



America's Destination
for Scenic Byways

SOUTHWEST COLORADO TRAVEL REGION PRESS KIT

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Colorado vacations bring up thoughts of skiing champagne powder, snow-capped 14,000-foot peaks, Rocky Mountain National Park's Trail Ridge Road. But how about eight scenic and historic byways, five national forests, five hot springs, five wilderness areas, two national parks, two national monuments, one 125-year-old narrow-gauge railroad, and thousands of 800-year-old cliff dwellings? It's the "other" Colorado – Southwest Colorado. And it offers a wealth of vacation opportunity for kids and kids at heart!

Southwest Colorado Travel Region Fact Sheet

Summary	The Southwest Colorado Travel Region boasts eight scenic and historic byways, five national forests, five hot springs, five wilderness areas, seven state and national parks, one national monument, one 125-year-old narrow-gauge railroad and thousands of 800-year-old cliff dwellings.
Web site	www.swcoloradotravel.org
Location	The Southwest Colorado Travel Region stretches from the Grand Mesa in the northwest to the fast-growing scenic town of Pagosa Springs in the southeast. It encompasses major ski areas of Telluride and Crested Butte, historic mining towns, and hundreds of recreational and tourism areas in between.
Things to Do & See	<p>Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park – Plunging 2,660 feet to the Gunnison River, the narrowest point at the bottom of the canyon is just 40 feet wide</p> <p>Canyons of the Ancients National Monument – Highest density of archaeological sites (20,000) anywhere in the United States, with sites dating to the eighth century</p> <p>Crow Canyon Archaeological Center - Internationally renowned research and education center where anyone can participate in day- and week-long excavations, turning up centuries-old bones, fossils, and artifacts</p> <p>Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad – Providing year round service along the Animas River from Durango to Silverton, the rail line was constructed primarily to haul gold and silver from the surrounding San Juan Mountains</p> <p>Hovenweep National Monument – Rare ancestral Puebloan towers</p> <p>Lake City Ice Park – a farmed ice park within walking distance of downtown Lake City</p> <p>Mesa Verde National Park – The nation’s seventh-oldest national park and the county’s largest archaeological preserve, the sole park dedicated to the work of humankind and the only park steeped in mystery of its origins</p> <p>Ouray Ice Park – The world’s only park dedicated exclusively to the sport of ice climbing</p> <p>Pagosa Springs’ The Springs Resort and Spa: Offering 18 soaking pools fed by the Great Pagosa Aquifer – the world’s largest and deepest mineral springs</p> <p>Scenic and Historic Byways – Grand Mesa National Scenic Byway, West Elk Loop Scenic and Historic Byway, Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway, San Juan Skyway, Alpine Loop Back Country Byway, Bachelor Historic Loop, Silver Thread Scenic Byway, Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway</p> <p>Two Major Ski Areas – Telluride Ski Resort and Crested Butte Mountain Resort</p> <p>Ute Mountain Tribal Park - 597,000-acre primitive area located adjacent to Mesa Verde National Park, members of the Ute Mountain tribe give guided tours of ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings, unique geological land formations, petroglyphs and pictographs</p>
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Communities of Southwest Colorado Travel Region

Cedaredge - www.cedaredgechamber.com

Aptly named for residing at the “edge of the cedars” of the Grand Mesa, the town of Cedaredge was officially incorporated on March 25, 1907. Cedaredge is the ‘Gateway to the Grand Mesa’ (www.grandmesabyway.org), and is filled with outdoor activities for enthusiast of all interests including fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, camping and hunting. Cedaredge is also home to Pioneer Town, a 19th-Century western village complete with board walk, frontier museum and more than 20 original or reconstructed buildings, including a jail, schoolhouse, saloon and blacksmith’s shop. Annual events in Cedaredge include: Cedaredge Little Britches Rodeo (July) and Cedaredge Apple Fest (October).

Cortez - www.cortezchamber.com

Nestled between the La Plata Mountains, Sleeping Ute Mountain, and Mesa Verde National Park, this ranching and farming center (you may catch a **real** cattle drive in the spring or fall) has held its place as a merging point and trade center for many **cultures for more than 2,000 years. Today, it** still serves as a major center for Native American art, pottery, and textiles. The town of nearly 8,500 people offers the greatest number and variety of services for visitors. Attractions include Mesa Verde National Park, Hovenweep National Monument, Ute Mountain Tribal Park, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center and a plethora of outdoor recreation including hiking, biking, golf, rafting, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. Annual events in Cortez include Zetroc Music Festival (July) and Mesa Verde Country Indian Arts & Cultural Festival (May).

Crawford - www.crawfordcountry.org

Crawford is named after Captain George A. Crawford, whose idea to start a post office in this area resulted in the growth of a town. Crawford more recently has been dubbed the “Golden Triangle” by Forbes Magazine. Crawford is home to the North Rim of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (www.nps.gov/blca/index.htm), which provides numerous winter outdoor activities such as snowshoeing, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. Visit the Crawford State Park (<http://parks.state.co.us/Parks/Crawford>) for many other outdoor sports like hiking, fishing, biking, and boating. Annual events in Crawford include Crawford Pioneer Days (June) and Crawford Render the Rock (September).

Delta - www.deltacolorado.org

The City of Delta, the namesake and seat of Delta County, was originally set up as a trading post for Ute Indians and the new settlers from the east. Delta is situated where the **Uncompahgre and Gunnison Rivers come together.** While in Delta, be sure to stop at Ft. Uncompahgre, a reconstruction of the original trading post used by traders, trappers and Native Americans. The **Delta County Historical Museum, housed in the old firehouse, is a must see** for the history buff and the inner science buff in all of us — fossils, dinosaur bones, and a butterfly exhibit, which

includes some of the only-known specimens of now extinct species are on-hand to quench the thirst for learning. Annual events in Delta include Council Tree Pow Wow and Cultural Festival (www.counciltreepowwow.org) and Deltarado Days (July).

Dolores - www.doloreschamber.com

The Dolores River is the heart and **soul of this small community (under 1,000 residents)**, providing a vital water supply and many recreational opportunities. Dolores is home to the Canyons of the Ancient National Monument, Anasazi Heritage Center, Rio Grand Southern Railroad Museum, McPhee Lake and the Dolores River, which offers boating, water skiing, fishing, rafting. Nearby activities include camping, hiking, hunting in the San Juan/Rio Grande National Forest, and the San Juan Skyway, federally designated **a scenic byway and dubbed “America's Most Beautiful Drive.”** Annual events in Dolores include the Mesa Verde Country Indian Arts & Cultural Festival (May) and The Dolores River Festival (June).

Eckert/Orchard City - www.orchardcityco.org

Orchard City is the product of three small, historical communities, Eckert, Austin and Cory. The small populations banded together in order to reach sufficient finances to bond for the construction of a much needed water pipeline. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon at Surface Creek Winery & Art Gallery (www.surfacecreek.com) where you may participate in a local artisan wine tasting followed by a viewing of the featured fine art. Orchard City is a short drive from the outdoor playground of the Grand Mesa and the rest of Delta County is at the doorstep. Annual events in the area include Eckert Crane Days, celebrated each spring when the Sandhill Cranes make a stop in town. Bird enthusiasts may observe the elegant creatures as they take a break from their migration south.

Gunnison/Crested Butte - www.gunnisoncrestedbutte.com

Gunnison-Crested Butte is nestled among almost two million acres of pristine wilderness in southwest Colorado. Winter sports enthusiasts know the area for its world-class alpine skiing and snowboarding at Crested Butte Mountain Resort, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and ice fishing. Gunnison-Crested Butte is also a haven for outdoor summer activities. In the warmer months, visitors may choose from recreational activities such as hiking, climbing, mountain biking, boating, whitewater rafting, kayaking, fly-fishing, camping and horseback riding. Year-round, visitors enjoy distinctive restaurants, unique shops and stimulating cultural opportunities, and have a wide range of lodging options — from rustic inns to guest cabins and bed-and-breakfasts to full-service resort hotels.

Recognized as the “Official Wildflower Capital of Colorado” by the Colorado Legislature, *Crested Butte* is the site of rich mining, ranching and skiing heritage and home to the Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum and Mountain Bike Hall of Fame. *Gunnison*, a real western town located 28 miles from Crested Butte, is home to the Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport, Gunnison Whitewater Park, Gunnison Valley Observatory, Pioneer Museum and Western State College, a four-

year institution offering majors in the liberal arts and sciences and professional fields. Both Crested Butte and Gunnison have thriving historic central business districts packed with shopping and dining opportunities. Annual events in Gunnison and Crested Butte include: Crested Butte Music Festival throughout the summer (www.crestedbuttemusicfestival.com), Cattleman's Rodeo Days (www.cattlemensdays.com) and Gunnison River Festival (www.gunnisonriverfestival.com).

Hotchkiss - www.hotchkisschamber.com

This little town along the West Elk Loop is named after the man who led the first group of settlers to the area, a man who is an inductee into the Cowboy Hall of Fame, Edos Throop Hotchkiss. The town was incorporated in 1900 only months after Mr. Hotchkiss's death. While you are in Hotchkiss, touted as "the friendliest town this side of the divide," your time can be filled with a tour of the facilities at the Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery (www.fws.gov/hotchkiss), an educational visit to the Hotchkiss-Crawford Historical Society Museum (<http://hchm.freehostia.com>), or an outing to the impressive Creamery Arts Center (www.creameryartscenter.org). If you still have time, and you really should make time, visit the local orchards and antique shops! Annual events in Hotchkiss include the Delta County Fair and CPRA Rodeo (August) and the Hotchkiss Sheep Camp Stock Dog Trials (May).

Lake City - www.lakecity.com

The tiny (population 375) town of Lake City is the base for six of Colorado's 53 ranked 14,000-foot peaks (Sunshine, Redcloud, Handies, San Luis, Wetterhorn, Uncompahgre). Lake City is chalk full of hiking and backpacking trails and scenic drives, including the Alpine Loop National Scenic Backcountry Byway. In spite of its size Lake City's list of activities ranks right up there with the big dogs. Historic guided walks, Hard Tack Mine Tours, Moseley Arts Center, fishing, horseback riding and ice climbing just skim the surface of Lake City's attractions. Annual events around Lake City include the Lake City Balloon Festival (February) and Lake City Uncorked Wine & Music Festival (www.lakecityfestival.org).

Montrose - www.visitmontrose.com

Montrose, whose name came from Sir Walter Scott's novel, The Legend of Montrose, is located at the doorstep of the Black Canyon. This uniquely-authentic town has carved out a place for itself in the landscape and culture of Colorado. Whether you are looking for adventure, agritourism, history, culture, shopping, fine dining or anything in between, Montrose has a little something for everyone. Visit the Montrose Historical Museum (www.montrose-colo.com/virtual/museum.htm), housed in the original railroad depot, enjoy an intimate dinner at one of Montrose's fine historic downtown restaurants such as Belly, spend a day on one of the beautiful golf courses, or venture out to the multitude of outdoor activities of the area including boat tours, fishing, hiking and so much more. Annual events in Montrose include Pickin' at the Pavilion Bluegrass Festival (April) and Main in Motion – summer (www.maininmotion.com).

Ouray/Ridgway - www.ouraycolorado.com and www.ridgwaycolorado.com

Perched in the picturesque Uncompahgre Valley and surrounded by majestic snow-capped peaks of the Cimarron and San Juan Mountains, Ridgway is the “Gateway to the San Juans.” The town was named for Rio Grande Southern Railroad superintendent Robert M. Ridgway who established the town in 1891. Located at 7,700 feet above sea level, Ouray is surrounded on three sides by 13,000-foot peaks, earning it the nickname “The Switzerland of America.” Ouray is an outdoor enthusiast’s paradise, offering rock climbing, hiking, four-wheeling and mountain biking in the summer and ice climbing, backcountry skiing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. Ouray was founded in 1876 as a prosperous mining town and was designated a National Historic District in 1983. Two-thirds of Ouray’s original Victorian structures have been restored and are still occupied today, keeping intact the town’s historic charm. Visit the Ouray Ice Park – the world’s first park dedicated exclusively to ice climbing and the Ouray Hot Springs Pool – open year-round and free of sulfur smell typical of most hot springs. Annual events in the area include The Ouray Ice Festival – January (www.ourayicefestival.com) and the Mt. Sneffels Half Marathon Run/Walk (www.mtsneffels.org).

Paonia - www.paoniachamber.com

Founded in the late 1880s by Samuel Wade, Paonia was named for the “peony” flower that Mr. Wade brought with him to the valley. Originally called “Paeonia” after the Latin name for the flower, the Post Office Department only approved the spelling by dropping one of the three vowels, thus becoming Paonia. Officially incorporated in 1902, Paonia celebrated its Centennial in 2002. Proudly, Paonia Park is the social heart of town. The town park occupies an entire city block and is filled with amenities for all ages including: picnic tables, playground, skate park, teen center, sports field, and an impressive canopy of tall trees in a wide variety of species. It is this canopy that makes Paonia a Tree City USA selection year after year. Orchards a plenty provide locals and visitors with enormous amounts of fresh fruit from crisp apples, juicy peaches to tart cherries and mouthwatering apricots, prunes, pears and grapes. Other Paonia attractions include wine tasting, theater and Paonia State Park (www.parks.state.co.us/Parks/paonia). Paonia hosts a number of annual events, such as the Mountain Harvest Festival (www.mountainharvestfestival.com) and Paonia Cherry Days (July) and Top of the Rockies Rally (July).

Pagosa Springs - www.visitpagosasprings.com

Nestled in Southwest Colorado at the base of the Continental Divide, Pagosa Springs is truly one of the state’s last undiscovered gems. Whether it’s the amazing hot springs, the pristine beauty, or the unpretentious and friendly locals, Pagosa Springs will delight your senses and make you feel right at home. With 300-plus days of sunshine each year, visitors can explore Chimney Rock, Wolf Creek Ski Resort, or go kayaking, hunting, fishing and snowshoeing. Annual Events in Pagosa Springs include Music in the Mountains – July (www.musicinthemountains.com) and The Pagosa Fiber Festival – Memorial Day Weekend (www.pagosafiberfestival.org).

Silverton - www.silvertoncolorado.com

Once the stomping ground of silver kings and railroad giants, Silverton survives today as one of Colorado's most endearing destinations. The “old west” town of Silverton is home to the Mining Heritage Center (www.silvertonhistoricalsociety.org) and The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad (www.durangotrain.com). Other historic attractions include gold mine tours, stagecoach rides and chuck wagon dinners. Jump on the Million Dollar Highway and take in the majestic foliage as it changes colors in the fall. Annual events in the area include Silverton Jamboree (www.silvertonjamboree.com) and The Hardrock 100 race (www.hardrock100.com).

Telluride - www.VisitTelluride.com

Located in the rugged San Juan Mountains, Telluride sits at 8,750 feet above sea level and is renowned for its Old West charm, culture and famous festivals, as well as exceptional restaurants and hotels. The entire town of Telluride was designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1964, the highest honor awarded by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Telluride is one of only a few Colorado communities to hold the distinction. Telluride is connected with neighboring Mountain Village by a free gondola transportation system —the only one of its kind in North America. At an altitude of 9,500 feet, Mountain Village is a pedestrian-friendly community and home to the Telluride Ski Resort headquarters, a world-class golf course, restaurants, lodging and shops. Annual events in Telluride include the Telluride Film Festival – September (www.telluridefilmfestival.org) and Telluride Bluegrass Festival (www.bluegrass.com) and the Telluride Jazz Celebration (www.telluridejazz.org).

Mancos - www.mancosvalley.com

The Mancos Valley, located between the La Plata Mountains and Mesa Verde National Park, continues its long tradition as a ranching community (cattle drives still run through the middle of town). This small town – **with** fewer than 1,200 residents – retains its Wild West character, with horseback rides and local retail collections of authentic western clothing, cowboy hats, and Native American jewelry. Visitors to the Mancos area can enjoy the Mancos Visitor’s Center, Mesa Verde National Park, Mancos State Park and Jackson Gulch Reservoir and Chicken Creek Cross-Country Ski Area. Annual Mancos events include the Mancos Valley-Mesa Verde Country Balloon & Art Festival and Sugar Pine Ranch Motorcycle Rally (Labor Day Weekend).

Towaoc

With a population of approximately 1,100, Towaoc is the reservation home of the Ute Mountain Utes, one of the seven original Ute bands that inhabited the entire state of Colorado. The Ute Mountain Utes enjoy a modern lifestyle while still retaining many of their traditional customs. They are established artisans known for their superlative beadwork and unique pottery. Visitors will find their work in trading posts throughout the area. Enjoy the Ute Tribal Park, Ute Mountain Ute Pottery Factory and Ute Mountain Casino. Each year, Towaoc participates in the Mesa Verde Country Indian Arts & Cultural Festival (May).

Southwest Colorado's Rich History & Heritage

Southwest Colorado is a veritable looking glass into the state's unique heritage and rich history. The area's exceptional attractions and towns chart a course through Colorado's history that chronicles everything from the early Native American presence to the settling of the west through mining, railroads and ranching.

Though it feels worlds away, the region is easily accessible by land or air. You may fly into several regional airports including Cortez, Telluride, Grand Junction or Montrose through Denver. Road tripping is another fun alternative. Albuquerque, New Mexico is about 260 miles from the region, and Denver is approximately a 450-mile drive. No matter how you travel, you won't want to miss the mystique that is Southwest Colorado.

Cortez is home to the **Cortez Cultural Center** (www.cortezculturalcenter.org), a regional hub for living culture that hosts performances by Native American dancers and musicians. The center also houses a museum of Anasazi and early pioneer history and the Hawkins Preserve, a local archaeological site dedicated to the preservation of plant and animal life.

Also check out the nearby **Anasazi Heritage Center** (www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ahc.html), an archaeological museum and the headquarters for **The Canyons of the Ancients National Monument**. Located just 10 miles north of Cortez, the Heritage Center boasts archaeological and special exhibits, hands-on activities and two small archaeological sites, one of which is accessed by an interpretive nature walk.

Nine miles east of Cortez is the famed **Mesa Verde National Park** (www.nps.gov/archive/meve/home.htm), selected by National Geographic Traveler as one of the "50 Best Places to Visit in a Lifetime." Here you can take a ranger-guided tour of Cliff Palace and Balcony House, or set your own pace with self-guided treks through Spruce Tree House, Cedar Tree Tower and Step House, just to name a few.

Retrace the steps of claim-seeking miners and board the **Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad** (www.durangotrain.com), which winds through the wilderness of the San Juan Mountains to the historic town of Silverton. Originally constructed to haul silver and gold from mining camps, the railway has been in continuous operation since 1881. While in **Silverton** walk along historic Blair Street, or try your luck panning for gold.

In **Lake City** you can experience what it was like to be a hardrock miner more than 100 years ago at the **Hard Tack Mine Tour & Museum** (www.hardtackmine.com). Take the guided tour, which includes displays of antique mining equipment, photos of the area when mining boomed, the area's largest rock collection and displays depicting how miners dug and blasted through rocks using hand tools and dynamite. The tour and museum are open 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Memorial Day to Labor Day. Winter visits are by appointment.

Located west of Pagosa Springs, the **Chimney Rock Archaeological Area** (www.chimneyrockco.org) lies on 4,100 acres of San Juan National Forest land and is surrounded by the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. Chimney Rock was home to the ancestors of the modern-day Pueblo Indians who built more than 200 homes and ceremonial buildings in the rocks above the valley floor. Explore May 15-September 30 with guided tours.

In Pagosa Springs, you may visit **The Springs Resort and Spa** (www.pagosahotsprings.com), which has been providing therapeutic and healing qualities since the Native American tribes first discovered them. The modern day resort still boasts the same healing waters and features 18 mineral pools, a non-mineral lap pool and spa, bathhouse and hotel.

Telluride and Mountain Village (www.visittelluride.com) lie in the middle of the Southwest Colorado region. Telluride was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964. Serving as the cultural and historical anchor in town, the **Telluride Historical Museum** (www.telluridemuseum.com) is located in a restored 1896 miners' hospital. Exhibits cover everything from the Ute Indians to the miners and ski resort pioneers. The museum also hosts fireside chats and historic walking tours. On the tour you might hear about famous hoodlum Butch Cassidy and his "Wild Bunch" who kicked off their bank-robbing careers at Telluride's San Miguel Bank in 1889. They were never caught, and the \$24,580 they stole was never recovered.

On the northern tip of the region is the town of Montrose and the **Ute Indian Museum** (www.coloradohistory.org/hist_sites/UteIndian/Ute_indian.htm), one of the few museums in the country devoted solely to one tribe. The museum commemorates the life and culture of these indigenous inhabitants of Western Colorado. It's located on a farm that once belonged to the famous Ute leader and his wife, Ouray and Chipeta.

The Ute Council Tree, located along the north side of the Gunnison River in Delta, is the site where Ute leaders met to hold council. The historic, 200-year-old cottonwood is a Colorado Landmark that still inspires those who visit. Also in Delta visit Fort Uncompahgre where the Ute Indians and trappers once traded. Now a history museum, you may stroll back in time as the Fort's Trader takes you on an interpretive tour of the Fort and its lifestyle.

Modern day trade is still conducted in the countryside of **Delta County** (www.westerncolorado.org) where descendants of the original settlers operate farms and ranches that have been producing quality products for more than 100 years. Banners guide you through this rich heritage area where you can visit with ranchers, farmers and vintners.

Southwest Colorado's Heritage Events Celebrate the Spirit of the West

Area's agriculture, Native American and railroad/mining traditions all on display

People who love the aura and authenticity of the west will find plenty of reasons to spend time in Southwest Colorado. Visitors may step back in time and enjoy a living demonstration of the region's western way of life at one of the many heritage celebrations and events hosted throughout the year. Here is just a sample of what's in store.

May - Hotchkiss Sheep Camp Stock Dog Trials - Hotchkiss (www.hotchkisschamber.com)

Ranching and agriculture has been a way of life since the earliest days of the southwest Colorado region. The Hotchkiss Sheep Camp Stock Dog Trials pay homage to that heritage. The sixth annual event features 75 canines competing to be top dog. Enjoy two days of judged trials, the USBCHA Sanctioned Handler's Dinner, the Sheep Camp Wagon and Tent Camp competition and much more!

May - Mesa Verde Country® Indian Arts & Culture Festival - Cortez (www.mesaverdecountry.com)

Held every Memorial Weekend, this week-long celebration explores the region's cultural and archaeological gems in Mesa Verde Country®. Enjoy a juried Native American art market, Native American dances, a Navajo rug auction, special archaeological tours and a Native American concert.

June - Pagosa Folk 'n Bluegrass Music Festival - Pagosa Springs (www.folkwest.com/folk_bluegrass_festival/index.htm)

You'll be singing the blues at this festival that is held at Reservoir Hill Park in Pagosa Springs. This year's lineup includes The Belleville Outfit, Sweet Sunny South, The Boston Boys, Missy Raines and the New Hip, and much more! Enjoy workshops, late night shows, campfire jams and a free kids program.

June - Telluride Wild West Fest - Telluride (970-728-6363)

This family oriented festival celebrates the spirit of the west and brings inner-city youth, along with artists and musicians from across the nation, to Telluride. Through a scholarship program created in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Big Brothers, Big Sisters of America, inner-city youth come to Telluride for a week of enriching educational experiences. The events are for everyone to enjoy and include drum group performance, vintage stagecoach rides, cowboy poetry, and performances at the Sheridan Opera House.

June - Telluride Heritage Festival - Telluride (970-728-6363)

This festival's goal is to bring together visitors and locals in a celebration of the enduring history of the greater Telluride region. Activities include a Ute blessing on the valley floor, a reenactment of the Butch Cassidy bank robbery, and heritage-related activities such as teepee building, blacksmithing, gold panning and ranching demonstrations.

July - Little Britches Rodeo - Cedaredge (www.cedaredgecolorado.com)

First organized in 1958, the Western Slope Little Britches continues to this day and features a rodeo, parade, car show and Lion's Club barbeque in the park. While in Cedaredge be sure to visit Pioneer Town, a museum and living history village.

July - Annual Cattlemen's Days Rodeo, Gunnison (www.cattlemensdays.com)

Dubbed the "Granddaddy of Colorado Rodeos" the Cattlemen's Days Rodeo made its debut 108 years ago when Main Street served as the arena for cowhands to show off their roping and riding skills. Scheduled between spring calving and summer haying, Cattlemen's Days continues to demonstrate the rhythm of traditional ranch lifestyles as PRCA cowboys and girls from around the U.S. and Canada compete. The event includes a county fair, parade, carnival, live music and dancing, horse shows, cow pie bingo, horse races and the PRCA rodeo events.

August - Lake City History Month – Lake City (www.lakecitydirt.com)

This is a month-long series of activities and events that highlight the rich and fascinating history of Lake City and Hinsdale County.

September – Ouray County Railroad Days – Ridgway and Ouray (www.ridgwayrailroadmuseum.org/2009RRDays.html)

All aboard for a celebration that pays tribute to Ouray County's world-famous railroad heritage. Take a guided hike complete with historical narration along the Silverton Railroad Grade from Red Mountain Summit to the Guston town site. Visit the Ridgway Railroad Museum and see Motor #1 demonstrations and enjoy a railroad symposium.

September - Ute Council Tree Pow Wow – Delta (www.counciltreepowwow.org)

"Experiencing Cultural Traditions" is what this festival is all about. Designed to celebrate the Ute culture and the present-day multi-culture of Delta, County this event is a collaborative effort of the three Ute tribes – Northern, Southern and Ute Mountain Ute – who inhabited the Delta area more than 100 years ago. Festivities include the participatory Ute Bear Dance, dancing and singing competitions, a parade, artisan and food booths, Tipi Village tours and other cultural activities for kids of all ages.

October – Western Colorado Railroad Extravaganza – Montrose (970.323.6469)

The history of the influence of the railroad system in southwest Colorado will be on full – albeit miniature! – display in October in Montrose. The model train event will consist of hundreds of train displays, vendors, artists, entertainment and how-to demonstrations.

Southwest Colorado Travel Region Launches Heritage Web Site

--Site details trip planning to Colorado's most historic region --

Exploring the rich history and culture of the vast, wide-open stretches of southwest Colorado is now as easy as the click of your mouse. The Southwest Colorado Travel Region's new Web site, www.swcoloradoheritage.com, offers well-organized, easy-to-search information on regional destinations, attractions, events and accommodations.

Visitors to the site will find an electronic trip planner, which they may use to build a personalized travel itinerary. Or they may choose from one of the many suggested trips detailed on the site. Audio tours also are available for download.

The site is unusual in that it brings such detailed trip planning and organizational information to an area of the country that has, to date, been one of Colorado's best kept secrets according to Kelli Hepler, president of the Southwest Colorado Travel Region. "We are using the most modern technology to help build awareness of some of the oldest archaeological sites and most incredible historic areas in this country," she says. "Eighty million Americans take heritage travel vacations each year, and this is a great step in ensuring that more of them put southwest Colorado on their 'must-see' lists."

The site is part of the region's Heritage Tourism Program, and is a collaborative effort of the Colorado Tourism Office, Colorado State Historic Fund, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and Southwest Colorado Travel Region. Among the more than 100 regional heritage experiences and attractions on the site are:

Mesa Verde National Park – A World Heritage Site and America's premier archaeological preserve, Mesa Verde is the only park dedicated to the work of humans.

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument – Highest density of archaeological sites anywhere in the United States, with sites dating to the eighth century.

Chimney Rock – Near Pagosa Springs, this archaeological site had great significance for the Ancestral Puebloan people. The Hot Springs in Pagosa Springs are rich in the lore of Ute and Navajo people.

Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad – Providing a spectacular trip along the Animas River from Durango to Silverton. The rail line was constructed primarily to haul gold and silver from the surrounding San Juan Mountains.

Fort Uncompahgre – This recreated fur trading post, in Delta, offers a vivid glimpse into life on the western frontier in 1828. Built by Antione Robidoux, a trapper who was brother to Joseph Robidoux, the founder of St. Joseph Missouri. Antione later served as an interpreter for General Kearny.

Gunnison Pioneer Museum – Consisting of 16 buildings, 12 of which are historic including an

1876 post office, a 1905 rural school house, a Denver & Rio Grande narrow-gauge train, Engine #268 and more than 60 antique cars.

Hovenweep National Monument – Ute for “Deserted Valley” Hovenweep is famous for its rare Ancestral Puebloan towers.

National Historic Districts - The towns of Telluride and Ouray are National Historic Landmarks, and Silverton and Lake City contain National Historic Districts.

Ute Mountain Tribal Park – “The other side of Mesa Verde,” this primitive area preserves Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings, unique geological land formations, petroglyphs, and pictographs. Tours of the park are led by Ute Mountain Ute Guides.

Southwest Colorado Home to Four National Parks and Monuments

Whether you want your next vacation to offer adventure, culture, history, scenery, or all of the above, Southwest Colorado's four national parks and monuments are just the ticket. Like proud cousins in an extended family network, each of these attractions is linked, yet has its own personality and unique features. All are reminders of America's pioneer heritage and unspoiled beauty.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (www.nps.gov/blca)

The Black Canyon of the Gunnison, 11 miles south of Crawford, cuts a striking swath through the landscape. The Visitors Center is located on the south rim just 12 miles out of Montrose. The canyon, at its deepest, plunges 2,722 feet into the Gunnison River, and is the only one in North America to offer such a narrow opening, steep walls and amazing depths. Activities abound at this breathtakingly beautiful park, including hiking on the rim or into the canyon itself, camping, wildlife watching, rock climbing, rafting and scenic drives.

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nm/canm.html)

Located near the town of Dolores, the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument features more than 20,000 archaeological sites-the highest density anywhere in the U.S. The sites date back to the eighth century and represent Ancestral Puebloan culture. The Anasazi Heritage Center houses the visitor center, research center and hands-on exhibits, and is the best place to start any visit to the monument. Here, you can pick up maps and get guidance from rangers to ensure you are fully prepared to trek into this remote, backcountry monument. Other highlights include Lowry Pueblo National Historic Landmark, the only developed recreation site within the monument. The back country location of Painted Hand Pueblo is aptly named for the pictographs of hands painted on a boulder. Sand Canyon, which features the popular 6.5-mile Sand Canyon Trail, is open to hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking.

Hovenweep National Monument (www.nps.gov/hove)

Hovenweep National Monument, just north and west of Cortez, houses six Puebloan-era villages that are sprinkled throughout a 20-mile area. Here you can enjoy short hikes, majestic quietness and an appreciation of the handiwork and determination of the Pueblo people. Start your visit at The Square Tower Group, where you can stop by the visitor center and consider attending one of the ranger-guided programs. The two-mile self-guided trail around Little Ruin Canyon is a must-see. Several of Hovenweep's structures seem to be designed to mark major celestial events, making stargazing a unique experience. There is also a small campground on site.

Mesa Verde National Park (www.nps.gov/archive/meve/home.htm)

Located nine miles east of Cortez, Mesa Verde National Park is the county's largest archaeological preserve and is the sole park dedicated to the work of humankind. The park protects more than 4,000 archeological sites, including spectacular cliff dwellings, which are some of the most distinguished and well preserved in the U.S. In addition to the popular ranger-led tours of Cliff Palace and Balcony House (offered seasonally), visitors may explore the park at their own pace, with self-guided tours of Spruce Tree House, Cedar Tree Tower, Far View Sites, Step House and others. The park is open year-round, although access to some sites is limited during the winter. Other activities include bird watching, cross-country skiing, plant walks, photography and wildlife viewing.

Winter's Best Showcased in Southwest Colorado

Travelers looking for a fun winter vacation getaway need look no further than the Southwest Colorado Travel Region. From world-class ski resorts to other activities that can keep you busy for days, here are just a few of the reasons why Southwest Colorado is a cool way to spend cold days.

Montrose

Montrose Regional Airport is the gateway to Southwest Colorado Travel Region and offers convenient flights from many major cities, including: Denver, Houston, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth and Newark. Make Montrose the hub for your Southwest Colorado vacation, but don't miss out on the experiences located right in this area.

The stunning **Black Canyon of the Gunnison** (<http://www.nps.gov/blca/>) is open year round and gives winter visitors the opportunity to snowshoe, cross country ski or star gaze. The **Museum of the Mountain West** (www.mountainwestmuseum.com) contains original and reconstructed historic buildings, businesses and homes. The **Ute Indian Museum** (970.249.3098) is one of the few museums in the country dedicated to one tribe. Both are open in the wintertime, giving visitors a glimpse into this region's historic past.

Telluride

Telluride is renowned for its rich heritage, charming culture and remote mountain beauty. Conveniently, visitors may fly directly from Denver or Phoenix into Telluride Regional Airport, the highest commercial airport in North America (at 9,078 feet above sea level). Between Telluride and nearby Mountain Village options for accommodations and activities abound. The world-class **Telluride Ski Resort** (www.tellurideski resort.com) is known for its powder-filled bowls, family-friendly ski school and amazing views. This winter the new Revelation Bowl will be open, as well as a high-speed quad lift. For a backcountry experience, book a trip with Colorado's only heliski outfitter, **Telluride Helitrax** (866.435.4754). Or, explore the **San Juan Hut System** (970.626.3033), which includes five backcountry ski huts sprinkled between Telluride, Ridgway and Ouray. For family fun, check out the local ice skating rinks—one near Heritage Plaza in Mountain Village, or another in Telluride's Town Park.

Gunnison-Crested Butte

Visitors can fly directly into **Gunnison-Crested Butte** (www.GunnisonCrestedButte.com) Regional Airport from Salt Lake City, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth and Denver to experience "Colorado's Last Great Ski Town." **Crested Butte Mountain Resort** is known for its world-class skiing and snowboarding. Snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and ice fishing are other popular activities in and around Gunnison-Crested Butte. There are a wide variety of lodging options from which visitors can choose—from rustic inns and cabins to bed-and-breakfasts and full-service resort hotels.

Ouray

Surrounded on three sides by 13,000-foot snowcapped peaks, beautiful **Ouray** is aptly nicknamed "The Switzerland of America." The **Ouray Ice Park** (www.ourayicepark.com) is the world's first park dedicated exclusively to ice climbing and offers free climbing experiences for beginners, as

well as experts. Each January world-class athletes flock to Ouray for the **Ouray Ice Festival** (www.ourayicefestival.com), the premiere international gathering of its kind. Nearby, **Silverton Mountain** (www.silvertonmountain.com) boasts the steepest, most powder-filled slopes in the U.S. Ouray also has its own ski hill (for the less adventuresome!) with a free towrope, as well as the local's favorite sledding hill. The **Ouray Hot Springs Pool** is open year-round and offers more than a million gallons of crystal clear natural hot springs water, several soaking sections at varying temperatures and a lap swim section.

Pagosa Springs

Pagosa Springs is known for its charm and **The Springs Resort & Spa** (www.pagosahotsprings.com), which is terraced along the banks of the San Juan River. Stay right at the resort in a standard, deluxe or grand hotel room and enjoy the 18 soaking pools at your leisure. The Great Pagosa Aquifer, the world's largest and deepest hot mineral spring, is the source of the therapeutic mineral waters here. After a day on the slopes treat yourself to a relaxing massage or other treatment at the on-site spa.

Delta County

Delta County's Grand Mesa, one of the world's largest flat-top mountains, boasts 800-square miles of winter playground terrain. The mesa is home to 400 miles of winter trails, perfect for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The 123-mile-long Powderhorn to Sunlight Trail is the longest snowmobile trail in North America. Visitors may book a room at one of the nearby communities in Delta County, or choose to stay right on the mesa at the Spruce Lodge (www.sprucelodgecolorado.com) or the Grand Mesa Lodge (800.551.6372).

Summertime Celebrations in Southwest Colorado

Southwest Colorado is home to quintessential Colorado communities such as Telluride, Silverton, Ouray, Cortez, Pagosa Springs, Gunnison and the “wildflower capital of Colorado,” Crested Butte, just to name a few. Begin your summer vacation planning by selecting one of the region’s signature summer celebrations, and then take time to explore all that makes Southwest Colorado so special. *Please note: event dates and times are subject to change without notice.*

May – Annual Hotchkiss Sheep Camp Stock Dog Trials – www.hotchkisschamber.com

Hotchkiss goes to the dogs for this event where 75 four-legged friends take center stage for two full days of stock dog trials. There will also be a sheep camp wagon competition and a trial-oriented item auction.

May – Indian Arts & Culture Festival, Mesa Verde Country – www.mesaverdecountry.com

This event showcases the many cultural and archaeological gems of the Mesa Verde region. Enjoy the juried Indian art market, a Navajo rug auction, special archaeological tours and exhibits, as well as Indian dances and entertainment.

June – Telluride Jazz Celebration (www.telluridejazz.org) & Balloon Rally (www.tellurideballoonfestival.com)

The Telluride Jazz Celebration has been making sweet music since 1977. The intimate format and abundant opportunities to enjoy the area’s spectacular recreation complement the superb music. Concerts take place on outdoor stages during the day, and there are theatre and club shows at night. And with its new dates in June it has become even more festive as it coincides with the colorful **Telluride Balloon Rally**.

June – Pagosa Folk ‘n Bluegrass Festival – www.folkwest.com

This outdoor family-friendly music festival features The Belleville Outfit, Bearfoot Bluegrass, Sweet Sunny South and The Boston Boys, to name a few. Enjoy musical workshops, free kids admission and activities, on-site camping, late night sets and jamming. New this year - Bearfoot Bluegrass Camp for Kids open to children ages 5-17, all bluegrass instruments and ability levels.

June – Dolores River Festival – www.doloreschamber.com

This family-oriented event features numerous vendors and river events, such as raft rides and river dog contests. You’ll also enjoy superb music by national and local acts all afternoon and into the evening.

June – Annual Ute Mountain Roundup Rodeo, Montezuma County Fairgrounds, Cortez – www.utemountainroundup.com

Don your western wear and get ready to rope in a good time at this PRCA rodeo that dates back to the post-World War I era. Mutton busting, steer wrestling and bronco riding are just a few of the highlights.

June – Annual Fat Tire Bike Week, Crested Butte – www.ftbw.com

This bike festival celebrates Crested Butte, the birthplace of mountain biking. Offering something for every biker, visitors enjoy guided rides, a pig roast, live music, a bike rodeo and the infamous chainless race.

July – Annual Park to Park Arts & Crafts Fair & Fourth of July Celebration, Pagosa Springs – www.pagosaspringschamber.com

Walk along the San Juan River in downtown Pagosa Springs as you acquire hand-made goods from more than 90 vendors. Jewelry, artwork, furniture, collectables, food and more are available in two parks and along the river. Also enjoy the Fourth of July parade, the Red Ryder Rodeo and a free concert before the fireworks.

July - Old Fashioned Fourth of July - www.lakecity.com

Held in Lake City Town Park, this event boasts a book sale, flyover, parade, reading of the declaration of Independence, games and food in the park, bingo, street dance, fireworks, and more.

July – Cattlemen’s Days Celebration, Gunnison – www.gunnison-co.com

Yee haw! Noted as the oldest rodeo in Colorado, the celebration includes a parade, county fair exhibits, livestock shows and auction and three days of PRCA rodeo performances.

Mid-July – American Cultural Gathering and Dances – www.chimneyrockco.org

Experience the vivid colors of full heritage dress, music and dance of more than ten Native American tribes, as they gather to share their culture at the sacred grounds of Chimney Rock. Enjoy a tour of the site in between shows or garner a beautiful piece of hand-made jewelry.

End of July – Annual Mancos Days Celebration – www.mancosvalley.com

This town’s motto is “Where the West Still Lives.” Enjoy this celebration of all things Mancos, including a town parade, crafts, vendors and food.

July-August – Archuleta County Fair, Pagosa Springs – www.archuletacountyfair.com

Enjoy a traditional county fair with all the trimmings. Partake in games, activities and contests, including a chili cook-off. Spend Saturday evening at the 4-H barbecue dinner, and livestock auction, and then dance the night away to the western sounds of Tim Sullivan and Narrow Gauge.

Beginning of August – Annual Artists Alpine Holiday, Ouray – www.ourayarts.org

Take pleasure in the wonderful creations of nearly 200 artists in every medium. This show spotlights 400 works of art, including sculpture and photography. There is a special category for students.

Beginning of August – Olathe Sweet Corn Festival – www.olathesweetcornfest.com

The Olathe Sweet Corn Festival is a family event full of music, food and fun. Festival goers enjoy all the "Olathe Sweet" sweet corn they can eat. This year's event features free contests and games and more than 150 booths with food, arts, crafts, carnival games and novelties. Country music star LeAnn Rimes headlines the concert on Saturday night.

August – Mesa Verde Country Wine & Arts Festival, Cortez – www.mesaverdecountry.com
Wine and art make a perfect pair at this annual event that showcases Colorado wineries. You can also sip in the sounds of music by local musicians.

September – Four Corners Folk Festival, Pagosa Springs – www.folkwest.com
This year’s lineup includes Tim O’Brien, The Subdudes, The Bills and The Darrell Scott Band just for starters. Camping is available and there will be late night jam sessions, workshops, children’s activities and lots of food and artisans.

September – Lake City Uncorked Wine & Music Festival - www.lakecityfestival.org
Featuring good music, good food, good wine, and good friends – all beneath the fall aspens of the San Juan Mountains!

The “Fore Corners” Region Drives Golfers to Southwest Colorado

-Newly-released brochure highlights the area’s 13 scenic golf courses-

Natural beauty is par for the course in Southwest Colorado, where golfers may tee off at one of the region’s 13 challenging courses. Good news is the ball travels farther at altitude. Bad news is you may easily become distracted by the amazing views and vistas of the surrounding San Juan Mountains! Now golfers may visit <http://www.swcoloradoheritage.com/heritage-maps-and-trips/suggested-trips/sw-colorado-golf-tour-fore-corners/?searchterm=golf> to download a brochure that highlights the courses in range within this “Fore Corners” region.

Black Canyon Golf Club at Montrose – Montrose (www.blackcanyongolfclub.com) – This course’s namesake, the Black Canyon National Park, provides the backdrop for the par 70, 6,171-yard course.

Bridges at Black Canyon – Montrose (www.montrosebridges.com) – Located in the heart of scenic and historic Montrose, this 18-hole Nicklaus Design Course features some of the most challenging and fun holes on the western slope.

Conquistador Golf Course – Cortez (970.565.9208) – Designed by Press Maxwell and Bill Stroud, this course has a PGA golf pro on staff, as well as spectacular views and special stay and play rates.

Deer Creek Village Golf Club – Cedaredge (970.856.7781) – With two distinct nines and four tees, Deer Creek is as difficult as you want to make it.

Devil’s Thumb Golf Club – Delta (www.devilsthumbgolf.com) – Located in the foothills north of Delta this “prairie style” course offers a unique blend of characteristics.

Divide Ranch & Club – Ridgway (www.eqresorts.com/divide/divide-golf.htm) - This mature, award-winning course nestles against the San Juans, with views of Mt. Sneffles to the south, and juniper, pinon and ponderosa pine lining the holes.

Dos Rios Golf Club – Gunnison (www.dosriosgolf.net) – Designed by J. Press Maxwell, Dos Rios incorporates the natural landscape and intertwines with the tree-lined Gunnison River, leading to numerous water hazards.

Pagosa Springs Golf Club - Pagosa Springs (www.golfpagosa.com) – Ponderosa pines line the fairways at this public resort facility with 27 championship holes.

Telluride Ski and Golf Club – Telluride (www.tellurideskiandgolf.com) – This par 71, 6,739-yard course is surrounded by the highest concentration of 14,000-foot mountains in the U.S.

The Club at Crested Butte – Crested Butte (www.crestedbutte.com) – Designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., this course has been named “Best Mountain Golf Course in Colorado” by *Mountain Golf Magazine*.

The Links at Cobble Creek - Montrose (www.cobblecreek.com) - With ten lakes and a creek that winds through the entire length of this link-style course, fairways shots are a must.

Vacationers Invited to Drink in the Tastes of Southwest Colorado

--Micro breweries, distilleries, wineries and delicious events all on tap--

Finding a place to savor the flavors of Southwest Colorado is easier than ever, thanks to the recently published Southwest Colorado Brewery Tour brochure. In addition to featuring the region's 16 microbreweries, the guide (downloadable at <http://www.swcoloradoheritage.com/heritage-maps-and-trips/suggested-trips/hop-to-it-brewery-tour>) also highlights the region's 15 wineries and distilleries. With so many choices there is something to please every palate.

"Hops" to It

The Cortez/Dolores area boasts three microbreweries, including **Main Street Brewery** (Cortez), which produces nine craft beers; **Coyote J Brewing Co.** (Cortez - www.jfargos.com) that pours four beers; and **Dolores River Brewery** (Dolores) that is known for its handcrafted beers and single barrel series (www.doloresriverbrewery.com).

Family-owned **Revolution Brewing** (www.revolution-brewing.com), located in Paonia, is known as Colorado's smallest brewery. While **Ourayle House**, a one-man operation with direct fire-brewed beer in Ouray, is also proving size doesn't matter.

Sip Stops

Western Colorado's terrain and weather are the perfect pairing for turning great grapes into savory sips in this up-and-coming wine region. Most of the wineries are open Memorial Day through fall, though visitors are advised to contact the wineries and distilleries for specific hours of operation.

Paonia has a plethora of wineries and tasting rooms. **Azura** (http://web.mac.com/azurastudios/AZURA_STUDIOS/Gallery_%26_Tasting_Room.html) offers a tasting room and art gallery. The underground "wine cave" at **Black Bridge Winery** (www.blackbridgewinery.com) was salvaged from a local mining operation. **Stone Cottage Cellars** and **Terror Creek Winery** are also located in Paonia.

Jack Rabbit Hill Estate Winery (www.jackrabbithill.com) is a 70-acre Hotchkiss estate winery that makes its wines from 22 acres of certified-organic/Biodynamic® vineyards. **Leroux Creek Vineyards** (www.lerouxcreekinn.com), also located in Hotchkiss, boasts a bed and breakfast and hiking/biking trails. Other "must not miss" wineries include Cortez's **Guy Drew Vineyards** (www.guydrewvineyards.com), **Stoney Mesa Winery** (www.stonemesa.com) in Cedaredge and **Surface Creek Winery** (www.surfacecreek.com) in Eckert.

Those who crave spirits should stop by Cedaredge's **Blossomwood Cidery** (www.blossomwoodcidery.com) and **Colorado Gold Distillery** (www.coloradogolddistillery.com), which produce bourbon, vodka and gin. **Mancos Valley Distillery** in Mancos is renowned for its rum.

Tasty Festivals & Events

Good family fun is always on the menu in Southwest Colorado, which boasts lots of festivals and celebrations that celebrate the flavors of the region. Here's just a taste of what's in store.

- June: Taste of Ouray (www.ouraycolorado.com)
- June: Love Your Valley Microbrew Fest, Ridgway (www.ridgwaycolorado.com)
- June: Telluride Wine Festival (www.telluridewinefestival.com)
- July: Crested Butte Land Trust Food & Wine Festival (www.crestedbuttevine.com)
- August: Mesa Verde Country Wine, Food and Art Festival, Cortez (www.mesaverdecountry.com/tourism/festivals/winefest/winefest.html)
- August: Annual Grillin' Chillin' and Thrillin' Microbrew Fest, Ouray (www.ouraycolorado.com)
- September: Fall Festival of Beers and Chili Cookoff, Mt. Crested Butte (www.gunnisoncrestedbutte.com)
- September: Harvest Beer Festival, Cortez (www.mesaverdecountry.com)
- September: Blues and Brews, Telluride (www.tellurideblues.com)
- September: Passport to Pagosa: Wine and Food Festival, Pagosa Springs (www.pagosachamber.com)
- September: Harvest Festival, Paonia (www.mountainharvestfestival.com)

Fall Foliage Fun along Southwest Colorado's Eight Scenic Byways

Each fall Colorado's aspen trees trade in their vivid green for a coat of vibrant yellow. The aspens' golden hues pop from their evergreen backdrop to offer a spectacle that is well worth the wait. September is typically a good month to experience this rite of autumn's passage. Southwest Colorado's eight scenic byways beckon road trippers year-round, and particularly during this time when the quest for colors reigns supreme.

Alpine Loop Back Country Byway

This 65-mile route explores stunning peaks and narrow glacial valleys, including two 12,000-foot passes. Along the way you may view well-preserved remains of stamp mills, tramways and ghost towns from the mining boom days, or stretch your legs on one of the hiking trails. Portions of the route are accessible only by off-road vehicles, so you might consider renting a 4x4 or hiring a commercial guide in nearby Ouray, Silverton or Lake City.

Bachelor Historic Loop

Bachelor Historic Loop is a 17-mile trek that takes visitors through the last great mining boom town in Colorado, Creede. The tour begins at the kiosk at the fork of East and West Willow Creek in the canyon north of town and ends at the kiosk on Highway 149 in Creede.

Grand Mesa National Scenic & Historic Byway

Linking the towns of Mesa and Cedaredge, the 51-mile Grand Mesa Scenic Byway follows Colorado 65 to I-70 before heading west along the Lands End Road (FDR 100). The road then traverses across the top of Grand Mesa, one of the world's largest flat-topped mountains. While here, stop at the Grand Mesa Visitors Center, or check out one of the 300 lakes on Grand Mesa. The 12-mile spur trip takes you to the Lands End Observatory where five mountain ranges can be seen.

San Juan Skyway

The San Juan Skyway has been called "The Most Beautiful Drive in America" and is Colorado's first National Forest Scenic Byway. Looping through the beautiful San Juan Mountains, this 236-mile route takes you through the San Juan, Uncompahgre, Wilson and Sneffels mountain ranges. The route passes through the towns of Silverton, Ouray, Ridgway, Telluride, Rico, Dolores, Cortez and Mancos.

Silver Thread Scenic Byway

The Silver Thread Scenic Byway weaves its way from Lake City through Creede and on to South Fork along Colorado Highway 149. Stretching 75-miles, this byway offers panoramic views and plenty of wildlife. It also explores an area rich in Native American history, early-day Anglo explorers and Victorian-era mining.

Trail of the Ancients National Byway

This route treats visitors to fall colors, as well as a glimpse into Colorado's historic past. The trail begins at the Four Corners Monument, where you may stand in four states at one time, then travels to the Ute Mountain Tribal Park and continues to Mesa Verde National Park. From Cortez you may backtrack to the Anasazi Heritage Center and go on to Lowry Pueblo. Before reaching the

final stop—Hovenweep National Monument—consider three side trips to Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Cortez Center and the Galloping Goose Museum.

Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway

From just outside of Grand Junction, this 138-route follows Colorado Highways 141 and 145 to Placerville. Following the course of the Unaweep Canyon, this scenic route continues through the vivid desert “redbeds” of Dolores River Canyon then opens onto the high plains. The entire drive is framed by the magnificent San Juan Mountain Range.

West Elk Loop Scenic and Historic Byway

The 205-mile West Elk Loop Scenic and Historic Byway originates in Carbondale then follows Colorado Highway 133 over McClure Pass into Crested Butte. From there it continues south to Gunnison then southwest on U.S. 50 along the Blue Mesa Reservoir. Continue on through Sapinero to the junction of U.S. 50 and Colorado Highway 92. Here the route proceeds north through the towns of Maher, Crawford, Hotchkiss and Paonia. By completing the loop in Hotchkiss you can return to Carbondale via McClure Pass.

Ghost Towns of Southwest Colorado

A treat any time of year, Southwest Colorado ghost towns offer a glimpse into Colorado's past

Step into the shadows of the past with a visit to one of southwest Colorado's ghost towns. The mining demands that created these communities fizzled, leaving behind a shell of life as it once was. Today, some ghost towns showcase abandoned buildings, while others have been restored, and still others serve as modern-day outposts for exploring this region that is so rich in history.

1. Red Mountain Town, outside of Ouray

The site of the National Bell Mine, Red Mountain Town is located off Hwy 550 near the crest of Red Mountain Pass. During its peak, as many as 10,000 residents lived in Red Mountain Town. Booming with over 100 businesses, a post office, jail, schools, newspapers, saloons and gambling halls, Red Mountain Town became one of the most prosperous of its time. Hard winters proved to be the biggest obstacle of survival and several tragic fires between the 1892 and 1937 nearly leveled the town. An estimated thirty million dollars in gold, silver, lead, zinc and copper has been taken out of this area. To explore what's left of this once booming mine town, park your car at the Red Mountain Pass and hike into the town site. Or, check out the overlook from Hwy 550 at the Idarado Mine turnoff.

2. Gothic, north of Crested Butte

Gothic is located approximately nine miles north of Crested Butte on County Road 317. It was founded as a stop on the East Maroon Trail that connected the new communities of Aspen and Crested Butte and at one time boasted a population of 8,000. Once a hot spot for silver mining, Gothic's downfall came during the Silver Panic of 1893. It is now an abandoned mining ghost town, but new life was breathed into the area when it became the site of the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in 1928. Four-wheel-drive vehicles may continue another nine miles past Gothic over Schofield Pass to the famous Crystal Mill, one of the most photographed sites in Colorado.

3. Tin Cup, Gunnison County

Founded as Virginia City in 1880, Tin Cup was renamed in honor of an early minor, Jim Taylor, who used an old tin cup to sift through the gravel in search of gold. During the 1870s the rough mining town of Tin Cup, with a peak population of 6,000 inhabitants was home to a lively red-light district, housed amongst the usual cast of saloons, dance halls, shops and churches. Today, however, Tin Cup is home to a few quiet and peaceful, mostly summer residents as well as Colorado's most unusual cemetery. Tin Cup can be found at the foot of Cumberland Pass on County Road 765.

4. Animas Forks, near Silverton

Established in 1875, the short-lived boom of Animas Forks ended by the 1920s. Plagued by

the frequent avalanches that kept travelers from entering and residents from leaving, Animas Forks quickly went from a thriving hub for local mines to a deserted ghost town. Thousands of people visit the remaining building and town ruins located about thirteen miles southeast of Ouray, Colorado. A jeep or other four-wheel drive vehicle is suggested for exploring this ghost town.

5. Not all Ghost Towns are necessarily abandoned and left frozen in time. **Lake City, Silverton, Ouray** and **Telluride** are examples of historic mining settlements that were once booming mining populations of their peak, are still alive and breathing among their well preserved buildings and streetscape. While many other western frontier towns were abandoned or destroyed by fire, Lake City (www.lakecity.com) and Silverton (www.silvertoncolorado.com) remain small thriving communities with an open door for those travelers looking for a break from their busy pace lives. Take a stroll through the historic main streets, tour old mines, or use them as a home base for the abundant outdoor activities in the area.

In Ouray (www.ouraycolorado.com), which is aptly nicknamed “Switzerland of America,” visitors make explore the historic downtown region, which has been designated a National Historic District. A mule-drawn carriage ride gives visitors the lay of the land, as well as some interesting historic facts. And, the Ouray County Museum, housed in an old miners hospital, has lots of exhibits displaying life as it once was in this quintessential mountain town.

Telluride (www.visittelluride.com) was named after the composition of ores in the area, which mostly consisted of telluride, a compound containing tellurium, a non-metallic element. Today, visitors may not only catch a glimpse of Telluride’s historic past, with walking tours and fireside chats sponsored by the Telluride Historical Museum, but they may also take part in world-class skiing, festivals and other outdoor activities.

Suggested Itinerary: Native American Presence on the Colorado Landscape

Total Number of Days/Nights: 6

Itinerary Summary: Travel Southwestern Colorado, rich in Native American Culture and History. Home of Mesa Verde National Park, Chimney Rock Archaeological Area, Ute Indian Museum, and two unique cultural festivals, Ute Council Tree Pow Wow and the Mesa Verde Country® Indian Arts and Culture Festival.

Destinations include:

Mesa Verde National Park	Ute Indian Museum
Council Tree Pow Wow	Pagosa Hot Springs
Ft. Uncompahgre	Historic San Juan Mountains
Chimney Rock Archaeological Area	Chipeta and Chief Ouray
Anasazi Heritage Center	Indian Arts and Culture Festival

Day One: Cortez, Colo.

Visit the Anasazi Heritage Center, an archaeological museum and the headquarters for the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (north of Cortez.) The Heritage Center includes archaeological exhibits, hands-on activities, cultural videos, and two small archaeological sites. Attend free Indian Dances and Cultural Programs at the Cortez Cultural Center in the evening (during the summer months.)

Day Two: Mesa Verde National Park, Colo.

Just east of Cortez, visit the spectacular cliff dwellings and mesa-top villages in world-renowned Mesa Verde National Park, a World Heritage Site, voted #1 Historic Monument in the World. Ranger-guided, self-guided, and ½ day guided tours are available in the park. Enjoy dinner at the famous Metate Room with views that will take your breath away.

Day Three: Chimney Rock, Pagosa Springs, Colo.

From mid-May to the end of September, take a trip back in time at Chimney Rock Archaeological Area. This site, once home to the ancestors of the modern Pueblo Indians, is of great spiritual significance today. Travel on to Pagosa Springs, whose name "Pagosa" is a Ute Indian word meaning healing waters. The hot mineral springs here are renowned for their healing qualities. Give them a try and learn the lore of the fight for ownership of the hot springs between the Ute and Navajo Indians.

Day Four: Ouray, Colo.

Drive from Pagosa Springs to Ouray, joining the San Juan Skyway in Durango, and following it through Silverton into Ouray. As you travel along this All American Road, often called "The Most Beautiful Drive in America," reflect on this area from the perspective of the Ute Indians, who utilized these mountains as a summer camp for their family groups for many centuries. In Ouray, their hot springs also had special significance for the Uncompahgre Band of Utes. They called the hot springs "sacred miracle waters," and used them for both ceremonial and healing purposes, even

bathing their beloved horses in the steaming waters. In the late 19th century, Chief Ouray built a small “summer home” at the hot springs where the Wiesbaden Spa is now located.

Day Five: Montrose, Colo.

Visit the Ute Indian Museum, one of the few museums in the country devoted solely to one tribe. The life and culture of the Ute People, the indigenous inhabitants of western Colorado, are commemorated in this museum. The grounds include the Ouray Memorial and the grave of Chipeta, wife of Chief Ouray. Travel on to explore Black Canyon National Park. This steep, dark canyon has been a barrier to humans from time immemorial. Only the rim, never the gorge, shows any evidence of human occupation, not even by Ute Indians.

Day Six: Delta, Colo.

Discover the Ute Council Tree. This historic cottonwood tree (*Populus deltoides*) was designated a Colorado Landmark and is marked by a plaque by the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The tree was dedicated in memory of Chief Ouray and his wife, Chipeta, of the Ute Indian tribe. There, he and his braves met with white settlers to smoke the pipe of peace and settle their differences. Chipeta was said to have been the only Indian woman ever permitted to sit in council meetings. Venture into the frontier at Fort Uncompahgre in Delta on a site where Ute Indians and trappers once traded.

Suggested Itinerary: Colorado Heritage Timeline

Total Number of Days/Nights: 7

Itinerary Summary: Travel Southwestern Colorado, rich in history and heritage. Follow a timeline beginning with the early Native American presence in the region, and progressing to the settling of the west through mining, railroads, bordellos and frontier forts. Then travel into the present day with farms, orchards and wineries celebrating the richness of Southwest Colorado today.

Destinations include:

Mesa Verde National Park	Ute Indian Museum
Council Tree	Pagosa Hot Springs
Fort Uncompahgre	Spectacular San Juan Mountains
Chimney Rock Archaeological Area	Four Registered Historic Districts
Durango & Silverton Train	Anasazi Heritage Center
Historic Mine Tours	Black Canyon National Park
Orchards and Vineyards	

Day One: Cortez, Colo.

Visit the Anasazi Heritage Center, an outstanding archaeological museum and the headquarters for the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (north of Cortez.) The Heritage Center includes archaeological exhibits, hands-on activities, cultural videos, and two small archaeological sites. Attend free Indian Dances and Cultural Programs at the Cortez Cultural Center in the evening (during the summer months.)

Day Two: Mesa Verde National Park, Colo.

Just east of Cortez, visit the spectacular cliff dwellings and mesa-top villages in world-renowned Mesa Verde National Park, a World Heritage Site, voted #1 Historic Monument in the World. Ranger-guided, self-guided, and ½ day guided tours are available in the park. Enjoy dinner at the famous Metate Room with views that will take your breath away.

Day Three: Chimney Rock Archaeological Area, Pagosa Springs, Colo.

From mid-May to the end of September, take a trip back in time at Chimney Rock Archaeological Area. This site, once home to the ancestors of the modern Pueblo Indians, is of great spiritual significance today. Travel on to Pagosa Springs, whose name "Pagosa" is a Ute Indian word meaning healing waters. The hot mineral springs here are renowned for their healing qualities. Give them a try and learn the lore of the fight for ownership of the hot springs between the Ute and Navajo Indians.

Day Four: Silverton and Ouray, Colo.

Explore Silverton's National Historic Landmark District, including a stop at the San Juan County Historical Society Museum, formerly the San Juan County Jail, and a walk along Historic Blair Street, where during the mining days, the "ladies of the evening" entertained the miners. Explore the

secret underground world of the hard-rock gold miner by taking a mine tour, and afterwards, try your luck panning for gold. Continue along the San Juan Skyway to Ouray.

Day Five: Ouray and Telluride, Colo.

The Red Mountain area was one of Colorado's richest and most productive mining districts. Take a jeep ride on the region's back roads to visit historic mines and mining towns that link Ouray to Telluride. While in Telluride enjoy their Nationally Registered Historic District, and the Telluride Historical Museum. After your jeep trip returns you to Ouray, stroll through the Ouray National Register Historic District, and visit the beautifully restored Beaumont Hotel, 1887, or the authentic St. Elmo Hotel, 1898.

Day Six: Montrose, Colo.

Visit the Ute Indian Museum, one of the few museums in the country devoted solely to one tribe. The life and culture of the Ute People, the indigenous inhabitants of western Colorado, are commemorated in this museum. The grounds include the Ouray Memorial and the grave of Chipeta, wife of Chief Ouray. Travel on to exploring Black Canyon National Park. This steep, dark canyon has been a barrier to humans from time immemorial. Only the rim, never the gorge, shows any evidence of human occupation, not even by Ute Indians.

Day Seven: Delta, Colo.

Discover the Ute Council Tree, dedicated in memory of Chief Ouray and his wife, Chipeta, where Ouray and his braves met with white settlers to smoke the pipe of peace and settle their differences. Then venture into the frontier life at Fort Uncompahgre where Ute Indians and trappers once traded. Throughout the summer stroll back in time as the Fort's "Mountain Man" takes you on an interpretive tour. Complete your Colorado timeline by touring the countryside of Delta County, an agricultural area steeped in pioneer sentiment. Farms, ranches, orchards, and vineyards have been producing quality products here for over 100 years.

Suggested Itinerary: The “Shady” Side of Southwest Colorado

Total Number of Days/Nights: 4

Itinerary Summary: Southwest Colorado has a “shady” side and this shade doesn’t come from its spectacular aspen trees. Stories of the Old West abound with adventure, intrigue, cowboys, outlaws, miners, and ladies of the evening. The miners on their days off needed the “entertainment” provided by the saloons and brothels, and the richness of the region was an invitation to the unscrupulous few who found ways to take their money rather than work for it.

Destinations include:

Farmer's Bank Building, Delta
Telluride
Butch Cassidy Bank Robbery
Ouray

Saloons and Bordellos
Historic Blair Street
San Juan County Museum
Silverton

Day One: Delta, Colo.

From 1892-1893, the McCarty Gang called Delta home. The gang was run by Tom McCarty, who would introduce Butch Cassidy to a life of robbing banks. The McCarty brothers, along with their nephew, Fred McCarty, robbed The Farmer’s Bank in Delta. Tom shot and killed the cashier, A. T. Blachey. When hardware merchant, W. Ray Simpson, heard the gunfire, he rushed the bank and shot and killed Tom’s brother Bill and his nephew. Tom McCarty escaped and fled to Montana. In 1906, the bank building was moved to Howard Street, where it remains in use today as a private residence.

Day Two: Telluride, Colo.

Telluride’s “shady” side includes the rough western culture of brothels and bordellos, and the notorious location of Butch Cassidy’s first bank robbery. The San Miguel Valley Bank was robbed at gunpoint on June 24, 1889 by a gang that included Robert Leroy Parker, alias Butch Cassidy. The bank was replaced in the early 1900s, but a plaque marks the bank’s original location. The bank vault still exists in another building located on Colorado Avenue.

Telluride also had a substantial “sporting” district. Many of the historic buildings along East Pacific and south Spruce Streets have been restored. The Silverbell Saloon, built in 1890 was a notorious dance hall and “female boarding house.” Next door is the Senate, also a notorious saloon with a colorful history. Now privately owned, plaques on the structures describe their history. On Pacific Street is a row of small dwellings known as the “Cribs,” where the ladies of the evening entertained. This district was known as Popcorn Alley due to the popping sound of doors opening and slamming throughout the night as miners enjoyed the hospitality of the bordellos.

Day Three: Ouray, Colo.

Ouray had two red light districts that flourished in the 1880s and 1890s and into the early decades of the 20th century. The earliest district was located along Main Street north of 8th street where the Gold Belt Theater and several other “female boarding houses” provided first class entertainment in addition to the second floor cribs. The second red light district in Ouray stretched along Second Street between 7th and 8th avenues. By 1908 there were 16 houses of ill repute where liquor, gambling, prostitution and loud music continued far into the night. The prosperity of these establishments rose and fell with the mining industry.

Day Four: Silverton, Colo.

Explore Silverton’s National Historic Landmark District, including a stop at the San Juan County Historical Society Museum, formerly the San Juan County Jail, complete with the original cell block and ball and chain. Inside the museum, be sure to visit the “women’s cell,” where many a madam spent the night and paid a fine to enrich the city’s coffers. Walk along notorious Blair Street, where during mining days, the “ladies of the evening” entertained the miners. The street was home to 32 saloons, gambling halls and houses of ill-repute covering a three-block stretch. The street was named for Thomas Blair, a saloon owner. His Assembly Rooms, where poker chips and cards were plentiful, saw men like Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp playing faro within its confines. To experience the other side mining life, explore the secret underground world of the hard-rock gold miner by taking a mine tour, and afterwards, try your luck panning for gold.