

The Other Side of Telluride

Written by Allison Young

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The box canyon town goes way beyond skiing for an out-of-the-box mountain adventure.



Wait a minute. Hold everything. A Colorado mountain town isn't supposed to have a cold cocktail as its signature sip, waterfall hikes within walking distance of downtown or brag worthy Thai food. Hell no. But we guess Telluride didn't get the memo. Besides having sweeping mountain views courtesy of the majestic San Juans and some of the best skiing in Colorado, the mining town turned adventure mecca is a rule-breaker in the best way. Get ready to be surprised and delighted.

It's super easy to get to—like, super easy It can feel like planes, trains and automobiles getting to some ski destinations (*cough*, *Aspen*), but thanks to the new non-stop [daily flight](#) from Phoenix to Montrose, hitching a ride to Telluride has never been easier. Then hop on the [Telluride Express](#) for a scenic trip that takes you straight into town. Door to door in less than 3 hours.

Trade the hot totties for martinis and craft brewskies To really drink like a local, Telluride's signature sip, the Flatliner Martini, is a mix of vodka, Bailey's, Kahlua and espresso that's stronger than it tastes. Or order up Telluride Brewing Company's Face Down Brown Ale, Wacked Out Wheat or Russell Kelly Pale Ale. All of the above are better enjoyed on the rooftop bar of the [New Sheridan Hotel](#) at sunset (pictured).

Choose your own adventure: slopes, white water or dirt paths Schussing down the slopes is magical and meditative and never would we put down skiing, but it's not the only thrill-seeking way to traverse Telluride. On the top of our list is white water rafting down the San Miguel or Dolores River, both high-octane adventures that'll have you paddling, backstroking and rocking your raft at high speeds (psst: ask your [Boot Doctors](#) guide if you can "Ride the bull"). Of course, there's mountain biking through untamed wilderness and standup paddle boarding on picturesque lakes, too.



Hike to a waterfall, no driving required There are three—count 'em three—waterfall hikes all within walking distance of downtown. The closest

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and easiest is [Cornet Creek Falls](#), a quick round trip that takes you to the 80-foot Cornet Falls. Slightly tougher is [Bear Creek Trail](#), an hour climb past porcupines and piled Cairns to a stunning waterfall with unbeatable views. The toughest but most spectacular goes to [Bridal Veil Falls](#), a steep 1.8-mile trek that ends at a 365-foot high waterfall, the tallest of its kind in Colorado.

Forget chili and fries, the food in this mountain town will blow your mind You can get authentic Thai in Telluride ([Siam](#)), a fab falafel sandwich bursting with fresh cucumber, tomatoes and garbanzo bean patties ([Caravan Middle Eastern Food](#)) and *T-D-F* Korean short rib tacos ([Taco Del Gnar](#)). Even [The Butcher & Baker Cafe](#) on the main drag is a refined surprise of sugar dusted chocolate croissants at breakfast and pork belly paired with grilled watermelon at dinner. The most unique food ticket, though, goes to [Telluride Sleighs](#) and Wagons, an evening that starts with a horse-drawn wagon ride and ends with a farm-to-table dinner under a tent.

Go for a low-key festival You've no doubt heard of the Telluride's Film Festival, Bluegrass Festival, Yoga Festival—and we could go on. The town hosts a different event every weekend Memorial Day straight through Labor Day, but not all call for throngs of people. [Telluride WOW](#), as in Weekend of Wellness, brings in experts from across the country for an intimate and interactive long weekend of mind-body-soul therapy that includes morning hikes, inspirational talks, private Gyrotonic and Pilates sessions, massage and plenty of fitness classes.

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Travel by gondola, day or night Perhaps Telluride's best wonder is the free gondola. The three-mile, 13-minute ride shuttles you from downtown all the way to Mountain Village, or get off at the San Sophia midway point to hike or bike. Ideal for seeing the sunrise, sunset and even the stars, it runs daily 6:30 a.m. to midnight. STAY: [The Hotel Telluride](#) (pictured) is located a few blocks from the gondola, plus they offer cruiser bikes and a free shuttle to get around town, not to mention fresh-baked cookies and coffee in the lobby every day.

For more information: VisitTelluride.com