

Wasatch Front Fall Color Drives

Best weekday dates & routes for 2026 · From the valley, no hiking required

Color is just getting started. High canyons turn first; lower canyons follow a week or two later. Weekday mornings (Tue–Thu, 9–11 a.m.) are easiest for a relaxed drive. Pack a layer — canyons run 10–20° cooler.

WHEN TO GO THIS YEAR

WINDOW	WHAT YOU'LL SEE	BEST FOR
Now – Sep 14	Spotty / first maples	Short local drives only
Sep 15 – 21	Patchy → near peak up high	Guardzman, upper Big Cottonwood
Sep 22 – Oct 5	Peak in the mountains	Main window — red maples, gold aspens
Oct 6 – 12	High country fading	Emigration, Provo Canyon, cottonwoods
After Oct 12	Past peak in the mountains	Stay closer unless a late storm resets color

FOUR DRIVES FROM TAYLORSVILLE

1 EASIEST 90 MINUTES Emigration Canyon + Little Dell

Sep 22 – Oct 10

25–35 min from Meadow Peak

I-215 → I-80 east → Emigration Canyon Rd. Turn around at Little Dell Reservoir.

Gentle grades, frequent pullouts, bathrooms at Little Dell. Stay by the car.

2 CLOSEST HIGH-CANYON GOLD Big Cottonwood to Silver Lake

Sep 18 – Oct 5

~20 min to mouth · 45–60 to Brighton

I-215 east → 6200 S / Wasatch Blvd → Big Cottonwood Canyon Rd (SR-190) to Brighton.

Fully paved. Flat Silver Lake boardwalk if you want 10 minutes outside the car. No dogs (watershed).

3 THE CLASSIC Alpine Loop (or half-loop)

Sep 20 – Oct 8

40–50 min to American Fork Canyon

I-15 south → SR-92 over the loop past Sundance, down Provo Canyon. Or out-and-back to Tibble Fork.

Narrow and winding — weekday morning only. Fee at AF Canyon. Stops: Tibble Fork, Cascade Springs, Bridal Veil Falls.

4 HIGH AND EARLY Guardzman Pass add-on

Sep 15 – Oct 3

Add to Big Cottonwood

Brighton → SR-190 over Guardzman toward Park City or Midway. Home via I-80 or Heber.

Nearly 10,000 ft, so gold arrives first. More curves. Clear, calm weekday only. Check UDOT that morning.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

Tue–Thu, Sep 23–Oct 2 · leave by 9 a.m.

Big Cottonwood Canyon to Silver Lake. Coffee in the car. Home for lunch. Lowest-effort, highest-payoff trip from Taylorsville.

Skip this year: upper Millcreek Canyon is closed above the Terraces through Dec 2026 for road work.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- UDOT Traffic app — roads & canyon cameras
- A layer in the car (mornings 45–55° up high)
- Water + a planned bathroom stop
- No hike needed — color is from the windshield
- Weekdays beat Saturday every time