



Take the scenic route

Up to four departures daily | Running daily year-round

WELCOME ABOARD AMERICA'S MOST SCENIC MOUNTAIN RAILROAD

In 1999, we embarked on a journey to resurrect Colorado's most storied and historic rail line. What began as just five railcars and a cooler full of soft drinks has become a worldwide destination attraction, welcoming more than 250,000 people to the Royal Gorge each year. Our Santa Express Train has become one of the nation's most popular holiday trains with over 50,000 guests experiencing the magical journey to the North Pole, where Santa awaits.

This isn't just a train ride—it's front-row access to some of the most spectacular scenery in the Rocky Mountain West, a place you can only reach aboard our beautifully restored railcars. While the canyon walls tower above and the Arkansas River rushes below, you'll enjoy freshly prepared entrée for breakfast, lunch, or dinner—all crafted right on board. Pair this with your favorite cocktail, Colorado microbrew, or fine wine, and you'll be reminded why you love to travel.

And now, we've turned up the magic on evening departures with our all-new light shows—colorful lasers dancing across the canyon walls, choreographed to music that will have you dancing in one of our open-air cars. There is no WiFi in this narrow canyon, so you'll have the opportunity to unplug and reconnect with family. You may even make new friends while on your journey, just like passengers did when trains first traveled this spectacular line back in 1879.

On behalf of our entire family, we deeply appreciate your patronage and thank you for riding the Royal Gorge Route Railroad—**Mark & Dawn**



Railcars & Locomotives

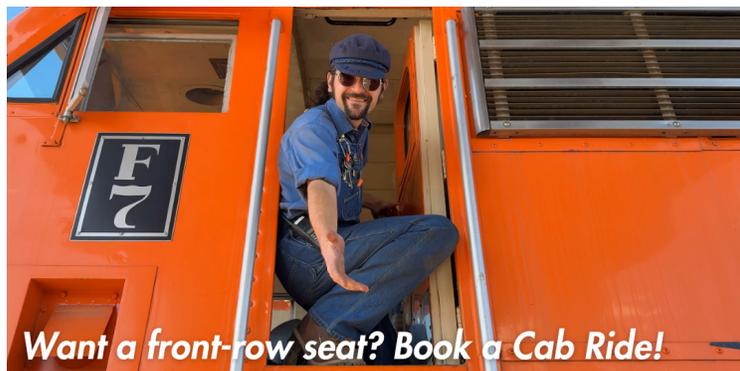
Our railcars and locomotives are unlike anything else in the country—historic, rare, and full of soul. Let's start with our crown jewels: the full-length Vista Domes. These beauties are the rock stars of railroading—only 30 of their kind were ever built, and we proudly own eight. With panoramic, 360-degree views, riding in a Vista Dome is like gliding through the Royal Gorge inside a floating glass cathedral. Look closely, and you might spot traces of their past lives—nostalgic touches etched into vestibule doors, whispering tales of their golden-era journeys.

But it's not just about beauty—it's about muscle too. Our iconic F-7 locomotives, engines 402 and 403, originally thundered across the Midwest for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway, each packing 1,500 horsepower from their V16 engines. Their numbers are a nod to the speed and ambition of a bygone era, "400 miles in 400 minutes" between Chicago and Minneapolis.

Then there are our power players. The SD40-2 once worked the Escalante Western Railway in Grants, New Mexico, and now, they bring their thunder to the Royal Gorge. Another standout is Locomotive 602—hand-painted by our crew for the magical Santa Express Train.

Let's not forget the heart of the train—the coaches and dining cars. Each one, built in the 1950s by the Canadian National Railway, has been lovingly restored to capture the charm and elegance of the glamorous rail-travel era.

Our rolling stock is a powerhouse collection of diesel-electric locomotives, Vista Domes, classic coaches, vintage dining and deluxe cars, open-air cars, kitchen cars, and power cars—each maintained by a crew of passionate professionals who keep the magic alive and the journey safe, smooth, and unforgettable.



First Class Ride & Dine



Step aboard Colorado's most scenic train and let the Royal Gorge captivate you from every angle. As the train winds through 1,000-foot granite cliffs, savor a scratch-made, three-course gourmet lunch or dinner crafted with locally sourced ingredients. Sip a glass of fine wine, a crisp Colorado microbrew, or a handcrafted cocktail from our full bar as you take in the view.

Your First Class journey begins with a sparkling toast and continues with impeccable service in our beautifully restored dining cars and Vista Domes. With every curve of the canyon and every plate served, this experience is more than dinner—it's a memory you'll never forget.

As the sun dips low and canyon light turns golden, there's no place more magical than our First Class Dinner Train. Inspired by the elegance of the Pullman era, it's an evening of fine dining, relaxation, and fun—now featuring our new Laser Light Shows, choreographed to your favorite songs on the open-air car.

Conductor's Reserve Wine List

Your wine experience should be as memorable as the journey. We've partnered with vintners to bring you exceptional wines at prices that feel like a find—often bottles you won't come across at other fine dining destinations. These hand-selected vitnages pair perfectly with our menus. Cheers!



All aboard the
The Santa Express Train

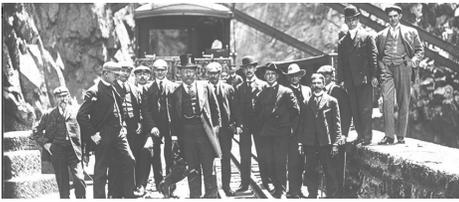


Slip into your coziest pajamas and gather your favorite people—it's time to step into the storybook wonder of Colorado's most beloved holiday tradition—the Santa Express Train! Join us for a dazzling ride to the North Pole in the Royal Gorge.

Decked out in over 50,000 twinkling lights, Santa town shimmers like a Christmas dream. While aboard waiting to meet St. Nick himself, you'll enjoy hot cocoa, delicious scratch-made dining, a fully stocked bar, and a heap full of holiday cheer. The Santa Express Train runs daily and nightly mid-November through early January, and yes— it sells out every single year.

EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC
Book Now at RoyalGorgeRoute.com





1878-'79 - Royal Gorge War: The railroad's initial construction was marred by a two-year struggle between two competing companies, D&RG and Santa Fe, in a race west for silver, igniting a battle true to the old west. The narrow mouth of the canyon created an uncommon strife between rail lines competing for the only route. Eventually, federal courts intervened and D&RG paid \$1.8M to Santa Fe for what they'd built. Tracks from Santa Fe to Pueblo reached Leadville on July 20, 1880. (Photo: President Roosevelt at Hanging Bridge, 1905)

1879 - Royal Gorge Route Opens - Hanging bridge built: The hanging bridge was built



over the river where the gorge narrows to just 30 feet. Construction cost \$11,759 in 1879 — about \$370,000 today. This engineering marvel has served the main rail line for 145 years.

1905 - President Teddy Roosevelt rides the Royal Gorge Route. Roosevelt described his ride as “the trip that bankrupts the English language.” Then, in 1936, while on his campaign trail on the train, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, called it “One of the best loved scenic wonders of America.” We couldn't agree more.



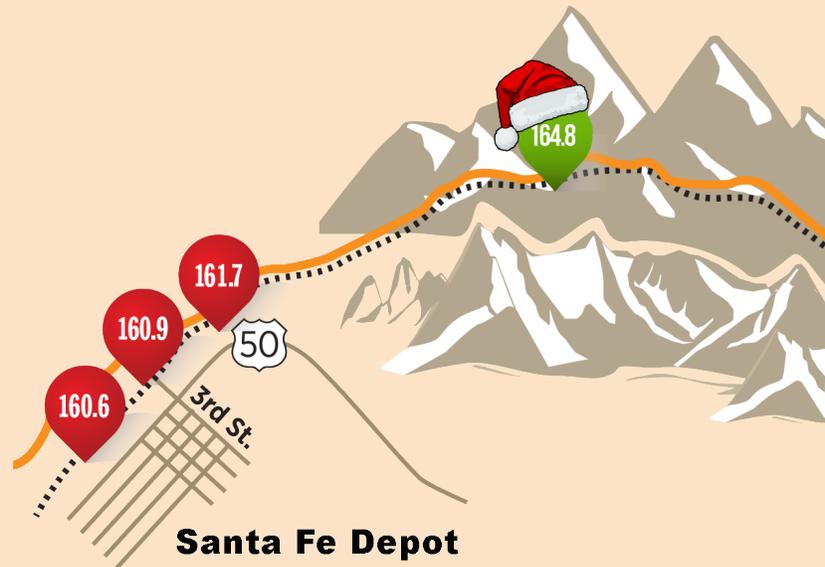
1909 - Water line built: Convicts of the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility built the wooden water line, remnants of which can be seen about halfway along the route guests ride today. At one time there were 12 suspended footbridges for workers to access the line.

1967 - Train Service Ends: Passenger service between Denver and Salida was discontinued in July of 1967 due in part to the U.S. Postal Service canceling its contract with the train. Travel fads also began to favor more modern modes like airline service.

MILEPOST GUIDE

Watch for black on white mileposts along the north side of the tracks. They will be numbered mostly in the 160's on this segment of the route through the Royal Gorge, denoting rail miles from Denver, Colorado.

Use this simple guide to learn some fascinating facts about what you are looking at just outside your personal window into history.



160.6 Royal Gorge Route Railroad Depot

Originally completed in 1914 by the AT&SF. On June 21, 1921, the Pueblo flood destroyed most of the Santa Fe track between Cañon City and Pueblo. Passenger service ended between those towns, and the depot was used for freight service until 1984.

160.9 Territorial Correctional Facility (on the right)

The older buildings were established in 1871, and are referred to as the old max, this is now a medium security prison. Look closely behind the prison you will see the original rock wall of the older buildings. The prison museum is located on First Street and is open year-round.

161.7 – 163.0 Tunnel Drive

Tunnel drive is a three mile hiking and biking trail, and was once the home of Cañon City's first gravity water diversion system, started in 1892 and built with convict labor.

165.45 Wooden Water Line (across the river)

Dilapidated but still hanging precariously across the two tributary gullies is Cañon City's oldest water line that was started in 1908 and finished in 1910. This gravity diversion water line pushed water into Cañon City up until 1972.

166.0 Royal Gorge Bridge

The bridge is 1,053' above the train. It is owned by the City of Canon City and is open year-round. The best views of the bridge are from the train, of course! So step out onto our open-air car for a view that is simply “priceless.”

166.23 Hanging Bridge

This famous bridge is located at the narrowest and deepest point in the gorge. Between 30 and 40 feet separate the walls of the canyon. The bridge developer, C. Shaler Smith, was able to conquer the challenge of building in this narrow chasm by



1999 - Resurrection of the train line: The former owners of the Georgetown Loop Railroad resurrected the line, and the train first ran with five passenger cars and a cooler with drinks for guests. From humble beginnings, the operation quickly grew with new railcars, offering extraordinary service and dining experiences that the Royal Gorge Route shares with guests today.

2003 - Santa Express Train Launched: The Santa Express Train draws more than 50,000 guests each year on a magical journey to the North Pole in the Royal Gorge. Featuring over 50,000 lights, Santa's workshop, and village,

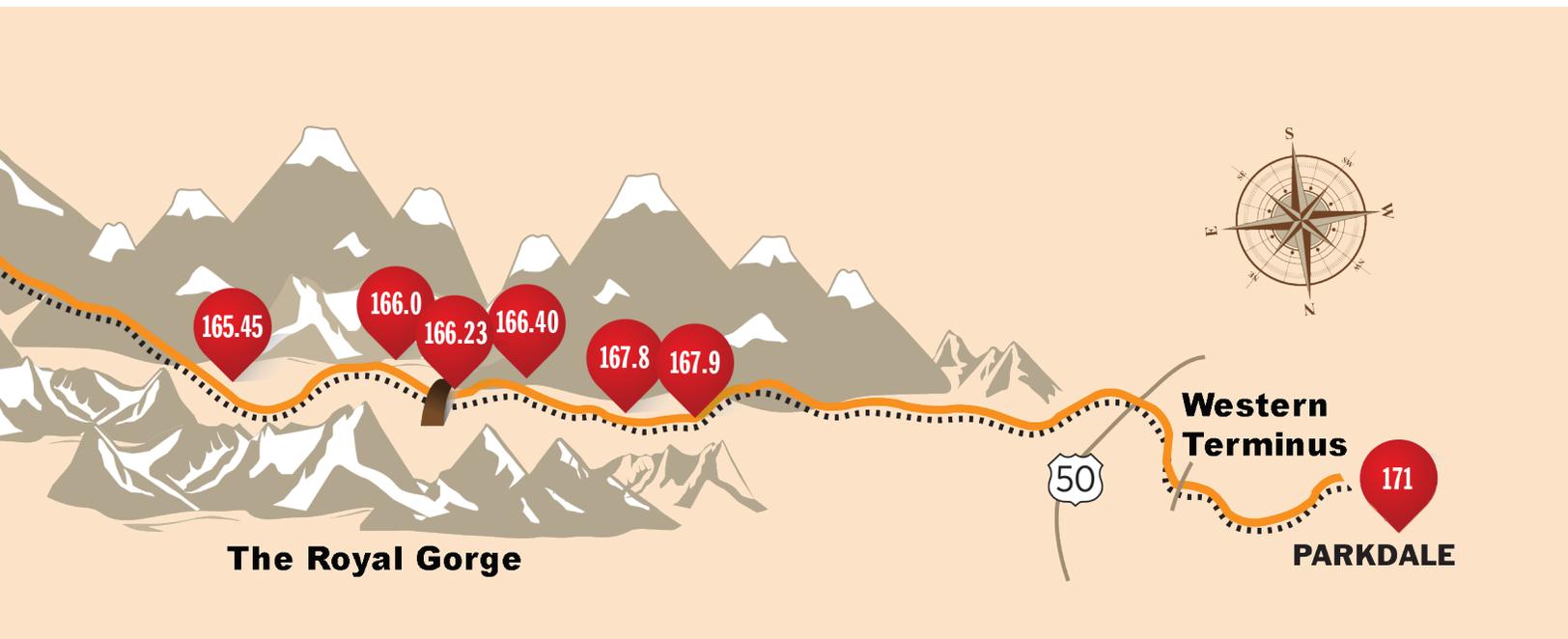
Santa boards the train here with gifts for each child. Enjoy our special holiday menu for lunch and dinner, with drinks and holiday cheer on board the Santa Express Train.

2004 - First Class dining introduced: Growing quickly beyond Coach Class, we added Vista Dome and First Class dining options for lunch and dinner. Four custom-built kitchens and full-service bars allowed us to expand, including our new breakfast offering on morning departures. Murder Mystery rides and five-course Wine Dinner Trains were also successfully introduced (both retired in 2022).

Did you know we have more dome cars than any other scenic train in the U.S.?

2014 - Deluxe class introduced, fresh menus available throughout the train: Kitchens were remodeled, and the Royal Gorge Route Railroad dining experience evolved again - offering organic and locally sourced ingredients. Our extraordinary scenery, service and dining began drawing international acclaim.

2025 - Laser Light Show Dinner Train introduced. In early 2026, we will launch our new restaurant and events venue: Antithesis at the Royal Gorge Mansion.



constructing a 175-foot (53 m) plate girder suspended on one side under A-frame girders that span the river and are anchored to the rock walls. The Arkansas River is rated Class III-V in this area, and extremely challenging for white-water rafters and kayakers.

166.4 Warming Shack

One of several remaining shacks that were strung along the water line for workers to get out of the cold during frigid winter months.

167 Wings Monument

During World War II, the military used the railroad to haul three dismantled airplanes through the gorge. One plane's wing struck the canyon wall, tearing free and pulling two others into the Arkansas River below. Ever since, locals have called this spot the Wings Monument—it also marks where the Royal Gorge's dramatic formation comes to an end.

167.8 Water Line Junction (across the river)

A portion of the old water line makes an inverted u-shaped bend above the ground. During the winter, sawdust was poured into the water line to help seal leaks between the redwood staves.

167.9 Caretakers' Homes (on the left, across the river)

Caretakers were responsible for the upkeep of the water line, dam and head gate. This home was accessed only by the hanging footbridge.

171 Parkdale.

Parkdale was once the home of a small community for AT&SF workers who called it Webster. Later, when the D&RG took over in 1880, it was renamed Park Dale, later changed to (one word) Parkdale.

Shopping at the Trackside Mercantile



We can shop anywhere, any time on a tiny screen in the palm of our hands. Sometimes that comes in handy. If I'm honest, though, I miss real-life shopping. Do not tell my wife, who by the way has entirely taken over the task of choosing my wardrobe. When we're out enjoying everything Colorado, we seek out locally owned stores and restaurants, all with goods and goodies we can hold in our human hands.

I might, for example, imagine my morning cup of coffee with cream (hold the sugar) in that hand-made vessel on the shelf. Or pick up a really cool gift that my friends will love and won't find anywhere else. Just as satisfying as the act of shopping is the knowledge that I'm supporting the local economy while meeting some cool people.

Enjoy the ride. Enjoy the shopping. Most of all, enjoy your time!

Luxury Lodging at the Royal Gorge Route Inns



Finding that tucked away place to stay where you know you'll be comfortable is an absolute treat. That's exactly what we had in mind when we designed the Royal Gorge Route Inns. Both located in the center of the Royal Gorge Region, with easy access to outdoor adventure, train rides, restaurants and more - these are destination lodging experiences you'll come back to year after year.

Lodging you'll look forward to as much as the journey.

Cozy and beautifully appointed inside and out, everything you need to feel right at home is at your fingertips. Here, you're destined for a good night, and a good night's rest. We invite you to stay with us any time you're in the region.

Comfort Awaits
Book Your Escape Instantly
Scan Here.



First Class Laser Light Dinner | Evening Departures



LASER LIGHT DINNER TRAIN An Experience You'll Never Forget.

Get ready for a one-of-a-kind high-voltage adventure through the Royal Gorge. Unlike anything you've experienced before, this train is taking you for a dinner, dance, laser light show under the stars. Climb aboard for a delicious journey through Colorado's grandest canyon. When we reach the perfect spot, alongside the rushing Arkansas tucked within the towering canyon walls, the show begins. Choreographed to your favorite songs, this laser light show unfolds while you lose yourself in the moment on the open-air car and take in beauty of the night.

Departures All Year
Get Your Tickets Today
Scan Here.



Happy Endings Caboose Cafe | Open Daily



Espresso, Ice Cream, All-Day Breakfast, Burgers, Crepes and More!

Located just west of the train depot, Happy Endings Caboose Cafe offers delicious Italian style espresso coffees, beer, wine, specialty drinks, ice cream, burgers, crepes, and more. Stop in to browse our logo wear, sure to put a smile on your face. This historic Great Western caboose includes a scratch kitchen, espresso bar, shopping, and comfy indoor seating. Check out our new air-conditioned caboose, shaded patio, deck and daily specials.

Stop by 403 Water St. or order to go 719.276.4023



ANTITHESIS

AT THE ROYAL GORGE MANSION



There are places that feed you, and then there are places that make you feel at home in ways you never expected. Antithesis, nestled within the historic Royal Gorge Mansion, is that rare discovery where elegant simplicity meets genuine warmth, and every visit feels like being let in on the Royal Gorge region's most beautiful secret.

The unexpected, yet familiar.

This bistro brings together the majesty of a historic mansion and the creativity of contemporary farm-to-table cuisine, blending tradition with the finesse of an unforgettable, delicious dining experience.

At the heart of Antithesis is a commitment to ingredients that speak for themselves. The kitchen partners with local farmers and regional producers, bringing the best of Colorado's bounty to each plate. Contemporary techniques combined with timeless bistro influences produce dishes that feel both familiar and unexpectedly fresh.

Step outside to discover the mansion's historic fountain, the centerpiece of our serene outdoor dining area, where natural beauty and architectural grandeur converge. Cozy fire pits glow throughout the outdoor space, offering warmth and comfort on Colorado evenings. Pair your experience with our international wines, handmade craft cocktails, or Colorado microbrews that celebrate the state's vibrant brewing culture.

The mansion and its surrounding grounds serve as a memorable setting for life's most exceptional moments, where century-old architecture creates a backdrop for a celebration you will never forget. Intimate gatherings, weddings, and business celebrations take on new meaning within these storied walls. Holiday festivities, Christmas parties, and seasonal corporate events feel especially magical in this setting. It is also the perfect venue for anniversaries, birthdays, and meaningful family occasions. The versatility of the estate allows every event to feel personal, whether you are hosting a cozy gathering for ten or a grand affair that fills the mansion and its stunningly manicured four-acre-grounds.

Learn more and reserve your event date now

DanaR@royalgorgeroute.com