

Ouray

The attractive mining community of **OURAY** lies 23 miles north of Silverton, on the far side of the 11,018ft **Red Mountain Pass**, where the bare rock beneath the snow really is red, thanks to mineral deposits. The Million Dollar Highway twists and turns, passing abandoned mine workings and rusting machinery in the most unlikely and inaccessible spots; back roads into the mountains offer rich pickings, for hikers or drivers with four-wheel drive.

Ouray itself squeezes into a narrow but verdant valley, with the commercially run **Ouray Hot Springs** beside the Uncompahgre River at the north end of town. A mile or so south, a one-way loop dirt road leads to **Box Canyon Falls Park** (daily 8am-7pm; \$2), where a straightforward 500ft trail, partly along a swaying wooden parapet, leads into the dark, narrow **Box Canyon**. At the far end, the falls thunder through a tiny cleft in the mountain.

The local **visitor center** is on the northern edge of town beside the hot springs (daily 8am-6pm; tel 970/325-4746 or 1-800/228-1876). At **Box Canyon Lodge**, an old-style timber **motel** at 45 Third Ave below the park (tel 970/325-4981 or 1-800/327-5080; \$50-75), you can bathe in natural hot tubs; the luxurious B&B **St Elmo Hotel**, 426 Main St (tel 970/325-4951; \$100-130), holds a good **restaurant**, and the **Ouray Coffee House**, next to the springs at 960 Main St (tel 970/325-4001), has an appealing patio for light lunches.