

# Transportation Heritage in Southwest Colorado

## Total Number of Days/Nights: 5

Travel Southwest Colorado in the footsteps of adventuresome explorers and pioneers who helped settle the region. Follow the historic route traveled by Spanish explorers Dominguez and Escalante, experience the narrow gauge railroad that transported supplies and ore to/from the area's historic mining towns, and marvel at the Galloping Goose, half truck, half train that carried supplies, mail and passengers into the mountains until the early 1950s. Experience what life was like for adventurers who traversed the region by stagecoach. Celebrate the hundreds of miles of National Scenic Byways that today join the region together as threads woven into a tapestry of mountains, canyons, mesas, and valleys.

## Destinations include:

Rio Grande Southern Train Depot  
Galloping Goose Railcars  
Durango & Silverton Train  
Mancos Valley Stage Lines  
Cimarron Railroad Exhibit  
San Juan Skyway  
Anasazi Heritage Center

Red Mountain Toll Road  
Ridgway Railroad Museum  
Million Dollar Highway  
San Juan Historical Museum  
Dominguez and Escalante Expedition

**Day One: Delta.** In 1776, Friars Dominguez and Escalante searched for a route from Santa Fe, NM, to Monterey, CA via western Colorado and into Utah. In Delta County, there are a number of locations where the expedition stopped along the way. The Trail is marked along Highway 133, between Hotchkiss and Paonia, and on the hill south of Hotchkiss. To find out more about the expedition visit the Delta County Museum in Delta.

**Day Two: Montrose, Ridgway, Telluride.** Located 20 miles east of Montrose, within the Curecanti Recreation area, are railroad exhibits at the Cimarron Visitor Center. Restored locomotives and cabooses are on display. After visiting, depart Montrose for the town of Ridgway, and the Ridgway Railroad Museum. Ridgway, Colorado, long known as the birthplace of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad, houses this museum dedicated to the preservation of the history of railroading in Ouray County and surrounding areas. Travel from Ridgway along the 1882 toll road to the mining district of Telluride. In 1890 the Rio Grande Southern Railroad arrived in Telluride and started its greatest boom. The 1930s ushered in a unique system of rail transport known as the Galloping Goose, part railcar and part truck. Galloping Goose Car #4 is located in Ridgway and is accessible to the public.



**Day Three: Dolores, Mancos.** Traveling out of Telluride toward Dolores, much of the old railroad grade linking the town of Telluride to Lizard Head Pass is seen. Arriving in the town of Dolores, Galloping Goose Railcar # 5 has been restored and is completely operational. It may be viewed outside the Railroad Museum, housed in an exact replica of the old Dolores Depot. Heading towards Cortez, be sure to take a short detour to the Anasazi Heritage Center. Departing the Heritage Center, travel on to Cortez and then to Mancos, for a lively adventure on Mancos Valley Stage Lines. Relive the history of 1800s stagecoach travel on coaches built to the exact specifications of the original coaches that helped to settle the American West.



OTTO MEARS

**Day Four: Durango.** Take a ride on the historic 125 year-old Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. A coal-fired, steam-powered locomotive carries you through the wilderness of the San Juan Mountains to the historic mining town of Silverton. Enjoy lunch in the National Historic Landmark town of Silverton, the northern terminus of the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, before returning to Durango.

**Day Five: Ouray.** From Silverton to Ouray, be prepared for quite an adventure. The Ouray and San Juan Wagon Road Company started the road we know today as the Million Dollar Highway in 1880. The Million Dollar Highway got its name in 1922, during the conversion of the road for auto traffic, when it was noticed that the separate contracts to rebuild the Ouray to Red Mountain Pass portion of the road totaled almost a million dollars. Called the Million Dollar Highway today, there is no amount one can put on the view – it is priceless.



DURANGO & SILVERTON NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD