Howdy Pardners! It’s time to start planning a trail adventure second to none. This time there is a requirement of advance planning because unlike past trails I’ve recommended, you’ll need more than one day to make this adventure a memorable one that’ll have you recommending it to other folks. So, let's saddle up and head for Bodie, California.

The trail to Bodie is about 345 miles from Santa Clarita. Figure about six hours and 30 minutes travel time. You’ll board Hwy 14 and head North traveling through Mojave, Lone Pine, Independence, Big Pine, Bishop and about seven miles before Bridgeport you’ll see State Hwy 270, the road to Bodie. The first ten miles on Hwy 270 is paved, the last three miles is wash board, just enough to rattle your teeth a little but not enough to prevent you from getting to the greatest ghost town in the United States. No need for a 4X4 vehicle. Rumor has it, the last three miles will never be paved as the good folks who keep Bodie in a state of “arrested decay,” want you to get just a little feel of the experience that those folks had way back in the 1880’s when traveling to Bodie.

I’ve decided to limit the amount of information I could provide and let you discover some information on your own via the internet and then you'll want to see the place for yourself. Start with [www.bodie.com](http://www.bodie.com/) and then be sure to visit [www.bodiefoundation.org](http://www.bodiefoundation.org/). There are a couple of extra important things to keep in mind when visiting Bodie. First, although Bodie is open all year, the very best time to enjoy visiting is between Memorial Day and Labor Day. That’s the time of year when the Museum is open and Mill Tours are available for a small fee (worth it!), in addition to the small admission fee to Bodie. With that said, by calling 760-647-6564 you’ll be able to confirm the opening of the Museum, Mill Tour availability and most important, the road to Bodie being open. A late snow, a late winter could mean a late opening of all there is to enjoy in Bodie. Second, make sure you take plenty of water and pack yourself a lunch. There is nothing for sale in the way of food in Bodie.

Wondering if there might be a souvenir available for purchase? Yes, there are several books for sale in the Museum as well as a wonderful DVD “Bodie: Ghost Town Frozen in Time.” As far as movies filmed in Bodie, only one is known and it is a classic. Filmed as both a silent and a talkie, only the talkie survives. From 1929, “Hell’s Heroes” directed by William Wyler who won three Best Director awards in his career with perhaps the 1959 version of “Ben-Hur” being his most famous. Get the DVD to see a lot of Bodie that no longer exists since the big fire of 1932. Now here’s a rumor to ponder: it is said that the baby in the movie since grew up and was in the town play with matches. That started the fire of 1932 that burned down 85% of the town.

How much time do you need to see Bodie and really enjoy this adventure? I call it a three day adventure with the first day being on the road to get near Bodie. The second day is all day in Bodie and the third day is your travel day home. Of course you could add or subtract as you see fit. There are several places for lodging in Bridgeport, which is about seven miles beyond Hwy 270 to Bodie. My personal favorite is a little place just beyond the Hwy 270 cutoff, on your left call the Settlement. Your newsletter editor Bill West and I took a trip to Bodie a couple of years ago and he will vouch for the Settlement as well as tell you about the fun of being in Bodie. Not only does the Settlement just have the right atmosphere for a trip to Bodie, they have great food and you're only steps away from trout fishing if you’re so inclined. Visit their website [www.virginiacreeksettlement.com](http://www.virginiacreeksettlement.com/) to check out the various types of lodging and also be sure to check out the menu in the restaurant section.

Pardners, I could write about Bodie and fill an entire newsletter but I’m going to let you discover on your own the truth of the tale of a little girl long ago who said “Good-Bye God... I’m going to Bodie” is false. What she really said was “Good, by God, I’m going to Bodie!”