

SaddleBrooke Hiking Club Trip
Durango, Colorado
September 25-27, 2019

The mountains are calling and we are answering that call!

In Fall 2019 the SaddleBrooke Hiking Club will be going north to the mountain town of Durango, Colorado for 3 days of hiking at all levels. The plan currently has hikes (none in areas affected by 2018 fires) scheduled for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. A possible train ride on Tuesday is being looked into where club members would ride the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad 45 miles from Durango to Silverton with a bus ride as return transportation. If we are lucky we'll be hiking when the colors are changing in the mountains.

For those with more time there are plenty of other activities available—biking, jeep tours, golfing, horseback riding, hot springs, rafting, fly fishing, galleries, six craft breweries, two distilleries, and everything in between. There are reportedly more restaurants per capita in Durango than San Francisco.

Within the general area are several sites where ancient Puebloan people lived including Mesa Verde National Park, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, Canyons of the Ancients Monument, Aztec Ruins, Chimney Rock National Monument and Hovenweep National Monument.

For those who wish a challenge there are eight 14ers in the area varying in difficulty and accessibility. You can hike sections of the Colorado Trail. State and national campgrounds pepper the area and private RV parks are available often with amenities.

Weather and Elevation

Weather will likely be highs in mid 70's and lows in the 40's. Durango's elevation is 6500' and hikes may be higher to much higher. The higher elevation hikes will be scheduled for the second and third days. It may be advisable to arrive earlier to acclimate to this elevation. Staying hydrated is very important. Start slowly and maintain a comfortable pace. Consider adding electrolyte solutions (sports drinks) to some of your water.

Member Responsibilities

Members must arrange their own transportation, food, and lodging and can participate in one, two, or all three days of hiking. It is not necessary that individuals stay for the entire stay or arrive on the first day.

Consider getting a Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue (CORSAR) card available for \$3 for the year. When Colorado's Search and Rescue teams carry out a search or rescue mission the costs are absorbed by the rescue team or the county sheriff under whom they operate. The CORSAR funds help reimburse these costs. It can be purchased online at www.colorado.gov/dola/search-and-rescue-fund. It can also be purchased in Durango at Gardenswartz Sporting Goods, Pine Needle Mountaineering, Walmart, and several other places.

SBHC Contacts for this Event

Randy Park and Gayle Hosek-Spies are co-leaders for this trip. To sign up to participate or for additional information please email Gayle at drgaylehosek@gmail.com. If you are signing up please provide her with name(s), phone number(s), email(s), and where you will be staying if you have made reservations for lodging. She will update this prior to the trip. Hiking guide cell phone numbers will be provided with the final schedule of hikes.

Getting There

Durango is approximately 470 miles from SaddleBrooke, approximately 8 hours. As we are hiking in September Colorado is on Daylight Saving Time and you will find it takes 8 hours of driving but 9 hours of time. Of course we gain it back on the way home.

Much of the drive will be through areas where gas stations and restrooms are few. Keep your tank filled and take restroom breaks as you find them if you might need to.

Google Maps or your navigation system should get you there. The route goes north on AZ 77 to Holbrook, AZ, east on I-40 to Gallup, NM, north on US 491 to northern New Mexico and then several options are available to get you to Durango,

leaving the desert and entering the mountains. You will be driving through the Navajo Nation and possibly the Southern Ute.

Lodging

Lodging is the responsibility of the club member. BOOK EARLY! This is considered to be "High Color" time. Rooms go fast and prices are higher than they may be at other times of the year.

There are many hotels available in Durango from mom-and-pop motels to national chains. There are several historic hotels and bed and breakfasts.

We were able to get a block of rooms at a reduced rate with the Best Western Rio Grande Inn for Monday, September 24 through Friday, September 27. Your reservation can be any of the days within that time period. Each guest will reserve their own rooms.

The rooms (two queen beds) are \$170/night . If you wish a king (\$200/night) you will need to request it when you reserve. With your reservation you also have a free breakfast and two free cocktails between 5:30 and 7:30 PM. The block of rooms not reserved will be released 30 days prior to our hikes. When released the discount price no longer applies and the rooms may no longer be available.

Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly (800-245-4466) and indicating you are part of the SaddleBrooke Hiking Club Block or online-click https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.06144.html?groupId=K11EL1PO

Below are some suggestions:

Best Western Rio Grande Inn	800-245-4466	\$\$\$
Doubletree Hotel by Hilton	800-222-8733	\$\$\$
La Quinta Inn and Suites	970-259-8400	\$\$\$
General Palmer Hotel	800-523-3358	\$\$\$
Comfort Inn and Suites	888-759-7903	\$\$
Days Inn	970-259-1333	\$\$
Econo-Lodge	866-291-4990	\$\$
Quality Inn	970-259-5373	\$

RV parks and camping are also available:

Durango KOA and Cabins	800-562-0793
Westerly RV Park	970-247-1275
Lightner Creek Campground and Cabins	970-247-5406
United Campground (city trolley stop)	970-247-3853
National Forest Campgrounds	Closed at this time of year

Food/Groceries

Durango is a small town (population in 2016 was 18,503) with a great variety of restaurants. There are two City Market grocery stores, one centrally located and one north of town. Albertsons is located centrally. Natures Oasis is a natural foods store just south of town.

Hike Sign-ups

The final hiking schedule will be determined by the number of hikers attending and the number of volunteer guides. Hikes at each level of difficulty will be offered each day. Some hikes may be repeated. A list of the hikes with descriptions will be provided in May. Please contact the hike leader to sign-up for hikes. Hikers will carpool to the trailheads.

Pre-trip Potluck

A pre-trip potluck prior to the trip is planned for club members to get together with others going to Durango, for hike leaders to answer any questions, and to do last minute sign-ups for hikes. More information will be provided in May and emailed to those going at that time.

Group Dinner

A group dinner while in Durango is being explored and would be optional with those interested getting together on Thursday, September 26th. The dinner depends on the ability to get a reservation for the size of the group that wishes to attend.