



Plumtaw — Piedra Loop

35 Miles Round Trip

The Plumtaw Road is a Forest Service access road that begins near town. From Hwy. 160 turn north at the corner of Lewis Street near Subway, then an immediate left. At about ¼ mile take the right fork and follow 4 Mile Road (CR 400) about 8 miles. Take the left fork and follow the Plumtaw Loop road. It is substantially higher in elevation than most other back roads in the county and affords spectacular vistas and autumn colors. It is also the summer home for many deer and elk. Keep an eye peeled for grouse and turkey. Where the Plumtaw Road descends to the Upper Piedra Road you can continue your trip in two directions. If you turn right you will head towards Williams Creek Reservoir, a scenic high mountain reservoir with a reputation for good fishing, hiking and camping. If you turn left, you will head back towards Pagosa. On your way, where Piedra Road (CR 600) crosses the Piedra River, take a little hike (half-hour or longer) down the Piedra Gorge past caverns of maidenhair ferns and mini-waterfalls. The roads are suitable for all vehicles and this is a great route for viewing fall foliage.



East Fork of the San Juan River

10 Miles to Turnoff

This route is suitable for high clearance vehicles as far as Silver Falls, about 8 miles from Hwy. 160. Beyond Silver Falls, four-wheelers are recommended. From town start by traveling ten miles NE on Highway 160. Take a right at the gravel road signed: "Forest Service Access Road East Fork of the San Juan." The route goes through the East Fork Canyon and passes some dramatic "beehive" rock formations on the left. The Canyon opens up into a breathtaking mountain valley that is privately owned, but through which public access is permitted. At the upper end of this valley, there is a fork — stay left toward Elwood Pass. This route will take you past the historic Joe Mann Creek, the old Black Diamond Mine, over the Continental Divide and to the old mining town of Summitville. From there, one may return by (1) the same route, (2) go down Park Creek to Highway 160 and back to Pagosa Springs over Wolf Creek Pass or (3) proceed to Chama as detailed in Route #7.



Blanco Basin

8.5 Miles to Turnoff

This is one of the most scenic drives in the state of Colorado when fall colors are bright. The route is south on Highway 84 for eight miles to the Blanco Basin turnoff (CR 326). Follow the road to the head of the Basin and to many magnificent views of the Continental Divide, Square Top Mountain and Oil Mountain. For an even more spectacular side trip turn right onto Castle Creek Road, cross the Rio Blanco and proceed to the end of the road at Fish Creek, approx. 6 miles. The views are more than inspiring. Roads are all-weather and suitable for conventional vehicles. Return by the same route.



Pagosa Junction

45-50 Miles Round Trip

Go south on Eighth Street out of Pagosa Springs, turning right on Apache St. which becomes Trujillo Road (CR 500), through the early-day settlements of Juanita and Trujillo. See historic Pagosa Junction, in a landscape more akin to New Mexico than to Colorado. From there, the route goes up Cat Creek Gap (CR 700) past the now deserted Talian Mine and the Lone Tree Catholic Church, a landmark. You can return to Pagosa Springs on Highway 160, the Navajo Trail, stopping to view the historical Pfeiffer Memorial marker, the site of a duel between Indian tribes for the ownership of the famed Pagosa Hot Springs. The park is at the west edge of Pagosa Lakes' development. Continuing on CR500 will take you to Navajo Lake and Navajo State Park, which is left onto Hwy. 151. Or return to Pagosa Springs turning right onto Colorado Highway 151, past Chimney Rock Archaeological site, and connecting to US Highway 160. Roads are all suitable for conventional vehicles.



Mill Creek — Nipple Mountain Road

7/10 Mile to Turnoff
32 miles Round Trip

This route is suitable for all vehicles to the vicinity of Quartz Lake trail head. Four-wheel drive vehicles are required beyond that point. Turn onto Mill Creek Road just north of the County Fairgrounds from US Highway

84. At approx. 7 miles take the right fork and proceed east to the Nipple Mountain area, another 12 miles. The trip will provide a vast panorama of the upper San Juan Valley. Proceed through the saddle separating Oil and Square Top Mountains. From this vantage point you will be able to observe the Blanco Basin. The road dead ends at this point. Return by the same route.



Radio Transmitter — Continental Divide

22 Miles to Turnoff

Suitable for conventional vehicles and as close to the top of the world as you can get by vehicle in this area! Turn north off US 160 at the summit of Wolf Creek Pass, follow the road up to the transmitter site. A spectacular vantage point and a picnic area are provided at the topographical crest of the mountain.



Platoro — Cumbres Pass — Chama

18 Miles to Silver Falls,
10 Miles to Platoro

The trip to Platoro can begin as described in Route #2, turning south after crossing Elwood Pass. Another route to Platoro is to proceed NE from Pagosa Springs on US Highway 160, cross Wolf Creek Pass to Park Creek Rd. (approximately 6½ miles from the summit.) Turn south on Park Creek Road and proceed to Elwood Pass and south to Platoro. Take your fishing gear and enjoy some excellent fishing on the Conejos River which parallels your route south from Platoro. Upon reaching Colorado Highway #17, turn right and cross Cumbres Pass. You will follow the route of the Cumbres & Toltec narrow gauge railroad to Chama, New Mexico. From there it is only 48 miles back to Pagosa Springs via Highway 84. This is an exceptional route for observing the fall foliage. Except for the portion of the route crossing Elwood Pass, roads are suitable for conventional vehicles.

Note: Mileage is calculated from downtown Pagosa Springs and is approximate.