



Montana's Basecamp for **Art & Adventure**

CM RUSSELL DRIVE

248 miles [400km] | 4 hours, 30 minutes

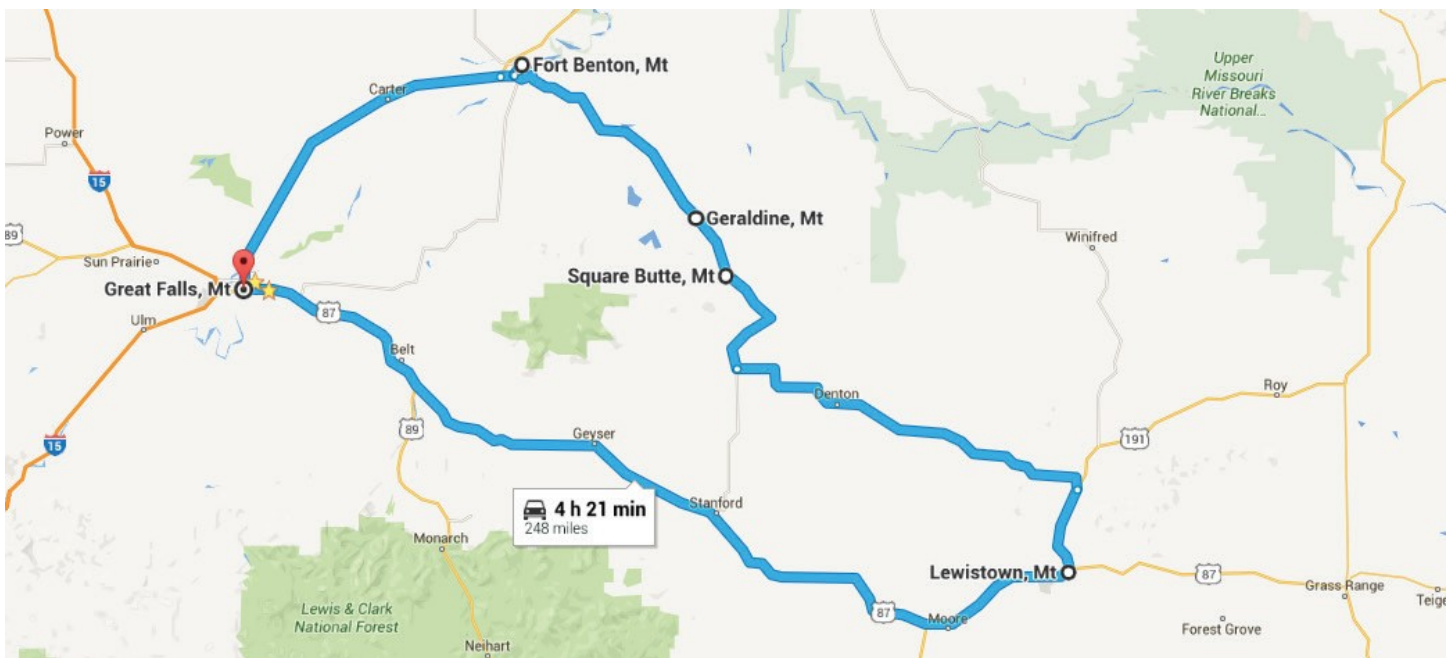
Take US 87 north of Great Falls to historic Fort Benton. Drive into Fort Benton, once the world's most inland port as steamships carried supplies up the Missouri River. There is fine dining at the Union Grille in the Grand Union Hotel and great home cooking at the Banque Club where the former bank vault is now the cooler. Try the Wake Cup for a yummy breakfast or lunch and of course, a good cup of coffee. You'll find history around every corner in Fort Benton so plan your drive with some spare time to enjoy what was once termed the "bloodiest block in the West."



Cross the mighty Missouri River on MT 80, drive past Geraldine and Square Butte. The little town of Square Butte to the eclectic Square Butte "Country Club" where you can find very unique art and there is usually a local on hand to chat with. You can see the iconic square butte for which the town was named and the Square Butte jail (quarried from local stone) as you drive this route. Take MT Highway 81 at the junction and drive to Lewistown, a community of about 7,000 people nestled between several island mountain ranges in the geographic center of Montana. Drive US 87 from Lewistown to Great Falls (about 100 miles). This route is designated as the CM Russell Trail. You'll pass many scenes from Russell paintings still visible today.

is home to find great food, with. You can see the iconic

There's a great side loop, about 25 miles and all paved from Hobson to Windham. In the middle of this loop is Utica and the Oxen Yoke Bar. The Ox serves a half pound burger and more fries in a basket than anyone should eat! Request a free copy of the CM Russell Auto Tour booklet (800-527-5348) that gives history of the area and great information about the western artist's paintings.





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LEWIS & CLARK DRIVE

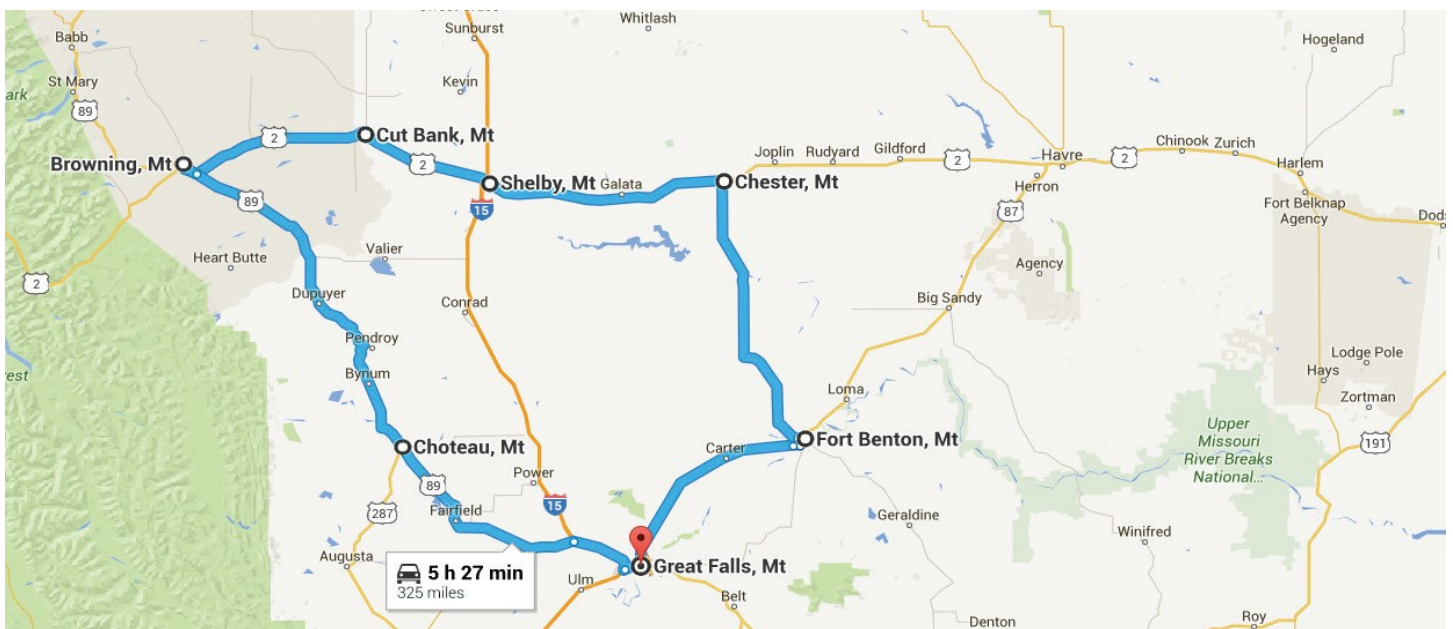
248 miles [400km] | 4 hours, 30 minutes

Drive US 87 north of Great Falls to Fort Benton, the birthplace of Montana. The Lewis & Clark Memorial stands on the levee in Fort Benton along with several museums covering the town's history. Take a tour of the Old Fort reconstructed on the original site and experience everything from a blacksmith shop to Native American culture to fur trade information. Stroll along the levee and think of the Lewis & Clark expedition paddling up this river. Be thankful for modern transportation!

As you drive from Fort Benton to Chester on MT 223 you'll pass the site of two separate Lewis & Clark campsites. Near Chester and Lake Elwell you'll see interpretive signage about the Lewis & Clark expedition. In Chester, turn west on US 2 and drive to Shelby, Cut Bank and toward Browning. Between Cut Bank and Browning is an interpretive marker about Lewis & Clark's Camp Disappointment. From Browning, take US 89 south. Just north of the junction of US 89 and MT 44 is another historic marker detailing the Meriwether Fight Site near here. This was the only hostile encounter with Native Americans on the Lewis & Clark expedition.



As you continue south on US 89 back to Great Falls, you'll be driving parallel to the spectacular Rocky Mountain Front through the charming rural towns of Dupuyer, Bynum (Two Medicine Dinosaur Center), Choteau and Fairfield. You'll be very thankful if you remembered to bring your camera!





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MOUNTAINS TO WIND TOWERS DRIVE

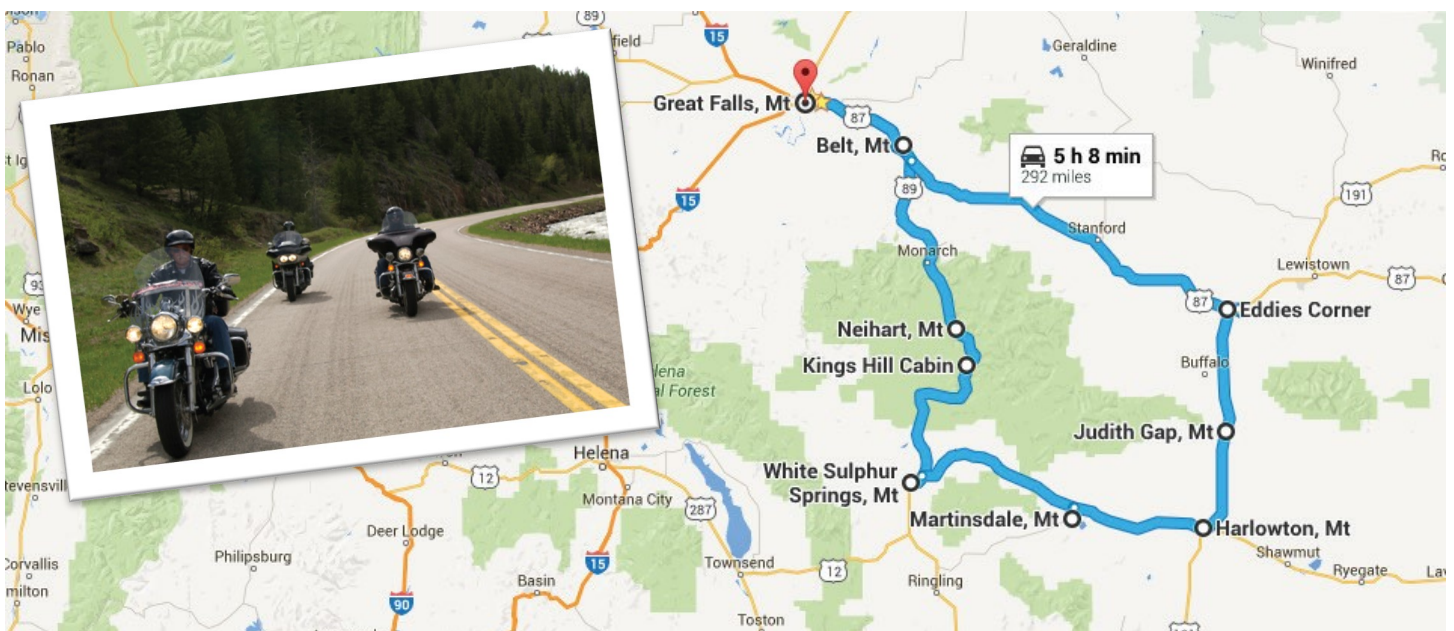
292 miles [488km] | 5 hours, 8 minutes

Drive 25 miles east from Great Falls on US 87 past Belt and turn south onto US 89 at Armington Junction rest area. The next 71-mile stretch is dubbed the Kings Hill Scenic Byway. You'll drive through the charming mountain towns of Monarch and Neihart, cross Kings Hill Pass, and into White Sulphur Springs. There are hot springs here and the water heats one large outdoor pool and two smaller pools. You don't need to be a motel guest to soak, just pay a small fee and enjoy the thermal waters. White Sulphur Springs features a unique Castle Museum built as a home by an early day resident.

After you've enjoyed White Sulphur Springs, drive about 3 miles back to the junction of US 89 and 12. Drive east on US 12 for 30 miles and take the turn to Martinsdale. In one mile you will see the Bair Museum, open for tours during the summer. Charles Bair was a sheep rancher, and his daughters left the home and its furnishings for the public to enjoy. The Bair ladies traveled abroad extensively and the house grew larger to accommodate their collections.

If you drive one more mile to the town of Martinsdale, the Crazy Mountain Inn there has been voted the best pie stop in Montana! Order the sour cream lemon. Backtrack to US 12 and then drive another 25 miles to Harlowton. Enjoy the E-57B electric train engine display while you sip java at Snowy Mountain Coffee and visit the Milwaukee Depot for some railroad history. The Upper Musselshell Museum in Harlowton showcases dinosaur history with the Avaceratops Lammersi found nearby.

At the junction for Harlowton turn north on US 191 driving past 90 wind towers to Judith Gap. Continue driving to Eddies Corner at the junction of 191 and US 87. Turn west on US 87 and about a quarter mile from this turn is a unique Amish grocery store and deli called Big Sky Grocery, well worth a stop. Drive back toward Great Falls. Foodies and beer lovers take note and plan time for built-to-order sandwiches with great ales and porters at the Belt Creek Pub about 25 miles before you reach Great Falls. The beer is brewed locally in the town of Belt at Harvest Moon Brewery.



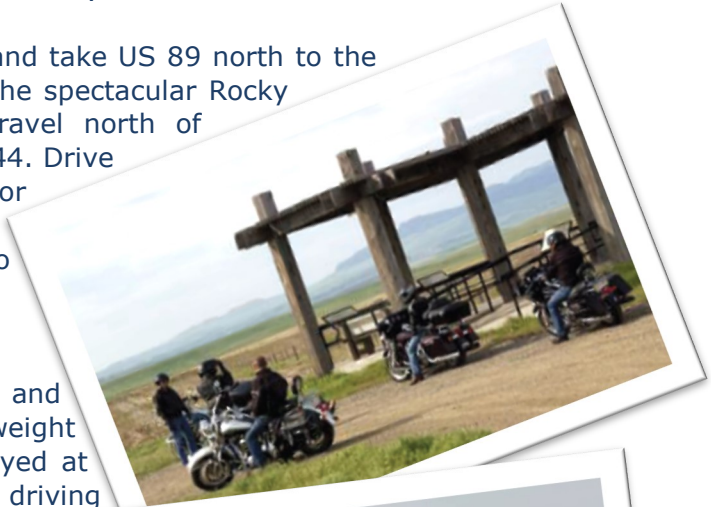


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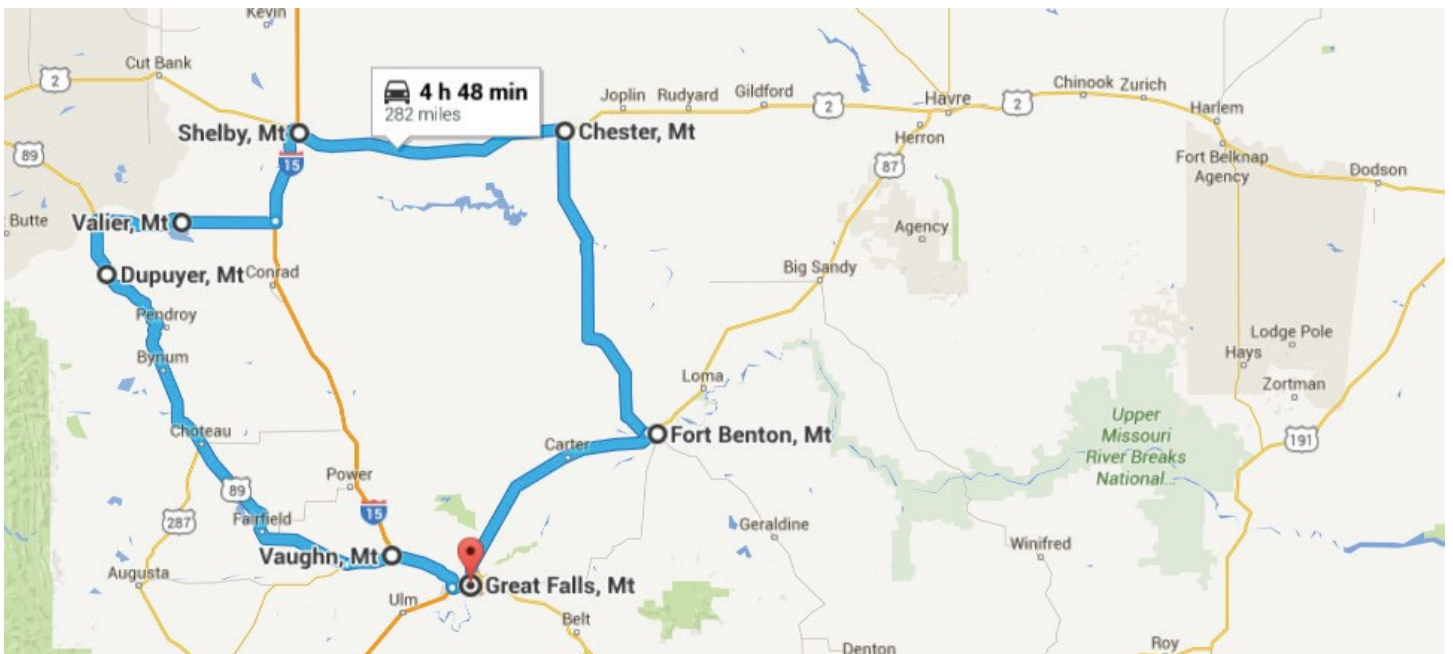
PLAINS & PEAKS DRIVE

282 miles [478km] | 4 hours, 45 minutes

Drive from Great Falls on I-15 North, turn at Vaughn, and take US 89 north to the small town of Dupuyer. You will be driving parallel to the spectacular Rocky Mountain Front, locally referred to as The Front. Travel north of Dupuyer about 10 miles, turn east toward Valier on MT 44. Drive by Lake Frances although you may want to stop in for dinner at The Lighthouse Restaurant. Continue driving on MT 44 to I-15, then turn north for a short drive to Shelby.



Boxing enthusiasts will want to see the boxing gloves and other memorabilia from the Dempsey-Gibbons heavyweight championship fight held here in 1923. They are displayed at the Marias Museum of History located in town. Continue driving on US Highway 2 east to Chester. Locally made gifts are for sale at the Liberty Village Arts Center and you'll need plenty of time to learn area history with a visit to the well-cared for Liberty County Museum. Drive south on MT 223 through what is called the Golden Triangle (for all of the wheat grown here) to the junction of 223 and US 87 near Fort Benton, then drive US 87 back to Great Falls.





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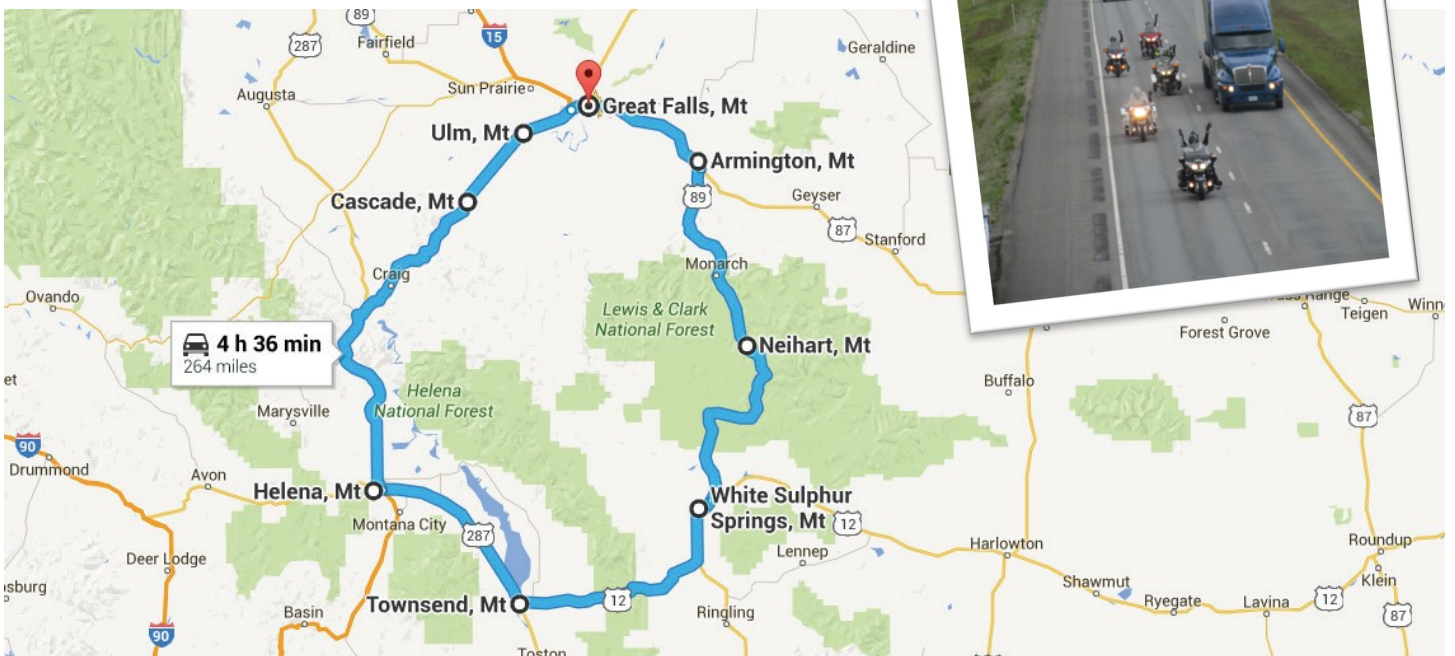
SCENIC BYWAY DRIVE

264 miles [450km] | 4 hours, 30 minutes

Drive about 25 miles east from Great Falls on US 87 past Belt, turn south onto US 89 at Armington Junction rest area. The next 71-mile stretch is dubbed the Kings Hill Scenic Byway. You'll drive through the charming mountain towns of Monarch and Neihart, cross Kings Hill Pass, then into White Sulphur Springs. There are hot springs here and the water is used at the Spa Hot Springs to heat one large outdoor pool and two smaller pools. You don't need to be a motel guest to soak, just pay a small fee and enjoy the thermal waters. If you forgot your swimming suit you can even rent one! This town features a unique Castle Museum built as a home by an early day resident.

Continue traveling about 36 miles to Townsend on US Highway 12 through the Big Belt Mountains and a scenic canyon, then to Helena on US 287. From Helena to Great Falls you can take I-15 and the frontage road. The terrain on this 90-mile route will amaze you with rocky cliffs, grassy mountains and the Missouri River. The canyons through Prickly Pear Creek display millions of years of breathtaking glacial erosion and seismic evolution. For a break, stop in and enjoy the locally owned shops and eateries in Cascade, about 25 miles southwest of Great Falls.

14 miles from Cascade near the town of Ulm is First People's Buffalo Jump State Park. The park is 4 paved miles from Ulm and there is a visitor center at the base of the buffalo jump. It's well worth the 4 miles off the highway to learn about Native American culture before the introduction of horses and firearms. Drive back to the frontage road and take the final 11 miles of your journey into Great Falls.





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THE COWBOY DRIVE

139 miles [230km] | 2 hours, 30 minutes

Cattle ranching and the cowboy way of life will be seen as you drive from Great Falls to Vaughn on I-15, then turn onto MT Highway 200 to Simms, then MT 21 to Augusta. The small town of Augusta has everything from a cappuccino bar in an eclectic gift store called Latigo & Lace, to a general store. A gathering place for locals, Chubbie's Diner, will satisfy just about any ice cream craving you have.

From Augusta, drive north on US 287 to Choteau and drive up Main Street where the highway splits and goes around the Teton County courthouse. Delightful shops, a great variety of home cooking restaurants, and a nice museum complex (Old Trail Museum) will make you want to stay here awhile. Once you've experienced Choteau, drive south on US 89 past Freezout Wildlife Management Area, through the town of Fairfield, then into Great Falls. Augusta, Choteau and Fairfield all have great locally owned shops, lodging and cafes for a taste of true Montana hospitality. Enjoy the drive and visit with the locals!

