

# The Real America THE US ROCKIES

15 days/2500 miles

## MOTORHOME ITINERARY

This itinerary can be booked to start/end in **Denver** or **Salt Lake City** – simply re-arrange the campground bookings to fit. This tour is available mid-May to mid September

**Day 1** On arrival into Denver, make your way to the airport area hotel you have booked and enjoy a relaxing overnight stay.

**Day 2** Call Cruise America first thing to arrange the time for motorhome collection. Unless you have pre-purchased the 'Early Bird' departure special, you will make your own way by taxi to the rental office this afternoon. Once you have your motorhome, get yourself on to Interstate 25, heading north for Wyoming. Your drive is only 100 miles – long enough to get used to your motorhome but not too tiring. It is mainly freeway and it should take less than two hours to reach the old west town of Cheyenne. It is Wyoming's Capital and is a legendary 'cow town' and you may be surprised to see the Victorian brick buildings and not the wooden sidewalks you might have expected from the movies. Your campground tonight is the **Cheyenne KOA** which sprawls across the High Plains grasslands.



Mount Rushmore

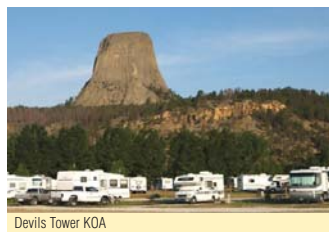
**Day 3** Head out early for the **Hill City/Mount Rushmore KOA** in South Dakota. The drive is about 295 miles and by lunchtime you should be at Hot Springs – and it is really worth spending a couple of hours in the natural but Olympic-size Evans Plunge indoor mineral pool and slides. Clear water, no chlorine, and a stone floor... pure magic. Leaving Evans Plunge you are 47 miles from your destination. Two heated pools, two spas, a 180ft waterslide, bike and paddleboat rentals, guided trail rides, minigolf... You name it they have it here. There is a nightly shuttle to the lighting ceremonies at both Mount Rushmore and the new, still under construction, Crazy Horse Monument – neither to be missed.

**Day 4** Only 54 miles today – so plenty of time to visit Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse in daylight. The destination today is the 'Black Hills of South Dakota' and 'Deadwood City' – where Kevin Costner bought a bar when he fell in love with the town during the making of the movie 'Dances With Wolves'. Visit the Historic Franklin Hotel for lunch before heading for the **Deadwood KOA** just a mile out of town. There is a free shuttle so once set up you can return and try your luck at one of the casinos, visit museums and goldmines and don't



forget to buy some Black Hills gold – a unique three shades are found here. Visit the graves of Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane too or just wander the sidewalks, and visit the bars, in this truly western town.

**Day 5** 19 miles into today's journey, you will come upon Spearfish Canyon – and it really is worth a stop, maybe for breakfast. Less than 100 miles in all today, and another hour will bring you to Devils Tower, the 1267 foot high monolith and America's First National Monument. The Tower was the star of the movie 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' and in case you've forgotten it, nightly showings of the film happen at the **Devils Tower KOA**, right at the entrance to the monument. It takes just over an hour to circle the base of the Tower and there are other, wider, trails you can take.



Devils Tower KOA

**Day 6** After a relaxed couple of days for the driver, mileage today totals 331 miles – but over half of that is on the Freeway so it is easy driving. Leave about 9am and arrive in the town of Sheridan, on the edge of the Bighorn National Forest, for lunch. Then cross through the forest and after about 140 miles, watch out for the **Cody KOA**, set in a grassy meadow just east of the town. A shuttle runs on summer evenings to the Cody Nite Rodeo.

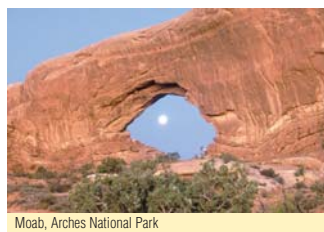
**Day 7** This morning, aim first for the Buffalo Bill Historical Center for an interesting view of the Old West through the eyes of this Wild West hero. Then head west again, about 50 miles, to the East Entrance of Yellowstone National Park. Depending how enthralled you are with Buffalo Bill, arrive into the Park about lunchtime and have the afternoon to

drive around the main driving loops. Don't miss Old Faithful – the geyser that sprays water into the air regularly throughout every day. You will enjoy animal watching too; if vehicles slow down in front, you can bet they spotted a moose amid the trees. As you exit through the West Yellowstone entrance and cross the Madison River, you will find the **Yellowstone Park KOA** about six miles ahead. Now time for a soak in the indoor pool!

**Day 8** Just 140 miles south today through Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park, following the line of the magnificent Rocky Mountains to your left and the Grand Tetons to your right. It is worth taking your time; the journey should take just over three hours. Overnight is at **Teton Village/Jackson West KOA** with the jagged peaks of the Grand Tetons' rising overhead. The Arnold Palmer Teton Pines Golf Course is just across the street; or take the Aerial Tram to the top of Rendezvous Mountain for a striking view of some of the West's most majestic scenery.

**Day 9** Just under 300 miles today and another six hour drive. Leaving Wyoming, you are headed south into Utah and famous Salt Lake City. A lot to see and do here but head first to the **Salt Lake City KOA** which is located just five minutes from Temple Square and the Family History Library. This is a must for a visit; it is the world's largest genealogy library, where you can trace your family tree.

**Day 10** National Parks again today as you head for the high-desert campground in the red-rock wilderness of east central Utah and the town of Moab, billed as the state's Adventure Capital. 280 miles through some



Moab, Arches National Park

Driving time: 54 hours (3.5 hrs per day average)

stunning countryside. Set off at 8am and arrive at today's destination by mid afternoon. Approaching the **Moab KOA**, Arches National Park is to your left and Canyonlands National Park is to your right just before you cross the Colorado River, where if you wish you can sign up for a guided rafting tour.

**Day 11** 128 miles today, so plenty of time for some more exploring in the National Parks before heading back into Colorado on the last stages of your roundtrip journey through four States. Overnight at the **Cortez/Mesa Verde KOA**, near the four corners where Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona meet. Mesa Verde National Park is famed for the 700 year old cliff dwellings in the canyon walls, so you must see them.

**Day 12** Today's 260 mile drive will take you through some amazing scenery including the San Juan scenic byway through the National Forest, where Mount Wilson rises 14,246 feet to your left. Drive on to Montrose, where you turn and head east along the Gunnison River. Watch out for the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument to your left and see the sheer rock walls plummet some 2500 feet to the River. Shortly you will cross the Blue Mesa Reservoir to reach the **Gunnison KOA** – home for tonight. Arriving just after 2pm, any way you turn from this campground leads toward spectacular scenery.



Royal Gorge excursion train

**Day 13** Only 2.5 hours driving today, 112 miles; you could arrive at the **Royal Gorge KOA** mid-morning. But on the way you will want to stop and visit the Royal Gorge itself, a 1000-foot deep granite chasm with an amazing bridge crossing the Arkansas River and, for the brave, an aerial tramway. When you arrive at the campground you will find a handy shuttle to take you to other nearby attractions – including the full-size Royal Gorge excursion train which takes a spellbinding ride as it slaloms alongside the River at the bottom of the Gorge.

**Day 14** 72 miles today before your first stop at Pikes Peak, which rises 14,140 feet, your first 'Peak' of the day! The second, Longs Peak, is 95 feet higher and its snowcapped top looms over the **Estes Park KOA**. Reaching here by early afternoon allows time to rent a bike and ride the five miles to the Rocky Mountain National Park where elk, bighorn sheep, moose and other wildlife abound. If that seems too much like hard work, drive the park's paved Trail Ridge, which crosses alpine tundra at more than 11,000 feet, providing panoramic views of the Rocky Mountains.

**Day 15** 70 or so miles and you will be back at Cruise America, and saying goodbye to your motorhome for yet another year.