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THE MAJESTY OF THE ROCKIES

World-class skiing and accommodation meets vintage western charm in Telluride, Colorado



WORDS Jeremy Freed, IMAGES © Ryan Bonneau / Courtesy of Visit Telluride

Left
Telluride Via Ferrata is one of the most iconic and notable rock climbing areas in the West

Right
The Revelation Bowl is known for having some of the steepest inbounds terrain in Colorado

Below
This former mining village combines epic skiing with a laid-back, Old West vibe



EMBRAER TIP

Travel from Chicago to Telluride Regional Airport in the fastest midsize jet—the new Praetor 500, flying up to 9 passengers. From there, a driver takes you to Mountain Village in 15 min.

Some ski towns can feel more like bustling cities than rustic getaways, but not so with Telluride, a quaint town of 2,500 nestled in Colorado's stunning San Juan mountains. Blessed with an abundance of 9,000–14,000 feet peaks, plus ample snow and sunny blue skies, Telluride isn't a place to shop or be seen, but to revel in some of the world's best skiing.

Don't let Telluride's charming main street of clapboard western buildings fool you: It has come a long way since its humble beginnings as a gold rush frontier town. Slope-side accommodations get the five-star treatment at The Peaks thepeaksresort.com, a ski-in/ski-out resort and spa in Telluride's Mountain Village, and the ideal base from which to explore the surrounding area. Rooms and suites are designed for maximum comfort for couples and families, while the hotel's penthouses boast steam showers, Jacuzzi tubs, Sub Zero appliances and peerless views of the surrounding mountains. A small collection of cabins adjacent

to the hotel offer even more privacy, along with expansive floor plans and distinctive interior design. Colorado's largest spa is onsite, offering a decadent array of wellness experiences to unwind after a day on the mountain. For visitors looking for a more home-like option, Exceptional Stays by Telluride Rentals exceptionalstays.com provide a collection of luxurious chalets ranging from the cozy three-bedroom Deer Park retreat to the palatial 11,800-square-foot Sunset Ridge.

Working up an appetite is easy in Telluride, and the dining options are just as impressive as the slopes themselves. At Alpino Vino tellurideskiresort.com, the loftiest restaurant in North America, traditional Italian cuisine and a wide selection of wine is served alongside spectacular views of the Wilson Range. For dinner, guests arrive via Sno-Cat to sample a five-course Northern Italian tasting menu, complete with handmade pasta and wine pairings from their extensive cellar. In town, the Chop House at the New Sheridan Hotel newsheridan.com



provides a taste of Telluride history alongside their menu of seafood, game and range-fed beef. The adjoining bar, which dates back to 1895, serves up a selection of local craft beer, along with weekly live music performances.

Telluride's surrounding mountains are reputed to offer some of the best runs in the Rocky Mountains. A public gondola carries passengers between the town of Telluride and Mountain Village, the only transportation system of its kind in North America. From there, skiers can access a network of blessedly line-free lifts, where trails for all ability levels span over three square miles of skiable mountainside. Thanks to an annual snowfall of more than 23 feet and over 300 days of sunshine a year, conditions couldn't be more ideal. For those in search of more adventurous terrain, Helitrax helitrax.com, Colorado's premiere back country outfitter, offers single-day and multi-day heli-ski expeditions throughout the San Juan mountains from The Peaks Resort & Spa.

There's just as much to do when the snow melts. Bring a mountain bike aboard the gondola to explore the mountain's many off-road trails, or spend the day rock climbing at nearby Cracked Canyon. For expert advice, visit Telluride Outside tellurideoutside.com for a wide range of outfitting services, including river rafting, ATV tours and fly-fishing expeditions.

For wintertime adventures, look to Telluride Outfitters tellurideoutfitters.com who offer multiple daily snowmobile excursions throughout the surrounding area, where visitors can step back in time and learn about the Colorado gold rush at a mining ghost town or have a soak in the nearby Dunton hot springs. Paragon Bootdoctors bootdoctors.com offer fat bike rentals and guided bike tours through the San Juans, while local cowboy "Roudy Roudebush" ridewithroudy.com specializes in adventures by horseback and sleigh. It's experiences like these that make Telluride such a unique destination, even among the world's top ski towns. Thanks to a combination of rustic western charm, world-class hospitality and abundant natural beauty, Telluride shines like a gem in the rugged rocky mountains. ←