

Big Sky Back Country Byway

Under Wide Open Skies



3 Days/2 Nights

Gateway City: Glasgow, Montana



It's Big Sky Country with no tall buildings and not many people either. Vast plains go on for miles. And so does the famous Montana wide-open sky. The beauty of the place is astounding, yet the story of the Big Sky Back Country Byway is even more interesting. Before the United States and Canada had a defined border, explorers, fur traders, and settlers moved back and forth between what is now two countries. French Canadian fur traders from the Hudson Bay Company traveled to Montana and married into the Native American families who had migrated from Minnesota. Settlers had more interactions with Saskatchewan than they did with American cities further south. Today, the Big Sky Back Country Byway is part of a route from Saskatoon that served as the major trail between the two, and ultimately became part of a longer route that carried adventurous Canadians to Yellowstone National Park. Descendants of the French Canadians who married Native Americans, referred to as Metis, are still part of a unique culture that has thrived through the centuries and carries on their traditions in the region. In fact, a portion of the route further north is called the Louis Riel Trail, in honor of the Metis leader who was hanged for treason for trying to keep his people and their land intact. In some places, the landscape along this traditional trail which also links the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, is punctuated with badlands and buttes. Several interpretive kiosks along the way tell the story of the original road and the people who passed this way. The area is also home to age old dinosaur bones, buried by the same natural upheavals that occurred all throughout the West.



Touring the Byway

We recommend beginning your trip in Glasgow, where you can visit the Valley County Pioneer Museum and enjoy a sip of authentic root beer or cream soda. Then it's off to the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, the second largest refuge in the United States. The Fort Peck Recreation Area and the Pines Recreation Area are the only two areas of the refuge that can be reached by car. The remainder is only reached by boat or on foot. Because the Refuge is so big, you should be prepared for a variety of conditions. Many of the roads are "primitive" requiring a high clearance vehicle and/or four-wheel drive. During wet weather, most are impassable. Temperatures can reach 100°F in the summer so carry plenty of water with you. Cell phone service is sporadic. Even so, it is well worth the trip to view this beautiful place.

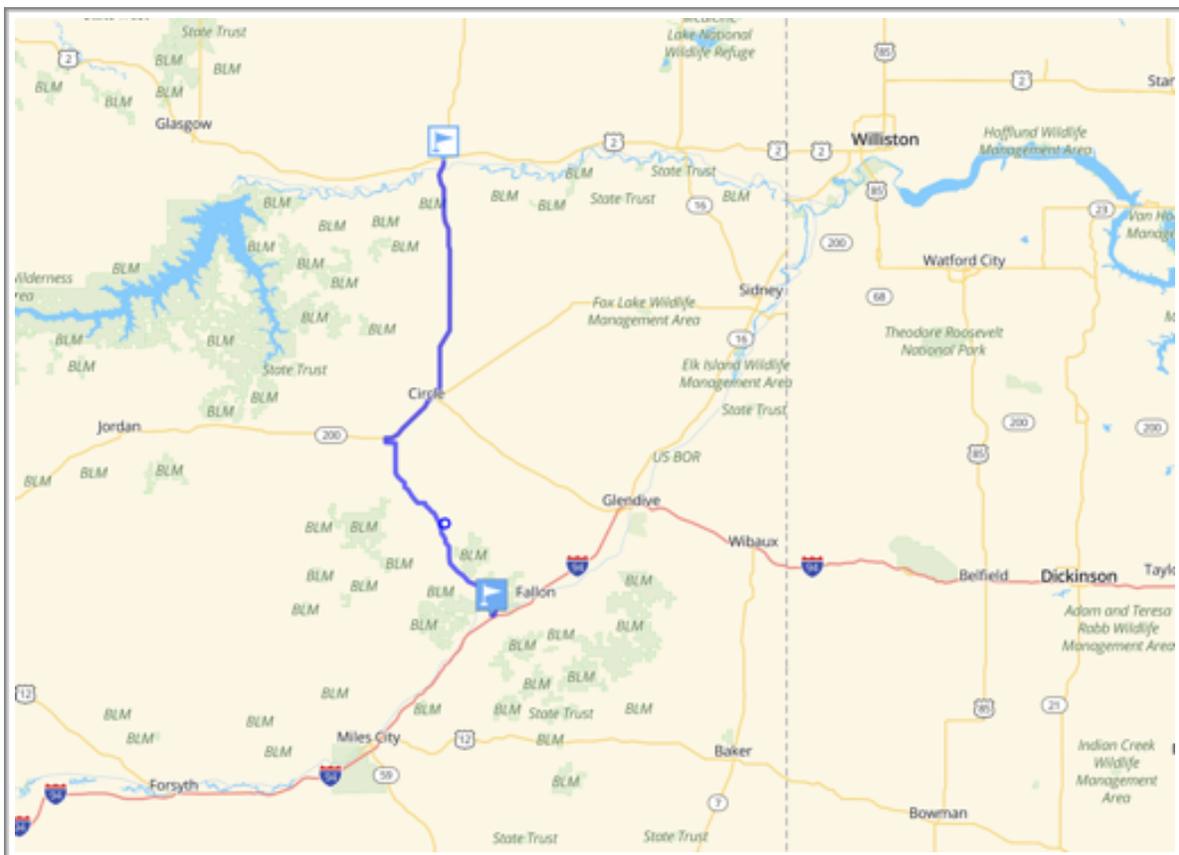
Leaving the Refuge, it's on to the Fort Peck Wildlife Station, the Fort Peck Dam, and the Fort Peck Interpretive Center. Be sure to check out the weekend afternoon productions at the Fort Peck Summer Theater. Catch some lunch in Fort Peck before moving on to Wolf Point, where you can tour the Wolf Point Area Museum, located on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, and the Wolf Point Historical Society.

After an overnight at the Sherman Inn, and a visit to the Wolf Point Area Museum, cross the Lewis and Clark Bridge, which until the 1930s, was the only bridge over the Missouri River for 350 miles. Once on the Big Sky Back Country Byway, you'll pass through Circle, where you can visit the McCone County

Museum, and then Brockway, before reaching Terry, home to the Terry Badlands just north of town.

The Terry Badlands Overlook is reached by turning right off the Byway onto Scenic View Road. A high clearance 4-wheel drive vehicle is recommended on the 5.5-mile primitive road. The Calypso Trail can be reached by traveling west out of Terry on Old Highway 10 for approximately 2 miles, turning right, or westward, on Milwaukee Road, and driving over the one-lane bridge across the Yellowstone River. A kiosk about a half mile past the river marks the beginning of the Calypso Trail. In Terry, explore the Prairie County Museum/Evelyn Cameron Gallery and stop at the antique shop in the Historic Kempton Hotel.

And then, it's on to Glendive where, after a stay at the Astoria Hotel and Suites, you can explore prehistoric Montana at the Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum, the Frontier Gateway Museum, and Makoshika State Park, where fossil remains are still in place. From there, we wish you safe passage if you're traveling another Montana Scenic Drive, or a safe and pleasant journey home.



DAY ONE



Glasgow

The Glasgow area was home to Native Americans, buffalo, and pronghorn antelope, for centuries before Lewis and Clark passed through in 1805. The town was founded in 1887 by railroad magnate James Hill and named when he spun the globe and his finger landed on Glasgow, Scotland. After having surrendered their lands in 1885, Native Americans in the area were ultimately moved to the Fort Peck Reservation in 1888.

Pioneer Museum of Valley County

Explore the country's largest collection of Assiniboine tribal artifacts, plus railroad and agricultural items, information about the construction of the Fort Peck Dam, and the visit of Lewis and Clark to the area. The museum also has an extensive library filled with books about Montana and Valley County, and others by Montana authors.

54109 US Highway 2, Glasgow, MT 59230, 406-228-8692, May-Aug M-Sat 9AM-5PM, Sept-Oct W-Sat Noon-4PM, Adults \$3

Busted Knuckle Brewery

Stop by this garage turned microbrewery to taste their authentic root beer or cream soda that has been shared with people from over 40 American states and several foreign countries.

303 First Avenue South, Glasgow, MT 59230, 406-228-2277

Destination Distinctive Retail

Wheatgrass Arts & Gallery 523 Second Avenue South, Glasgow, MT 59230, 406-230-0148
Works by local and regional artists.

Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge

The nearly 1 million acres of the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge honors the colorful Montana favorite son who painted the refuge's expansive badlands, cottonwood river bottoms, forested coulees, sagebrush steppes, and mixed-grass prairies, and espoused a conservation ethic way ahead of his time. The area has changed little since Lewis and Clark passed through. Elk, mule deer, pronghorn and bighorn sheep, sage and sharp-tailed grouse, and bald eagles can be seen within the native prairie, forested coulees, river bottoms, and "breaks" badlands. Fort Peck Field Station Visitor Center, 270 Montana Highway 117, 406-526-3464, M-F 9AM-5PM



Fort Peck

Fort Peck was planned by government engineers as the headquarters for construction and operation of the huge Fort Peck Dam in 1933.

Fort Peck Dam and Reservoir

Montana's largest lake was created in 1933 by the 3.8-mile dam built across the Missouri River, now the largest embankment dam in the United States. The 5th largest man-made reservoir in the world has more shoreline than California. A scenic overlook just east of the dam offers views of Fort Peck Lake and interpretation of Lewis and Clark's visit here. 406-526-3411

Fort Peck Dam Interpretive Center

Explore the history of the area from dinosaurs to dam building, and view fish from the reservoir in two large aquariums.

157 Yellowstone Road, Fort Peck, MT 59223, 406-526-3493, Memorial Day-Labor Day, F-M, 9AM-4PM

Destination Distinctive Dining

Gateway Club Restaurant, Bar and Casino 6001 South Highway 24, Fort Peck, MT, 59223, 406-526-3557 American Pub and Bar

Stillwater Brew 9 Stillwater Road, Fort Peck, MT 59223, 406-526-7033

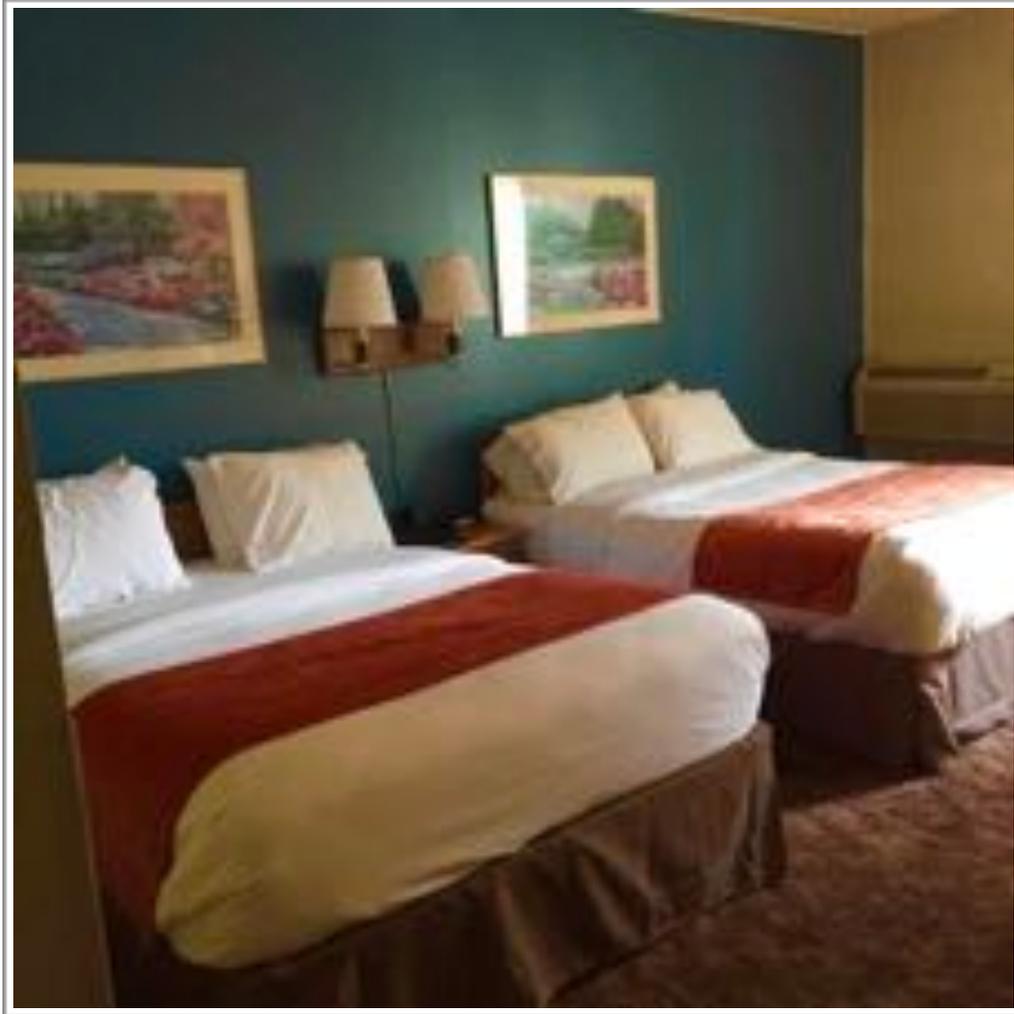
Fort Peck Summer Theater

The US Army Corps of Engineers built this theater to entertain the workers who built the Fort Peck Dam. The labor-intensive project crafted in the New Deal arts and crafts tradition, with elaborate, decorative appointments including hand-crafted light fixtures, a beautiful weathervane, and the architect's original drawings. In its heyday, movies ran around the clock.

201 Missouri Avenue, Fort Peck, MT 59223, 406-526-9943

Wolf Point

The largest town on the Fort Peck Reservation, Wolf Point began in the 1860s as a trading post for farmers and ranchers. It is now home to the Dakota-Lakota-Nakota (Sioux) and Dakota (Assiniboine) nations in the region. The town hosts the i Wild Horse Stampede, called the "Granddaddy of Montana Rodeos" every year in July.



Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Sherman Inn 200 East Main Street, Wolf Point, MT 59201, 406-653-1100

Book into one of 44 rooms, dine in the dining room, and relax in the lounge and casino.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Old Town Grill 400 US Highway 2, Wolf Point, MT 59201, 406-653-1031

Try the Stampede Special California Smashed Burger Deluxe or other great American choices.

Missouri Breaks Brewing 326 Main Street, Wolf Point, MT 59201, 406-653-1467 Using only the highest quality hops and other ingredients, Dr. Z and Katy have crafted the ultimate Stout, IPA, Scottish Ale, Wheat, and trademark Big Beaver Belchin' Ale.

Destination Distinctive Retail

Lorene Hintz Watercolors 210 East Johnson Street, Wolf Point, MT 59201, 406-853-2250

Featuring scenes of rural Montana homesteads, barns, windmills, teepees, buffalo, and wildflowers by a local artist.

DAY TWO

Wolf Point Area Museum

This museum features antiques, heirlooms, and artifacts from early settlers and Native Americans who lived in the area, including Sherman T. Cogswell's 1910 cash register, antique printing presses, pendulum clocks, two 1890 Edison phonographs with cylinder records, an excellent arrowhead collection, and paintings by several local artists.

203 US Highway 2, Wolf Point, MT 59201, 406-653-1912, May-Sept M- Sat

Circle

Established in 1884, Circle takes its name from the circular brand of nearby Mabry Cattle Company Circle Ranch on the Redwater River.

McCone County Museum

More than 7,000 historic items including over 200 birds and animals displayed in their natural settings, eight cement dinosaurs, an old schoolhouse, church, homestead house, a Northern Pacific Depot and caboose, are on display.

1507 Avenue B, Circle, MT 59215, 406-485-2414, May-Sept 30, M-F 9AM-5PM

Brockway

Brockway, home to the Brockway Dairy Day Rodeo, one of the oldest rodeos in Montana, experienced an economic boom in the mid-1930s when it became a major shipping point for livestock and grain.





Terry Badlands

The Terry Badlands feature colorful banded cliffs and rolling prairie punctuated with sandstone bridges, spires, tabletops, buttes, and deep gullies formed by thousands of years of wind and water. Expect to see mule and whitetail deer, pronghorn sheep, elk, badgers, raptors, and reptiles.

Terry

Terry is located on the historic Yellowstone Road, developed by a group of South Dakota businessmen to create an automobile route across America. Planned from Massachusetts to the Puget Sound, the founders not only improved the road, they also produced maps and guidebooks, and promoted tourism, so successfully that Terry welcomed 85,000 visitors in 1925.

Prairie County Museum/Evelyn Cameron Gallery

The Prairie County Museum preserves the work of frontier photographer Evelyn Cameron who recorded the scenic badlands and pioneer way of life. The 1916 State Bank of Terry building in which the museum is housed is complemented by the only existing steam heated outhouse, a pioneer homestead, a Burlington Northern train depot and red wooden caboose.

101 Logan Avenue, Terry, MT 59349, 406-635-4040 M, W, F, 9AM-3PM, Sat-Sun 1PM-4PM. By Appointment Anytime

Destination Distinctive Dining

Roy Rogers Bar, Grill and Casino 205 Spring Street, Terry, MT 59349, 406-635-9913

Enjoy a whole range of choices from American and Mexican to seafood and downhome cooking.

Destination Distinctive Retail

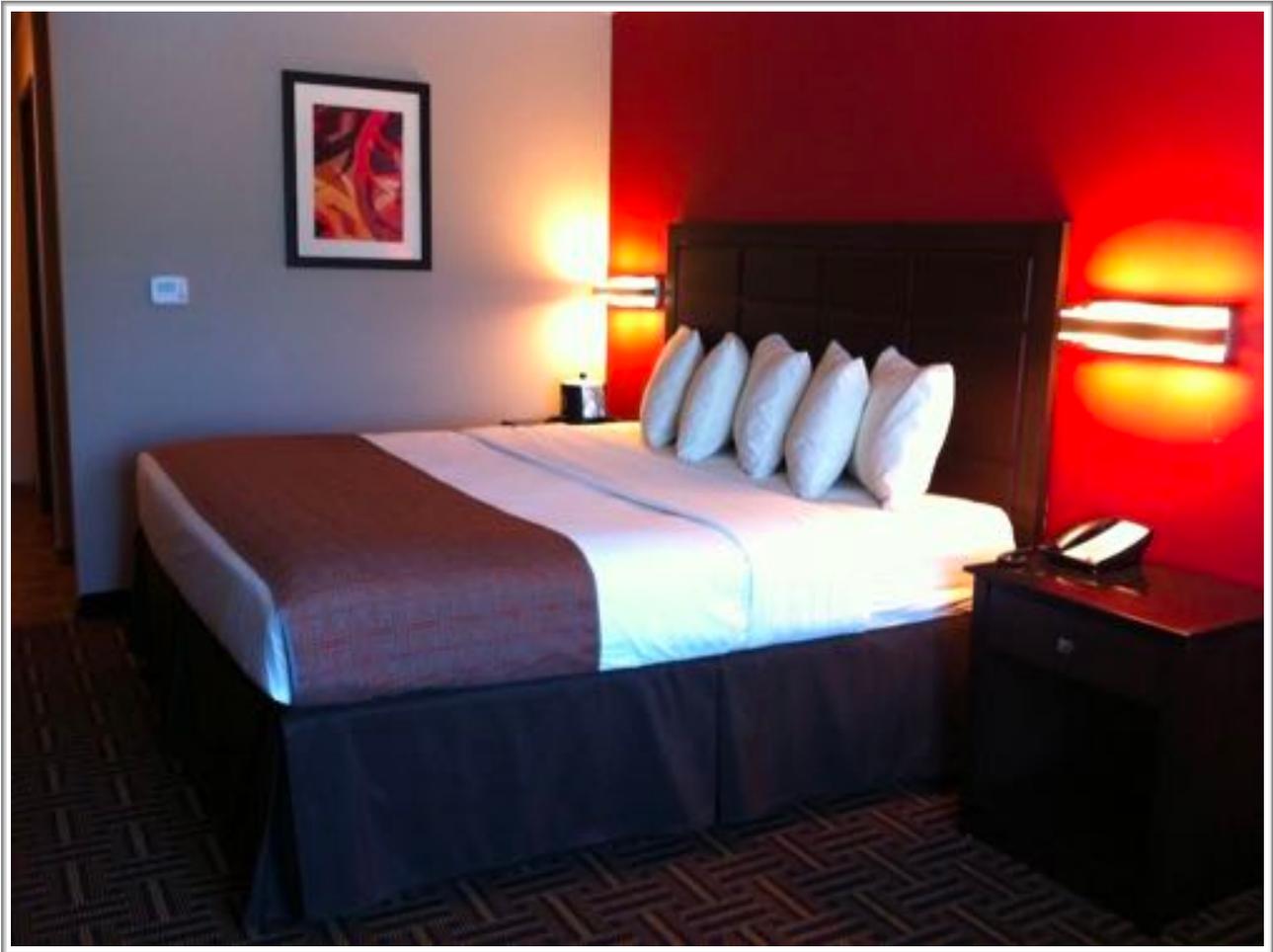
Prairie Unique 114 Logan Avenue, Terry, MT 59349, 406-635-5598 Selling distinctive items and treasures that are “Made in Montana.”

Historic Kempton Hotel Antique Shop 204 Spring Street, Terry, MT 59246, 406-635-5543 Built by homesteaders, the Kempton Hotel, which hosts the antique shop, is the oldest continuously operated hotel in Montana. Famous guests included Teddy Roosevelt and Calamity Jane.

Glendive

Tucked between the Badlands and the Yellowstone River, Glendive was established by the Northern Pacific Railway as part of the transcontinental route across the northern tier of the United States. Considered the hub of the rich inland agricultural area of eastern Montana and western North Dakota, Glendale is the ideal distribution location where the railroad met the Yellowstone River. One of the most impressive badlands areas in America, Makoshika State Park borders the southern edge of town.





Destination Distinctive Accommodations

Astoria Hotel & Suites 201 California Street, Glendive, MT 59330, 406-377-6000 Each room is equipped with a 42" TV and wireless high-speed Internet access. Continental breakfast daily. A pool, Jacuzzi, fitness room, and an outdoor patio with a gas barbecue and seating are available to guests.

Destination Distinctive Dining

Bloom & Vine 209 Gibson Street, Glendive, MT 59330, 406-365-2586

Specialty coffeehouse, eatery, and evening wine bar located in the charming 1913 Historic Glendive Greenhouse.

CC's Family Eatery 1902 North Merrill Avenue, Glendive, MT 59330, 406-377-8926

Destination Distinctive Retail

The Gallery 109 North Merrill Avenue, Glendive, MT 59330 Featuring drawings, paintings, sculpture, crafts, dance, drama, poetry, and literature.

Country Girl Clay 211 North Merrill Avenue, Glendive, MT 59330, 406-939-1926

Handcrafted pottery from a small Eastern Montana studio.

DAY THREE

Frontier Gateway Museum

Seven buildings are filled with fossils, Native American artifacts, items from homesteaders, cattlemen, settlers, and railroad memorabilia, spanning from prehistoric times to the 21st century.

201 State Street, Glendive, MT 59330, 406-377-8168 M-Sat 9AM-5PM, Sun 1PM-5PM

Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum

Stand in awe of more than 24 full-size dinosaurs, complemented with numerous fossils, the story of the origin of the geologic column, the fossil record, the age of the earth, and more.

139 State Street, Glendive, MT 59330, 406-377-3228, M-Sat 10AM-5PM, Adults \$8



Makoshika State Park and Visitors Center

The name Makoshika (Ma-ko'-shi-ka) is Lakota for 'bad land' or 'bad earth'. Here, Montana's largest state park features badlands that look like they fell from outer space, along with fossil remains of Tyrannosaurus Rex, Triceratops, and other prehistoric life. The Visitor Center has exhibits for all ages.

1301 Snyder Street, Glendive, MT 59330, 406-377-6256, Daily 7AM-10PM, \$8 per vehicle



Baisch's Dinosaur Digs

Since dinosaur bones begin to deteriorate within a few years of being exposed to air, there is the constant quest to find fossils before nature turns them to sand. You can help by playing paleontologist for a day to immerse yourself in a dinosaur dig for Triceratops, Edmontosaurus, and the elusive T-rex, on a privately owned ranch, within view of Makoshika State Park.

323 Rd 300 Glendive Street, Glendive, MT 59330 406-365-4133, Full Day \$120, Half Day \$80.