

THE
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SUMMER GETAWAYS



On the road
Mountain retreats
and romps to the rodeo

Around Colorado
7 chill hot springs
10 campgrounds with a view
15 spectacular summit hikes

Trips not to miss
Festivals, bike tours, wineries, farm
dinners — and staycation ideas



Andy Grosch hikes along the Palisade Rim trail with his dogs Kalty, in front, and Apollo, in back, in Palisade.

Helen H. Richardson, *The Denver Post*

Day 1: Drive and arrive

1. HIKE



After the drive, stretch your legs on the Palisade Rim trail. The trailhead is just off of Interstate 70, but the highway sounds will fade into the background as you weave up through the desert scrub, layered rock and funky formations toward the heights at Palisade's eastern end. Stick to the lower loop, which is 3.7 miles, or just go out and back as far as you'd like — and enjoy views of the river and the contrast of the lush valley on the return. (Mountain bikers and runners: Tackling the upper loop will add 5.6 miles to the lower loop.)

PALISADE
ELEV. 4,722 FT

2. DRINK



Palisade has more than 20 wineries, and choosing one is no easy task — each has its own character and flavor. For example: Maison La Belle Vie Winery (3575 G Road, 970-464-4959, maisonlabellevie.com) offers a relaxed slice of the French countryside; try the barbera and chill out in the lovely rustic tasting room or the shaded courtyard.

Just around the corner, Red Fox Cellars (695 36 Road, 970-464-1099, redfoxcellars.com) offers up tastings of old favorites, yes, but also adventurous reds aged in bourbon barrels, wine cocktails and cider flights in their modern tasting room and sunny deck.

Try others, too, but make sure you can still drive — you're not there yet.

3. STAY



The western end of Grand Junction's Main Street has three chain hotels that are hard to beat in terms of comfort and convenience — they make it a cinch to walk to shopping, coffee, dinner and drinks. (SpringHill Suites, Fairfield Inn and Hampton Inn, all in the 200 block of Main Street, downtown; additional fees for parking.)

4. EAT



Bin 707 Foodbar's (225 N. Fifth Street #105, 970-243-4543, bin707.com) knowledgeable staff serves up modern and often local cuisine paired with an extensive beverage program — and they're happy to help with the best pairing, whether it's a Western Slope or far-flung wine, or a sip from the thorough list of whiskeys. Just as many options for cheese and charcuterie. Settle in, you'll be here for a while, and that's a good thing.

Peachy-keen romp through Palisade

By **Jenn Fields** *The Denver Post*

If it's hot in the city, it's likely hot in Grand Junction, too. But with its verdant orchards, striking cliffs and — let's face it — flowing wine, the Western Slope is a world apart. Pack a bike and a sun hat, but leave space in the trunk for a crate full of peaches or cherries. You're unlikely to come home from this road trip empty handed.



Day 2: Palisade

Whether you're pedaling or driving Palisade's Fruit and Wine Byway, pack a lunch and bring a basket — you'll want something to bear the bounty of your day among the orchards, vineyards and farm stands. There are plenty of stops on the trail, but here are three to get you rolling. (visitpalisade.com/portfolio-item/fruit-wine-trail/)

1. FUEL

Those who prefer to head out for the day with a full stomach will do well to stop in Dream Cafe (314 Main Street, 970-424-5353, dreamcafej.com) for a plateful of standard but tasty breakfast fare.

2. VISIT THE FUZZIES

A visit to SunCrest Orchard Alpacas (3608 E. 1/4 Road, 970-464-4862, suncrestorchardalpacas.net) will probably be your cutest stop of the day. Owner Mike McDermott will happily introduce you to the herd, including the babies born this spring, and show you how their luxurious coats — technically, it's hair, but McDermott will explain that — become the soft fiber we love to wear. Kiddos can feed the gentle beasts, and grown-ups can buy an alpaca scarf knitted by one of the McDermotts (this, like many Palisade farms, is a family business) in the small store.

3. GATHER

The idyllic Sage Creations Organic Farm (3555 E. Road, 970-464-9019, sagecreationsorganicfarm.com) offers pick-your-own lavender (English variety available in June, but proprietor Paola Legarre grows more than 50 cultivars of lavender) and self-guided tours. But a closer look on a \$5 tour (kids 12 and under free) is advised since this is a corner of Palisade worth lingering in. Legarre also grows cherries, a variety of heirloom tomatoes (both plants and fruit) and other stand-out offerings that will pique gardeners' interest.

4. IMBIBE

The tasting room at Avant Vineyards (3480 E. Road, 970-216-9908, avantvineyards.com) isn't open daily, but that's kind of the point — this is a small-scale, personal experience. Neil and Diane Guard host tastings out of their walk-out basement, which opens onto a lush yard with views across the valley. Avant sits atop a cliff overlooking wetlands along the Colorado River, so birders, this could be your winery of choice. Bring binoculars for a better view of the eagles.



Mike McDermott, owner of SunCrest Orchard Alpacas, holds a newborn alpaca (at right) while it nuzzles another alpaca on his farm in Palisade. The farm specializes in alpacas, fiber processing and finished alpaca-fiber products. *Helen H. Richardson, The Denver Post*

5. OTHER IMBIBING

If wine's not your thing, Palisade's still got you covered. Pop into Palisade's well-loved Peach Street Distillers (144 Kluge Ave #2, peachstreetdistillers.com, 970-464-1128) or Palisade Brewing Company (200 Peach Ave., palisadebrewingcompany.com, 970-464-1462), which are coincidentally virtually next door to one another. Eat before you go or check their schedules for food truck options, this is a dangerous corner of town!

6. EAT


Wrap up your day back in Grand Junction at Il Bistro Italiano (400 Main Street, 970-243-8622, ilbistroitaliano.com) for proper Italian fare with a glass of vino (you haven't had enough!) or Rockslide Brewery (401 Main Street, rockslidebrewpub.com, 970-245-2111) if you're craving a cold one with good pub grub after a long day in the sun.




GRAND
JUNCTION
ELEV 4,583 FT

Day 3: Colorado National Monument


7. CAFFEINATE

 Trailhead Coffee Bar (413 Monument Road, trailheadcoffeebar.com, 970-314-3135) is on the way to your real trailhead and thus a convenient stop for your morning java. Grab a breakfast burrito, ask for waffles and berries or just go with one of the many tasty pastries. Gluten-free options are available and yummy. Community seating at this busy cafe ensures that you'll make friends quickly.


8. HIKE

 If you overindulged yesterday, get back on track with some exercise on one of the many of the trails at the popular Tabeguache/Lunch Loops trailhead as you can handle. (Un-missable trailhead on Monument Road, 1.6 miles south of Broadway. Map at: copmoba.org/trail-map-pdfs.) Early is best for a cool hike out on the vast desert landscape. Take the high routes for vistas of the layers of rock in all directions.

9. SCENIC DRIVE


 The Grand Junction entrance to Colorado National Monument is just a few more minutes down the road from the trailhead, and there's plenty to hike here, too. Take to the trails, or just enjoy the drive — it's truly grand to climb up to the cliff bands and then cruise along them, wondering at the canyons and rock towers, taking in the view. (\$10 per vehicle or \$5 per cyclist for those riding the monument, 970-858-3617 ext. 360, nps.gov/colm)

10. LEARN

 Okay, geology geeks, adults and children alike: After exiting the monument near Fruita, stop in at the Dinosaur Journey of the Museums of Western Colorado (550 Jurassic Court, 970-858-7282, museumofwesternco.com/dinosaur-journey/) to learn more about the dinosaurs that paleontologists have found in the area (many!) and dig sites in the neighborhood. And if you didn't already do this at the monument, learn

about what you've been seeing: displays at the museum explain the area's geology and I.D. the cliffs and rock layers visible all over the Grand Valley. (9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily in summer; \$9 adults, \$7 seniors, \$5 children)

11. EAT

 Fruita's Hot Tomato (124 N. Mulberry Street, 970-858-1117, hottomatocafe.com, closed Sunday and Monday) is really hopping during the peak season for mountain biking, in spring, but this tasty pizza joint is pretty much always a hot spot to grab a slice or a big salad and a beer.



Day 4: Drive home

Two and a half days isn't really enough, but if it's time to head home, make one more detour along the way by heading up to Grand Mesa. It's a land of lakes up here in the summer, and much cooler than it is down in the valley. Take in a hike, or just the sights, before heading back to I-70 via the wonderful, winding DeBeque cutoff.

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A mountain biker rides the trails in the Lunch Loops area near Grand Junction.

Helen H. Richardson, *The Denver Post*