Day 1: Head south of Dillon, Montana on Interstate 15 to exit 59. Take Highway 278 to the Bannack State Park turn off (approximately 22 miles). Explore Montana's First Territorial Capital by starting at the Visitor's Center and proceeding down the boardwalk to the other preserved buildings including the Meade Hotel, the Methodist Church, an old schoolhouse and more. Bannack comes alive for a mid-July weekend each year when living history reenactors show what life was like in the 1860's during the gold rush.

Proceed west on Highway 278 to the Maverick Mountain Ski/Elkhorn Hot Springs turn off (approx. 10 miles) which is the start of the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Stop for a soak in Elkhorn Hot Springs or proceed to Crystal Park set aside for everyone to enjoy digging around for lovely quartz and amethyst crystals (Bring your own shovel or spade and sieve and have fun exploring.) Return to Dillon for many options for a great dinner.

Day 2: Drive south on Interstate 15 to Highway 278 (exit 59). Proceed through Jackson (hot springs available here, too) and head to Wisdom. To see the Big Hole Battlefield, a National Park commemorating where the Nez Perce and US Army fought, head ten miles west of Wisdom on Highway 43. There is a visitor's center with a film and short walking paths to learn about this tragic confrontation. Return to Wisdom for lunch or refreshments and continue on Highway 43 north to complete the loop of the Big Hole Valley to join Interstate 15.

Day 3: Take a drive northeast of Dillon on Highway 41. Head south in Twin Bridges after crossing over the Jefferson River and drive through Sheridan to Nevada City. Here a family can buy a Day Pass to explore the Nevada City Museum and try gold panning. Just beyond, explore Virginia City by hopping on the fire truck for a tour of the area to learn about the 1863 gold rush which brought tens of thousands of seekers of gold. There are preserved buildings in Virginia City to give you a glimpse of the past, as well as a candy store to please people of all ages.