



24 *Hours*

IN
MONTROSE

Perfectly located between Durango and Grand Junction and close to Ouray, Ridgway, and Telluride, Montrose has much more to offer than you can experience in 24 hours, but if that's all you have, these are the top things to do.

SUMMER EDITION

Montrose isn't necessarily the first name that springs to mind when you think of Colorado, but the town of just under 20,000 is both a year-round destination and an increasingly popular place for people to relocate and retire to.

The regional airport brings in excess of 100,000 people and is the entry port of choice for the vast majority of those who fly in to ski at nearby Telluride. In fact, ski season is the busiest time for the airport, bringing in people from across the US - from Big Sur to the Big Apple. Montrose is also the gateway to the San Juan Mountains and as such attracts lovers of the great outdoors year round, many of whom come to see the amazing Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park.

7 am

With just 24 hours, an early start is critical if you are going to scratch the surface of this genuine western Colorado town, so that means starting off with a jolt of caffeine. Locally owned and recently expanded to a third location, Coffee Trader on Main Street has a wonderful canopy-covered garden and is the perfect spot for a cup of hot coffee on a cool Colorado summer morning. If you come later in the day when the temperature has risen, an iced coffee, ice tea or, if you're feeling a little more cosmopolitan, an Italian soda, is a better bet. Elsewhere, you can find coffee at Cimarron Roasters in Sampler Square. Located west of downtown, Cimarron is a slightly different experience thanks to its more artisanal approach to coffee - think beans from Rwanda. Cimarron's two house blends are Courthouse and Chimney Rock, named after peaks in the Cimarron range. For a quick breakfast on the go try Backstreet Bagels, Montrose Donut & Deli, or the Daily Bread.



Rachel Oftedal, Cimarron Coffee Roasters

8 am

People come from all over to check the impressive Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park off their list. During the warmer months, it's a good idea to head up early to take in the splendor of the deepest, steepest and narrowest canyon in the world before the sun really heats things up. There are dozens of hiking trails and plenty of other activities to keep outdoor enthusiasts of all ages and fitness levels occupied. The park rangers at the South Rim Visitor Center have all the information you will ever need. If time is an issue, be sure to at least drive the 13 miles from Highway 50 to Warner Point inside the park, stopping along the way to see the canyon from different vantage points. At the visitor center, there is a short walk to an overlook that offers spectacular views into the canyon.



Montrose Farmers' Market

11 am

There is something particularly nice about Saturdays during the summer in Montrose. There is a buzz in the air around downtown, particularly around Centennial Plaza where the farmers' market brings together lovers of fresh, local produce and the smallholders (butchers, bakers, and even candle makers [no actual candlestick makers as of yet]) who provide it. Coming from around the region to sell their wares, you will usually find local meats, all kinds of beautiful fruits and vegetables (Palisade peaches and Olathe sweet corn are said to have no equal anywhere in the country), as well as handmade cosmetics and even plants.

With some Colorado cherries or perhaps a Palisade peach in-hand, stroll down the town's historic Main Street. Browse the collection of little boutiques along the town's most aesthetically pleasing two blocks or stop in and peruse with purpose. The Green Cupboard, a jewelry and accessories store that benefits Sharing Ministries Food Bank; and Heirlooms for Hospice, which sells all kinds of wares including furniture, home décor, and gently used clothing and antiques to support local non-profit HopeWest, are first. On the next block is SheShe Boutique, Country Flair, Fabula, and Ouray Silversmiths. Be sure not to miss Straw Hat Farm Market & Kitchen Store. Located a block south at 514 South First St, the quaint shop offers some of the the best baked goods in town.



Straw Hat Farm Market & Kitchen Store

1 pm

Having built up an appetite, it's time for a spot of lunch. The Vine Market and Bistro, on the corner of Main Street and Cascade Avenue, is a great example of how Montrose is changing for the better. Opened in 2016, the menu utilizes a lot of local produce and changes often thanks to the seemingly free reign the chefs are given to be as creative as they can. Pretty much an instant hit, it is the best place in town for an upscale lunch.

Adjoining the Vine Market and Bistro is Maggie's Books, a very welcome and very recent addition to downtown. The selection of books on local history, culture, and nature will likely be of interest to those from out of town, state, and country. Give yourself at least 15 minutes of post-lunch browsing time.



Maggie's Books



VisitMontrose.com, Montrose Water Sports Park

2:30 pm

Suitably fueled, head towards the Montrose Visitors Center around the corner and pick up a few brochures, chat to the knowledgeable staff, and borrow a bike for an afternoon jaunt around town.

An easy ride from downtown is Riverbottom Park. Home to the Montrose Water Sports Park (click here to read more about the park in "Heavenly Bodies: 10 Places to Get Wet West of 105"), Riverbottom is far enough away (if you include the return journey) to make you feel as if you deserve the afternoon drinks you probably should indulge in. Cruise around the park, cross the Uncompahgre River and head back towards town on the Uncompahgre Riverway Trail. If you're looking for a slightly more strenuous ride, the same trail extends south towards Ridgway for another six or so miles.

Papa Wheelie's and Bicycle Outfitters both offer mountain bike rentals if you want to get out of town and on a slightly more taxing trail. There are plenty of options just outside Montrose; the good people at the bike shops will be able to point you in the right direction based on your skill level. You can also visit the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association's website at copmoba.org.

Whatever you decide, you will eventually need somewhere to cool off, and if anyone knows how to cool off, it's those from the southern states.

A Taste of New Orleans Sno-Balls has been a summer mainstay in the tiny Demoret Park on the corner of Main Street and Townsend Avenue for more than two decades. The authentic shaved ice sno-balls really are a treat in the sometimes sweltering heat of a Montrose afternoon.

4:30 pm

Opened by local beer guru Tom Hennessy in 2013, Colorado Boy is actually more of a pizzeria with beer as opposed to a bar, but in terms of what keeps people coming back, the beer and pizza share equal billing. In fact, their IPA is quite possibly the best we've ever had. The modest food menu contains Neapolitan-style pizzas and a small selection of salads. As serious about his pizza as he is about his beer, Hennessy filters the water for the dough, uses Italian flour (although he assures us that as soon as something more local and good enough is available he will switch without hesitation), and the mozzarella is made in house. Oh, and the happy hour is among the best in the state.



Colorado Boy Pizzeria

6 pm

After a few pints (regular or English), it will be just about time for dinner. Trattoria di Sofia is a few blocks away and is a popular spot. The humble-looking restaurant contains an equally humble-looking menu, however, the dishes are much more than the sum of their parts.



Storm King Distillery Co

8 pm

Evenings at elevation, even on hot summer days, cool off significantly thanks to the lack of humidity, but it will likely still be warm enough and early enough to sample Montrose's most recently-opened watering hole.

Less than a 10-minute walk from Trattoria di Sofia is Storm King Distilling Co. The locally-owned business opened its doors in May, 2018 and produces vodka, gin and agave blanco. The bar then turns them into great cocktails. And parked right in the Storm King parking lot is Dlicious Food Co. The food truck has been churning out an ever-changing menu of creative and popular dishes since it opened in June of this year - think chicken tacos made with Peruvian beans and pickled habanero; and adobo-braised pork tostadas.

There are two more breweries in town if you want another drink. 2 Rascals and Horsefly both have their own beery concoctions and bar food, and the latter has regular live music. For music that is less local, Intrinzik on Main Street brings all kinds of bands and singers from across the state and beyond to Montrose. Check their schedule online.

Need a nightcap? Phelanies is another recent addition to Montrose and it is a big hit with the locals. The prohibition speakeasy offers a range of cocktails made from top-quality ingredients, but don't forget to check their Facebook page for the password - it is a speakeasy after all.

Beyond 24

For those with a little more time or who want to forgo some of the above and engage in more active pursuits, there are three golf courses (The Bridges features a 7,100-yard, par-71 Nicklaus Design championship golf course), Gold Medal fishing at Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area about 20 miles north of town, and the aforementioned Montrose Water Sports Park. Rent a kayak or a SUP board and take on the mini rapids.

With so much history in the region, it's no surprise there are a few museums in and around town. The Montrose County History Museum, located in the old rail depot right downtown, offers an interesting array of artifacts from the past. A few miles East of town is the Museum of the Mountain West. An homage to the region's pioneers, there are hundreds of items that chart the town's history as a bona fide western town including a reproduction of an old west town with a saloon, a general store, and an apothecary. They offer guided tours, too. The newly renovated Ute Indian Museum south of town is another great attraction that chronicles the region's native inhabitants. Offering insight into the Native American tribes who lived in the area, the museum is great for families and anyone interested in the heritage of the Colorado Ute Indians.



Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area



VisitMontrose.com, The Bridges

Lodging

As for where to rest what is sure to be a weary head after a busy day, Montrose has plenty of accommodation options, but perhaps the best located is Canyon Creek B&B. Right on Main Street (a few doors down from Horsefly), there are two properties side by side. There are also seven unserviced suites available at The Bridges golf course (the views of the San Juan mountain range cannot be beaten). Hardier souls may want to sleep under the stars at the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park where early risers will witness what is sure to be another glorious sunrise in the Centennial State.

HISTORICAL DOWNTOWN MONTROSE

History buffs will want to be sure to take the self-guided walking tour of downtown Montrose. Consisting of 12 interpretive signs within a five-block area of Downtown Montrose, the tour brings visitors along the well-preserved blocks of Main



Denver Rio Grande Depot;

Street where four signs depict the early history of Montrose and the Uncompahgre Valley and eight additional signs highlight downtown buildings and the people associated with them who played a part in creating Montrose's history.



Masonic Building

A map of the Historic Montrose Downtown Walking tour can be picked up at the Visitor Center. The folks over at the Montrose County Historical Museum also offer guided historical walks until October. Visit their website for more information.

COFFEE & BOOKS

The Coffee Trader
845 East Main St & 211 South 5th St
6 AM - 7 PM Mon - Fri
7 AM - 5 PM Sat - Sun

Cimmaron Coffee
72 South Grand Ave
8 AM - 3 PM Mon - Sat

Maggie's Books
345 East Main St
10 AM - 6 PM Mon - Sat

DINING

The Vine Market & Bistro
347 East Main St.
8 AM - 9 PM Mon - Sat
9 AM - 2 PM Sun

Trattoria di Sofia
110 North Townsend Ave
11 AM - 9 PM Mon - Sat

DliciousFoodCo
41 W Main St
11 AM - 3 PM, 6PM - 9PM
Thurs - Sun

DRINKING

Colorado Boy Pizzeria & Brewery
320 East Main St
11:30 AM - 9 PM Tues - Sun

2 Rascals Brewing Co.
147 North 1st St
4 PM - 9 PM Tues - Thurs
1 PM - 10 PM Fri - Sat
1 PM - 8 PM Sun

Intrinzik
512 East Main St

Horsefly Brewery
846 East Main St

Storm King Distilling Co.
4 PM - 9PM Thurs - Fri
1 PM - 9 PM Sat
10 AM - 4 PM Sun

Phelanies
19 South Junction St
5 PM - 10 PM Tues - Sat

LODGING

Canyon Creek B&B
820 East Main St

The Bridges of Montrose
2500 Bridges Dr

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
Campground

GOLF COURSES

The Bridges of Montrose
2500 Bridges Dr

Black Canyon Golf Course
1350 Birch St

Cobble Creek Golf Course
699 Cobble Dr

MUSEUMS

Museum of the Mountain West
68169 Miami Rd

Montrose County Historical Museum
21 North Rio Grande Ave

Ute Indian Museum
17253 Chipeta Rd

INFORMATION

Montrose Visitor Center
107 South Cascade Ave

South Rim Visitor Center
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

Montrose Public Lands Center
2505 South Townsend Ave