

## 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:** 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: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Aspen Warm-Up Ride / Welcome Reception and Dinner**

Travel to the Annabelle Inn in Aspen. VBT offers complimentary car service from Aspen/Pitkin County Airport (ASE) to the Annabelle Inn, with a scheduled departure at 12:00 p.m.

The Annabelle Inn—your accommodations for the next two nights—is conveniently located just steps from the heart of downtown Aspen. Upon check-in, you'll receive your welcome package filled with helpful information.

After settling in, meet your trip leaders at 3:30 p.m. for a safety and bike-fitting session. Your Colorado biking adventure begins with a warm-up ride through Aspen's charming Victorian West End. The town's residential history is on full display along these peaceful streets. You'll return to the inn via a scenic riverside bike path. This evening, get to know your fellow travelers and learn more about the week ahead during a casual reception hosted by your trip leaders. Later, stroll into town for an included dinner at one of Aspen's acclaimed restaurants. On the way back, take your time enjoying the mountain views and browsing the 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 the Cemetery Lane Trail, a tree-lined, dedicated bike path offering stunning mountain vistas. Views of the Roaring Fork River are your constant companion on this easy, familiarization ride.

Cumulative Distance Range: 6 miles

Included Meals: Dinner

## DAY 2: Maroon Bells Scenic Walk / Ride Through Castle Creek Valley

This morning, shuttle to White River National Forest at the foot of the Elk Mountains. Here, you'll encounter one of the most photographed locations in North America—and one of Colorado's most magnificent vistas: the Maroon Bells. These twin peaks, each rising to nearly 14,000 feet, are reflected in the glassy surface of Maroon Lake, creating a spellbinding alpine tableau. Enjoy time for a leisurely walk along the lake's shore and savor the pristine surroundings.

After a hearty lunch, continue on to explore Ashcroft Ghost Town, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This former mining town flourished during a silver boom in the late 1800s before quickly fading into obscurity. Step back in time during a fascinating interpretive walk among the restored remains of its saloon, post office, and hotel.

Later, cycle through majestic aspen groves and past sloping hills as you descend through Castle Creek Valley. Enjoy an 11-mile ride with gentle grades leading back into Aspen. For those looking to extend the adventure, an optional independent ride to the iconic Woody Creek Tavern is available.

The evening is yours to explore Aspen. You might ride the Silver Queen Gondola from the village center for breathtaking views from the 11,000-foot summit of Aspen Mountain. Dinner is on your own at one of Aspen's many acclaimed restaurants—advance reservations are highly recommended.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Maroon Lake Scenic Trail Walk — 1.5 miles

Afternoon: Ashcroft to Aspen — 16 miles

Afternoon: Ashcroft to Woody Creek — 26 miles

### What to Expect:

The Maroon Lake Scenic Loop Trail is a well-marked path with level terrain, leading you through a meadow to the far end of the lake, past a beaver pond, and over a creek before circling back along the shoreline to the parking area. After your walk, begin your ride "up valley" on Castle Creek Road, where a gentle 11-mile descent delivers you to the start of the Marolt Trail. Follow the recreation path past the Holden Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum and continue through Aspen to your hotel. For those

seeking more miles, an optional independent ride to the iconic Woody Creek Tavern is available.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 – 26 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 3: Rio Grande Recreation Trail / Optional River Rafting**

Today, you ride the length of the Roaring Fork Valley, almost entirely on a car-free recreation path. Over the course of 44 miles, you'll enjoy a gentle downhill ride along the Rio Grande Trail, descending about 2,100 feet past breathtaking red canyon cliffs. Along the way, feel free to pause for lunch in the laid-back mountain town of Carbondale, nestled at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Crystal Rivers.

Your ride ends in Glenwood Springs at the historic Hotel Colorado. Though its guest rooms are modest by modern standards, the hotel offers a rich history and charming setting ideal for our short stay.

This afternoon, you may opt to raft the Colorado River on an easy float trip—at your own expense. This excursion lasts about three hours and is subject to seasonal availability. Advance booking is required; please refer to your “Know Before You Go” email (sent 75 days prior to departure) for reservation instructions.

After a rewarding day amid Colorado's natural beauty, enjoy dinner on the hotel's private terrace. Later, stroll across the pedestrian bridge to downtown Glenwood Springs—just minutes away—for live music and local ambiance under the stars.

### **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—and follow it 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. Spanning more than two city blocks, it has drawn visitors since Glenwood Springs first appeared on the map. This is the perfect muscle-soothing pause, as you've now reached the midpoint of your cycling week.

Alternatively, choose to cycle east directly from your hotel onto the Glenwood Canyon Trail, a magnificent car-free path that cuts through a towering gorge. The Colorado River is your constant companion as you follow a gentle uphill grade, 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 to Vail.

A short shuttle then brings you to your final destination of the week—Vail Village. This iconic resort town sings with Colorado splendor. Mountains rise in every direction, and Gore Creek winds through the cobblestone streets of the charming pedestrian village. Enjoy a warm-up ride along the Gore Creek Trail before lunch and a sampling of local craft beers at your hotel.

You'll check in to your delightful accommodations just steps from the base of Vail Mountain. Opened in the 1960s as one of Vail's first great European-style lodges, the Tivoli Lodge has since been completely reimagined. Today, it offers modern comforts while preserving the Tyrolean charm, ambiance, and hospitality that made it a local favorite. Dinner is on your own tonight, with many excellent options along the village's pedestrian lanes. On many Wednesday nights in June, July, and August, Vail Valley Music Festival events fill the town with live music and energy.

### **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: relax with a soak in the soothing hot springs or cycle east from Glenwood Springs on the car-free Glenwood Canyon Recreation Trail. Unlike previous days, today's ride features a gradual uphill climb as you ascend through the dramatic canyon landscape. In the afternoon, enjoy a scenic spin along the Gore Creek Trail—the perfect way to get acquainted with the charming streets and surroundings 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 in every direction. You'll enjoy a downhill ride to Copper Mountain Village, followed by a more gradual descent to Frisco, a quaint small town with inviting cafés and unique shops. Your final stretch follows the tranquil Dillon Reservoir and leads you into Breckenridge, home to the largest historic district in Colorado. Take time to explore "Breck," enjoy lunch, and browse the scenic main street.

Shuttle back to Vail for a leisurely afternoon to further explore the town. This evening, celebrate your Colorado cycling tour with 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 and scenic descent to Copper Mountain Village, then on to the town of Frisco. From there, you may shuttle to Breckenridge or continue riding along a paved, car-free bike path past the scenic Dillon Reservoir. This final stretch includes a moderate climb as you make your way into town.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 – 22 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 6: Your VBT Vacation Ends

Enjoy a final breakfast at the lodge before bidding farewell to your trip leaders and fellow travelers.

VBT has arranged a shuttle departing at 9:00 a.m. to Eagle County Regional Airport (EGE), also known as Vail/Eagle Airport, located in Gypsum, Colorado—approximately 30 miles west of Vail. The shuttle is scheduled to arrive at the airport around 10:00 a.m. For optimal convenience, we recommend booking flights that depart no earlier than 11:30 a.m.

For guests who drove to the tour's starting point or need to return to Aspen, VBT provides transportation to the Rio Grande Parking Garage in downtown Aspen. This shuttle also departs Vail at 9:00 a.m. and is expected to arrive in Aspen around 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.