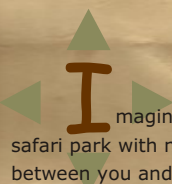


My Bike Journal

a permanent on the Colorado front range

Glen Haven Gallivant

by Susan Plonsky



Imagine cycling through a safari park with nothing but thin air between you and roaming animals - that's the Glen Haven Gallivant permanent in Colorado.

The route starts in the rolling foothills east of Boulder, and like all randonneurs, we start in the early morning. Prairie dogs are just getting up and there are dozens of them in the horses' fields, each by their own holes. Some are standing and yawning, some are munching.

In less than 2 hours we arrive at the foot of the mountain and the entrance to St Vrain Canyon. A sign says "In case of flood, seek higher ground." To the right and left are rugged cliffs of stone. I have no climbing skills and I'm sure as heck not going to leave my bike behind.

I have a couple hours to think about my flash flood strategy until we summit at the town of Estes Park. Elk roam at will, grazing on front lawns and tourists bring out their lawn chairs and watch.

Beyond Estes Park, Rocky Mountain National Park looms



When You Go

Route: Glen Haven Gallivant Permanent
Start: Louisville, CO (off US 36 between Denver & Boulder)

Distance: 201 km

Pay off: Wildlife - Don't forget your camera.

Climbing: 6,500 vertical feet. Ride starts at 5,400 feet above sea level.

higher still. I'm grateful to make our descent, down the switchbacks called Devil's Gulch, and to the general store checkpoint in Glen Haven. The cinnamon rolls are so large some patrons need a doggie bag.

We continue to descend into Big Thompson Canyon where traffic stops to watch big horn sheep on the cliffs beside the road.

Once off the mountain we are again among fields of horses and cows. A flock of Canada geese are flying low into the sunset. A few geese are honking, as if to say "We've got a gap in the peleton. Tighten up!" ▲