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A TOWN WITH A SOUL AS DEEP AS ITS MOUNTAIN VIEWS. NESTLED WHERE THE SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS MEET THE OPEN EXPANSE OF THE UNCOMPAHGRE VALLEY, RIDGWAY IS A PLACE WHERE CREATIVITY, ADVENTURE, AND COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER IN A WAY THAT FEELS NATURAL.

Once a rough-and-tumble railroad and ranching town, Ridgway has grown to include a vibrant community of artists, outdoor enthusiasts, and independent spirits, while remaining true to its strong ranching heritage and tight-knit roots. The land here is rugged and wild, but the people? They're warm, open, and always ready to share a story. Walk down the streets and you'll find a mix of history and modern creativity—funky art galleries, local craft breweries, and spaces where live music fills the air.

Ridgway is all about the experience. Whether you're exploring the trails, paddling the river, soaking in the nearby hot

springs, or simply taking in the views, this place has a way of helping you slow down and appreciate the moment. It's peaceful yet intriguing, rustic yet artistic, a little funky but always authentic. As a designated Dark Sky community, Ridgway also offers stunning, star-filled nights that add to its serene, otherworldly vibe.

We invite you to stop and stay a while. Get to know the land, the people, and the stories that make Ridgway more than a stop—it's a place that stays with you.



CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

Ridgway is a place where the LAND, the PEOPLE, and the CREATIVE SPIRIT are deeply connected. Our rugged mountains, open spaces, and historic streets tell the story of a hardworking community that values both independence and togetherness.

Life moves at a different pace here, one that invites you to slow down, take in the beauty, and appreciate the craftsmanship of everything from a hand-forged sculpture to a well-loved hiking trail. Whether you're visiting for a weekend or considering making Ridgway your home, we ask that you treat this special place with the same care and respect that locals do every day.

Caring for Ridgway means more than just looking after our public lands, it means:

- Supporting local businesses
- Respecting the pace of life
- Being mindful of those who call Ridgway home

When exploring, stick to designated trails to protect the delicate high-alpine environment. Dispose of waste properly, whether you're in town or on the trail, and keep noise levels down to preserve Ridgway's peaceful vibe. Wildlife thrives here, but for their safety and yours, admire them from a distance. And as you drive through town, take it slow—our streets are shared by pedestrians, cyclists, and residents and visitors soaking in Ridgway's charm.

By following these principles, you not only help protect Ridgway's natural beauty and community character, you get to experience it at its best. Take a deep breath, settle into the rhythm, and enjoy all that this remarkable place has to offer.









Ridgway, Colorado OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE

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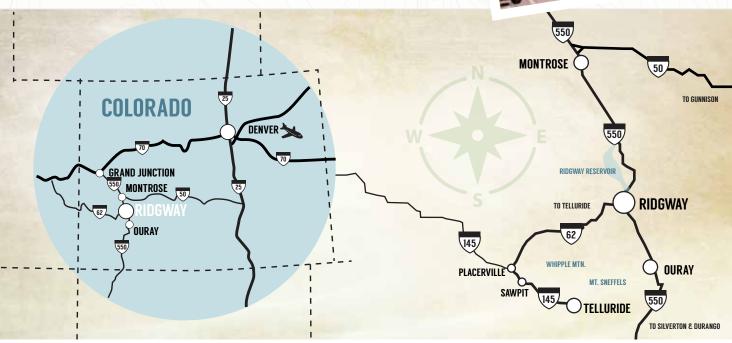
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GETTING TO RIDGWAY

Ridgway, Colorado, is a scenic mountain town in the heart of the San Juan Mountains, offering a perfect balance of adventure, relaxation, and small-town charm. Nestled at the crossroads of U.S. Highway 550 and State Highway 62, Ridgway is easily accessible by car and is within driving distance of several regional airports. Whether you're flying in or hitting the road, getting here is part of the adventure—offering some of the most breathtaking drives in the state.





DRIVING TO RIDGWAY

Ridgway sits at 6,985 feet and is surrounded by rugged peaks, open valleys, and winding mountain highways. Driving here is an experience in itself, with stunning views around every bend. If you're coming from the north, Highway 550 from Montrose provides a direct and easy route, passing through the broad Uncompandere Valley before reaching Ridgway. Travelers from the west can take Highway 62 from Placerville, a scenic drive through rolling ranchland with dramatic mountain backdrops.

For those coming from or continuing south beyond Ridgway, the Million Dollar Highway (U.S. 550) between Ouray and Silverton is one of the most famous mountain drives in the country. With steep cliffs, tight curves, and no guardrails in sections, this route requires extra caution—especially in winter—but rewards drivers with unmatched views of the towering San Juans.

AIRPORTS NEAR RIDGWAY

For those flying in, several regional airports provide convenient access to Ridgway:

Montrose Regional Airport (MTJ) -27 miles north The closest airport with year-round commercial flights. Serviced by major airlines with direct flights from Denver, Dallas, Phoenix, and more.

Telluride Regional Airport (TEX) -40 miles west A small regional airport with limited commercial flights and private aviation services.

Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT) - 95 miles north A larger regional airport with multiple airline options and rental car services.

Durango-La Plata County Airport (DRO) - 120 miles south This airport offers additional flight options for those exploring Southwest Colorado.

Denver International Airport (DEN) -315 miles northeast Colorado's largest airport with extensive domestic and international flights. From Denver, travelers can either drive (approximately 6 hours) or take a connecting flight to Montrose for a shorter drive to Ridgway.

Rental cars are available at all major airports, and shuttle services from Montrose and Telluride provide another option for getting to Ridgway car-free.

EXPLORING THE AREA FROM RIDGWAY

Ridgway's central location makes it an excellent base for exploring the surrounding region. Just 10 miles south, Ouray is famous for its hot springs, historic downtown, and ice climbing park. Telluride, about 45 minutes west, is known for its world-class skiing, summer festivals, and stunning scenery. Silverton, Durango, and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park are all within easy reach, making Ridgway a perfect launching point for day trips.

No matter how you get here, the journey to Ridgway is part of the experience—offering winding scenic roads, wide-open landscapes, and that first glimpse of the San Juan Mountains welcoming you to the adventure ahead.

Visit the Plan Your Trip section of the Visit Ridgway website by scanning the QR code HERE for detailed information about getting to Ridgway.



WINTER & SUMMER DRIVING TIPS

Mountain weather can be unpredictable, so it's essential to check road conditions before heading out, especially in winter. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) provides real-time updates on road

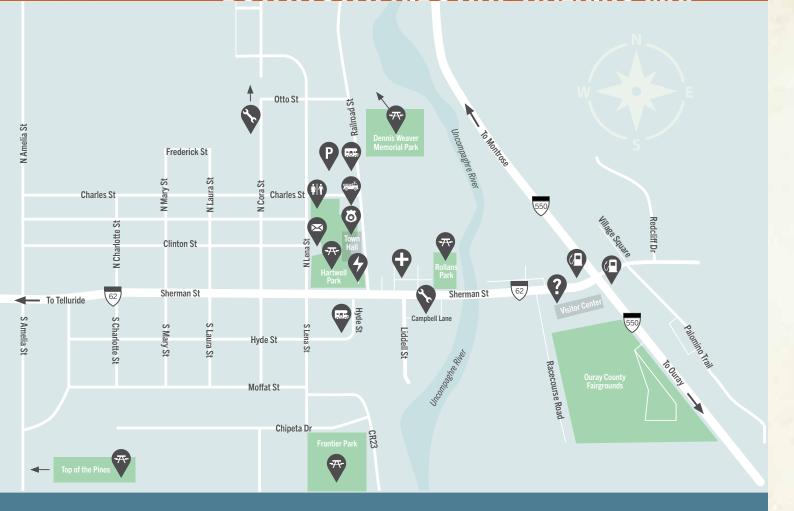
closures, conditions, and passenger vehicle traction laws at COTrip.org.



WINTER DRIVING: Snow and ice are common from late fall through early spring. Make sure your vehicle has snow tires or chains when required and allow extra time for travel.

SUMMER DRIVING: Afternoon thunderstorms can bring sudden rain or hail, especially at higher elevations. Drive cautiously and watch for wildlife on the roads, particularly at dawn and dusk.

DOWNTOWN RIDGWAY WALKING MAP



- **Visitor Center**
- **Police Dept**
- **Medical Services**
- Gas Station
- P Public Parking
- **EV** Charging
- **Post Office**

- Public Restroom
- RV Parking
- **Mechanics**



THE HISTORY OF RIDGWAY & THE SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS

Ridgway's history is deeply rooted in the rugged landscapes of the San Juan Mountains and the hardworking people who have called this region home for generations. Long before the arrival of settlers, the Ute people thrived in these mountains, following seasonal migration patterns and living in harmony with the land. Their deep connection to the San Juans is still evident today in place names, traditions, and cultural heritage.

In the late 1800s, the discovery of rich silver and gold deposits in the San Juans brought a wave of miners, prospectors, and fortune-seekers to the region. Towns like Ouray, Telluride, and Silverton sprang up overnight, and Ridgway became an essential railroad hub, connecting the high-mountain mining camps to supply lines and markets beyond Colorado. The Rio Grande Southern Railroad, built in 1890, ran through Ridgway, bringing prosperity and commerce to the town.

Alongside mining, ranching became a vital part of Ridgway's economy. The fertile valleys surrounding the Uncompangre River provide rich grazing land, and cattle ranching continues to be an important part of the community today. Over time, Ridgway evolved from a rough-and-tumble frontier town into a welcoming place for artists, outdoor enthusiasts, and independent spirits, while still honoring its ranching roots.

The San Juan Mountains have long drawn explorers, adventurers, and those seeking solitude in the wild. These dramatic peaks, deep canyons, and alpine basins tell the story of millions of years of geologic change, from volcanic eruptions to glacial sculpting. Today, visitors to Ridgway can experience this living history firsthand—whether soaking in the region's hot springs, hiking its rugged trails, or simply taking in the breathtaking mountain views that have captivated people for centuries.

Visit Ouray Historical Society for more historical and cultural persectives about Ridgway and the San Juan Mountains.







WINTER RECREATION

Winter in Ridgway is a quiet, magical time. Snow-covered peaks create a breathtaking backdrop for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice climbing, and backcountry adventures. Nearby, Ouray Ice Park and Telluride's ski slopes are just a short drive away, while Ridgway State Park offers peaceful winter hiking or snowshoeing and wildlife watching. When the day is done, warm up at local hot springs or cozy up in town.

SUMMER RECREATION

Long, sunny days make summer ideal for hiking, mountain biking, fishing, boating, and camping. The Uncompahgre River and Ridgway Reservoir provide excellent paddling and fishing, while nearby trails lead to stunning alpine views. Ridgway's parks and outdoor spaces invite you to slow down and savor the season. Whether you're climbing a peak or floating on the water, summer here is pure freedom.

OFF-PEAK RECREATION (SPRING & FALL)

Spring and fall bring quieter trails, crisp air, and stunning natural beauty. Spring's melting snow swells rivers, making it a great time for a guided whitewater adventure, while fall's golden aspens make for unforgettable hikes and scenic drives. These seasons are perfect for wildlife watching, road cycling, and soaking in Ridgway's peaceful vibe. Fewer crowds mean more space to roam and explore at your own pace.

Find your adventure with more info on experiences and exploring everything Ridgway has to offer.



RIDGWAY STATE PARK

Just north of town, Ridgway State Park is a year-round destination for outdoor recreation, offering boating, camping, hiking, fishing, and cycling in a stunning mountain setting. The park's 1,000-acre reservoir is perfect for water sports, while miles of scenic trails wind through the foothills. With campgrounds, picnic areas, and wildlife viewing opportunities, the park is a must-visit for nature lovers. It also offers exceptional stargazing, complementing Ridgway's designation as a Dark Sky Community.



WINTER

Winter brings a quiet, peaceful beauty to Ridgway State Park. Snow-dusted trails invite hikers, snowshoers, and fat bikers, while frozen landscapes provide a serene backdrop for birdwatching and photography. The park remains open for camping, with heated yurts available for a cozy stay. Even in the colder months, the Uncompahgre River flows through the park, offering a scenic escape for those who love the outdoors.

SUMMER

Summer is when Ridgway State Park truly shines. The reservoir is a hub for boating, paddleboarding, kayaking, and fishing, while sandy swim beaches invite visitors to relax. Campgrounds fill with families enjoying the warm days and star-filled nights. Cyclists and hikers can explore miles of trails with breathtaking views of the San Juan Mountains. Whether on land or water, summer at the park is all about adventure and relaxation.

OFF-PEAK VISITS (SPRING & FALL)

Spring and fall offer a more tranquil experience at Ridgway State Park, with mild temperatures and fewer visitors. Fall's golden cottonwoods and crisp air make for scenic hikes and bike rides, while spring brings flowing rivers and great fishing conditions. These seasons are ideal for camping, wildlife watching, and enjoying the quiet beauty of the changing landscape. No matter the season, Ridgway State Park is a place to unwind and connect with nature.

ACTIVITIES

Ridgway State Park offers endless activities for outdoor enthusiasts.

- The reservoir is ideal for motorized and non-motorized boating, fishing, and paddleboarding. Anglers can cast a line for trout and bass, while swimmers enjoy the park's sandy beaches.
- On land, visitors can explore hiking and biking trails that weave through juniper and pinyon forests, offering spectacular mountain views.
- The park also features wildlife viewing areas, where lucky visitors may spot deer, bald eagles, or great blue herons. Birdwatchers and photographers will appreciate the diverse habitats, from wetlands to rocky ridges.
- For a more leisurely experience, the park's picnic areas provide scenic spots to relax and enjoy a meal surrounded by nature.

CAMPING

Camping at Ridgway State Park is a fantastic way to immerse yourself in nature. The park offers more than 250 campsites, including RV-friendly spots with full hookups, tent sites, and walk-in campsites for a more secluded experience. For a cozy alternative, heated yurts are available year-round, providing a unique and comfortable stay. Campers can enjoy modern amenities like showers and restrooms, making it an ideal place for families and outdoor lovers. With easy access to trails, the reservoir, and breathtaking scenery, camping at Ridgway State Park is the perfect way to experience Colorado's great outdoors.

Whether you're looking for adventure or relaxation, Ridgway State Park has something for everyone.



HOW TO VISIT RIDGWAY STATE PARK RESPONSIBLY

To help preserve Ridgway State Park's natural beauty, visitors are encouraged to follow responsible recreation practices.

- Pack out all trash and waste, as litter can harm wildlife and disrupt the environment.
- Give animals plenty of space—keep pets on a leash at all times, observe wildlife from a distance and never feed them.
- To protect delicate ecosystems, campers should set up at designated sites and avoid camping too close to water sources. The park's campsites are highly sought after, especially in the summer, so making reservations well in advance is recommended.

Visitors should be aware of and follow the principles of Do Colorado Right and Leave No Trace to minimize their impact and ensure that Ridgway State Park remains a well-cared-for destination for generations to come.



HISTORY & HERITAGE

Ridgway boasts a rich history shaped by ranching, railroads, and Western film lore. Once a bustling railroad hub, this charming town retains its heritage through historic sites, museums, and cultural events that celebrate its vibrant past.

A RAILROAD TOWN

Founded in 1891, Ridgway served as a vital stop along the Rio Grande Southern Railroad, connecting mining towns like Telluride and Ouray to the world. The Ridgway Railroad Museum preserves this legacy with restored railcars, artifacts, and exhibits detailing the town's role in Colorado's transportation history. Visitors can explore historic rail equipment and learn about the innovative Galloping Goose railcars, which played a crucial role in the region's development.

HOLLYWOOD IN RIDGWAY

Ridgway's picturesque landscapes and Old West character made it a prime filming location for classic Westerns. The town gained fame as a backdrop for John Wayne's 1969 film True Grit, with several iconic scenes shot in the area. Visitors can follow the True Grit walking tour to see filming locations, including the historic firehouse and the original bank building featured in the movie.

RANCHING & WESTERN CULTURE

Beyond the railroad, Ridgway's economy thrived on ranching, with open pastures and fertile valleys providing ideal conditions for cattle and agriculture. Today, this legacy lives on through local ranches and events that honor the town's Western roots. The historic downtown area reflects this heritage, with century-old buildings housing galleries, shops, and eateries that maintain Ridgway's rustic charm.

PRESERVING THE PAST

Today, Ridgway embraces its history while evolving into a vibrant community known for arts, culture, and outdoor adventure. Heritage sites, museums, and walking tours offer glimpses into the past, ensuring that Ridgway's storied history remains an integral part of its identity. Whether exploring railroad relics, visiting historic landmarks, or experiencing the Old West charm, history enthusiasts will find plenty to discover in Ridgway.

Find more fun facts about Ridgway





SAVORING RIDGWAY

A CULINARY EXPERIENCE

Ridgway's food scene offers a mix of locally sourced meals, craft beverages, and welcoming spots to gather. From farm-to-table dining to casual cafés and breweries, visitors can enjoy fresh ingredients and simple, flavorful dishes that reflect the region's agricultural roots.

LOCAL FLAVORS & FARM-TO-TABLE DINING

Many restaurants in Ridgway source ingredients from nearby farms and ranches, featuring fresh meats, produce, and cheeses. Diners can find everything from gourmet meals at small bistros to quick bites from food trucks, all highlighting quality local ingredients.

CRAFT BEVERAGES & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Ridgway's breweries and distilleries produce a variety of craft beers and spirits, while coffee shops and bakeries offer fresh pastries and drinks. With scenic views and a laid-back atmosphere, dining in Ridgway is a great way to experience the town's local flavors.

Discover culinary quisine and more





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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Ridgway offers a peaceful setting for relaxation and rejuvenation, with health and wellness experiences that help visitors unwind and recharge. Whether soaking in natural hot springs, enjoying a spa treatment, or practicing yoga, there are plenty of ways to enhance well-being in this scenic mountain town.

HOT SPRINGS & SPAS

The area's geothermal hot springs provide a soothing retreat, perfect for easing sore muscles after a day of outdoor adventure. Local spas offer massages, facials, and holistic treatments to promote relaxation and renewal.

YOGA & MEDITATION

Ridgway is home to yoga studios and wellness centers that provide classes in various styles, from gentle flow to more intensive practices. Meditation sessions and wellness retreats are also available, offering a chance to reset and find balance. With stunning mountain views, Ridgway is an ideal place to focus on mind-body wellness.



SHOPPING

Ridgway offers a delightful shopping experience characterized by its unique, locally owned businesses. Visitors can explore an eclectic mix of stores featuring handcrafted gifts, apparel, art, and outdoor gear, reflecting the town's creative spirit.

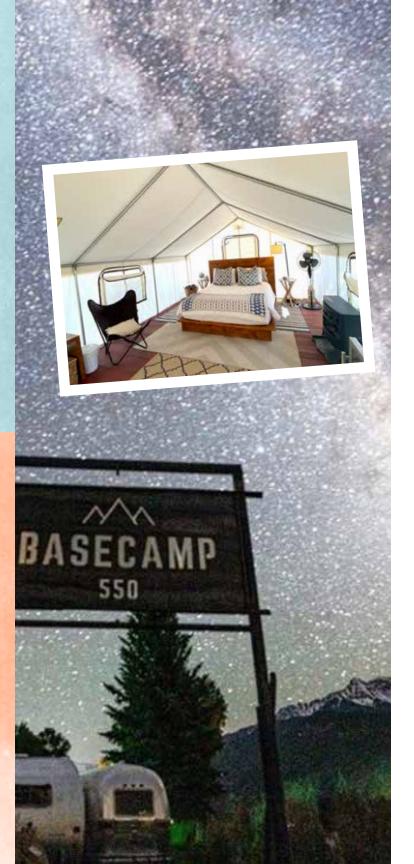
HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

The historic downtown area is a treasure trove for those interested in vintage and consignment shopping, providing a range of pre-owned goods from home décor to clothing and jewelry. Additionally, the community hosts a vibrant farmers market, offering local produce and artisanal products.

A VARIETY OF AMENATIES

Ridgway's service-oriented businesses ensure a comfortable stay, with amenities such as salons, hardware stores, and markets. Embracing small-town charm and a commitment to customer satisfaction, Ridgway invites visitors to discover its diverse and welcoming shopping scene.





ACCOMMODATIONS

Ridgway offers a welcoming variety of accommodations to suit every kind of traveler. Whether you're seeking comfort, convenience, or a closer connection to nature, you'll find just the right place to rest and recharge.

RELAXED HOSPITALITY

Visitors can enjoy the relaxed hospitality of locally owned hotels and motels, where friendly service and thoughtful amenities make for a comfortable stay. Many offer stunning views of the San Juan Mountains and easy access to downtown shops, restaurants, and trails. For those wanting a home-away-from-home experience, Ridgway has a selection of short-term rentals ranging from cozy cottages to modern mountain homes—ideal for families, groups, or longer stays.

FOR THE OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST

Outdoor enthusiasts can take advantage of several camping options, from full-service RV parks to more rustic tent sites nestled along the river or near Ridgway State Park. Whether you're road-tripping, traveling with a pet, or planning a romantic getaway, Ridgway's diverse lodging options let you choose your own adventure.

No matter where you stay, you'll find that Ridgway's accommodations reflect the town's welcoming spirit, scenic beauty, and commitment to making visitors feel right at home.



ITINERARIES

FAMILY FUN IN RIDGWAY

Start your family adventure with a morning at the Ridgway Railroad Museum, where kids can explore train cars and learn local history. Afterward, head to the town parks and play areas—including playgrounds and a skate park. Grab lunch at a family-friendly café before an afternoon dip in the natural warm waters of Orvis Hot Springs or nearby Ridgway State Park. Cap off the day with a scenic drive along Owl Creek Pass, spotting wildlife and snapping photos. Stay in a cozy short-term rental with space for everyone to unwind.

SUMMER ADVENTURE IN RIDGWAY

Summer in Ridgway is all about sunshine and scenery. Start your day with a hike or mountain bike ride on the trails around Ridgway State Park or the popular Ridgway Area Trail System (RAT). Cool off with paddleboarding or swimming in the reservoir. Spend the afternoon browsing shops and art galleries downtown, then enjoy dinner with a view at an outdoor patio. As night falls, take in the stars—Ridgway and Top of the Pines Recreational Area are both certified International Dark Sky Destinations, offering incredible stargazing opportunities. Camp under the stars or relax at a locally owned inn before another day of adventure.

WINTER ESCAPE TO RIDGWAY

Ridgway makes the perfect basecamp for a peaceful winter retreat. Wake up to snow-capped peaks, then head out for Nordic skiing or snowshoeing at nearby trails. Soak your muscles in a natural hot spring before exploring Ridgway's charming shops and art studios. Warm up with a hot cocoa, glass of wine or local craft beer and enjoy a fireside dinner at a cozy eatery. Lodging options range from rustic cabins to modern rentals—ideal for relaxing after a day in the snow.



EXPLORE RIDGWAY & OURAY

Begin your day with breakfast in Ridgway, then set off on the scenic drive to nearby Ouray—known as the "Switzerland of America." Spend the morning exploring Ouray's charming Main Street, lined with boutiques, galleries, and historic buildings. Hike the Perimeter Trail for stunning canyon and waterfall views, or take a guided jeep tour into the rugged backcountry. After lunch in Ouray, relax in the famous Ouray Hot Springs Pool before heading back to Ridgway. Unwind with a stroll through Ridgway's River Trail or stop by a local gallery. Enjoy dinner at one of Ridgway's cozy restaurants, then settle in for the night at a warm and welcoming hotel, short-term rental, cabin or even a yurt. Enjoy the perfect mix of relaxation, adventure, and small-town charm—all surrounded by jaw-dropping mountain beauty.



RIDGWAY'S NEIGHBORS, DAY TRIPS & SCENIC DRIVES

Ridgway sits at the heart of some of Colorado's most breathtaking landscapes and legendary destinations, making it the perfect basecamp for adventure. Surrounded by towering peaks, scenic byways, and historic mountain towns, Ridgway offers easy access to some of the most unforgettable drives and day trips in the state, all while providing a peaceful, welcoming place to return to at the end of the day.

Just a short drive south, Ouray is a must-visit city with its stunning box canyon setting, cascading waterfalls, natural hot springs, and rich mining history. From there, continue along the iconic Million Dollar Highway (U.S. 550) to Silverton. This stretch of road is as thrilling as it is scenic, winding through high alpine passes with jaw-dropping views at every turn. Silverton's historic downtown and access to rugged backcountry make it a favorite for history buffs and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

To the west, Telluride's world-renowned skiing, summer festivals, and vibrant arts scene provide a mix of culture and adventure. The drive there is equally stunning, passing through open valleys and dramatic peaks before arriving in this picturesque box canyon.

Closer to home, Ridgway State Park offers year-round recreation with hiking, biking, boating, and fishing on the expansive reservoir. The park's sweeping views of the San Juans make it a perfect place to relax or explore without venturing too far.

With so much to see in every direction, Ridgway's central location allows visitors to take in the best of the region without the crowds. Stay an extra night (or two), enjoy Ridgway's laid-back vibe, and set out each day on a new adventure—whether it's a high-alpine drive, a dip in a hot spring, or a quiet afternoon by the lake. From rugged mountain roads to charming historic towns, every journey leads back to Ridgway, where you can recharge and plan your next discovery.



EVENTS

SIGNATURE EVENTS IN RIDGWAY

Ridgway's signature events celebrate the town's creative spirit and tight-knit community. From summer concerts in the park to local art festivals and heritage celebrations, there's always something happening. The annual Love Your Valley Fest and Ridgway Rendezvous draw visitors with live music, local food, and artisan vendors. Seasonal farmers markets and outdoor movie nights round out a lively calendar set against the stunning backdrop of the San Juan Mountains. In winter, the town hosts the thrilling San Juan Skijoring event, where skilled skiers are pulled by horses through a challenging course, showcasing a unique blend of athleticism and equestrian tradition.

EVENTS ACROSS OURAY COUNTY

Ouray County, including the City of Ouray, offers a vibrant mix of events that showcase mountain culture and small-town charm. Highlights include the world-famous Ouray Ice Festival, the lively Fourth of July celebration in Ouray, and a range of outdoor races and winter activities. Countywide, visitors can enjoy craft fairs, live music, and cultural gatherings that reflect the area's adventurous spirit and creative community.



WINTER IN RIDGWAY

Winter in Ridgway offers a peaceful, scenic escape with easy access and fewer crowds. Just off the highway and under an hour from Telluride, Ridgway makes an ideal basecamp for exploring the San Juan Mountains. Visitors can enjoy snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, and wildlife viewing, all set against a backdrop of snow-dusted peaks. After a day outdoors, relax in a cozy café, soak in a local hot spring, or browse art-filled shops downtown.



Ridgway's relaxed pace and stunning winter scenery create the perfect setting for a laid-back mountain getaway. While Telluride draws skiers from around the world, Ridgway offers a more accessible and affordable way to enjoy the season. Take in starry skies from a certified Dark Sky community, unwind by the fire, or experience a one-of-a-kind winter event like Skijoring. It's winter in the mountains—without the hassle.

Things to do and think about when visitig Ridgway and the area in winter.



