

Colorado by Train

July 8 - 18, 2022 • 11 Days • \$4575

Five heritage train journeys are the centerpiece of this Adventure, the most impressive starting across the New Mexico border and topping out at over 10,000 feet above sea level.

Everyone loves to see the countryside by train!

But there is so much more, including hikes in three national parks: the surprisingly deep and rugged Black Canyon of the Gunnison, the picturesque Pueblo culture at Mesa Verde National Park, and the startling, massive mountains of sand in the Rockies at Great Sand Dunes National Park. Woven through all this is a tapestry of dramatic landscapes in the spectacular Rocky Mountains!

TOUR COMPLETE

[Contact Us](#)

[Tour Type: Classic Curated](#)

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Following the popularity of past *Colorado by Train* Adventures, we are eager to return to the resplendent Rockies. We are now pleased to offer a fifth rendition of this outstanding itinerary, which includes a high-quality combination of great walks, vintage train rides, breathtaking national park vistas, and spectacular scenic driving through the awesome alpine panoramas of Colorado! Starting and finishing in Denver, this 11-day program uses a combination of a motorcoach and five vintage trains to work our way through the “Centennial State” amongst a smorgasbord of some of the country’s most scenic settings!

You can look forward to:

- Savoring the spectacular sites of Ouray (the “Switzerland of America”), with its inviting hot springs, cascading waterfalls, Victorian homes, and optional thrilling mountain jeep ride;
- Appreciating the dramatic role mining and the “boom or bust” cycle played in 19th century communities like Silverton and Georgetown;
- Enjoying the flavor of the Old West with stops and overnights in a variety of small, nostalgic Colorado towns;
- Pondering the way of life of indigenous peoples as we wander through pueblos built into the cliffs at Mesa Verde National Park, and;
- Immersing ourselves in almost non-stop Rocky Mountain panoramas, from the splendor of the 14ers (peaks higher than 14,000 feet), to the depths of Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, to the towering mountains of sand at Great Sand Dunes

National Park.

Including:

- Airport to hotel transfers on first day; group airport transfer at end of tour
- All land travel by motorcoach as outlined
- 5 heritage train rides as listed below
- Tourist-class or better hotel accommodations
- 13 meals: all breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 2 dinners as denoted (BLD)
- 6 walks as listed plus optional Denver walk on Day 1
- Walking fees for those collecting AVA walk credit (if AVA approved)
- WAI guide service throughout
- All tipping for local guides, coach drivers, and group meals
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$1050. We also provide a roommate matching service for those interested.

Visits to/train rides:

- Georgetown Loop Railroad
- Lebanon Silver Mine Tour
- Hotel de Paris visit in Georgetown
- Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
- Ouray Museum
- Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad
- Mesa Verde National Park
- Cliff Palace tour - Mesa Verde National Park
- Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad
- Great Sand Dunes National Park
- Royal Gorge Route Railroad
- Garden of the Gods
- More fun stops than we can list!

Optional Excursions:

- Downtown Denver Highlights Walk (Day 1)
- Ouray Rocky Mountain Jeep Tour (Day 4)
- Pikes Peak Cogwheel Train (Day 10)

"I loved that some more challenging walks were included, e.g. Petroglyph Trail. It seemed to me that there was an activity for every level of walker so that all were able to comfortably enjoy each day."

-Steve & Judy M; Encinitas, CA

"Scott and Pat gave us lots of good information. Both were exceptional—friendly, and you felt relaxed with their guiding...All railroads were good but Cumbres & Toltec and Royal

Gorge were splendid.”

-Lois S; Port Orange, FL

“This trip exceeded my expectations. It was planned well. Scott did a great job of keeping us informed every step of the way of what is on the schedule. Pat’s geo lessons were fun and informative. Both of them made my first experience w/WAI the best trip I have ever had.”

-Betty P; Silver Spring, MD

“We really enjoy the camaraderie that develops among the group, including the guides...We like the walks and activities which engage us in the areas that are featured on the tour. We are impressed with the research and thorough planning for the tours we’ve been on, as well as the personable guides who seem to give each group member thoughtful attention.”

-Carole G; Pendleton, OR

“The participants are all active people. ‘Educational’ aspects of tour are a highlight.”

-Don G; Pendleton, OR

“When you find the ‘BEST’— you forget about the rest...Us ‘2’ have been so pleased to have Scott and Pat as our Tour Guides. They were OUTSTANDING. Hope to travel with them again.”

-Joan C; ON, Canada

“I was pleasantly surprised by the ‘family atmosphere’ of the tour and how inclusive it was—this was a super group to travel with and get to know...Scott and Pat—excellent guides—you can tell they enjoy doing this...Fabulous scenery and great train rides—the attention to detail was really appreciated—enjoyed the geology talks along the way.”

-Mary W; AB, Canada

“Scott and Pat were excellent! Lots of info and stories. Geology lessons from Pat an added

bonus...This was our first WAI tour and we are impressed...Hard to improve on excellence. Would do a tour again with either one (WAI guides) in a heartbeat!"

-Doug W; AB, Canada

"From the WAI office staff to the guides we are always treated like we are a friend and not a customer. We feel safe on the tours...We are always amazed after 13 adventures with WAI how we get much more than we expect. This is the main reason we continue to travel with WAI."

-Bill & Linda H; Pasadena, MD

"This was my first tour and I was very impressed with the guides. Everything ran like clockwork."

-Nancy H; Cedar Falls, IA

"We were much impressed with Scott's attention to details and presentation to the travelers. Most congenial. Very experienced and knowledgeable and worked well with Pat...The scenery was spectacular. The trains were on time. A wonderful opportunity to have another rich, meaningful experience with WAI. Many thanks."

-Don C; ON, Canada

"I have found WAI tours to be of the highest quality and I feel that the WAI personnel value my friendship as much as I value theirs."

-Bob S; Portland, OR

"Information received on history of the area along with little known facts was well done. Enjoyed hearing stories about famous characters and incidents of the region...The Chama to Antonito train trip was wonderful. The aspen trees were absolutely gorgeous. I have never seen such a brilliant yellow color! Great Sand Dunes awesome. Story teller Leon was excellent."

-Helen S; Portland, OR

“The Colorado trains were a big attraction for me - the rides were spectacular, beautiful scenery and it was fun to learn ‘whistle speak...’ The highlights were the train rides; meeting new people and the beautiful sites... This was a fun, challenging and surprising trip. Great guides!!!!”

-Jennie D; Olympia, WA

“Loved all the walks, always felt safe and well guided. Scott prepared us well and told us what to wear and expect.”

-Jackie L; San Antonio, TX

“The quality of the itinerary, the quality of the WAI guides, the adventuresome, convivial nature of the other walkers in the group - we always make new friends, and reconnect with old friends from previous tours.”

-Mike N; Seattle, WA

“Expectations were exceeded. We found all of our fellow travelers very friendly and free to spend time talking with us... A nice variety of walks in different areas of Colorado and all the train journeys complemented the walks.”

-Pat and Richard S; Buckingham, England

- [360.260.9393](tel:360.260.9393)
- [Email Us](#)



Tour Pace: 1 2 3 4 5

Walk Challenge: 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)



Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour.

Tour Pace: On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

Walk Challenge: This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Contact Us](#)

Important Info



Group Size

Maximum 22 travelers



Hotels

Strategically located Tourist Class or better



Meals

13 meals: all breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 2 dinners as denoted by (BLD)



Airfare

Not included. Official start and finish is in Denver, Colorado (airport code DEN).



Transportation

Included. With 5 heritage train journeys and a full-size motorcoach with a seating capacity of 50+ seats.



Traveler Age

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

Your Guides



Scott Isom has had a passion for the outdoors ever since his childhood days spent exploring the waterfalls and outstanding hiking trails of the Columbia River Gorge with his family. Currently living in Puyallup, Washington, Scott loves to explore the unknown, knows how to have a good time, and enjoys including others in the fun!

As one of WAI's busiest guides and on-site Adventure planners, Scott has led tours on all 7 continents.

Scott and WAI owner, Dan Friesen, created this the basis of this itinerary on a scouting trip together in 2012 and Scott looks forward to leading another group of walkers through the

Rockies this summer!

Itinerary

Click on each day for more details.

[DAY 1-July 8: Arrive Denver, Colorado](#)

Our vintage train Adventure through the celebrated Rocky Mountain vistas of Colorado begins today in Denver. Travelers arrive throughout the day. Our first official activity is the Welcome Orientation & Reception this evening at 7:30 pm at our hotel. Please plan to arrive in time to attend this important Adventure kick-off!

Optional Downtown Denver Excursion For those who arrive into Denver a day early (July 7), an optional Downtown Denver Highlights Walk is available. This delightful all-day exploration of the Mile High City includes round-trip transport to downtown Denver, walk credit, and guide services. Estimated price: \$50

[DAY 2-July 9: Denver - Glenwood Springs \(B\)](#)

TRAIN #1: Georgetown Loop Railroad

We head west into the Rockies today on scenic Interstate 70, bound for the tiny town of Silver Plume and our first vintage train experience. The Georgetown Loop Railroad was built in the 1880s to connect the gold and silver boom towns of Georgetown and Silver Plume. The “loop” covers 3 miles of narrow-gauge track with an elevation gain of 640 feet, requiring a series of trestles, cuts, and loops. We disembark for a walking tour of the historic Lebanon Silver Mine at the halfway point. After lunch on our own in Victorian-styled Georgetown (8,512 feet - feet above sea level), we soak up wild west ambiance, blended with 19th century France, at stunningly restored Hotel de Paris, then continue over the continental divide through dramatic mountain scenery to the popular hot springs town of Glenwood Springs.

[DAY 3-July 10: Glenwood Springs - Ouray \(BD\)](#)

Black Canyon of the Gunnison Walk - 8 km, rated 2D

The travel proverb claiming “the journey is the destination” certainly applies to this Adventure, and today’s journey takes us south along the West Elk Loop Scenic Byway. The afternoon is devoted to exploring Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park with a scenic drive and walk. Unmatched for its combination of narrowness and depth - as deep as 2,700 feet and as narrow at the top as 1,200 feet - Black Canyon of the Gunnison trails include Warner Point Nature Trail and the Rim Rock Trail (8,300 feet), offering spectacular views from Painted Wall and Chasm Wall. We conclude our day with a historic saloon dinner on the first of two nights in the delightful mountain community of Ouray, known as the

“Switzerland of America!”

[DAY 4-July 11: Activities from Ouray \(B\)](#)

Rocky Mountain Mining Towns Walk - 8.5 km, rated 2B

Nestled in the eye-popping San Juan Mountains, Ouray (7,811 feet) warrants a full day to explore its lovely alpine surroundings. A morning walk around this charming, 19th century mining town blends Victorian-era homes, rushing waterfalls, and endless mountain panoramas.

Ouray Rocky Mountain Jeep Tour After lunch on our own, consider an optional (and thrilling!) 4×4 jeep ride into the high alpine wildflower wonderland above town (Estimated price: \$85).

Or soak in the famous Ouray Hot Springs near our hotel before enjoying dinner on your own in this delightful destination.

[DAY 5-July 12: Ouray - Durango \(B\)](#)

TRAIN #2: Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad

After a nostalgic and historically enlightening visit to well-curated Ouray County Museum, we ascend the Million Dollar Highway, touted by the American Automobile Association (AAA) as “among the nation’s most spectacular automobile routes.” This jaw-dropping road leads to another mining Mecca - the aptly-named town of Silverton (9,305 feet). Here, we board the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, built to transport gold and silver ore in the early 1880s. Mining gave way to tourism, however, and the magnificent vistas through which it is routed resulted in a steady stream of visitors through 128 years of continuous operation. We arrive in Durango (6,502 feet) this evening for a two-night stay.

[DAY 6-July 13: Activities from Durango \(B\)](#)

Mesa Verde National Park Walk - 10 km, rated 2D

Mesa Verde National Park is the only American national park dedicated specifically to human endeavors. Our multi-part walk in the park introduces us to the Pueblo Indians who first arrived in this area more than 1,000 years ago. The route also highlights the natural beauty of the park, exploring several of the impressive Pueblo cliff dwellings the park was established to protect.

Reservations are limited, but we plan to book a tour of the Cliff Palace, which the national park service calls “a world-famous masterpiece of architecture and design and the largest cliff dwelling in North America. Built between 1190 and 1280 CE, Cliff Palace was once home to over 100 people.” Click [here](#) for a virtual tour of Cliff Palace.

[DAY 7-July 14: Durango - Alamosa \(BL\)](#)

TRAIN #3: Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

Following a recurring theme, the transport of silver ore from southwest Colorado's San Juan Mountains was the objective for building the phenomenal Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad during the 1880s. Our third train journey follows a 64-mile narrow gauge line through the spectacular mountains and valleys of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. We board in Chama, New Mexico, travel as high as 10,015 feet above sea level, and ride, at one point, on rails fastened to a rock shelf carved from the face of a cliff. The train stops midway for a hot lunch before continuing to Antonito, our destination back on the Colorado side of the border. We spend the night in the small community of Alamosa (7,543 fasl), enjoying dinner on our own in the shadow of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains!

[DAY 8-July 15: Alamosa - Cañon City \(B\)](#)

Great Sand Dunes National Park Walk -5 km, rated 2B (unsanctioned)

Great Sand Dunes National Park takes us into surreal world of sand - 30 square miles of dunes rising to heights of nearly 700 feet! A short nature trail takes us up close to this sensational sea of sand surrounded by the Rockies—a sandbox of the titans—with an option to climb to the breathtaking summit of one of these striking dunes. Following picnic lunch on our own at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, we journey to Cañon City (5,332 fasl), gateway to the Royal Gorge, and our home base for the evening.

[DAY 9-July 16: Cañon City - Manitou Springs \(B\)](#)

Manitou Springs Walk - 10 km, rated 2A

TRAIN #4: Royal Gorge Route Railroad

Mining in the 1880s was again the motive for what became a railroad war between the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad and the Santa Fe Railroad. The two companies waged an ongoing struggle of litigation and actual armed confrontation for the right to build and operate a railroad through this deep river gorge. Sheer gorge walls over one thousand feet tall required that rails be suspended over the river for several hundred feet. Our seats are in the 1950s Vista Dome, the best way to take in the breathtaking views of the Royal Gorge. We arrive early afternoon into Manitou Springs (6,320 fasl). Faster walkers may have time to walk the local volkswalk; others may wish to just stroll amongst the artsy charm of historic Manitou Springs.

[DAY 10-July 17: Activities from Manitou Springs \(BD\)](#)

Garden of the Gods Walk - 8.5 km, rated 2C

Our final walk is a local and national favorite. At the base of Pikes Peak, the trail winds through the towering red sandstone monoliths of the Garden of the Gods.

Join us this afternoon to ride the highest cog railroad (the train's turning "cog wheel")

meshes into a special rail) in the world. In 1893, English professor Katherine Lee Bates was so impressed by the views that she penned the lines of what became one of our national treasures, "America the Beautiful." Due to extreme elevations (we travel from 6,571 feet to the summit of Pikes Peak at 14,110 feet), this experience is provided on an optional basis. Estimated price: \$80.

Those who opt out of this high altitude experience have free time to enjoy in Manitou Springs, or may opt to participate in yesterday's featured Manitou Springs walk from our hotel. We rendezvous this evening to reminisce about our journey at a Farewell Dinner.

[DAY 11-July 18: Depart from Colorado \(B\)](#)

Our *Colorado by Train* Adventure draws to a close with an early-morning group transfer to the airport in Denver. Exploring the beauty of the Rockies is a delight. Combining the Rockies with travel on these wonderfully restored and maintained historic trains makes the experience unforgettable. Thanks for sharing this nostalgic connection with America's past!

More Details

Click on each heading for more details.

[How do I lock in my place on this Adventure?](#)

To register, a non-refundable \$200 deposit is required to hold your spot. A final payment is due 60 days before departure and is non-refundable once paid. You will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance.

Soon after registration, an "Adventure Advice" email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

Please follow this link to read our full [General Tour Conditions](#).

[What's a Classic Curated Tour?](#)

With help from local experts and walking guides, these itineraries are crafted with extensive on-site planning by WAI tour planners.

When planning Classic Curated Tours, our objective is to capture the essence of a destination—the history, culture, and natural wonders unique to that part of the world. We then build activities and walks that take us *inside* these characteristics.

Yes, these tours are educational, but they are also interactive and immersive; walking gets us off the bus and penetrates local cultures to not only see, but also touch, smell, and feel these special spaces.

Along the way, interactions with locals amplify the experience by sharing insights into the magic of that particular location.

[Walk Ratings](#)

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. Walks that are oriented more towards education may take longer due to stops for guide commentary. Nature walks, on the other hand, generally continue at a steadier pace because we're stopping less to talk.

In most cases, we are not "strolling." We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness. If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of "training" beforehand to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion. If you have questions about your ability to participate, please contact our office at fun@walkingadventures.com.

We have adopted a walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented on the table below:

INCLINE

1. Minimal hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: <200 feet.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 200-1000 feet.
3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 1000-2000 feet.

TERRAIN

- A. Almost entirely on pavement.
- B. A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.
- C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky / rooted paths or soft sand).

[Elevation in Colorado](#)

Please bear in mind that the walks on this Adventure take place at elevations ranging from 5,000 feet above sea level to well over 8,000 feet above sea level. Elevations of key walks and destinations are listed in the itinerary. It is important to pursue any concerns you have about altitude with your doctor. As always, travelers are free to opt out of any activities. However, acclimation to these altitudes is an important aspect of a successful visit to the Colorado Rockies for most of us who live near sea level. As is the case with all of our Adventures, it is also important that you prepare for the fun by maintaining a good physical fitness routine.

[Tour Accommodations](#)

Good quality, tourist-class accommodations are the standard for our Adventure. Most

accommodations on this tour are selected primarily as a practical base from which to pursue our itinerary. Many, but not all, of our accommodations on this adventure are either single-floor or two-floors, sometimes without elevators. Travelers should be able to carry their luggage up a number of steps to get to a second-floor room if necessary.

[How is airfare arranged?](#)

The Adventure begins and ends in Denver, Colorado (airport code DEN). Information about transportation options from the Denver airport to our first hotel will be provided upon registration. On the last day of the Adventure, one group bus transfer is included from Manitou Springs to the Denver Airport. Details about flight arrangements will be made available once we reach a viable participation level.

We recommend that you contact Laura Pfahler, the travel agent we work with, to help book your flight arrangements. In this age of airfare complications and airport uncertainty, using a travel agent is a good investment! More details about flight arrangements and travel agent contact information will be provided in an Adventure Advice PDF by email after you register for the Adventure. Please do not book your airfare prior to receiving these flight details from us!

[Travel Insurance](#)

WAI believes strongly in the importance of travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. are travel agents who provide air travel and insurance services to many WAI travelers.

- Laura Pfahler: 503-434-6401 or lp@wtpdx.com
- Sharon Mitchell: 971-261-2091 or smitchell@wtpdx.com

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance. (NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc.).

As always, do some shopping to ensure you are getting best value. Using the [SquareMouth.com](#) website can be a good way to compare pricing.

Other options for travel insurance include:

- Allianz
- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

NOTE: We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing "cancel for any reason" insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing

and terms *BEFORE* they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape have caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.

[What if WAI Cancels the Tour?](#)

Walking Adventures International reserves the right to cancel this tour departure with fewer than 12 participants, in which case registered participants will receive a 100% refund of payments received. This refund policy contains one exclusion related to the COVID-19 environment. Many suppliers require non-refundable deposits as a condition of booking services. Though unlikely, unforeseen circumstances linked to the virus can force us to cancel a tour. In the case of COVID-19-related cancellation that trigger these supplier non-refundable policies, WAI attempts to retrieve as much of these deposits as possible, but cannot guarantee a 100% refund. In cases where full refunds cannot be obtained for a cancelled tour, we will do our best to transfer unrefunded money as traveler credits to be applied to a future tour to that destination.

View our full [Coronavirus FAQ](#) for more details.

[COVID-19 Policies for This Tour](#)

Walking Adventures International official policy is to endeavor to mirror any COVID-19 policies in place in the destinations through which we travel.

We are not aware of any COVID-19 policies or restrictions that will impact this tour in Colorado.

Requirements and restrictions have been fluid. WAI will update travelers upon learning of any changes.

Travelers participating in the *Colorado by Train* tour must agree to abide by policies in place at the time of travel.

[What happens next?](#)

Upon registering for this Adventure, you will receive a welcome email and initial invoice notifying you of your tour balance and due date. All payments for the tour or optional services/excursions can now be made online.

Soon after registration, an "Adventure Advice" email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

About 70 days before departure, you will receive a final statement reminder about the final tour payment, which is due 60 days before departure. Please see our [General Tour Conditions](#) for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

Around 2-3 weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

Take a few minutes to peruse the enclosed itinerary. The beauty of Colorado is inspirational. Its Old West ambiance and vintage train transport takes us back to a simpler time. And, as always, walking is the special ingredient for connecting with the intriguing history, culture, and scenery of this Rocky Mountain state! In the end, we think you will agree that walking is still and always the best way to experience our world. Join us this summer for this unforgettable Walking Adventure program as we experience *Colorado by Train* together!