



Mesa Verde & Southwest Colorado

Includes →

Mesa Verde National Park	244
Cortez	250
Telluride	255
Ridgway	261
Ouray	263
Silverton	266
Durango	268
Pagosa Springs	275
Creede	277
Lake City	280
Crested Butte	286
Montrose	289
Grand Junction	294

Best Places to Eat

- James Ranch (p273)
- 626 on Rood (p295)
- New Sheridan Chop House (p259)
- Secret Stash (p288)

Best Places to Stay

- Willowtail Springs (p249)
- Jersey Jim Lookout Tower (p249)
- Kelly Place (p251)
- Wiesbaden (p264)

Why Go?

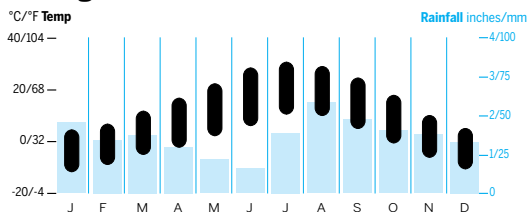
The West at its most rugged, this is a landscape of twisting canyons and ancient ruins, with burly peaks and gusty high desert plateaus. Centuries of boom and bust, from silver to real estate, tell part of the story. There's also the lingering mystery of its earliest inhabitants, whose relics have been found at the abandoned cliff dwellings in Mesa Verde National Park.

Southwestern Colorado can be a heady place to play. Some of the finest powder skiing in the world melts to reveal winding singletrack and hiking trails in summer. Vineyards are sprouting up on the western slope. A sense of remove keeps the Old West alive in wooden plank saloons and aboard the chugging Durango railroad.

With all that fresh mountain air, local attitudes – from the ranch hand to the real-estate agent – are undoubtedly relaxed. Dally a bit under these ultra-blue skies and you will know why.

When to Go

Durango



Jun–Aug

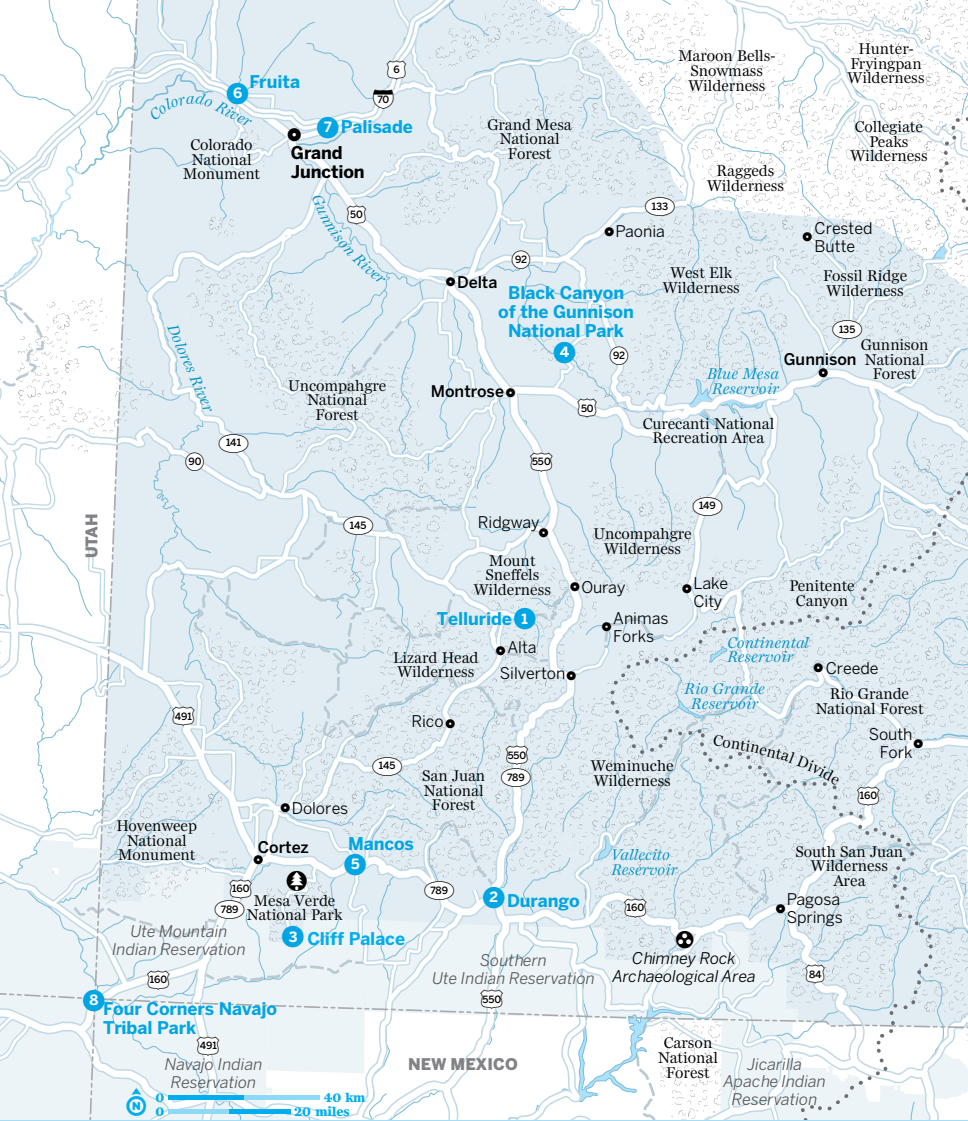
Prime time for hiking and camping in the legendary San Juans.

Sep–Nov

Cool days in the desert and fewer crowds in Mesa Verde.

Dec–Apr

Powder hounds hit the famed slopes of Telluride.



Mesa Verde & Southwest Colorado Highlights

- 1** Carve turns on the world-class slopes of **Telluride Ski Resort** (p255).
- 2** Climb aboard the **Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad** (p269) for jaw-dropping scenery.
- 3** Retrace the steps of Ancestral Puebloans at **Cliff Palace** (p246).
- 4** Climb down to the floor of the dizzying **Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park** (p283).
- 5** Poke around the friendly, offbeat town of **Mancos** (p249).
- 6** Ride the dizzy desert singletrack of **Fruita** (p297).
- 7** Savor the bold reds while exploring the Colorado wine country of **Palisade** (p298).
- 8** Drive to the point where four states (almost) meet: **Four Corners Navajo Tribal Park** (p253).