

## Silverton

Journey's end for the narrow-gauge railroad from Durango comes at SILVERTON, spread across a small flat valley surrounded by high mountains. It's one of Colorado's most atmospheric mountain towns, with wide, dirt-paved streets leading off towards the hills to either side of its one main road. Silverton's zinc and copper mining days only came to an end in 1991, and while the population has dropped since then, those that remain have so far resisted suggestions that its future lies in gambling to draw in the tourists. They are, however, extremely reliant on the seasonal tourist train; so while the false-fronted stores along "Notorious Blair Street" are a reminder of the days when Wyatt Earp dealt cards in the Arlington saloon, the town is defined by the restaurants and gift shops that fill up between 11am and 2pm when tourists are deposited in town.

Although tourism makes Silverton tick, it's pretty quiet here in the evenings as most visitors are on day-trips with the train. Bargain accommodation is to be had at the Triangle Motel, 848 Greene St (tel 970/387-5780; \$50-75), at the south end of town, which also offers good-value two-room suites and jeep rental, though the old-style, central Grand Imperial Hotel, 1219 Greene St (tel 970/387-5527 or 1-800/341-3340; \$75-100), with its forty creaky, antique-furnished rooms, is not much more expensive. The tin-walled Silverton Hostel, 1025 Blair St (check-in daily 8-10am & 4-10pm; tel 970/387-0015; up to \$35), has \$11 dorm beds. For food, there's the French Bakery, 1250 Greene St (tel 970/387-5976), serving sandwiches and soups through to full meals, while Romero's, 1151 Greene St (tel 970/387-0123), is an enjoyable Mexican cantina with a menu of tasty, authentic food, plus fantastic salsa.