



TRAVEL GUIDE
TELLURIDE
SUMMER EDITION

TELLURIDE

Telluride is one of my favorite places on earth, and I get asked about it constantly. Set in the middle of a beautiful box canyon, it is an old mining town with loads of charm and history, and despite its small size, it never stops surprising me. It has become a destination I love to visit year round, though summer holds a special place for me. The cooler weather, stunning mountain vistas, and nonstop action make Telluride the perfect escape.

What most people call Telluride is technically two separate towns. Telluride itself sits at 8,754 feet, and above it is Mountain Village, a later addition built for skiing at 9,545 feet. A free gondola connects the two, so moving between them is a snap.



The altitude, on the other hand, is no joke and requires some planning. The air is thin enough that most visitors feel it, usually as a headache or a bit of fog for the first day or two. Take it slow, drink more water than feels necessary, and skip the wine until your body adjusts. Companies like Oxygen Delivers rent supplemental oxygen if you want extra insurance, and the town's medical center is top-notch if your symptoms become more serious.



GETTING THERE

I almost always fly into the town of Montrose. From there, we either rent a car for the ninety minute drive or book the Telluride Express Shuttle which will take you straight to your hotel door.

If money is no object and you want a heart pounding story to tell at dinner, fly directly into Telluride Regional Airport. It has earned the nickname "America's Most Dangerous Airport," though its safety record actually says otherwise, and the ten minute ride into town afterward is hard to beat.



FLIGHT INTO MONTROSE 



BRING THE FAMILY

For the Pups: Telluride is a paradise for your pooch! There are plenty of pet-friendly hotels and rentals, and many of the shops and restaurant patios welcome leashed dogs. Even the gondola has doggie dedicated cabs. You and your buddy can enjoy most of the hiking trails together or try the River Trail for a cooling paw plunge.

Although there is a leash law in town, it is loosely enforced and not everyone adheres to the rules, so don't be surprised if you run into a few free-range Fidos. For supplies, PET Telluride on the main street is well stocked, and should your furry friend run across a porcupine (it happens more often than you think!), the local animal hospital is fantastic and has truly seen it all.



THE GONDOLA 



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 BEAR CREEK

For the Kids: Summer here runs on a very full schedule. Grab an inner tube from the local Ace Hardware for a chilly ride down the San Miguel, or head to Town Park for the playground and skate park.

There are several kid-appropriate hikes, including Bear Creek which is a four mile hike that starts right in town. It ends at a waterfall dramatic enough to earn genuine awe from even the pickiest ten year old.

For something a bit more creative, the Ah Haa School for the Arts runs youth classes and camps, and the Wilkinson Public Library has story times and movie matinees to fill in the gaps.



 AH HAA SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS



 WILKINSON PUBLIC LIBRARY



WHERE TO STAY

The New Sheridan Hotel is my go to. It's a Victorian beauty right on the main street that fits the history of the building and the town around it.

Quick Tip: If you prefer more quiet evenings, request a room off the main street. The bars close at two, and it can get noisy!



THE NEW SHERIDAN 



 DUNTON TOWN HOUSE

For something a bit simpler, Dunton Town House sits close to the gondola in the heart of town. It is a lovely five-bedroom bed-and-breakfast run by Dunton Destinations, the same team behind Dunton Hot Springs (more on that below) and a collection of other extraordinary resorts.



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DUNTON HOT SPRINGS

For something further afield, spend a night or two at Dunton Hot Springs. About 90 minutes outside of Telluride, the property bills itself as an 1800s ghost town, and it carries a Ralph Lauren inspired rustic luxury through every detail, from the cabins to the cuisine. Spend the day hiking or horseback riding, then soak in one of the hot springs, and round out your evening with a whiskey by the fire.



WHAT TO WEAR

Looking good in Telluride is easy. You can wear jeans and a sweatshirt to the very finest restaurant in town and no one will blink. Don't get me wrong—people dress up here, but the mood is relaxed chic rather than formal. Daytime looks are built around hiking and biking gear, and shorts and jeans are perfect if you are spending the day closer to town. Evenings might call for a dress and boots, or jeans with a great blouse.



Two items are non-negotiable: a rain jacket and comfortable shoes. Summer afternoons bring pop up showers with little warning, so keep something light on hand. Since the town is small enough to walk everywhere, flats and wedges are your best friends. Cute sneakers, your favorite Birkenstocks, or a Pedro Garcia wedge sandal will take you anywhere you want to go.



WHERE TO SHOP

Sit Stay Shop! Telluride is a fantastic thrift shop benefiting the Second Chance Humane Society, and it punches well above its weight. I've found some incredible pieces there, including signed pottery and vintage dishware, but I've also seen Prada boots and brand new ski gear amongst other treasures. You never know what you'll walk out with.



SIT STAY SHOP! 



Crossbow covers everything western lifestyle related that you never knew you needed. There are gorgeous hats and locally made leather goods, but I'm a big sucker for their hat pins, including the "Brim Biter." Bring home a gift from Crossbow and you will immediately become everyone's favorite friend.



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Mixx Projects and its sister showroom, Milk Moon Gallery, are not to be missed. Mixx carries a beautiful mix of jewelry, home accessories, art, and furnishings, and leaving empty handed is nearly impossible.

Next door, Milk Moon is a woman-owned contemporary art space that always has interesting pieces to explore, and they are expert art consultants to boot. Ask for Hannah. She is one of Telluride's true treasures.



MIXX PROJECTS 



 BETWEEN THE COVERS

Scarpe is the spot for chic clothes and accessories, and one of the few places in town where stylish guys can shop too.

Between the Covers is a delightful bookshop. Their Staff Picks section is excellent and has never once let me leave with fewer than two new titles. When you pop in, be sure to keep your eyes open for Alpine Style by Kathryn O'Shea-Evans, which includes my personal mountain home!



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Atelier is one of the most romantic shops I've ever walked into. Joanie Schwarz is the talent behind the embroidery, patchwork, and thoughtful embellishments added to upcycled garments, creating beautiful new stories for each piece.

She also carries delicate jewelry, small gifts and some artwork. The Show Bear is a longtime favorite that is in high demand, and it's easy to see why once you encounter the piece in person.



ATELIER, SHOW BEAR 



WHERE TO EAT/DRINK

The Grand does a wedge salad and a trout worth building your day around. If you can, snag one of the sofas in the front window. It's the best seat in town for people-watching.

Baked in Telluride, Smuggler's Brew Pub, and Brown Dog Pizza are reliable Telluride staples that are kid-friendly and consistently good. You can't go wrong with any of them, even if you're kid-free.



Van Atta is one of the new(er) kids on the block and already carries the title of Best New Bar from the 2026 James Beards Awards. Set inside a historic building that once housed a dry goods store during the mining days, this spot now serves up a delicious Mountain Sour.

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I have it on good authority that The Butcher and the Baker makes the best hot chocolate in town. They also serve up killer breakfast sammies and pastries, which you can wash down with a coffee or a cocktail. I never miss an opportunity to come home with a cupcake or two.



THE BUTCHER & THE BAKER 



 THERE

On a recent visit to The National, the Pheasant Agnolotti and Grilled Artichoke and Fava Bean dishes were incredible! If you're visiting solo, this is a great spot to grab a seat at the bar—chances are good that you will end the meal with a few new friends!

For some reason, it took me a while to visit There. Now that I've been There, however, I will go back There as often as I can. With a fun, tiki-bar-meets-mountain-hideaway vibe, There is definitely eclectic, but the food and drinks are excellent. I would go back for the tempura mushrooms alone.



The Coffee Cowboy is a Telluride institution. It started out in an old horse trailer, and now lives in a brick-and-mortar shop, though the spirit has not changed. Yes, the coffee is great, but they also have delicious sandwiches and light bites that you can enjoy in their lounge. It's huge, yet still cozy enough to justify bringing a book and staying far longer than planned.



WHAT TO DO



 HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

Speaking of which, the Telluride Historical Museum is a smart way to spend a rainy afternoon. Move quickly through the first rooms and give more time to the mining history further in. It is far more interesting than it sounds. I promise it's fun!

For the best overview of the town, join one of the Historic Walking Tours with local actor and raconteur Ashley Boling. They are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. and the tour starts at the museum.



HISTORIC WALKING TOUR 



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Walk the San Miguel River Trail. You never know who you might meet! This is a gentle way to ease into some of the bigger hikes, like Bear Creek or Jud Wiebe, with trail heads starting in town. For something a bit more demanding, Hope Lake and Sneffels Highline Trail are a challenge but they deliver views well worth the climb.



SAN MIGUEL RIVER TRAIL 



 GONDOLA RIDE

Ride the free gondola to Mountain Village. Take in some music at the Sunset Concert Series on Wednesday evenings, and stop at Tomboy Tavern for a brie and chicken sandwich with truffle fries before heading back down to Telluride.



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Rent a paddleboard through Telluride Outfitters and spend an afternoon at Wood's Lake just outside of town. This is such a beautiful way to spend the day - be sure to grab a charcuterie board from Over the Moon on the way and make a proper picnic of it.



OVERTHE MOON 



 TOMBOY

Book a jeep tour up to the old mining town of Tomboy for stunning views (and occasionally snow, even in late summer!). There are several groups that run these tours, but I've always booked with Telluride Outside.



Don't miss the Farmer's Market on Friday mornings for pastries, fresh flowers, and gifts. If your timing is right, Palisade peaches will be available, and they are, without exaggeration, the best you will ever have. Sorry, Texas and Georgia!

FARMER'S MARKET 



FESTIVALS

Summer in Telluride runs on festivals, and there is truly something for everyone. Full dates and details live at [Visit Telluride](#), but here is where I would start:

The [Balloon Festival](#) kicks off the season in early June, and it happens to be one of my favorites. Watching dozens of balloons rise against a crisp blue sky in the early morning is its own kind of magic, and at night, when they anchor along the main street and light up, it's even better. I love getting right up close to these extraordinary flying machines.



BALLOON FESTIVAL



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Music lovers have their pick between **Bluegrass** in late June, **Jazz** in early August, and **Blues and Brews** in late August, all favorites that pack the town to capacity.

Film has its own place here too. The Telluride Film Festival takes over Labor Day weekend with premieres and enough celebrity sightings to keep things interesting, while Mountain Film in May leans into mountaineering, environmental, and political storytelling. There is also The Horror Show, which is smaller in scale but a genuine cult favorite.



TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL 

These are all rounded out with a Mushroom Festival, food and wine events, and a steady stream of arts festivals throughout the season.

Telluride.com is the place for a fully updated calendar if you want to plan your trip around any of it.

