

Visit Durango :: Largest town in Southwest Colorado

DURANGO is the largest town in southwest Colorado and the best hub for exploring the Four Corners region. Founded in 1880 as a refining town and rail junction for Silverton, 45 miles north, steam trains continue to run along the spectacular old mining route through the Animas Valley, though nowadays tourists, not sacks of gold, are the money-making cargo.

The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad runs up to four round-trips daily between May and October, from a depot at 479 Main Ave at the south end of town (all leave in early morning; \$55 round-trip; reserve tickets at least two weeks in advance; tel 970/247-2733). Shorter excursions, covering the most scenic areas of the route, run between late November and early May (daily 10am; \$45).

Durango has also become one of the West's latest boomtowns, attracting a large influx of long-distance computerized teleworkers. Combine them with the local population of students from Fort Lewis College and outdoors enthusiasts who come to ride their mountain bikes in the area, and you end up with a town which has a youthful, energetic buzz.

Greyhound services between Denver and Albuquerque call in at 275 E Eighth Ave.

There are plenty of places to eat and drink: Carver's Bakery & Brewpub, 1022 Main Ave (tel 970/259-2545), opens at

6.30am for breakfast, serves Southwestern lunches and dinners, and keeps buzzing later on in its brewpub role.

Steamworks Brewing Co, 801 E Second Ave (tel 970/259-9200), is another good choice to sample local brews and also serves good food.