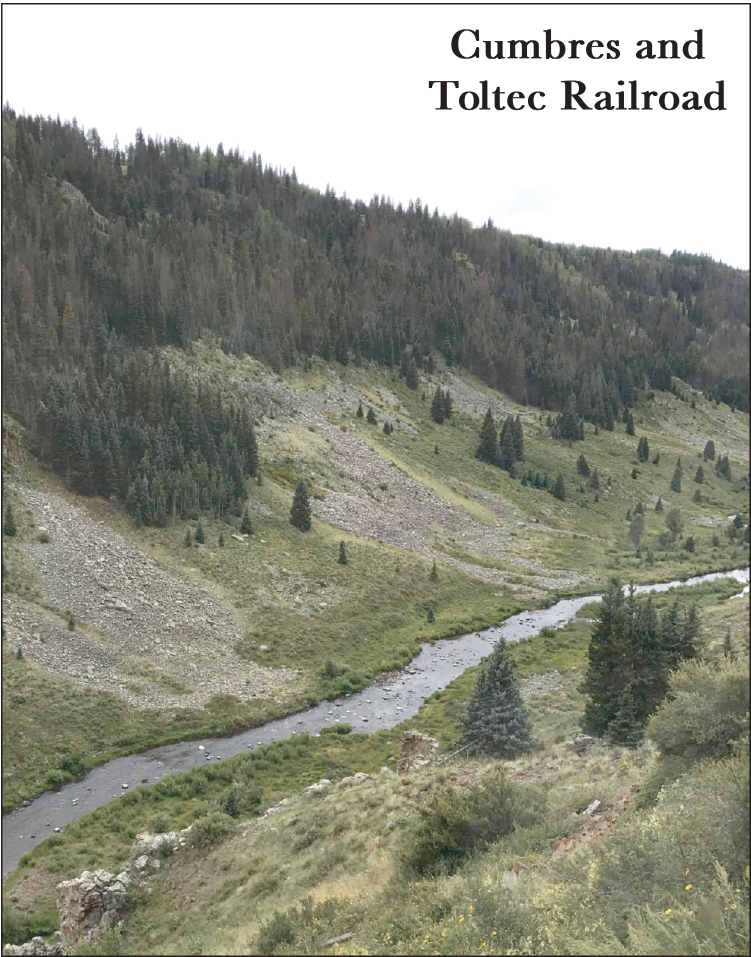


Cumbres and Toltec Railroad



Cumbres and Toltec Railroad

Escape the Heat...With a Trip to the Mountains

This summer has already proven to be extremely hot and dry. However, Texans don't have to travel all that far to enjoy cool, mountain air in our neighboring state of New Mexico. We are taking a look at three different destinations to help you beat the summer heat! With only a six hour drive, Ruidoso is perhaps the closest and most popular mountain destinations for Coke County folks. Close behind Ruidoso is Cloudcroft. However, let's start this journey with a lesser known, but highly enjoyable train ride.

The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad is a 64 mile day trip aboard a National Historic Landmark. The coal-fired steam engine begins its journey in either Chama, New Mexico, or Antonito, Colorado, (both approximately 9 hours away) before traveling through steep mountain canyons, high desert, and lush meadows as it goes back and forth eleven times over the Colorado and New Mexico border. This off-the-grid adventure is a chance to experience the authentic Old West and see railroading exactly the way it was in the 1880s. From the moment the engineer gives two long whistle blasts (the signal that the train is moving forward), you are back in time, feeling the rattle of the cars, smelling the coal smoke, hearing the steam whistle, and seeing the exact same mountain, gorge and river views that Westerners saw almost 140 years ago. The train rumbles across the Rocky Mountains at a stately speed of 12 miles an hour through a nice soft breeze and refreshing mountain air. The tracks go where no roads go. One minute, you are surrounded by meadows of quaking aspens and wildflowers. Deer, elk and even bears have been seen from the train. The next minute, you're riding on a narrow ledge through Toltec Gorge, with views straight down 600-feet to the roaring river below. There are bridges, trestles and tunnels, and always, there is the fragrance of the railroad the

sweet smell of pine trees and coal smoke.

The only thing that is better than hearing the steam whistle echo off the mountains, is the natural air conditioning to be found along the route. Temperatures drop 3.5 degrees for every thousand feet of altitude you gain, so as the train steams higher and higher to eventually top out on Cumbres Pass at 10,015-feet, the temperature drops as you go along. Bring a jacket – even in the height of summer.

Patrons can choose to ride in one of several different cars - traditional cars, an open gondola car, on the platforms between cars, or in a stately parlor car, like the ones once used by railroad executives. There are onboard restrooms and a bar car. Full day, 64-mile long rides stop for a hot lunch at scenic Osier Station at the midway point. The train runs daily through October 21.

NOTE: The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is more than 100 miles away from the wildfires that firefighters are battling in Northern New Mexico and Southeastern Colorado with business as usual and no adverse conditions as a result.

Cloudcroft, New Mexico

Cloudcroft, New Mexico, is a 110 year old, unique mountain community which combines the amenities of modern life with a heritage as a pioneer village. In the summer, it is a wonderful place to get away from the heat and enjoy the delightful pleasures of the mountains. With a central location, it might be your perfect vacation headquarters! It is only 40 miles through beautiful mountain terrain to Ruidoso and all that city has to offer. However, it is only 16 miles to the Space Museum, Alameda Park Zoo and the Toy Train Depot at Alamogordo, New Mexico. Another 40 mile drive from Cloudcroft will bring you to the White Sands National Monument. If golf is your game, Cloudcroft is within fifty miles of 8 magnificent courses. At 9,000 feet above sea level,

The Lodge Golf Course is one of the highest and most unique courses in North America. Built in 1899, the course is governed by the Scottish tradition of playing different tees and separate flags on each hole. This exquisite nine-hole course, when played twice, becomes a challenging 18-hole round. In addition to golf, The Lodge offers activities for all seasons. Onsite amenities include: swimming, dry sauna, hot tub, spa services, exercise room, snowmobiling, snow tubing, hiking, cross country skiing, lawn games, mountain biking, and shopping.

In the village, you can get your picture made in authentic period costumes at Mountain Foto before visiting the Western Bar and Restaurant. This establishment is located on Burro Street and has served locals and visitors for over 50 years. The Western Restaurant features a family atmosphere with a varied menu. In the bar, it's Karaoke night on Friday's, and locals and visitors mix in a true local atmosphere.

In addition to the quaint village, Gillespie Ranch is just east of town. Gillespie Ranch is a historic New Mexico ranch, a true working cattle ranch in the Lincoln National Forest. Gillespie Ranch encompasses 15,000 acres ranging in elevation from 7200 to 8600 feet. Wildlife is abundant and includes elk, deer, bear, mountain lion and turkey. The ranch welcomes horseback riders, hunters, ATV riders, and anyone else you want to bring along. Camp in your rig or enjoy the fully equipped cozy cabin. Come to ride or hunt, or just to enjoy the mountain scenery. Trails range from easy to extreme – take your choice.

Ruidoso, New Mexico

Texans have fun year round in Ruidoso! If you're a horse racing fan, Ruidoso Downs Race Track is for you. It is home to the richest quarter horse race in the world - the All American Futurity. Ski Apache is not just for winter anymore. It also offers many biking and hiking trails as well as disk golf,

gondola rides and of course the highest elevation zipline rides in the whole world. Or maybe, you just want to gamble. With the casinos at the track, the truck stop (much better than it sounds) or in luxury at Inn of the Mountain Gods, gamblers just might get lucky. If all of this activity isn't for you, relax in the mountain air to the sound of running water or take a stroll down through the many art galleries and shops in midtown. For the history buffs, area museums and historic sites offer a peak into the past. More details are listed below about all

of these activities and more.

Ski Apache Zip Tours

Take your zip-lining experience above and beyond with this three-span zip tour. This beautifully stunning adventure begins and rises above 11,000 feet. It is also complete with parallel cables so riders can glide down the mountain side-by-side. The adrenaline-pumping, three-part zip tour takes about an hour and a half and reaches speeds of up to 65 mph and is approximately 8,900 feet in length, making it one of the longest in the world while offering a thrilling and unforgettable experience.

(Continued on next page)

That's Smart!

Smart Planning is important today! Yes, it is smart to think ahead and save for your special anniversary trip, future vacation home or sending your child to college. These are life enrichment goals most people have to save for over a long period of time. We want to help you reach your future savings goals. Let's talk!



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