



DAY TRIP TO NEVADA CITY

From Ennis · Madison County, Montana



GOLD MINING



Photo: Tumbleweed1954, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

OPEN IN SUMMER

State-owned open-air museum, run by the Montana Heritage Commission. Open daily in summer, from about Memorial Day to Labor Day; paid admission.

Nevada City is a summer day trip from Ennis, half an hour over the hills on MT 287. Spend the morning in the open-air museum, then ride the Alder Gulch Shortline a mile and a half up the gulch to Virginia City. The museum and train are closed now: when we checked on October 21, 2026, the museum page still showed the 2025 season, so confirm next summer's dates before you go.

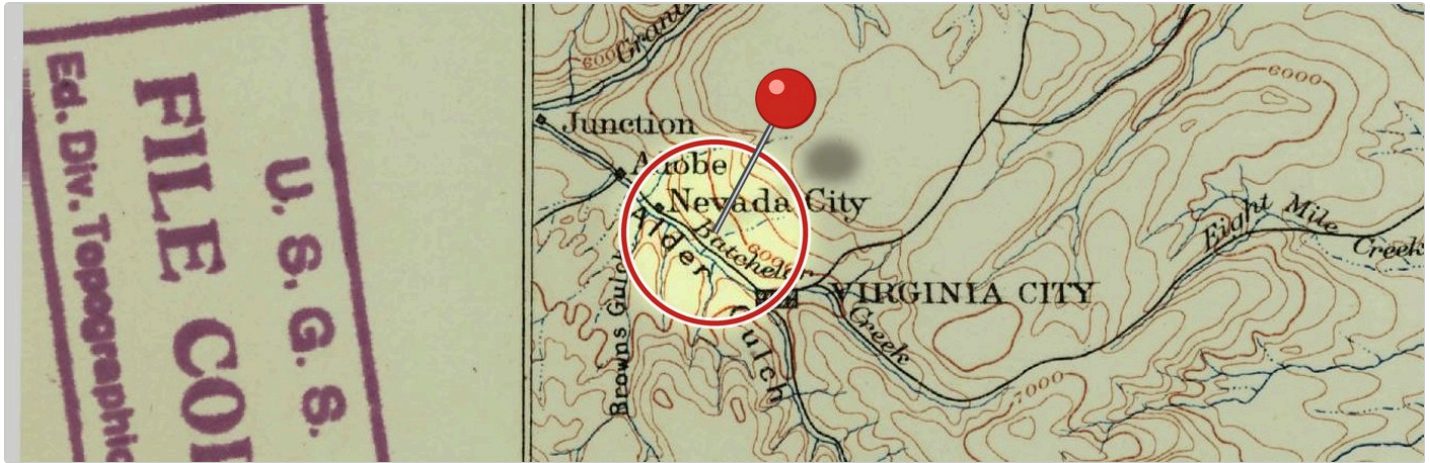
A SAMPLE DAY

- ☐ 9:30 a.m. Leave Ennis on MT 287 over the hills, through Virginia City and down Alder Gulch, about half an hour.
- ☐ 10 a.m. The museum opens. Start with the music machines at the entrance, then walk the streets of moved-in buildings and Chinatown.
- ☐ 12:30 p.m. Lunch, then cross to the Bovey Visitor Center for the train to Virginia City.
- ☐ Afternoon Walk Virginia City's boardwalk, then ride the train back. The 2026 schedule listed departures until 6 p.m.
- ☐ 4:30 p.m. On the drive home, stop at the free outdoor mining exhibits and the Mount Vernon Dredge on MT 287 between the two towns.

Coming from Bozeman? It's about 1 hour 45 minutes by MT 84 and US 287. Leave by 8:15 a.m. to be there at opening.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The Nevada City Hotel.** It faces MT 287 with the Star Bakery beside it. Shoot the row from across the highway.
- **The train.** Catch it leaving the Bovey Visitor Center, or ride it and film the gulch from the car.
- **Living history.** Weekend interpreters in period dress make good video. Ask before close-up portraits.
- **The Mount Vernon Dredge.** A big dredge on the west side of the road between the towns, with mining equipment around it.
- **Drones.** The Heritage Commission's pages don't mention them. The museum is state property, so ask the office first.



USGS topographic map, 1888 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	16 mi, about 29 min each way from downtown Ennis. From Bozeman: 69 mi, about 1 h 43 min.
OPEN	The Heritage Commission's season runs Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. The museum page still shows 2025 (May 24 to September 1); last entry is at 5 p.m.
ADMISSION	2025 rates: adults \$10 on weekdays, \$12 on weekends and holidays; youth 4 to 11 and seniors 65 and over \$8 and \$10; 3 and under free.
TRAIN	In 2026 the Alder Gulch Shortline ran daily from May 23 to September 7, about 15 minutes each way, \$10 adult round trip. Tickets are sold in person only, and it doesn't run in bad weather. It leaves from the Bovey Visitor Center, across from the museum entrance.
RESTROOMS	Four outhouses in the museum, and public restrooms on the south side of the Bovey Visitor Center.
FOOD	The Heritage Commission's pages list no food at Nevada City. Bring a lunch or look in Virginia City.
LIVING HISTORY	Interpreters on Saturdays and Sundays in season. The weekly schedule goes up on the museum's Facebook page.
CONTACT	Montana Heritage Commission, 406-843-5247.
WEBSITE	virginiacitymt.com/Experience-The-Old-West/Nevada-City-Museum-and-Music-Hall

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Keep out of unstable buildings and off fenced ruins.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 45.30750, -111.96800 • 45°18'27"N
111°58'05"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/montana/nevada-city/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.