

Summer Activities for Families

Box Canyon Falls Park

This is a must see! The Box Canyon Falls is in the southwest corner of Ouray and can be reached by walking or driving.

This is a City Park and there is a \$3.00 entry fee for adults and \$1.50 for children (5-12 years). Enter the falls via the walkway and suspension bridge. Since it is usually cool in the canyon, be sure to take a jacket. You can also hike to the bridge above the falls. This is a short but rocky climb but a good one for children.

There are several gazebos in the Box Canyon Falls Park that are great picnic spots. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. starting Memorial Day weekend. Check for hours during the earlier and later part of the season.

Cascade Falls Park

Located at the east end of Eighth Avenue, you can drive or walk the two-block steep hill from 8th Ave and Main to the start of the trail. From the interpretive sign about the falls, it's a ¼-mile (45-minute round trip)-uphill hike to the base of the falls. Sturdy walking shoes are recommended. Children will enjoy Cascade Creek or perhaps a picnic on the way to this spectacular, natural waterfall.

Ouray Hot Springs Pool & Park

The Ouray Parks Department offers a variety of parks around town and a number of activities at the largest of these parks, the Hot Springs Pool & Park. Following is a list of the family activities available.

Ouray boasts of a 250 by 150 foot public pool containing about a million gallons of sulphur-free natural hot springs water. In addition to several soaking sections at a variety of temperatures, the pool has a lap swimming section and a diving area. The bathhouse has a full range of conveniences including showers, hair dryers and changing table for infants. Daily rates for pool use are: Adults (13-61) \$10; Students (7-12) and Seniors (62+) \$8; Children (3-6) \$5; 2 and under-free. Towel, swimsuit, and locker rentals are available. Admission includes use of the water slide. Float rentals are available at the Pool Swim Shop. Swim punch pass options may be more economical for you and your family. Immediately following Memorial Day weekend, pool hours are 10 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Check for hours during the balance of the year by calling 970-3225-7073.

- A playground, popular with children of all ages, is located immediately in front of the Pool Bathhouse. Watch your children from our covered seating area.
- There is a horseshoe pit on the west side of the Park by the gazebo.
- Ouray has two tennis courts at the southwest corner of the Hot Springs Park.
- Immediately next to the tennis courts is a half court basketball area.
- Try a family softball/baseball game at the ball diamond area of the Hot Springs Park.
- Ouray has volleyball nets set up both outside in the park and in the pool for water volleyball.
- Bring your skateboard and enjoy Ouray's small skateboarding ramp.
- The Pool Park grounds are the perfect place for a family Frisbee "tournament". Purchase a Frisbee at a local shop or bring your own.
- The natural pond at the Hot Springs Park is home to a variety of

fish and turtles. A number of brightly colored foot-long Japanese koi and the black Pacu (a vegetarian cousin of the piranha fish) swim freely throughout the year in this large hot springs fed pond. Turtles sun themselves on the large rocks around the pond. Please watch that your children do not handle or disturb the turtles or wade into the pond.

- On the far west side of the Pool Park is a picnic area with tables and barbecue grills.

Mine Tour/Gold Panning

There are two mine tours in the Ouray area: one in Ouray and one in Silverton. They are both excellent and very informative. Be sure to take jackets since you will be underground and it can be very cool, even during the summer months. Check with the Ouray Visitor Center for more information on this interesting and educational activity.

Hot Air Ballooning

Seeing the southern Rockies by hot air balloon is truly spectacular. Ascending from Ridgway, with San Juan Balloon Adventures, will be an experience you won't forget. Call 970-626-5495

River Rafting

Whitewater rafting opportunities are available along several southwest Colorado Rivers, including our Uncompahgre River out of Ridgway. Springtime trips offer the best rafting experiences with snowmelts swelling the rivers to whitewater levels. Ask at the Ouray Visitor Center for more information.

Hiking

There are a number of easier child-friendly hikes that you can enjoy with younger children. Try these:

- Box Canyon Falls (mentioned above)
- Cascade Falls (mentioned above)
- Portland Trail in the Ouray Amphitheater
- Baby Bathtubs in the Ouray Amphitheater
- Hike or bike around Ouray's North River Corridor
- Blaine Basin (Slightly more difficult and longer.)
- Lower Blue Lakes Trail (Slightly more difficult and longer. Go only as far as you want on this hike.)

Jeep Rentals & Tours

Unless they are afraid of heights, most children enjoy the 4-wheel drive trips into our beautiful mountains. If you are adventurous and want to try them on your own, there are a number of Jeep rental companies. If you prefer to leave the driving to someone experienced, the Jeep tours are highly recommended. There are both half-day and full-day tours. Stop in and talk to any of the tour companies or pick up brochures at the Visitor's Center or at many of the motels.

Horseback Riding

You can choose from a short one-hour ride up to an all-day excursion at one of the three sources in the Ouray area. Brochures for each of the possibilities are available at the Ouray Visitor Center.

Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad

If you want to try the Durango-Silverton Train with children, we recommend the bus/train options offered from early May to mid-October. This shortens what would be an all-day trip by about two hours, but also costs slightly more to offset transportation expenses. As of 2008, trip prices have increased for most ride choices. You'll need to call Durango at (970) 247-2733 or 1-888-872-4607 for arrival and departure times and to make reservations. Pick up a train information brochure at the Visitor Center and note suggestions for dress and eye protection. Sturdy shoes (not sandals) are strongly recommended.

Railroad Museum

Enjoy learning the history of Ridgway at the outstanding Railroad Museum at the Ridgway Visitor Center.

Ouray County Museum

Be sure to save time for a visit to this outstanding historical museum with its variety of exhibits that appeal to children. If a rainy spell interferes with outdoor plans, visit the museum at 420 Sixth Avenue or call 325-4576. If possible, allow at least an hour to fully appreciate all the exhibits.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison & Morrow Point Lake Boat Tour

It's an easy 1-1/2 -hour drive to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, one of our newest National Parks just 11 miles east of Montrose. You should stop at the outstanding park visitor center and its overlook into the canyon. From there you can visit any number of the many overlooks which vary in walking distances or drive the rim and see the entire canyon.

The U.S. Department of the Interior offers an exciting boat tour of the Black Canyon. These tours are scheduled six days a week (closed on Tuesday) from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The two daily tours at 10:00 am and 12:30 pm are by reservation only. No walk-ons allowed. To enjoy the boat trip, drive east of Montrose approximately one hour to the dam (watch for the Pine Creek Trail entrance). Once you have parked your car, you have a one-hour walk down 232 stairs to get to the boat dock. It is important that you are prepared for this kind of hike and allow for extra time to get to the bottom of the walking path. The 2008 cost is \$15 (adults), \$7.50 (Seniors with Golden Age/Access cards), and \$7.50 (children under 13) and children under 2 years are free. We recommend the 11:30 a.m. tour that lasts 1-1/2 hours. You must call 970.641.2337, ext. 205 ahead of time to make reservations. They are required for the tour.

Gondola Ride

If you drive to Telluride, be sure to take the free gondola ride. The enclosed gondola traverses the mountains between the Town of Telluride and the Telluride Mountain Village. In addition to being fun, you have a spectacular eagles-eye view of the mountains of southwestern Colorado. Just before and after the ski season, the gondola is down for maintenance.

Ridgway State Park/Reservoir

The Ridgway State Park/Reservoir is one of Colorado's newest parks located only a short 30-minute drive north of Ouray. The park offers camping, hiking, biking, boating, picnicking, water-skiing, many nature programs and a sandy beach. There is a small park admission fee.

Shopping

There are several Ouray shops that appeal to children. Be sure to visit these shops and also watch some of the local artists in action.

- Columbine Mineral Shop
- Gator Emporium
- Ouray Toys
- Buckskin Booksellers
- Ouray Glassworks & Pottery
- Mouse's Handmade Chocolates

Weehawken Creative Arts

Weehawken Creative Arts will be offering drop-in and ongoing workshops in visual and cultural arts at all levels for ages 7 and over. This can be a one-time visit or for multiple days. Call 970.325.4005 for information on times and location of workshops oriented specifically toward children.

EVENING ACTIVITIES

Outlaw Cookout

You will be transported in a four-wheel drive vehicle to a beautiful location along a canyon where you'll enjoy rib-eye steaks cooked on an open grill and served with several side dishes. Fish or chicken can be requested ahead of time. Before and after dinner, guests enjoy roasting marshmallows over an open campfire. Call 970-325-4014 for price information, availability, and to make the required reservations.

Wright Opera House

The Ouray Entertainment Company is reviving the Wright's Opera House at 472 Main Street to bring a variety of matinee and evening events for Ouray residents and visitors. This historic Opera House is becoming a multi-purpose venue for movies, theater, dance, lectures, a variety of musical performances/artistic activities and even parties. New entertainment possibilities will be explored as they come along. Check their website at www.ourayentertainment.org for event information.

Main Street Tonight

Offers a family variety show with a live band on stage six nights a week (closed Sundays). You can enjoy their dinner and show or watch the show only at 630 Main Street. Check with the Ouray Visitor Center or at any of the local hotels for more information.

Angel Ridge Ranch

This Ridgway ranch offers a variety of western entertainment during the summer months. Call 970-626.4287 for more information.

Ouray Bathrooms Open To The Public

- Goldbelt Restaurant on Main Street
- Colorado West Jeep Rentals & Tours on Main Street
- Ouray City Hall on 6th Avenue
- Ouray Hot Springs Pool Bathhouse
- Ouray Hot Springs Pool Park by the picnic area
- Box Canyon Falls Park

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