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ENJOY THE RIDE

HERE'S YOUR GUIDE TO WINTER ADVENTURE IN TELLURIDE IN THOSE MELLOW EARLY SEASON WEEKS BEFORE THE CROWDS ARRIVE (OR ANY TIME OF YEAR).

BY CHRIS KASSAR

Seeking a way to mix it up this Thanksgiving? Or planning a winter escape for later this year? Head to the San Juans. Telluride makes the perfect basecamp for adventure any time of year—however, there's a certain magic to getting here before things really open. There might not be as much snow, but there are far fewer people. Make the most of your visit to this magical spot with our insider's guide.

RIDE

Thanks to the fat-bike revolution, cycling isn't just for summer anymore. For a lung-busting adventure, climb **Boomerang** or **Bear Creek**. If you want a high-speed adventure, take the Gondola to the top of Mountain Village and float down the **Jurassic Trail**, a flowy route down through the forest. Follow the ridgeline west to combine this with the **Meadows Trail** and then ride the valley floor out to the **Telluride Brewery** (telluridebrewing.co) for a frosty beverage. Hit up the pros at **Boot Doctors** (bootdoctors.com) for info, bike rentals or a guided excursion.

CLIMB

From mid-November through early May, the countless waterfalls here freeze up to create some of the best ice climbs in the West. If you're an intermediate and want an easy walk from town, head to **Bear Creek** where there are many short lines ranging from WI 3-5. If you're an expert, hit **Ames Ice Hose** (WI 5/5+, occasionally 6) or **Bridal Veil Falls** (5/5+, occasionally 6-). Never put on crampons or used an ice axe? No problem. Try an easier pitch like **Lower Ames**. No matter your skill level, the renowned climbers and leaders at **Telluride Mountain Guides** (telluridemountainguiding.com) will gear you up and take you out on an adventure.

EXPLORE

With more than 70 kilometers of maintained Nordic trails, Telluride is a paradise for cross-country skiers. At the **Telluride Nordic Center**, located between the Town Park offices and the new Ice Pavilion, you'll find 3K of immaculately groomed trails which are perfect for a quick workout or for those new to Nordic skiing. For a longer excursion head to the top of Lizard Head Pass and hit the **Trout Lake Railroad Grade**, a 4.9K route (one-way) that tops out at 10,267 feet. This area is known for receiving more snow than other Nordic trails in the region, so it's your best bet early or late in the

photos courtesy TELLURIDE TOURISM BOARD



NORDIC STROKE: TELLURIDE IS FAMED FOR ITS LIFT-SERVED SKIING, BUT YOU CAN UP YOUR HEART RATE AND ENJOY THE VIEW AT SPOTS LIKE THE TELLURIDE NORDIC CENTER AND PRIEST LAKE.

season. Or, try the series of interconnected loops 12.5 miles south of town at **Priest Lake**. These trails cruise nearly 8K over rolling terrain through peaceful and breathtaking scenery.

SHRED

Telluride Ski Resort (tellurideskiresort.com) claims a variety of terrain that will appeal to everyone. Experts will love the moguls, cliffs, and chutes, while beginners will praise the fact that they aren't banished to a mere three runs on the bottom of the hill. Telluride offers up a ton of runs that are ideal for newbies and intermediates, including some sweet glades, many of which are accessed from high up on the mountain. Those who like to earn turns need to hit up **Palmyra Peak**, arguably the best in-area hike-to terrain in North America. And, with 120 trails, 4,425 feet of vertical drop and 18 lifts, there are rarely lines so you can maximize your time on the slopes.

FEAST

Hit the **Cosmopolitan** (cosmotelluride.com), a chic restaurant in the Columbia Hotel serving up signature cocktails including Pisco Punch and a variety of cosmos, for a delectable, fine-dining experience. With an eye to minimizing impact, the restaurant sources many ingredients locally.

Delicious don't-miss delicacies include the warm beet salad, Chilean sashimi, lamb two ways and the blueberry pie. If you're looking for a uniquely Telluride dining experience, visit **Alpino Vino** (tellurideskiresort.com/events-activities/dining/alpino-vino), a European chalet located at 11,996 feet, making it the highest elevation fine-dining restaurant in North America. After the snow-coach ride up from the base area, you'll enjoy unmatched views of the Wilson Range while savoring a five-course Italian meal paired with the perfect wines. For affordable, yummy eats right downtown, visit two of our favorites: **Brown Dog Pizza** (browndogpizza.com), which serves up Detroit-style pies, or **Siam Telluride** (siamtelluride.com), which offers authentic Thai dishes.

STAY

After pushing your limits all day out in the cold, it's important to come home to a place you can relax. **The Hotel Telluride** (thehoteltelluride.com)—a quaint boutique hotel right downtown—tops our list. Expect exceptional service. The staff are friendly, detail-oriented and they will shuttle you anywhere in town. Visit the hotel spa for a massage or facial. Pamper yourself with a soak in the outdoor hot tubs. The biggest bonus? For a small fee you can bring your pup! 🐾