

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club

NextGen San Juans: Durango and Silverton, Colorado, June 2026

- Dates:** Orientation meeting Monday, June 15, 2026. Riding Tuesday, June 16 – Friday, June 19. Following our short ride on June 19th, we take the iconic narrow-gauge train from Silverton to Durango. Lodging the night of June 19th in Durango included in tour price. Depart on June 20th.
- Leaders:** Greg Lestikow and Matt Seiler; **SAGs:** Mayoma Pendergast and Kathleen Schindler
- Miles:** Approximately 160 miles and 12,800 feet of elevation gain
- Rating:** Intermediate-Advanced. The mileage is not big, but some of the grades are steep. Shoulders are narrow in some areas with steep grades and sharp roadside drop-offs; riders need to be experienced enough to manage these conditions.
<https://www.heartcycle.org/tour-ratings>
- Riders:** 30
- Price:** \$2,000 (double occupancy). \$500 at registration. Balance due March 17, 2026. Single supplements are limited; the cost is \$3,000.
- Cancellation:** [Standard cancellation policy](#)

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

OVERVIEW

Arguably the most beautiful part of Colorado, the San Juan Mountains along U.S. Highway 550 (the Million Dollar Highway) offer stunning views in every direction that are best enjoyed by bicycle. Mid to late June is the perfect time of year to ride in southwestern Colorado, with cool weather and less tourist traffic. The days are sunny with average lows in the 50s and average highs in the 70s.



Join us to enjoy spectacular scenery, unforgettable riding, good food, and fun. Our first two days of riding will be in the Durango area with some optional gravel sections. Then we'll head north into the San Juan Mountains, following the iconic Iron Horse race route over Coal Bank and Molas Passes into the quintessential Colorado mining town of Silverton. After an up-and-back ride to Red Mountain Pass, we'll wrap up the tour on the charming and scenic steam-powered train back to Durango.

This tour is Heart Cycle's second installment of the NextGen tour format, which is aimed at attracting a new generation of cyclists to the club. All members are welcome to register for the ride, and priority will be given to (a) pairs or groups with one or more cyclists under 45 and (b) single registrants under 45. So, if you are a current member over 45, think about younger folks in your life who might enjoy doing this tour with you (or on their own, if they can't stand you or vice-versa!): daughters, sons, nephews, nieces, colleagues...

A limited number of bicycles may be transported from Denver and back for a \$150 fee.

ITINERARY

Day 0: Monday, June 15, 2026. Arrival and orientation meeting at 5:00 PM.

Day 1: Tuesday, June 16

Durango to Lemon Reservoir and back

33 miles, 2400 feet of elevation gain; gravel option is 45 miles, 3600 feet.

This ride takes us past Fort Lewis College and over rolling hills on Florida Road to Lemon Reservoir. Gravel riders will follow part of the Iron Horse Gravel Race route through ranch and farmland back to town, while road riders will retrace their steps and enjoy a nice descent before lunch at a park in Durango.



Day 2: Wednesday, June 17

Durango to Mayday and Breen and back

49 miles, 3000 feet of elevation gain

Today we head west through the high Southwest desert to the mouth of the La Plata Canyon. From there, we aim south, past the one-lift local ski area at

Hesperus Hill to the town of Breen before looping back to Durango along the shores of Lake Nighthorse, named in honor of former U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell.



By Jeffrey Beall, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=81402953>

Day 3: Thursday, June 18

Durango to Silverton: “The Iron Horse”

52 miles, 5550 feet of elevation gain; riders may take a SAG bump to Purgatory Ski Resort, making for a 28-mile ride with 3300 feet of gain

The queen stage of this tour. Heading north, we take Florida Road and County Road 250 for ~18 miles before we join U.S. Highway 550, up past the local ski area (Purgatory), over Coal Bank Pass (10,640 ft), down about 1000 feet, then climb up to Molas Pass (10,910 ft), where the views are spectacular. A quick 7-mile descent takes us to our hotel in historic Silverton (9318 ft). We’ll have our group dinner at the Grand Imperial Hotel this evening.



Day 4: Friday, June 19**Red Mountain Pass and the Silverton-Durango railway**

21 miles, 1800 feet of elevation gain

Getting back out to Hwy 550, we begin our 10-mile ascent of Red Mountain Pass (11,018 ft). It's only about 1,800 feet of climbing, but you start and finish high, so get those lungs ready! After a breathtaking descent (this time it's figurative, not literal), we'll have a couple hours to spend in Silverton before hopping on the Durango &



Rian Houston photo, used with permission

Silverton Narrow Gauge Railway. You'll have 3 hours to rest your legs during the gorgeous trip through the Animas River Valley back to Durango.

Day 5: Saturday, June 20

We say our goodbyes and depart Durango. Safe travels!

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