-at-heart will enjoy the nostalgia of ordering from a phone at the table. Be sure to order a classic shake!

ACTIVITY

John Martin Reservoir State Park

Need some time to regroup? Grab your fishing pole and head out to John Martin Reservoir, the state's second-largest body of water, where the mild weather allows for great fishing throughout the year. If birding is more your thing, get out your binoculars as the area is considered a birder's paradise.

Insider's Tip

The Reel Deal:



The [Colorado Parks & Wildlife fishing app](#) can help you discover 1,300 fishing locations, check conditions and regulations and more. Search CPW Fishing in the Apple App Store and on Google Play.

Insider's Tip

Sweet Cravings:

Only the Lamar locals know that the [Wash Spott Car Wash](#) has an excellent old-timey soda fountain ice-cream shop tucked inside. It's worth a visit whether you're getting a car wash or not.

LODGING

Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Lamar

On the go? Enjoy a complimentary grab-and-go breakfast. Ready to relax? Enjoy the indoor heated pool.
Day 5

BREAKFAST

Brew Unto Others, Lamar

The babes will have a hard time choosing from various pastries, including sticky pecan buns, cinnamon rolls, muffins and scones.

ACTIVITY

World War II Comes to the Canyons and Plains Region: Granada Relocation Center

In response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order that forced the incarceration of thousands of Japanese Americans and immigrants. The Granada Relocation Center, commonly known as "Camp Amache," was one of 10 internment camps across the nation. It now serves as a reminder of the wrongful imprisonment of thousands. This National Historic Landmark is home to the Amache Museum and several interpretive kiosks, which help to tell the story of the site and the people who were imprisoned. Visitors can experience a driving audio tour of its history and significance, narrated by camp survivors.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Tour Camp Amache.

Explore the history of the Granada Relocation Center, one of 10 internment camps during World War II. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, more than 7,300 Japanese Americans lived at this camp from 1942-1945. [Get activity.](#)

LUNCH

La Mission Villanueva, Lamar

Save room for dessert! The little ones will love sopapillas and the Mexican fried ice cream.

Insider's Tip

Go Birding:

If you have a little extra time, the [Willow Creek Nature Trail](#) is a short hiking path with some great bird spotting in the town of Lamar.

ACTIVITY

Colorado Welcome Center in Lamar

Located in Lamar's historic train depot, this friendly welcome center will provide great recommendations on even more local spots and kid-approved excursions. Kiddies can also enjoy the old steam locomotive, complete with a water tower and track right outside the depot.

Insider's Tip

Only One Stop Left:

Head back toward Lamar on Hwy. 50 as your trip through Canyons & Plains winds down.

DINNER

Hickory House Restaurant

Best ribs in Colorado, not to mention biscuits and gravy, meat-lovers omelets, BLTs and much more.

ACTIVITY

Life on the High Plains: Big Timbers Museum

A fitting end to your adventure is a trip to this local museum, which focuses on the history of the High Plains of eastern Colorado. Young people of all ages will enjoy exploring the antique wagons, cars, trucks and fire equipment in the Big Timers Transportation Museum.

Educational Activity

Educational Activity

Go Treasure Hunting at the Big Timbers Museum.

Put your detective skills to the test with a museum scavenger hunt. Draw or write what you saw. [Get activity.](#)
Extra Credit

Extra Credit

How's Your Memory?

Test it out by creating a mental map of your adventure. [Get extra credit activity.](#)

LODGING

Days Inn by Wyndham, Lamar

Located near John Martin Reservoir State Park, this hotel was designed with comfort in mind. Be sure to book a family suite so that you can rest easy while the children build a fort in the added space.

Insider's Tip

Check Out this Eccentric Stop:

Down the street lies a quirky roadside attraction we're sure your kids will get a kick out of ? the world's only petrified wood gas station, made out of 175 million-year-old wood. ([See this article for more info.](#))

Hello World.

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