

# San Juan Skyway

*Spectacular Mountainside All American Road*

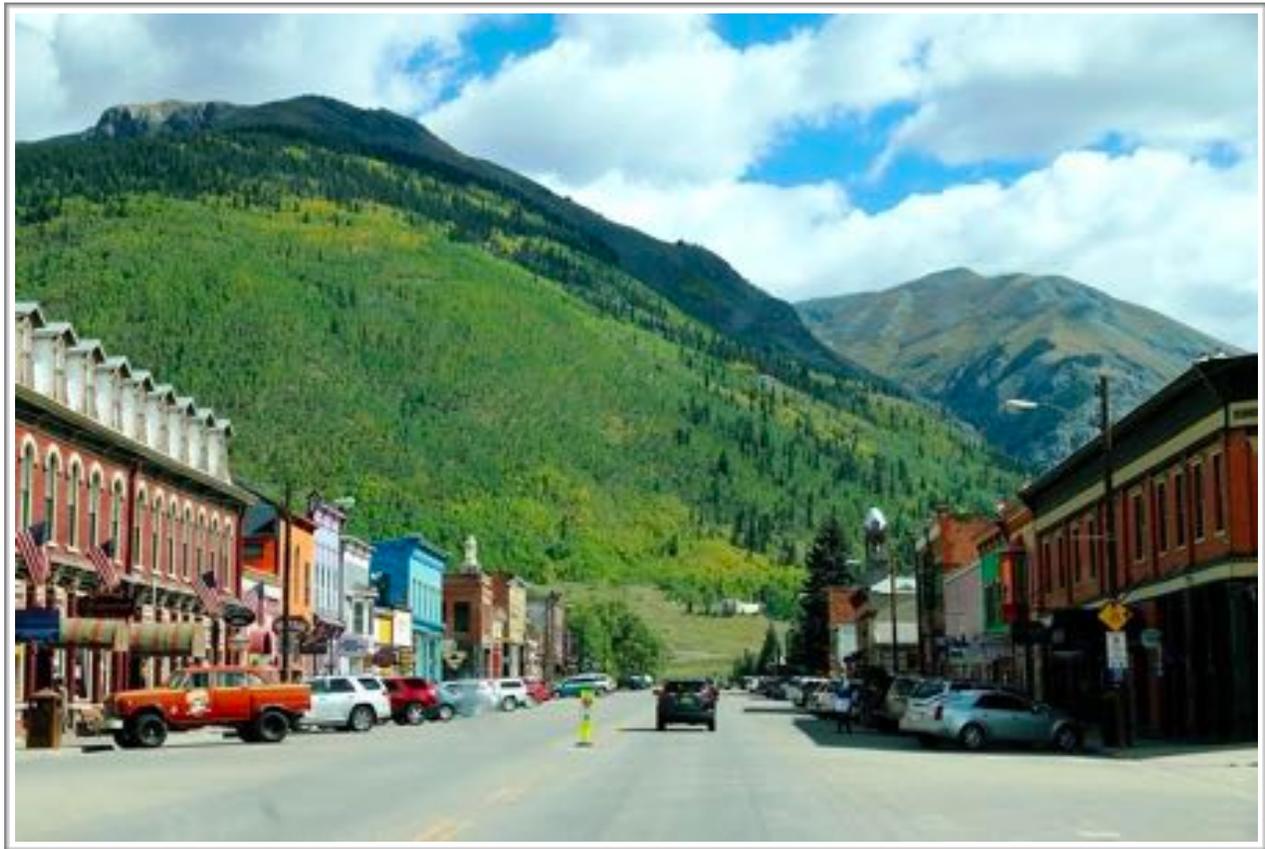


5 Days/4 Nights

Gateway City: Durango, Colorado



It's a triple whammy landscape and one that's not to be missed. As you drive the Million Dollar Highway between Silverton and Ouray, you might feel like you're on the edge of the world. Meandering over 14 summits over 10,000 feet you're going to feel like you're on top instead. The San Juan Skyway All-American Road, considered one of the most scenic drives in America, is a spectacular loop through the rugged mountains of Southwest Colorado. Along the way, you'll pass through two National Forests and the San Juan Mountains, over the Animas and San Miguel Rivers, natural hot springs, Cherry Creek, and over a whole series of spectacular mountain peaks. As the road climbs into the mountains, the terrain changes from the dusty southwestern desert to blazing foliage and snowy peaks in just the turn of a head. The scenery is world class, yet there's more to the route than that. The time-tested heritage of this journey includes the charming Victorian towns of Telluride, Silverton, Ouray, Mancos, and Ridgway with mining and railroad history. Here, you can live in the Old West for a few days. Rub shoulders with prospectors, cowboys, ranchers and miners. You're in good company - visitors from around the world are intrigued by the culture that grew up in the American West when the law was young and prospectors were chasing newfound fortunes. Towns grew from muddy streets and wooden boardwalks to the beautifully preserved places you'll see today. Nowhere else in the world can you find such vivid images of cattle rustlers, gold miners, wildcatters, and other characters that have come alive in the memories of the old West, all surrounded by magnificent beauty.



### **Touring the Byway**

To get you in the spirit of the Byway, we recommend starting your journey in Durango, which still looks like it dropped out of the Old West. Plan to arrive early enough to enjoy lunch and a ride on the Durango and Silverton Railroad, a coal-fired steam train that chugs up into the mountains. Explore the art galleries in the historic downtown and visit the Animas Museum to learn the story of the frontier in Colorado.

On Day Two, it's time to head out on the San Juan Skyway All American Road toward Silverton where not much has changed since 1876. You can explore the region's mining culture and its impact on life, before visiting the Old Hundred Gold Mine to see for yourself how gold was dug out from deep in the mountainside. After a couple of ghost towns, it's time to drive the Million Dollar Highway on the way to Ouray, scenic driving that's as good as it gets! Arriving in Ouray, you'll discover an entire town on the National Register of Historic Places.

Spend the morning of Day Three visiting the Ouray Historical Society, taking the Historic District Walking Tour, and touring the Bachelor-Syracuse Mine. From there, it's on to the Ouray County Ranch History Museum in Ridgway and after another amazing scenic drive, you'll arrive in Telluride. It's hard to believe this charming town began as a hardscrabble mining camp where Butch Cassidy robbed his first bank. On Day Four, you'll be traveling the rest of the San Juan Skyway on your way back to Durango. From there, we wish you safe passage if you're traveling another Colorado Scenic Byway or a safe and pleasant journey home.



## DAY ONE



### **Durango**

Founded in 1880 by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Durango is a Victorian gateway to Colorado's Old West. A collection of outstanding historic buildings that evolved during eras of boom and bust, include the railroad depot, the Wetter Building, several historic hotels, and the carefully preserved "Saloon District." Even though the "jeans and cowboy hat dress code" will be immediately obvious, the town has more award-winning restaurants per capita than San Francisco. In fact, Durango's high quality of life is the main reason residents leave the big city for a more casual mountain life, a multitude of scenic walking trails, a thriving arts community, and great historic and cultural offerings.

## **Historic Downtown Durango Walking Tour and Durango Art Galleries**

One of the special things about Durango is the living heritage on display along Main Avenue. The Historic Downtown Durango Walking Tour begins at the Railroad depot, where you can also visit the D&S Railroad Museum. Along the way, you'll pass art galleries and alternative art spaces featuring contemporary, western and Native American art from local, regional and nationally recognized artists. The Durango Art Galleries Collective that includes Diane West Jewelry and Art, Durango Arts Center, Earthen Vessel Gallery, Sorrel Sky Gallery, Toh-Atin Gallery, and Wildshots Gallery hosts events, workshops, shows and gallery walks throughout the year.

Tour starts at 479 Main Avenue, Allow 2 hours





### **Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad**

Riding the train that brought over \$300 million in gold and silver down from the San Juan mountains is a must do. You'll see completely different scenery than you will driving the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway. Constructed in 1881, the line parallels the Million Dollar Highway completed in 1887. Hauling of precious metals continued until 1893, when the bottom dropped out of silver prices. After facing various challenges for nearly 40 years, Hollywood discovered Durango and the railroad, showcasing the train in movies including Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

479 Main Avenue, Durango, CO 81301 970-259-0274 Departures at 9AM, 12:15PM, 3:15PM, Allow 3+ hours, Adults \$70

### **Animas Museum**

Located in the North Main District, the Animas Museum delivers an overview of the area's Native Americans, Old West, fires, railroads, transportation, and lifeways. The Joy Family Cabin and Peterson House which contrasts life in 1876 with life in the 1930s, are also part of the campus.

3065 West Second Avenue, Durango, CO 81301 970-259-2402 Tuesday-Saturday 9AM- 4PM, Allow 1 hour, Adults \$5



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**General Palmer Hotel** 567 Main Avenue Durango, CO 81301 970-247-4747 The prestigious Victorian General Palmer has operated continuously since it was built in 1898. Named after a Civil War general, it is the only Historic Four Diamond Hotel in Southwest Colorado where you can step back in time while enjoying all the modern comforts.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Grassburgers** 726 ½ Main Avenue Durango, CO 81301 970-247-1081

An award-winning farm to table restaurant featuring 100% grass fed burgers, with gluten free, vegan and allergy friendly options that are completely non-GMO.

**Eolus** 919 Main Avenue Durango, CO 81301 970-259-2898 Considered the best restaurant in Durango, with exquisite food and excellent service.

**Bar D Old West Music Show and Chuckwagon Suppers** 8080 County Road 250 Durango, CO 81301 970-247-5753 Eat on traditional tin plates, enjoying a choice of entrees, served with potatoes, baked beans, homemade biscuits with honey, applesauce, home baked cake, cowboy coffee or real lemonade. Adults \$29, Dinner at 6:30PM

## DAY TWO



### **Silverton**

Anchoring one end of the Million Dollar Highway, the entire town of Silverton is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. National Historic Landmark. Even though precious metals were discovered here in 1860, miners did not return to stake their claims until a decade later. When they did, Silverton soon became the center of numerous mining camps. Within a year after the first train rolled in, Silverton hosted 2,000 residents, 400 buildings, two banks, five laundries, 29 saloons, several hotels and a bawdy red-light district. When men began bringing their wives and families to town, Greene Street served as an invisible line between the law-abiding, church going residents and the gamblers, dance halls, saloons and other local characters who resided on the other side. Mining did not completely close down in Silverton until the early 1990s. Legend has it that there's still gold and silver in the hills, waiting for mining to return.

Durango - Silverton, 48 miles

## **Silverton Historic Walking Tour**

Take the 16-block walking tour through the historic district that takes you past the San Juan County Jail, the old hospital, and a selection of the many dens of iniquity from the mining heyday. Besides the town, the Durango and Silverton Railroad and the Mayflower Mill are National Historic Landmarks. The Old Hundred Boarding House is a Colorado Historic Place.

The tour begins at the San Juan County Courthouse, Greene Street and West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Allow 2 hours

## **San Juan County Historical Society**

The same mining heritage that fueled development of the beautiful historic towns in the region also had an impact on San Juan County. Discover the story at the properties of the San Juan Historical Society, Mining Heritage Center, the 1902 County Jail Museum, the Mayflower Mill, the Allen Nossaman Memorial Archive, the Silverton Power Station, Silverton Standard, Miner Newspaper, (a National Journalism Historic Site) and the Little Nation Mill in Howardsville.

1557 Greene Street, Silverton, CO 81433 970-387-5609 7 Days, 10AM-5PM,  
Allow 2 hours, more time to visit all locations. Adults \$10  
Purchase a Heritage Pass for discount to visit all locations





### **Ghost Towns of Howardsville, Eureka, and Animas Forks**

At this point, it's time to visit the ghost towns of Howardsville, Eureka, and Animas Forks just east of Silverton. Even though Howardsville now has only a few cabins, the town was the first seat of LaPlata County. The 1874 courthouse was briefly the seat of government for the entire of southwestern Colorado.

Howardsville went into decline when the railroad bypassed the town and the county seat moved to Silverton. Home of the Sunnyside Mine, Eureka still holds deposits of precious metals. At one time, the ghost town of Animas Forks had 30 cabins, a hotel, general store, saloon and post office, along with 450 residents and a newspaper.

### **Old Hundred Mine Tour Howardsville**

It's time to suit up in a yellow rain suit and hard hat to travel 1500 feet underground to see how gold was mined. A mine train takes you a third of a mile into a mountain to where old mining equipment is still in place. Live demonstrations include operating drills, a skip, a slusher, mucker operations, and honey wagons, from the Camp Bird, Idarado and Sunnyside mines. Try mining in the sluice boxes outside.

721 County Road 4 A, Silverton, CO 81433 970-387-5444 Daily 10AM-4PM, 1 hour tour, on the hour, Adults \$24



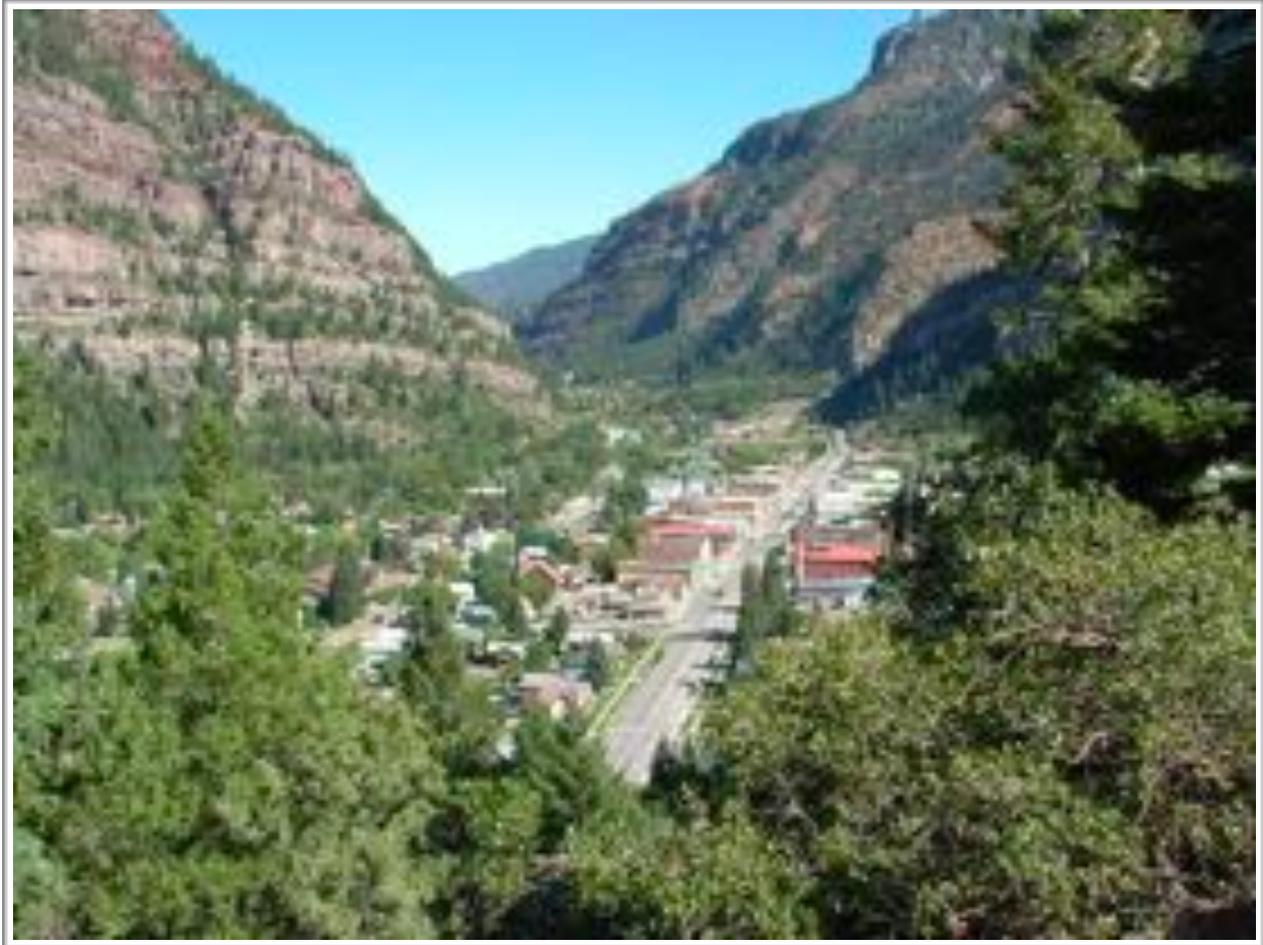
### **Million Dollar Highway**

The portion of the San Juan Skyway that travels between Silverton and Ouray began as a toll road named for the large quantities of silver and gold that moved down the route. Local legend has it the road cost a million dollars a mile to build (think of what that would be in today's dollars!) and the fill dirt still contains a million dollars in gold ore. Today, the highway cut from the mountainside delivers jaw-dropping vista after vista of magnificent scenery. Drive with care around the hairpin curves and use caution while enjoying the beautiful views.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Handlebars Restaurant and Saloon** 1323 Greene Street Silverton, CO 81433

970-387-5395 In the 30 years since it opened, Handlebars has developed a reputation for exceptional food and unique western decor. You can step back in time and savor the flavor of western fare, when roulette wheels shirred, bordello girls beckoned, and gold dust littered the bar, as miners paid for their drinks with “a pinch of powder.”



## **Ouray**

Local legend has it that Chief Ouray lived in a small cabin near the Amphitheater, soaked in the "sacred hot springs," conducted native rituals, and met with officials here as Ouray was being formed. Known to some as the Switzerland of America, the town is surrounded by some of the most rugged mountains in the country. Ore shipments made the railroad the most profitable railroad per mile in the U.S. and the town a historical gem.

Silverton to Ouray - 23 miles



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**Beaumont Hotel and Spa** 505 Main Street Ouray, CO 81427 970-325-7000 Built in 1886 at the height of the “gold boom,” the Beaumont Hotel has a long been known as the 'Flagship of the San Juans.' The graciously appointed structure has welcomed famous guests such as Theodore Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover, King Leopold of Belgium, Chipeta, widow of Chief Ouray, Sarah Bernhardt, Angie Dickenson, Oprah Winfrey, and more. Recent restorations modernized the entire structure to meet the needs of today's traveler while preserving the property's historical grandeur.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Brickhouse 737** 737 Main Street Ouray, CO 81427 970-325-7236 The number one restaurant in Ouray, with unique choices and farm to table cuisine.

**Outlaw Restaurant** 610 Main Street Ouray, CO 81427 970-325-4366 A local steakhouse that is also vegetarian friendly.

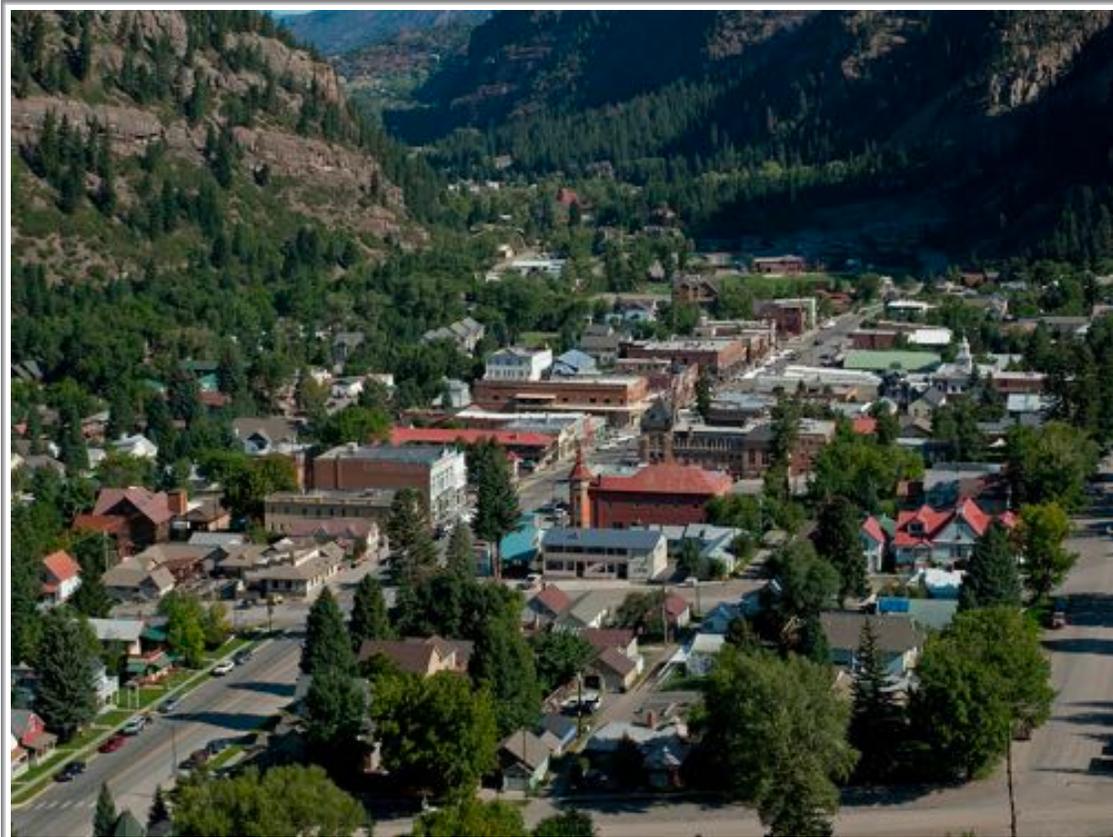
## DAY THREE

### **Ouray County Historical Society**

When the St. Joseph's Miners Hospital was transformed into the Ouray County Historical Museum, the Smithsonian called it "one of the best little museums in the West." Three floors with twenty-seven rooms of exhibits include original documents and thousands of photographs, an impressive mineral collection, Ute Indian displays, Victorian era displays, mine exhibits, railroading and ranching exhibits, hospital operating rooms from the 1890s and the 1940s, and an original patient room. In addition, the museum offers guided tours of Ouray's Main Street. 420 Sixth Avenue, Ouray, CO 81427 970-325-4576 10AM-4:30PM, Days vary with seasons, Allow 2 hours, Adults \$7

### **Ouray Historic District Walking Tour**

The Ouray Historic District Walking Tour begins and ends at the Ouray County Historical Museum, takes you past 24 locations of the finest Victorian architecture. Tour begins at 420 Sixth Avenue, Allow 1-1.5 hours





### **Bachelor-Syracuse Mine Tour**

Beginning at ground level, a tour of the Bachelor-Syracuse mine takes you 1,500 feet into Gold Hill. You'll discover rich ore veins and the equipment used to dig it out. After the underground mine tour, you'll receive gold panning instruction and a tour of the turn-of-the-century Blacksmith shop. If you have not yet had lunch, stop at the Outdoor Café.

95 Gold Mountain Trail, Ouray, CO 81427 970-325-0220 7 Days, 10AM-2PM, 1 hour tour. Adults \$16

## DAY FOUR

### **Ridgway**

The tiny railroad town of Ridgway was founded in 1890 as the headquarters of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad as well as miners, farmers and ranchers in the area. Today, Ridgway is part of the Creative Arts Circuit and home to a vibrant “foodie” culture. Ouray to Ridgway - 10 miles

### **Ridgway Movie Locations Tour**

When the movie “True Grit” was being planned, the spectacular scenery around Ridgway caught the eye of director Henry Hathaway, who cast John Wayne, Glen Campbell, Kim Darby, Robert Duvall, and Dennis Hopper to star in the lead roles. For six weeks, the center of Ridgway was turned into 1880s-style Fort Smith, Arkansas, complete with Hanging Judge Parker’s three-man gallows. When the movie was finished, the firehouse became an artist studio, and the livery stable, the post office. The jail wagon, which John Wayne brought back from Indian Territory is on display at the Ouray County Ranch History Museum. Take the one-hour True Grit Movie Walking Tour that departs every Friday from the Visitors Center at 11 AM, or a self-guided tour.

Tour begins at 150 Racecourse Road, Ridgway, CO 81432 970-626-5181 Allow 1 hour, Free



## **Ouray County Ranch History Museum**

When President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law on May 20, 1862, settlers moved West to get 160 acres of public land. They paid a small fee and promised to live on for five years before purchasing it at \$1.25 an acre. The lifestyle on these farms and ranches is on display at the Ouray County Ranch History Museum.

321 Sherman Street, Ridgway, CO 81432 970-316-1085 Friday-Saturday  
11AM-3PM, Allow 1 hour, Adults \$5



## **Ridgway Creative District**

The Ridgway Creative District weaves together Ridgway's heritage and culture with arts and creative enterprises that produce sculpture, poetry and art in some unusual places, including alleys, trails, and parks. See where the Grammy awards are produced and wander around the surrounding blocks to discover a variety of studios, shops, and restaurants.

Regular retail hours, generally Wednesday-Sunday, 10AM-3PM, Sunday  
10AM-2PM

## **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**Colorado Boy Brewery** 602 Clinton Street Ridgway, CO 81432 970-626-5333 You can taste the passion that the owners of Colorado Boy Brewery have about craft beer and artisan pizza, in their, as they call it, "wee humble pub." Constantly working on improving brewing processes, they continue to hone their craft.



## **Telluride**

Just eight blocks wide and twelve blocks long, the tiny town of Telluride is tucked into a box canyon surrounded by 14,000 foot peaks. It began as a gold mining camp and ended up a fairy tale. Even though the mountains were loaded with zinc, lead, copper, iron and silver, it wasn't until the gold rush the town grew from cabins and shacks to rows of elegant residences and stately buildings. The National Historic Landmark District is filled with colorful Victorian homes, clapboard storefronts, art galleries, gourmet restaurants, and boutiques, which citizens work to keep impeccably preserved.

Ridgway to Telluride - 40 miles



### **Destination Distinctive Accommodations**

**New Sheridan Hotel** 231 West Colorado Avenue Telluride, CO 81435 970-728-4351 As the gold rush boomed in southwestern Colorado, prospectors and profiteers who moved to the area, needed a place to stay. The Sheridan Hotel was constructed to fill this bill in 1891. When it burned in 1894, it was rebuilt in brick. As Telluride changed from gold mining to skiing, the Sheridan Hotel became the New Sheridan Hotel with 26 handsome rooms and impeccable quality. Today it's the only historic hotel in town and one of the few of left in Colorado that date from mining days.

### **Destination Distinctive Dining**

**221 South Oak** 221 South Oak Street Telluride, CO 81435 970-708-1437 Housed in a tastefully refurbished historic home, 221 South Oak is just steps from the Telluride Gondola. Entrees including beef, game, poultry, seafood, and a full vegetarian menu are prepared using fresh quality ingredients.

## DAY FIVE

### **Telluride Historic Walking Tour**

In one of the West's most iconic Victorian mining towns, many of the elegant Victorian structures and stately brick buildings are filled with modern boutiques and restaurants. Take the self-guided Historic Walking Tour through Telluride's storied past.

Tour begins at the intersection of Colorado and Oak Streets

### **Telluride Ski Resort Gondola**

After a walking tour, it's time for a bird's eye view on the gondola that links Telluride with the Mountain Ski Village. The 13-minute ride that delivers a front row seat to view the magnificent mountain landscape from 10,500 feet, is the only public transportation of its kind in America.

West San Juan Avenue, Telluride, CO 81435 Daily 6:30AM-Midnight, Free



### **Telluride Historical Museum**

At one last stop for mining history, the Telluride Historical Museum introduces you to the diverse prospectors, settlers, and entrepreneurs who came to the mountain valley to seek their fortune. The museum illustrates family life in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> in the mining camps of Tomboy and Marshall Basin.

201 West Gregory Avenue, Telluride, CO 81435 970-728-3344 W-Sat 11AM-5PM, Adults \$7