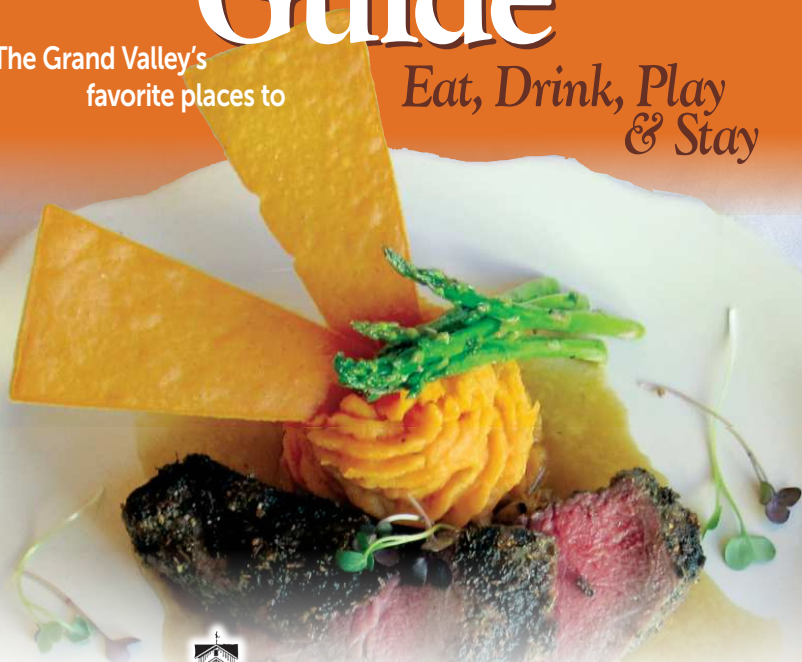


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Sage Rubbed Grilled Elk Loin
Recipe on page 25.

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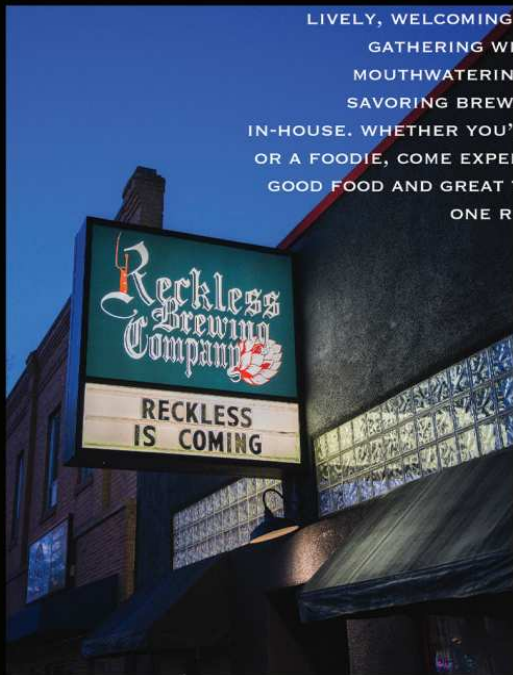
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>>EXPLORING THE COLORADO<<

National Monument

by Savannah Nelson

The Colorado National Monument is one of the Grand Valley's must-see natural wonders in Grand Junction. The Monument spans over 20,500 acres of rugged landscapes and terrain, with red rock formations, iconic canyons and sweeping desert views.

The Monument is open to visitors and ready to explore. It's accessible by car, hike, bike and camp, with lookouts, trails and a welcome center. There are entrances in Grand Junction and Fruita; passes are paid for at the entrance station by credit card, cash or check and are good for seven days.

For first-time explorers, a drive along Rim Rock Drive offers a 23-mile scenic introduction to the Monument's dramatic views. The road curves through the heart of the Monument, with designated pull-offs at viewpoints like Cold Shivers Point and Grand View, perfect for admiring the panoramic surrounding vistas and looming rock formations.

There are also hiking trails for all experience levels. Beginners should head to Window Rock trail for a leisurely walk with great canyon views. More experienced hikers will enjoy Monument Canyon Trail, which has up-close views of Independence Monument, towering 450 feet tall. The Coke Ovens Overlook is another must-see point, with incredible views of the rock dome formations. Liberty Cap Trail, one of the more difficult options, yields high effort and reward: a trip to the top of a massive rock formation towers over the Monument with extraordinary views.

Wildlife viewing opportunities are available even from the comfort of a vehicle, with easy-to-spot views of bighorn sheep, deer and golden eagles in their natural habitat. The Monument is home to a rich desert ecosystem, with native plants like juniper trees and desert wildflowers.

Even with limited time, visiting the Colorado National Monument—with its natural beauty and rugged adventure—is a must.



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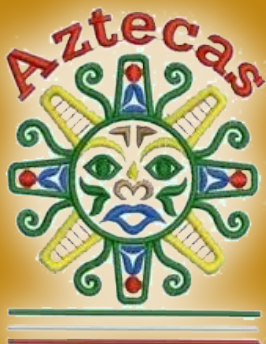
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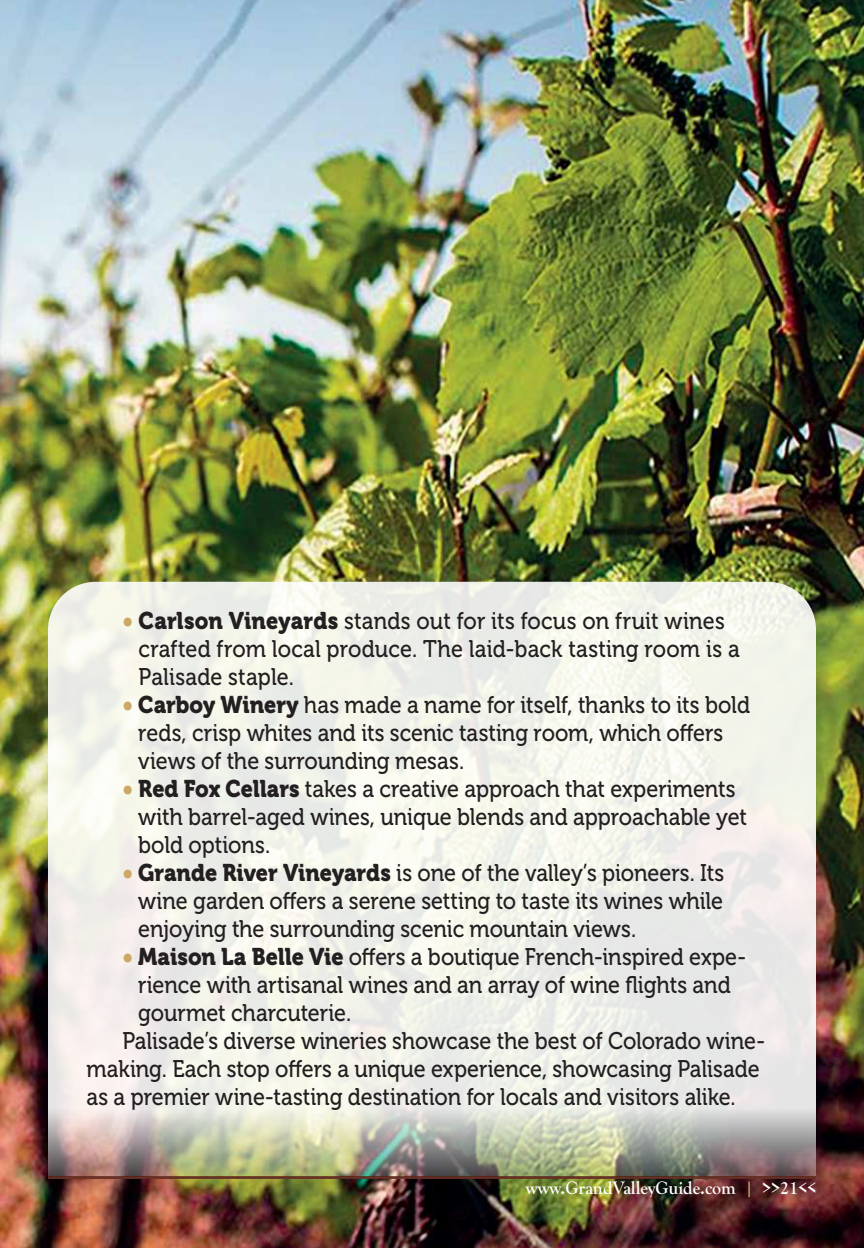
>>OPTIONS ABOUND IN PALISADE<<

by Savannah Nelson

There is no shortage of wine-tasting options in Palisade—plenty of spots to fill your glass, swirl for legs, sniff for aromas and sip an array of reds, whites, roses and blends.

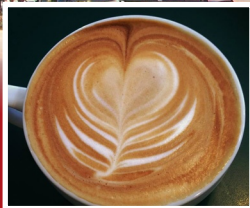
Here's a guide to some must-visit wineries in Palisade.

- **Restoration Vineyards** is known for its commitment to sustainable practices and meticulously crafted wines. The relaxed, welcoming atmosphere allows visitors to savor their wines while taking in panoramic views of the valley.
- **Bookcliff Vineyards** offers a taste of both reds and whites crafted with grapes grown across its Colorado vineyards. Its tasting room showcases the best of Palisade, with local cheese and chocolate pairings.
- **Sauvage Spectrum** has gained attention for its innovative approach, particularly with sparkling wines and varietals. Known for its vibrant tasting room and wine flights, this is a fun stop for those eager to try something unique.
- **The Ordinary Fellow** blends old-world winemaking with modern touches, housed in a renovated historic firehouse.

- 
- **Carlson Vineyards** stands out for its focus on fruit wines crafted from local produce. The laid-back tasting room is a Palisade staple.
 - **Carboy Winery** has made a name for itself, thanks to its bold reds, crisp whites and its scenic tasting room, which offers views of the surrounding mesas.
 - **Red Fox Cellars** takes a creative approach that experiments with barrel-aged wines, unique blends and approachable yet bold options.
 - **Grande River Vineyards** is one of the valley's pioneers. Its wine garden offers a serene setting to taste its wines while enjoying the surrounding scenic mountain views.
 - **Maison La Belle Vie** offers a boutique French-inspired experience with artisanal wines and an array of wine flights and gourmet charcuterie.

Palisade's diverse wineries showcase the best of Colorado wine-making. Each stop offers a unique experience, showcasing Palisade as a premier wine-tasting destination for locals and visitors alike.

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Sweet Potato Masher & Tuile* Crisp Preparation

Sweet Potato Masher Recipe

Ingredients

- 3 sweet potatoes, baked

- 3 tablespoons butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

Sweet Potato Masher Recipe Method

Bake sweet potatoes in medium oven until soft, for 30 minutes to 1 hour depending on size. Peel hot potatoes into bowl, add 3 tablespoons butter salt and pepper to taste. Whip in food processor or with mixer until light and fluffy.

Sweet Potato Tuile* Crisp Garnish

Take one baked sweet potato and peel while hot. Add to food processor with one tablespoon butter, pinch of salt and pinch of cinnamon. Puree until smooth. Using a stencil, spread the mixture on a silicone mat. Bake in 200° oven for about 2 hours until crisp.

**Tuile is a baked wafer, French in origin, usually arched in shape as a garnish to a dish.*



>>COVER RECIPE<<

Sage Rubbed Grilled Elk Loin



Recipes by Chad Griffith, Executive Chef
Wine Country Inn | Palisade, Colorado

Elk Loin Preparation

Elk Loin Sage Rub Ingredients

- ½ cup dry sage
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1/4 cup onion powder
- 2 tablespoons dry mustard
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons black pepper
- Mix all dry items

Elk Loin Preparation Method

Clean, trim and proportion elk loin into 6 oz. steaks. Rub elk loin generously with sage rub. Coat with a little oil for grilling. Grill elk evenly until the internal temperature reaches 110° degrees. Remove from grill and rest for 5 minutes. Slice and serve with sweet potato masher and fresh mushroom demi-glaze.

Product Sources

- Elk loin provided by Kinikin
Located in Montrose, CO
- Mushrooms provided by Monumental
Mushrooms, Palisade, CO
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>>COLORADO MOUNTAIN<<

Winefest

by Savannah Nelson

The Colorado Mountain Winefest is a local celebration of wine that originated in Palisade in 1992 and has become a vibrant tradition yearly. It's the state's oldest and largest wine festival, bringing together vintners and wine lovers from near and far as an ode to Colorado's booming wine industry.

This annual celebration transforms Palisade's Riverbend Park into a site for wine tasting each September as the ultimate event of Colorado's Wine Week. The Colorado Association for Viticulture & Enology (CAVE) organizes the festival, bringing more than 50 wineries from across Colorado and giving winemakers a unique platform to showcase their creations.

Attendees can participate in tastings across the spectrum of Colorado wines (and beyond), from reds to whites to unique blends. In addition to drinking the wine, Winefest is also a source of education: there are workshops, seminars and guided tasting sessions designed to deepen understanding of wine production, the industry and tasting techniques. Whether a wine connoisseur or a casual wine drinker, there's something for everyone's tastes at Winefest.

In addition to wine, there are also hands-on experiences to enjoy, like grape-stomping, live displays and exhibits, cooking demonstrations and tours. It's an immersive experience of the entire winemaking cycle, from vine to bottle.

Winefest is also a celebration of Palisade—a festival that showcases the community's local producers. The event has food vendors, artisan booths, live music performances and partners with Colorado Mesa Tech's culinary program. Local businesses lean into Wine Week, offering events, specials and tours, spreading the joy beyond the event.

Colorado Mountain Winefest is a celebration of Colorado's growing wine industry, which has flourished due in part to the region's unique climate, growing conditions and enthusiasm to create and share. It's an accumulation of local agriculture, community and the joyful artistry of winemaking in Colorado.



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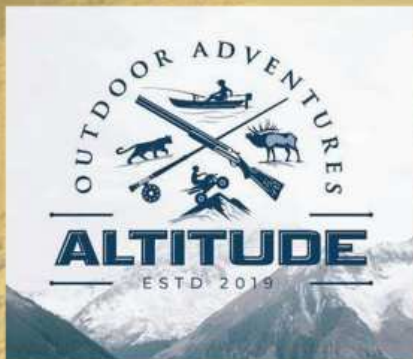
The facilities were astounding! The staff went out of their way to make sure we had a great time. Highly recommend this resort, whether you're looking to relax on a beautiful lake or do some adventuring around the mesa.

- Shel



I recently had the pleasure of staying at Mountain Top Resort on the Grand Mesa, and it was an unforgettable experience. The luxury cabins are beautifully designed, offering stunning views that make you feel truly immersed in nature. During our stay, we booked an ATV tour, and it exceeded all our expectations. Our guides were incredibly knowledgeable and skilled, ensuring we felt safe throughout the journey. When the rain started, they quickly found shelter and even built a cozy campfire, turning an unexpected situation into a memorable moment. The sights we encountered were breathtaking, especially a crystal-clear lake that left us in awe.

- DeAnna



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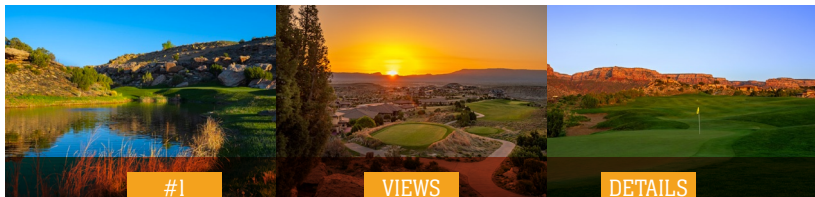
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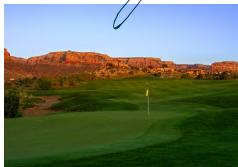


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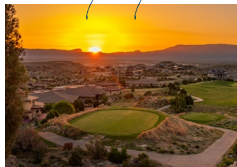
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There are places to ice fish, snowshoe and cross country ski trails that loop the many lakes, skiing and snowboarding at Powderhorn, and even sledding at the "old powderhorn" - a well-maintained old hill that is perfect for smaller children. Mesa Lodge and Powderhorn Resort are always full of people. With its evergreens and aspens, the Mesa is a drastically different landscape from all the other surrounding mountains in the Grand Valley such as the Book Cliffs as well as the Monument which are more sandstone and dry. This is just another demonstration of the wondrous diversity and outdoor accessibility the western slope offers year around.

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RV Parks & campgrounds

by Amy Bradley

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>>10 FAVORITE<< Local Hikes

by Savannah Nelson

The Grand Valley has vast geological and high-altitude desert features to explore, its diverse terrain perfect for hiking. Here are ten favorite local hikes to check out in the Grand Valley.

1. Mt. Garfield Trail
3.4 miles, hard

Known for its steep climb and iconic views of the Grand Valley, the Mt. Garfield Trail is short, demanding and sweet.

2. Kodel 1 Loop
2.1 miles, easy

Kodel's Canyon, located near the West Entrance to the Colorado National Monument, is a quick,

easy and peaceful hike perfect for spotting resident bighorn sheep.

3. Monument Canyon Trail
11.6 miles, hard


This out-and-back trail weaves and passes iconic rock spires like Independence Mountain, with elevation gain and great views.

4. Riverfront Trail
22 miles, easy

This system of interconnected trails follows the Colorado River, offering leisurely options for walking, biking and birdwatching.

5. Serpents Trail
3.8 miles, moderate

Dubbed "the crookedest road in the world," this out-and-back



Colorado National Monument trail has 16 switchbacks and stunning overlooks.

6. Devil's Kitchen

1 mile, moderate

Devil's Kitchen leads to a large rock grotto in the Colorado National Monument, perfect for a quick adventure.

7. Palisade Rim Trail

3.3 miles, moderate

This multi-use trail towers above Palisade, with rewarding views of vineyards, orchards and rock art along the path.

8. Mica Mine Trail

2.7 miles, easy

Located in Bangs Canyon, this

out-and-back trail leads to an old mica mine with remnants of glittering mica scattered around.

9. Ribbon Trail

6.7 miles, moderate

Ribbon Trail is a trek through slick rock landscapes and vibrant desert scenery in Bangs Canyon.

10. Liberty Cap Trail

7 miles, difficult

Starting in the Colorado National Monument, this challenging hike rewards with sweeping valley views and towering rock formations.

Each trail offers a distinct perspective on Grand Valley's stunning landscapes, ready to explore.

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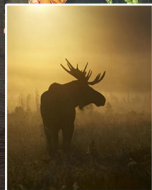
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Western Colorado has so many beautiful landscapes and corresponding activities. The rivers, for example, provide both calm stretches for paddle boarding and rapids for the more adventurous kayaker or rafter. Grand Junction itself, is named for the area in which the Colorado River joins the Gunnison, while the western slope as a whole has many other rivers, including the Yampa, White River and San Juan.

Many reservoirs have also created areas for an abundance of outdoor activities such as water skiing or tubing. Blue Mesa is by far the largest of these, outside the town of Gunnison at a size of over 940,000 acre-feet – nearly twice as large as the next largest. And always remember to stop and enjoy the scenery around the river valleys. Some are absolutely gorges!



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>>HISTORY OF<<

Palisade Agriculture

by Savannah Nelson

Western Palisade has an agricultural legacy known far and wide as the heart of Colorado's wine country and "The Peach Capital of Colorado." This is thanks to the Grand Valley's fertility, geology and climate conditions, which have produced a range of iconic fruits since the late 19th century. Settlers discovered the area's potential assets for farming: abundant sunshine, warm days, cool nights.

In the 1880s, irrigation canals transformed the arid high desert into productive farmland. This addition allowed pioneers to cultivate orchards of peaches, apples and other fruit while the natural terrain absorbed warmth and protected crops from freezes. By the early 20th century, Palisade became widely known for its high-quality peach crops.

The climate, a 182-day growing season, and an average of 78 percent sunshine have made Palisade home to over 500,000 peach trees. Thanks to its fruit-growing prowess, Palisade has also been called "The Banana Belt."

In addition to fruit orchards, Palisade expanded its agricultural diversity over the decades, including viticulture.

Colorado's first recorded wine production was in 1890 when Colorado Governor George A. Crawford planted 60 acres of wine grapes above Palisade. By the 1970s, vintners experimented more with grapevines. The success of these early efforts led to the establishment of several wineries, making Palisade the epicenter of Colorado's wine industry.

Today, the Grand Valley is home to some 1,000 acres of vineyards and over two dozen wineries. The local vineyards produce 90% of the grapes used to make Colorado wine.

Palisade's agriculture has continued to evolve, with a modern focus on sustainable practices and organic farming. The town's annual Peach Festival, Lavender Fest and Colorado Mountain Winefest celebrate its agricultural bounty, keeping Palisade's traditions alive and celebrating its local producers and businesses. As a result, Palisade stands as a testament to the enduring relationship between land and community.

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