



Ridgway On The Rails: 1-day itinerary

As the birthplace and early headquarters of the famed Rio Grande Southern Railroad, the town of Ridgway is a center point for discovering the West's rail history. Located on the northern edge of the rugged San Juan Mountains, the town and the surrounding area relied on trains including the Denver & Rio Grande and Silverton Railroads for the development of mining, ranching and agriculture. Local historians and train enthusiasts have preserved this important heritage, and invite visitors to travel back into our rich past.

Breakfast: Kate's Place

Open everyday 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fresh, healthy cuisine with heart and soul. Voted Best Breakfast & Lunch. Summer outdoor dining.
615 W. Clinton St., Ridgway; 970-626-9800, www.katesplacерidgway.com

Morning Activity: Ridgway Visitor Center, Ridgway Railroad Museum & Ridgway Railroad Depot-

Check out railroad history displays inside the museum. Depending on your level of interest, you could spend 30 minutes or a couple hours here, asking questions to visitor center staff and reading about the history and mechanics of the early trains. Also, get a map and directions for your afternoon hike or drive.

Then, head over to the Ouray County Ranch History Museum in the historic Railroad Depot. Visitors can see the interior and exterior of the depot, built in 1890 by the Rio Grande Southern railroad, and featured in the 1961 movie, "How the West Was Won". *(If you plan to continue to Day 3 of the History & Heritage itinerary, make your museum visit short on this day to give you more time for your second afternoon activity and to save the ranching history for Day 3.)*

Step out back of the museum to the pasture where you can explore several historic train cars including the famous Galloping Goose, one of seven motor railcars made by the Rio Grande Southern Railroad for small passenger and cargo loads. Groups can schedule guided tours and ride the Galloping Goose (Motor Car 1) on a half-mile loop of demonstration rail (weather permitting) almost anytime of year by appointment.

- **Locations:** Start at the Visitor Center/Railroad Museum, 150 Racecourse Rd., Ridgway, CO 81432; End at the Ouray County Ranch History Museum, 321 Sherman St., Ridgway, CO 81432 (park in the lot at the southwest corner of Sherman and Railroad Streets, next to Hartwell Park, and cross east over Railroad street to the museum).
- **More information:** ridgwayrailroadmuseum.org, 970-626-5181

Lunch: True Grit Cafe

Open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. "Where Comfort Food Meets True West". Serving locals and visitors for over 30 years. Known for our local beef and pork!
123 North Lena St., Ridgway; 970-626-8739; www.truegritcafe.com

Afternoon Activities:

Option 1 (for an active afternoon)- Hike or bike along the historic railroad bed of the former Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad corridor. This well-maintained concrete trail is 5.1 miles one way so will be a 10.2 mile round trip (about 3.5 hours by foot or 70 minutes by bike). You will cross over a picturesque, restored railroad trestle (bridge), follow the scenic Uncompahgre River through typical high desert landscape with sagebrush, juniper and pinon trees, and cross through Dennis Weaver Memorial Park, 60 acres of permanent wildlife preserve with a picnic area and sculptures. North of the park, the route is open sagebrush with a stunning mountain backdrop along U.S



Highway 550 and ends in Ridgway State Park's Dallas Creek area with more trails, the Ridgway Reservoir, picnic areas and prime fishing spots.

- **Route:** You can leave your car at the Hartwell Park parking lot on Railroad Street and start your hike going north on the sidewalk, going over the crosswork towards the river after Charles Street, and entering the start of the river trail near the San Miguel Power Association yard. Or, you can drive your car north on Railroad Street to the dead end next to San Miguel Power, park there and start the trail at that point. If you want a shorter hike (28 minutes, 1.4 miles one way), you can turn around at Dennis Weaver Park at River Sage Drive.
- **More information:** Map of trail: <https://goo.gl/maps/3jA84FsLJhz>; <https://www.traillink.com/trail/uncompahgre-riverway-trail/>; <https://dennisweaverpark.com/>

Option 2 (or a relaxing afternoon)- Take a scenic drive back into railroad history and see several landmarks from the late 1800s and early 1900s when trains transported people and cargo around the San Juan Mountains. You will visit another one of the Galloping Geese in Telluride, and travel along several roads that paralleled the defunct Rio Grande Southern Railroad tracks, though rail ties and other remnants are long gone. Among the sites will be historic coal chutes used to load the trains, a preserved water tower and one of the few remaining railroad trestles in the area. You will also have many opportunities for great photos of high alpine scenery and possibly even some wildlife (though early mornings or evenings are best for viewing the deer, elk and other local animals).

- **Route:** From Ridgway, you will take a 39 minute (51-mile) drive to Telluride to see the Galloping Goose downtown next to the San Miguel County Courthouse. Then, head back out of town and drive toward Telluride Mountain Village, passing the turnoff and continuing to Trout Lake, where you can see the road where the old railroad bed ran with the old water tower still standing on the edge. A short, 1.5-mile drive on the dirt road also leads to the railroad trestle. Then, you can return to Ridgway for the evening. The whole trip is a 2.5-hour drive (106 miles) but will take longer with your stops at each landmark.
- **More information:** Map of route: <https://goo.gl/maps/v6pxLkkgPc12>; <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gmug/landmanagement/resourcemanagement/?cid=stelprdb5431853>; <https://www.sanmiguelcountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2612/Coal-Chutes-Loop-Trail-Map-PDF>

Dinner: Colorado Boy Pub & Brewery

Local crafted ales, wine, salads and artisan pizzas. Growlers and kegs to go.
602 Clinton St., Ridgway; 970-626-5333; www.coloradoboy.com

Evening Activity:

Evenings at the Sherbino are always fun and interesting, from musicals and plays to concerts, documentaries and even game night, you'll be entertained and inspired.

- **Location:** Sherbino Theater, 604 Clinton St, Ridgway, CO 81432
- **More information:** <https://sherbino.org/>, 970-318-0892

Overnight: Ridgway Lofts

Boutique Hotel Suites offer luxurious mountain contemporary lodging with full kitchens for couples and families. Only hotel-style accommodations in the historic district.
630 Sherman St./Hwy. 62, Ridgway; 970-729-2366; www.ridgwaylofts.com

For more information, go to ridgwaycolorado.com. From May to October, call or visit the Ridgway Visitor Center (970-626-5181) at 150 Racecourse Rd., Ridgway, CO 81432.

