



# DAY TRIP TO ROCHFORD

From Hill City · Pennington County, South Dakota



GOLD MINING

## NEAR-GHOST TOWN

A tiny living community on public roads. Legends of America and a 2026 Islands.com article put the population at about 10; Wikipedia says 25. The Moonshine Gulch Saloon posted a live-music night in October 2026.

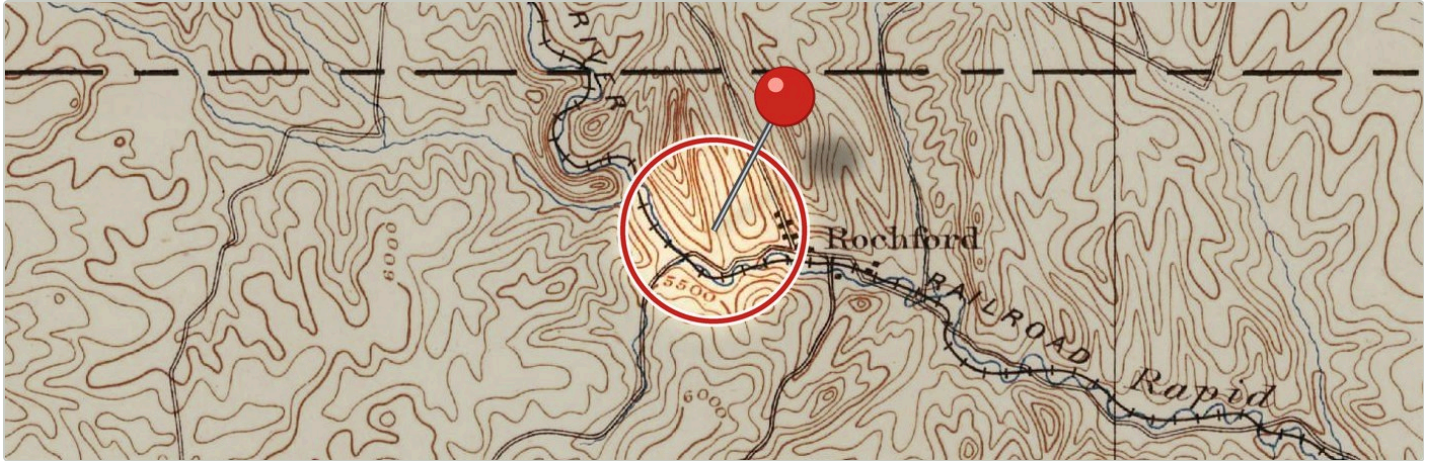
Rochford makes a half-day loop from Hill City through the forest. Walk the short street, stop at the Moonshine Gulch Saloon, and head back or on north toward Lead.

## A SAMPLE DAY

- |                                              |                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning             | Leave Hill City on Deerfield Road and South Rochford Road, about 45 minutes.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Late morning</b> | Walk the town and look at the old buildings from the street.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Midday              | Lunch at the Moonshine Gulch Saloon, if it's open. Call ahead.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon           | Return to Hill City, or continue north on the gravel road toward Lead and Deadwood. |

## WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The saloon front.** The saloon dates its building to 1910. Its false front and sign are the classic Rochford shot.
- **The gulch.** From the road above town, the buildings sit small against the pine forest.



USGS topographic map, 1894 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

## DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DRIVE</b>        | 30 mi, about 46 min each way from Main Street, Hill City. From Rapid City: 34 mi, about 1 h 05 min.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>OPEN</b>         | The town is on public roads. Homes are private, so look from the road.                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>SALOON HOURS</b> | Neither the saloon's <a href="#">website</a> nor its <a href="#">Facebook page</a> posts dated opening hours, and other listings disagree. Call the saloon at 605-574-1800, the number on its Facebook page, before you plan a meal. |
| <b>SEATING</b>      | The saloon's manager told Pigeon605 in June 2024 that it seats about 30, first come, first served.                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>BIKES</b>        | The saloon's website says the Rochford trailhead of the George S. Mickelson Trail is about a quarter mile down the road from its door.                                                                                               |
| <b>FUEL</b>         | Our sources list no fuel in Rochford. Fill up in Hill City.                                                                                                                                                                          |

## 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** 44.12443, -103.71964 · 44°07'28"N  
103°43'11"W

**Full guide** [abandonedtowns.com/south-dakota/rochford/](https://abandonedtowns.com/south-dakota/rochford/)

**Directions** [Google Maps](#)

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