

WELCOME TO

The Mystic San Luis Valley



*An Experiential Guidebook
to Photo and Dark Sky
Opportunities in the
San Luis Valley*

**INSIDE: 7-County Map
Identifying 50 Locations for Exceptional
Photography and Viewing the Night Sky!**

Brought to you by the
San Luis Valley Tourism Association

Adventure, Imagination, and Oh, the Skies!

In ancient times, our ancestors roamed the Earth, their curiosity and sense of adventure driving them to explore and learn. They surely gazed up at the vast expanse of the night sky, and in those shimmering stars saw more than just pricks of light – they must have felt a canvas of endless possibilities. With hearts full of wonder and minds fueled by a yearning for the unknown, these early humans celebrated life, told stories of adventure, and made plans. The stunning night skies offered them moments of contemplation, familiar points of reference, and a profound sense of the place they lived.

Today, the mystical San Luis Valley invites you to experience that same sense of wonder and adventure. Come explore new places, meet kindred spirits, and gaze into the vast expanse of the sky and feel that timeless connection between humanity and the universe. We hope you will take home memories, photographs, and keepsakes of your time here, and return again for more adventures under the Colorado skies.

Welcome!

Prepare to be captivated by the breathtaking San Luis Valley. With its stunning landscapes and endless opportunities for exploration, we hope your visit here will be unforgettable.

This guidebook serves as your companion to the wonders of the San Luis Valley, focusing on three captivating themes that will make your stay truly unforgettable:



Dark Skies

Learn about the importance of protecting these renowned dark skies and how your actions can make a difference. You are invited to witness the wonders of the universe from this extraordinary viewpoint.

Million Dollar Shot

Unleash your visual storytelling skills and capture the beauty of San Luis Valley through our photography challenges.

Whether you are a pro or an amateur, you will discover priceless imagery.



Explore and honor the natural wonders of the San Luis Valley through responsible and sustainable practices. Discover hidden gems and local cultures while respecting the land, people, and history. Our guide empowers you to experience the Valley while ensuring its magnificence endures for generations.





Why Dark Skies Matter

Preserving the Beauty and Benefits of Night Skies

Astronomy and Scientific Advancement: Dark skies offer ideal conditions for astronomical research. Artificial light pollution can disrupt telescopes and hinder our exploration of the universe. Preserving dark skies is essential for expanding our knowledge of space.

Human Well-being: Excessive artificial light at night disrupts natural sleep patterns and harms human health. It can lead to sleep problems, obesity, and other health issues. Dark skies promote healthier sleep and overall well-being.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage: Many cultures have rich traditions tied to the night sky. Protecting dark skies ensures the continuation of these cultural and historical connections.

Enhanced Quality of Life: Dark skies enrich communities and individuals by connecting them to the natural world through awe-inspiring views of stars and celestial objects.

Wildlife Protection: Artificial night lighting has a broad negative impact on wildlife, altering natural behaviors and ecological balance. This includes navigation, mating, foraging, and natural predation, fragmenting habitats and impacting diverse ecosystems.

Energy Efficiency: Lighting that spills into the night sky wastes energy and contributes to pollution. This inefficiency carries economic and environmental consequences, including increased greenhouse gas emissions and higher electricity costs.

Economic Benefits: Areas with dark skies attract stargazers and astrotourists, benefiting local communities through tourism and educational programs.

Preserving dark skies involves using energy-efficient lighting, shielding fixtures, and educating people about responsible outdoor lighting. This protects the environment, enhances well-being, and allows us to explore the wonders of the universe.

What is a Dark Sky Reserve?

A Dark Sky Reserve is a protected area of land with exceptional starry nights and a nocturnal environment for scientific, natural, cultural heritage, or public enjoyment purposes. It has a “core” zone that meets minimum sky quality requirements and is surrounded by a periphery with policy controls to protect the darkness of the core.

Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve

The park’s 149,164 acres of dunes, wetlands, grasslands, forests, and alpine tundra offer an array of opportunities to view the night sky and explore the park after dark. Great Sand Dunes was certified an International Dark Sky Park in 2019.

Sangre de Cristo Dark Sky Reserve

The proposed Sangre de Cristo Dark Sky Reserve in rural Colorado aims to become one of the world’s largest dark sky areas. This will be achieved through partnerships, lighting regulations, agreements, and long-term planning to safeguard Colorado’s beautiful night sky.

What is Light Trespassing?

Light trespass is a form of light pollution that impinges on other people’s personal space. Examples include floodlights and string lights that illuminate a neighbor’s yard and beyond. Think carefully before installing outdoor lighting, keep outdoor lighting off when it’s not needed, and close your blinds at night to keep light inside.

Dark Sky Camping Guidelines

Use light responsibly to minimize the impact on your surrounding environment and ensure an enjoyable experience for all:

- Light your site, not the night.
- Shield your lights and point them down.
- Use warmer color light (like red light) if light is needed.
- Avoid unneeded and excessive light (like decorative lighting, landscape lighting, string lighting, etc.)
- Consider stargazing as an alternative to a campfire.
- Refrain from driving in the camping areas from dusk to dawn.
- After dark . . . Lights off, STARS ON!

Do Your Part

Modern society requires outdoor lighting for safety and commerce, but nighttime lighting can be used wisely. To minimize the harmful effects of light pollution, please follow the 5 Principles of Responsible Lighting:

1. **USEFUL** – All light should have a clear purpose.
2. **TARGETED** – Light should be directed only where needed, inside and outside.
3. **LOW LIGHT LEVELS** – Light should be no brighter than necessary.
4. **CONTROLLED** – Light should be used only when it is useful.
5. **COLOR** – Use warmer colored lights where possible.



Wish Upon a Shooting Star

Up your stargazing party and plan to visit the San Luis Valley during one of the annual prominent meteor showers.

Meteor showers are spectacular celestial events that occur when Earth passes through a trail of debris left behind by a comet.

Quadrantids (January): Peaking in early January, this short-lived shower delivers about 40 meteors per hour. Precise timing is key, and the radiant point is in Boötes.

Lyrids (April): This mid-April shower provides around 20 meteors per hour, making it a rewarding option, though not as active as others.

Perseids (August): A reliable favorite, peaking in mid-August, producing up to 60-100 meteors per hour. Best viewing after midnight with Perseus high in the sky.

Orionids (October): Associated with Halley's Comet, this October shower offers around 20 meteors per hour. Prime viewing is after midnight with Orion well-placed.

Geminids (December): Known for its high meteor rate, often exceeding 100 per hour. It occurs in mid-December and is best viewed after midnight when Gemini is high.

For optimal meteor watching, avoid areas with artificial lighting and choose a safe, open location. Be aware of private property and closed gates, and keep an eye on weather forecasts and moon phases for clear, unobstructed views.

What Makes a Million Dollar Shot?



FILTER FREE ZONES

Captures Authenticity:

Photography is a powerful tool, capable of preserving the authenticity of a place and its people. Before applying filters, ponder whether they might detract from genuine moments. Instead, let nature, weather, and people breathe life into your photos, bringing forth the real essence of the moment.



SHUTTER SPEED LIMITS

Transcends the Frame:

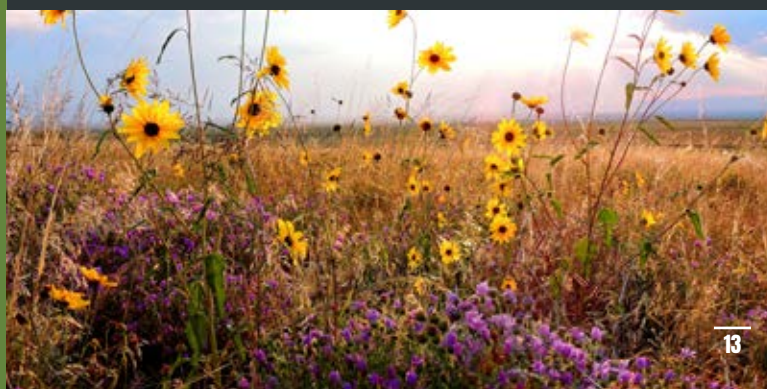
Every photo captures a moment that is more than just the image. It preserves a slice of time, amplified by the small but significant details that make it unique – the unseen flower, the mist from a waterfall, the earth beneath your boots, and the people you encounter on your journey.



COLORADO PHOTO PRESERVES

Preserves the Beauty:

While a photo is forever, the traces of our presence should not be. Let your photos be a celebration of the environment and its diverse ecosystems. Consider the history and diversity that make each place unique, and take actions to preserve it. Think about the actions you can take to better preserve our natural wonders.



Photography Safety Tips

Photography in the San Luis Valley requires careful consideration of environmental and safety factors. Here are key practices for safe photography:

Weather Awareness: Stay informed about changing mountain weather, anticipating sudden shifts even in summer.

Altitude: Take it easy if not acclimated to high altitudes; be mindful of physical condition, especially during higher elevation hikes.

Sun Protection: Use sunscreen, wear a hat, and sunglasses to shield against intense sun at higher altitudes.

Wildlife Respect: Keep a safe distance from diverse wildlife by using a telephoto lens; know potential encounters in explored areas.

Leave No Trace Principles: Pack out all trash and avoid disruption of natural features.

Lighting Conditions: Be aware of altitude's impact on lighting, with thinner air intensifying sunlight; leverage sunrise/sunset for optimal mountain landscapes.

Gear: Carry essential gear, including a sturdy tripod and consider a weather-sealed camera for mountainous regions.

Know Before You Go: Respect private property, not all land is public. Know what land is protected with special regulations.

Emergency Preparedness: Have basic first aid knowledge and kit; ensure a charged phone and consider a GPS device in remote areas.

Planning: Research locations in advance, considering trail conditions, accessibility, and regulations.

Be Bear Aware: Understand bear safety, including proper food storage, and know what to do if encountering a bear.

See Your Photos in a New Light

At what point are you satisfied with your photo? When the light is perfect? When no one is blinking in the group shot? Or could it be the moment you think to yourself *“That’s the one I’ll share to remember this moment.”*

When you visit the San Luis Valley, it’s tempting to snap everything you see, but take a minute and ask yourself why is it necessary to take so many photos of the same thing? Because sometimes in the rush to take photos, we may be missing the beauty of each moment.



Here in the San Luis Valley, the pace is slower and the scenery is breathtaking. We invite you to explore, engage, and consider what makes this area so unique and unlike any other. Embrace the rural way of life and be respectful of the diverse people, wildlife, history, and landscapes. The following “**Do SLV Right**” guidelines will help you maximize your enjoyment while respecting and protecting this beautiful place.

Know Before You Go

Maximize your adventure, minimize your risk

Explore our rugged backyard responsibly. Learn about the area beforehand, check conditions before you depart, pack and dress appropriately, and visit less crowded destinations. Don't forget to bring reusable water bottles to stay hydrated and limit waste.

Stick to Trails

Love the trail you're on

Stay on designated trails to avoid erosion and protect the homes of local wildlife. Shortcuts can be tempting, but can be dangerous and destructive. Camp in designated campsites at least 200 feet from waterways.

Trash the Trash

Help keep our views beautiful

Aim to leave our beautiful scenery even better that you find it. Pack out ALL trash, including peels and cores. No rest room around? Use a convenient and disposable WAG bag or bury your waste 70 steps from water and the trail.

Be Careful With Fire

Be smart about fire danger

In our dry and windy climate, be careful with fire! Check if campfires are allowed, keep them small and attended, and fully extinguish them. Use local firewood and be cautious when smoking. Discarded butts are a major cause of fires.

Respect the Rural

Slow down, unplug and enjoy

Embrace our rural way of life - switch off your phone, slow down, and keep a smile on your face while admiring our natural wonders like the Sangre de Cristos and Sand Dunes National Park.

Enjoy Hidden Gems

The slower pace is by design

Unplug and unwind in our scenic beauty. Enjoy our dark skies and hot springs. Always check seasonal business hours before visiting. Our rural lifestyle means more time to take in the views.

Respect the Trail

Keep your wheels on the road and a smile on your face

OHVs are a popular way to explore the backcountry, but it's important to be considerate of others and the environment. Stay on designated routes, yield to non-motorized users, leave gates as you found them, use appropriate exhaust systems, pull over to let faster vehicles pass, and avoid blocking trails or trailheads.

Hunting Essentials

Be in the know before you go

The San Luis Valley's public lands are a paradise for hunters. Stay safe by knowing and following Colorado laws and regulations. Carry your hunting license and clean up all targets and shells. Know the game management units to avoid private property.

Follow these “Do SLV Right” guidelines and make the most of your San Luis Valley adventure while respecting and protecting what makes it so unique.

Care for Colorado Leave No Trace®

Plan Ahead and Prepare: Research and adhere to specific area regulations. Plan your trip in advance.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces: Stick to established trails to minimize vegetation impact. Camp at designated sites, avoiding damage to fragile ecosystems.

Dispose of Waste Properly: Pack out all trash, including food scraps. Use designated facilities or portable toilets for human waste.

Leave What You Find: Avoid disturbing wildlife or removing natural and cultural features. Preserve artifacts and landscapes as you find them.

Minimize Campfire Impact: Use camp stoves whenever possible. If fires are allowed, use established rings, keeping them small and following regulations.

Respect Wildlife: Observe from a distance, avoiding feeding or approaching. Securely store food to prevent wildlife habituation.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors: Keep noise down and respect the environment's tranquility. Yield to others on trails, practicing courtesy.

Know and Follow Local Regulations: Comply with specific area regulations and obtain necessary permits.



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Stay the Trail

A Colorado campaign promoting responsible off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation.

Stick to Designated Trails: Stay on established trails to minimize soil erosion and protect vegetation.

Respect Wildlife: Observe wildlife from a distance and avoid disturbing them, especially during breeding seasons.

Stay on the Trail: Avoid creating new trails or taking shortcuts to protect sensitive ecosystems.

Tread Lightly: Stay on durable surfaces, like trails or rocks, to reduce damage to the environment.

Pack It In, Pack It Out: Carry out all trash and litter to maintain the cleanliness of the area.

Respect Other Users: Be considerate of others, yielding the trail as appropriate, and maintaining a positive and respectful attitude.

Educate Yourself: Know and adhere to the specific regulations and guidelines of the area you are visiting.

Obey OHV Regulations: Learn and follow all regulations to minimize environmental impact, foster good relationships with residents and landowners, and preserve Colorado's natural beauty.

Saguache COUNTY (suh•WATCH)

Spanning 3,170 square miles between the majestic Sangre de Cristo mountains and the San Juan range, Saguache County boasts a sparse population of just two people per square mile. With over a thousand miles of roads and no stoplights, it serves as the northern gateway to the San Luis Valley, offering many historic sites, scenic places, and year-round outdoor recreation.

1 - Poncha Pass. Grand vistas of the rugged Sangre de Cristo mountain range, open meadows, and dense pine forests. A picturesque display of Colorado's natural splendor.

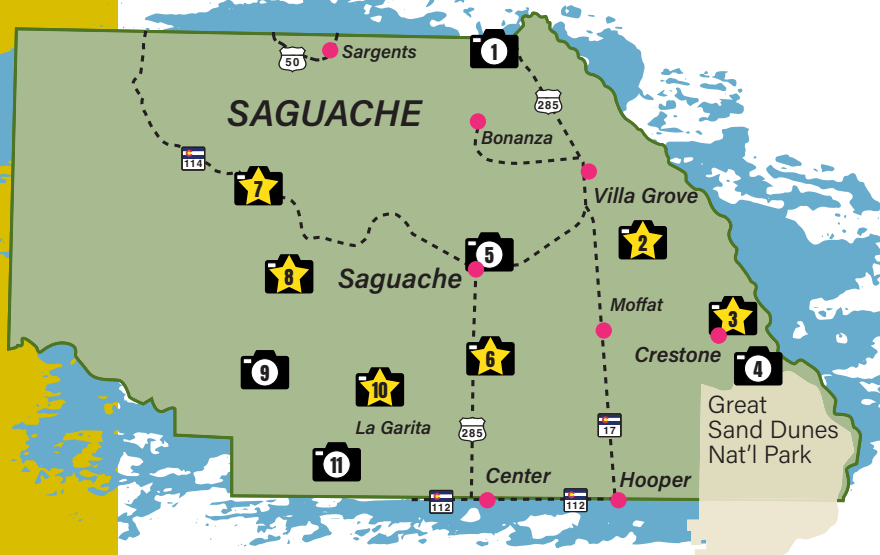
2 - Joyful Journey. A serene oasis where visitors can unwind in natural geothermal pools surrounded by breathtaking mountain views, creating a truly rejuvenating and tranquil experience.

3 - Town of Crestone. This unique community is renowned as a spiritual center and is a designated Dark Sky community, combining diverse spiritual traditions with a commitment to preserving its pristine night sky.

4 - Baca Wildlife Refuge. A vital sanctuary for diverse bird species and other wildlife, set against a backdrop of sweeping wetlands and the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

5 - Town of Saguache. A charming ranching community, steeped in Frontier history, that exudes a quiet, timeless allure with its tree-lined streets, historic architecture, and small shops.

6 - Russel Lakes. A critical wetland habitat for migratory birds, creating a serene and ecologically significant landscape in this high desert region.



7 - Cochetopea Pass. A winding, scenic high-altitude route. A breathtaking journey for explorers and adventurers alike.

8 - Saguache Park. Surrounded by the San Juan Mountains, outdoor enthusiasts will be enchanted by sweeping views, alpine meadows, clear streams, and towering peaks.

9 - Ventana Natural Arch. A captivating geological wonder—a towering sandstone arch framed by dramatic cliffs and expansive vistas.

10 - Penitente Canyon. With its stunning red rock formations and sheer cliff faces, this world-class rock-climbing destination also offers trails, camping, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

11- Elephant Rocks. Massive granite boulders stand as a testament to the forces of nature and provide a captivating playground for climbers and hikers alike.

Downtown Saguache



Mineral (mi•nr•uhl) COUNTY

Nestled amidst the rugged splendor of the San Juan Mountains, the region stands as a testament to the untamed beauty of the American West. Dubbed the “heart of the San Juans,” it offers unspoiled wilderness, pristine alpine lakes, dense evergreen forests, and jagged peaks. The county also holds a rich mining heritage, with historic towns and mining operations scattered throughout the rugged terrain, offering a glimpse into the wild and storied past of the Colorado high country.

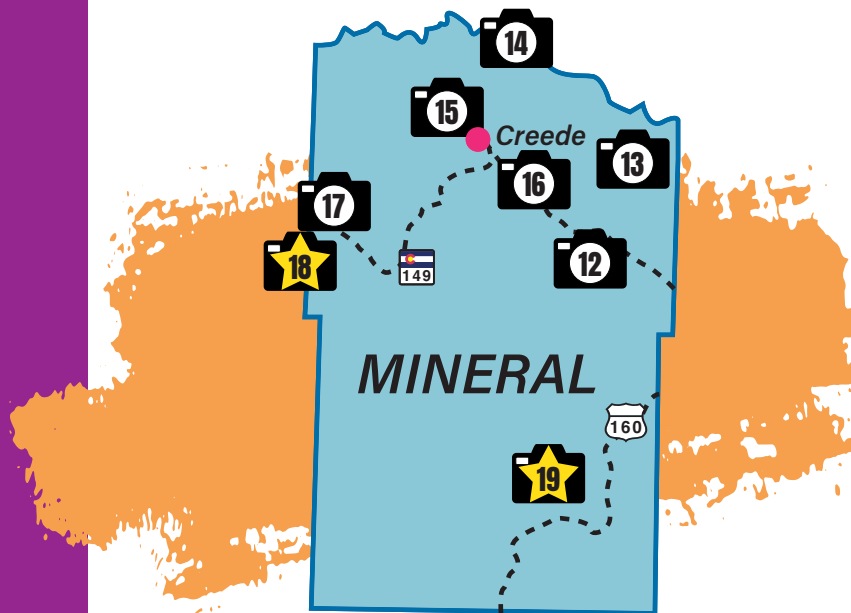


Wheeler Geologic Area

12. Collier State Wildlife Area. A paradise for anglers, as well as bird and wildlife watching. View elk, deer and moose in winter, and bighorn sheep throughout the year.

13. Wheeler Geologic Area. Towering spires and intricate rock formations tell a story millions of years in the making. Hike the challenging trail and immerse yourself in the rugged splendor of this captivating wilderness.

14. San Luis Peak. Embark on an unforgettable adventure to the summit of San Luis Peak, one of Colorado’s most majestic fourteeners. With its sweeping panoramic views, this challenging hike offers a true taste of high-altitude beauty for seasoned hikers and nature enthusiasts alike.



15. Bachelor Loop Interpretive Site. This engaging trail winds through the scenic remnants of old mining operations, providing a glimpse into the area’s past while surrounded by the stunning beauty of the San Juan Mountains.

16. Town of Creede. A charming and historic town with a rich mining heritage, charming shops and creative district, and stunning natural landscapes.

17. North Clear Creek Falls. A magnificent natural wonder known for its dramatic drop and picturesque surroundings. Accessible by a short walk from the parking area.

18. Lake San Cristobal. Colorado’s second-largest natural lake, it offers a serene retreat for fishing, boating, and taking in stunning views.

19. Wolf Creek Interpretive Site. Situated amidst the scenic beauty of the San Juan Mountains, this site provides visitors with informative displays and interactive exhibits on natural and cultural history.

North Clear Creek Falls



Rio Grande COUNTY

(RREE-oh GRAHN-deh)

Rio Grande County is situated in an area of exceptional natural beauty with a rich cultural heritage. It offers stunning views of the Rocky Mountains and is intersected by the Rio Grande River. The county is well-known for its diverse outdoor recreational activities, from hiking and fishing in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to birdwatching in the wetlands surrounding the San Luis Lakes. The region is steeped in history, with remnants of old mining towns and early settlers waiting to be discovered.

20. Silver Thread Historic Byway. Winding through spectacular landscapes this route weaves together mining history, charming mountain towns, and breathtaking vistas.

21. Col. Pfeiffer Historic Landmark. Colonel Albert Pfeiffer was a Dutch-born American who served as a Ute Indian agent, fought in the Civil War, and contributed to the Navajo Campaign and Ft. Nichols. He played a pivotal role in regional land disputes before his death in 1881. His gravesite is an off-roadside attraction accessible from the Rio Grande County Museum.



Gold Medal trout streams and historic mining sites



Sandhill Cranes

22. Town of Del Norte. Once considered for the capitol of CO, this quaint town has a rich history, featuring picturesque streets, historic architecture, and a warm community spirit. The perfect blend of relaxation and exploration!

23. The Spanish Trail. Whispering tales of centuries-old trade and cultural exchange as it winds through picturesque towns, connecting to a rich history of exploration and commerce.

24. Home Lake. Nestled in the heart of the San Luis Valley, this is a serene and historically significant body of water, where the landscape's natural beauty and cultural heritage converge.

25. Monte Vista Natl Wildlife Refuge. Provides a critical habitat for migratory birds and offers visitors a chance to witness the captivating spectacle of thousands of sandhill cranes and waterfowl during their seasonal migrations.

Alamosa (a-luh•MOW•suh) COUNTY

Framed by the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the expansive San Luis Valley floor, this county offers a picturesque backdrop for both residents and visitors. Home to the bustling city of Alamosa, it serves as a hub for commerce, education, and recreation, while also honoring its agricultural heritage. With its vibrant arts scene, diverse outdoor opportunities, and a strong sense of community, Alamosa County invites exploration and promises a genuine taste of authentic Colorado living.

26. Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Park & Preserve. Discover the breathtaking beauty of Great Sand Dunes National Park, where towering sand peaks meet against a backdrop of majestic mountains. With wildlife viewing and camping, the park is a unique and awe-inspiring natural wonder.

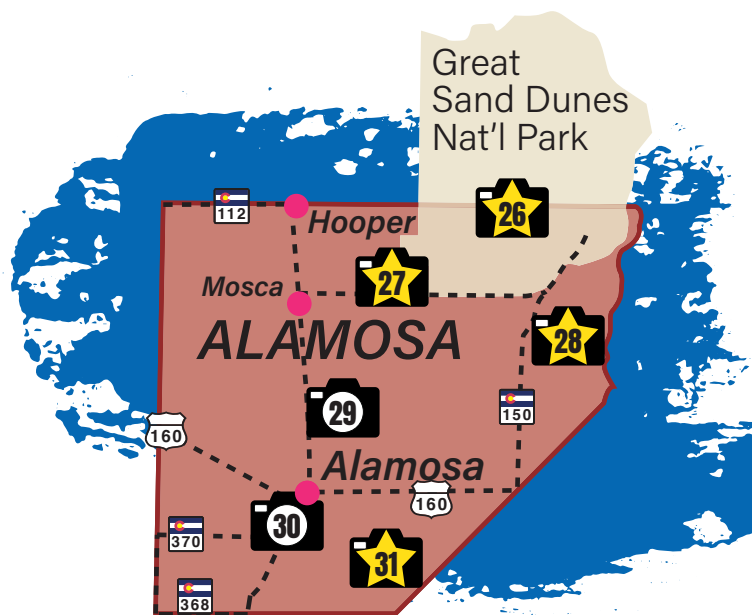
27. San Luis State Wildlife Area. Explore the serene landscapes where tranquil wetlands and diverse habitats provide a haven for birdwatching and outdoor enthusiasts seeking a peaceful escape.

28. Zapata Falls. A hidden gem near the Great Sand Dunes, where a short hike leads you to a stunning waterfall nestled in a picturesque canyon—an unforgettable experience for nature lovers of all ages.



29. Colorado Gators Reptile Park. Interact with an array of exotic and domestic animals, many of them rescued. See reptiles and famous alligators in this fun and educational environment.

A rescued tortoise at Colorado Gators Reptile Park



San Luis State Wildlife Area



Sandboarding at Great Sand Dunes National Park



Wading in Medino Creek at Great Sand Dunes National Park

30. Alamosa Welcome Center & Train Depot. Immerse in Alamosa's charming history and hospitality, offering a warm introduction to the region's rich heritage and scenic wonders.

31. Alamosa Nat'l Wildlife Refuge. Experience natural beauty and diverse ecosystems. Expansive wetlands and pristine habitats invite visitors to discover and connect with nature.

Huerfano COUNTY

(ˈWER•fa•no)

Truly a hidden gem with diverse natural beauty and rich cultural history. From the iconic Spanish Peaks to fertile valleys and rolling hills, this county exudes a timeless frontier appeal. Home to several charming communities, Huerfano County welcomes travelers with open arms, inviting them to explore its historic towns, thriving arts scene, and abundant outdoor recreational opportunities. Whether it's hiking through pristine wilderness, discovering remnants of its mining past, or simply reveling in the serenity of its landscapes, Huerfano County offers a quintessential Colorado experience.

32 La Veta Pass - Uptop Historic District. This area provides a unique and captivating glimpse into the bygone days of the West, making it a must-visit destination for history enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

33. Town of La Veta. Experience the charm of this picturesque mountain town surrounded by the stunning Spanish Peaks. Wander through quaint streets lined with art galleries, boutique shops, and historic architecture, offering a perfect blend of small-town hospitality and scenic beauty.

34. Spanish Peaks State Wildlife Area. Sprawling landscapes and diverse ecosystems provide a haven for wildlife and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Immerse yourself in the beauty of this protected area, surrounded by the iconic Spanish Peaks.

35. Farley Wildflower Overlook Memorial. A serene haven celebrating the vibrant flora of Colorado. This peaceful retreat offers stunning views and a reflective atmosphere, making it a perfect destination for those seeking solace in the midst of nature's colorful tapestry.



36. Cuchara Mountain Park. Nestled in the heart of the Cuchara Valley, you will be welcomed by pristine wilderness and recreational opportunities.

37. Scenic Highway of Legends. Embark on an unforgettable journey, where every twist and turn reveals breathtaking landscapes, historic sites, and the majestic Spanish Peaks, making it a road trip like no other.

Cuchara Mountain Park



Costilla ('kow•STI•luh) COUNTY

A place of rugged beauty, this county boasts breathtaking vistas, high desert plains, and vibrant communities. With a heritage deeply rooted in Native American, Hispanic, and pioneer cultures, Costilla County offers a unique blend of traditions and a welcoming spirit. From the historic town of San Luis, one of Colorado's oldest settlements, to the pristine wilderness areas, this county beckons both adventurers and seekers of serenity to explore its diverse landscapes and vibrant heritage.

38. Fort Garland. Fort Garland is an unincorporated town established in 1858. It is home to the 19th Century Military Fort Garland Museum and Cultural Center, open year-round for tours of the original adobe buildings.

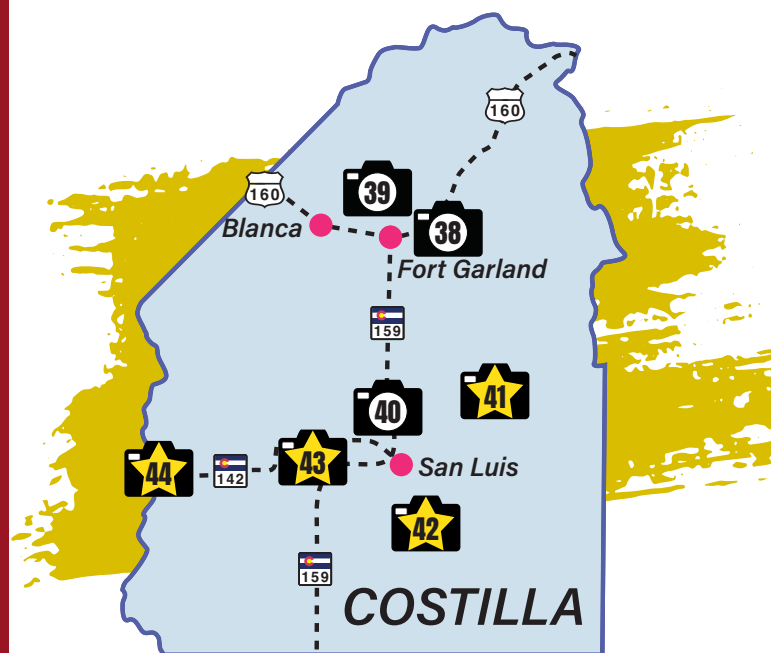
39. Mt. Blanca.

Towering over the San Luis Valley, this mountain is the fourth-highest peak of the Rocky Mountains. It holds great cultural importance for Native American communities in the region and is revered as a sacred site.



Mt. Blanca

40. Stations of the Cross Shrine. An exceptional artistic and spiritual site, near life-size bronze statues mark the 15 stations of the cross in San Luis. A place of prayer and solace open to all, the Shrine reflects the spiritual and cultural traditions of the early settlers that continues today.



41. Rito Seco Park-San Luis. Located in the Culebra Range, there are four new trails that offer hiking and biking opportunities. The area also has camping and fishing options near Culebra Creek.

42. Sanchez Reservoir. Sanchez Dam, built in 1912, is a great spot for fishing and boating. The surrounding 1,462 acres offer camping and hiking opportunities, with stunning views of Culebra Peak. Note that hunting and swimming are not allowed.

43. San Luis Peoples Ditch. This organized gravity-fed irrigation channel was hand dug by original Spanish settlers in 1852 to access water from the Culebra River for livestock and farming. The oldest continually used community irrigation ditch in Colorado.

"Entrada" to the San Luis Valley

44. Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic Byway.

Meaning "the ancient roads" this 129 mile route connects some of the oldest communities in the San Luis Valley. This day trip will inspire visitors with history, culture, and natural beauty.

Conejos (kow•NAY•howz) COUNTY

A land of captivating natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, this picturesque county offers adventure amid the San Juan Mountains, with Conejos Peak at 13,179'. With 67% public lands, it provides vast expanses for hiking, fishing, mountain biking, snowmobiling, and wildlife watching. Discover an authentic frontier, steeped in Native American, Hispano, and pioneer traditions. From the historic town of Conejos to the San Juan Wilderness Area, explore dynamic landscapes and immerse yourself in a vibrant cultural tapestry. Truly a testament to Colorado's resilient and diverse past.



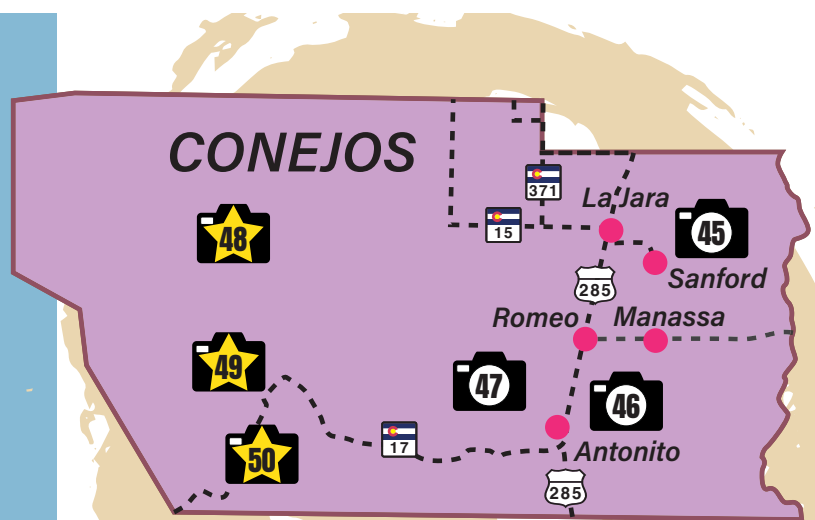
Mural on silos



Platoro Reservoir

45. Pikes Stockade Nat'l Historic Landmark. Immerse yourself in the frontier history of Colorado, where the reconstructed stockade preserves the legacy of Zebulon Pike's expedition and the early days of the American West.

46. Murals of Conejos County Driving Tour. Embark on a journey through culture and art, where each mural tells a unique story of the rich tapestry of the community's history and creativity. A self-driving tour through the towns of Antonito, Manassa, Romeo, and La Jara.



47. Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Embark on a nostalgic journey through the rugged landscapes of Colorado and New Mexico aboard a historic steam-powered train that offers a captivating glimpse into the bygone era of narrow-gauge railroading.

48. Platoro Reservoir. Visit this tranquil alpine waterway, surrounded by the majestic San Juan mountains and enjoy fishing, hiking, camping, and adventures.

49. Conejos River/Canyon. A pristine river with hundreds of miles of streams and creeks, offering Gold Medal waters, hiking, camping, leaf peeping, wildlife and bird watching.

50. Cumbres Pass. A scenic mountain pass on the Continental Divide that offers a spectacular view of the surrounding San Juan Mountains, with many accessible biking and hiking trails.



Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

Thank You!

*From the Seven Counties of
The San Luis Valley*



ALAMOSA COUNTY
alamosa.org



CONEJOS COUNTY
conejosvacation.com



COSTILLA COUNTY
costillacounty.colorado.gov



MINERAL COUNTY
mineralcounty.colorado.gov



HUERFANO COUNTY
spanishpeakscountry.com



SAGUACHE COUNTY
mystic-colorado.com



RIO GRANDE COUNTY
visitriograndecounty.com

Information

Emergencies: **911**

Nat'l Weather Service: **www.weather.gov**

Road Conditions: **cotrip.org**

CO State Patrol: **719-589-2503**

CO Division of Wildlife: **719-587-6900**

Rio Grande National Forest:
719-852-5941

CO Snowmobile Hotline: **800-235-4480**

CO Welcome Center at Alamosa

601 State Ave, Alamosa (Train Depot)
www.alamosa.org | 800-BLU-SKYS

Entrada Visitor Center

319 Miranda Ave., Fort Garland
719-379-3196

Great Sand Dunes Visitor Center

www.nps.gov/grsa | 719-378-6399

San Luis Welcome Center

408 Main St., San Luis
719-672-3002

South Fork Visitor Center

28 Silver Thread Lane, South Fork
719-873-5512 | www.southfork.org

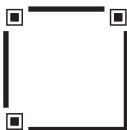
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