

ROAD TRIPS TO RICHES

Don't spend your next long weekend on your couch. Get out there and find your adventure.



GLENDIVE, MONTANA

WHAT YOU'LL FIND DINOSAUR BONES

Not every treasure glitters and gleams. In the Badlands of Montana, a few miles from the town of Glendive, Baisch's Dinosaur Digs offers visitors an opportunity to discover and take home with them the fossilized remains of long-extinct life-forms, including Tyrannosaurus Rex and Triceratops. Anyone not afraid to spend the day in the dirt under a blazing sun may discover the foundation for their own Jurassic Park.



HIDDENITE, NORTH CAROLINA

WHAT YOU'LL FIND EMERALDS

In the foothills of North Carolina's Brushy Mountains lies the small town of Hiddenite, which contains the country's only emerald mine open to the public: Emerald Hollow Mine. Despite the name, the mine is still packed with other rare gemstones such as sapphires, garnets, amethysts and emeralds (of course). Thousands of weekend gem hounds flock to the mine, which is open from 8:30 a.m. until sunset most days of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Hopefully, the company of friends and loved ones on those holidays will be enough of a treasure.



FROM LEFT: JOHN REDDY/ALAMY; CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/MCT/LANDOV



MURFREESBORO, ARKANSAS

**WHAT YOU'LL FIND
DIAMONDS**

Arkansas may not be the first place that leaps into mind when you think of places to look for diamonds, but the Natural State is home to the only place on Earth proven to produce diamonds where the public can (legally) keep the stones they find. The Crater of Diamonds State Park caters to its visitors by renting all the necessary equipment, and treasure hunters have put it all to good use: In June, visitor Bobbie Oskarson uncovered a 8.52-carat diamond.



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: STEFAN JANNIDES/REDBRICKS/STOCK.COM/ALAMY; MICHAEL SNELL/ALAMY; JOE DEVENNEY/ALAMY; BETTY SEDERQUIST/CITIZEN OF THE PLANET/ALAMY



COLOMA, CALIFORNIA

**WHAT YOU'LL FIND
GOLD**

Curious gold-seekers can make the pilgrimage to the origin of one of the country's biggest rushes in Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. The site of James Marshall's historic discovery still contains some gold, and the helpful guides and easily accessible panning lessons make it a great first-time venture for would-be prospectors.



BYRON, MAINE

**WHAT YOU'LL FIND
GOLD**

Along the Swift River in Coos Canyon, amateur prospectors are able to find gold among the natural beauty of the northeastern United States. People first discovered gold in the area in the 1840s, and you can still rent or buy basic equipment, such as gold pans, at a small shop called Coos Canyon Rock and Gift. Anyone finding a gold nugget 3 grains or larger gets the added bonus of getting their picture placed in the shop's Big Nugget Photo Album.



Gold Panning 101

The time-honored basics of getting gold.



1 PICK YOUR GROUND
Look for a place where the water is moving swiftly enough to stay clear from the dirt and debris you'll stir up. You don't want to miss a nugget among the murk. But water moving too fast can splash into the pan and take gold along with it.

2 GET YOUR SCOOP
Dip your pan into the water and fill it about halfway with earth. While the pan is still submerged just below the ridge, shake it vigorously to get the heavier material (called black sands) to settle toward the bottom of the pan.

3 SHAKE IT
Take the pan out of the water, but keep the liquid in your pan along with the earth. Now tilt your pan forward and gently shake it side to side so that whatever gold you've collected will get trapped on the ridges (called riffles) in your pan. Now you need to wash the material.

4 WASHING UP
You should have the forward edge of your pan poised above the water's edge. Slowly dip the pan in and out of the water to wash away worthless, lighter material still collected in the pan. Take your time until all that is left in your pan are the black sands and the gold.

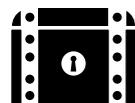
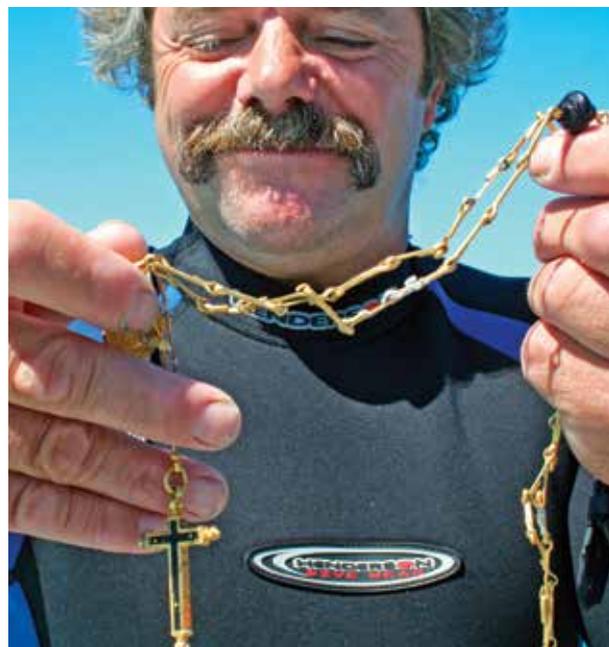
5 EXTRACTION
All that's left now is for you to separate the gold you've collected from the heavy black sand. Some people use a snuffer bottle to suck up the precious material, while others opt for a specialized gold magnet. Whichever method you choose, enjoy your haul of the metal!



A young man dives into the Swift River of Coos Canyon, Maine. The pristine waters make this swimming hole a treasure in and of itself.

“ Along the Swift River in Coos Canyon, amateur prospectors are able to find gold among the natural beauty of the northeastern United States.”

ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP IMAGES



KEY WEST, FLORIDA

WHAT YOU'LL FIND TREASURE

The recent discovery of about \$1 million-worth of gold coins and other artifacts by the Schmitt family off the coast of Florida has reminded the world of the treasures hidden beneath the ocean's surface. Anyone who wants a taste of the adventure and elation experienced by the Schmitts can head to Key West and sign up for a vacation with Mel Fisher's Treasures. Named after the famed treasure hunter who discovered the wreckage of the 1622 Spanish galleon *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, the company offers tourists dives to the wreckage of the Atocha, where they can still retrieve any valuables they're lucky enough to find.



PHILIPSBURG, MONTANA

WHAT YOU'LL FIND SAPPHIRES

Located 22 miles west of an old mining village overflowing with small-town charm, Gem Mountain has a full-time staff who relieve visitors of the burden of breaking and sorting through the larger rocks. Instead, daytrippers get right down to washing the gravel in search of precious sapphires. They even have their own heat-treating furnace on hand to brighten the colors of any stones you deem worthy of the small expense.

DENVER, COLORADO

WHAT YOU'LL FIND GOLD

Nestled in the mile-high capital of Colorado is Goldstrike Adventures, an organization dedicated to bringing aspiring prospectors and golden treasure troves together. Depending on how much you want to lose yourself to gold fever, you can opt to either pan for the element with simple tools or use the latest mechanized suction dredges of a minted millionaire, you'll strike it rich with the memories of the beautiful scenery of the Colorado countryside.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: SHUTTERSTOCK; HO/REUTERS/LANDOV; THOMAS LEE/ALAMY; TIM FITZHARRIS/MINDEN PICTURES/NEWS.COM



BIG SUR, CALIFORNIA

WHAT YOU'LL FIND JADE

One of the most valued and beautiful stones produced by the Earth, jade can be found amongst the breathtaking scenery of California's Big Sur. Treasure hunters not scared of getting a little wet can dive into the ocean around Jade Cove in search of the gem. Those who want to keep their feet on solid ground might still be able to find some jade pebbles along the shores of the beach.