



Narrow Gauge Scenic Byway

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The Narrow Gauge Scenic Byway has had many twists and turns, both literally and figuratively. Essentially the isolated 10-mile road allows you to experience a narrow gauge railroad trip, winding through dramatic landscape of canyon walls and greenery, without a narrow gauge train. Started as a primitive trail forged by miners and early settlers, it became a crude toll road in 1877. The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad laid track on the same alignment to Durango, CO later in the 19th century, but that went bust in the 1960s, and most of the track has since been removed. Once again, the route is a largely unimproved road (avoid driving in wet or very cold weather). Now known as Jicarilla 9, the route, which begins in Dulce, isn't just for sightseeing. It forms the main link between the sovereign nations of the Jicarilla Apache in northern New Mexico and the Southern Ute in Colorado. The first 4 miles of the byway parallel the sparkling Amargo Creek. At the confluence of the creek and the Navajo River was the railroad's station stop called Navajo, commemorated today by a plaque on the bridge.

Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

America's highest and longest remaining narrow gauge railroad, the Cumbres & Toltec operates on all that's left of the D&RGW tracks, near where the byway travels today. Originally the D&RGW's San Juan Extension, the route served isolated farming and mining communities, transporting raw materials like timber and mineral ore. The steam-powered locomotives, vintage train cars, and railroad itself is owned jointly by the States of New Mexico and Colorado, so that all can experience the awe-inspiring beauty of the area, and the trestles and tunnels of the snaking route. You don't have to be a railroad buff to enjoy the sound of the steam engine and the rhythmic clack of wheels on the narrow gauge track. The train ride is especially beautiful during the fall, as the leaves turn golden, but don't pass up the experience any time during its late spring through fall season. On the New Mexico side, the train leaves from Chama. www.cumbrestoltec.com

Phone (575) 756-2151

Jicarilla Apache Reservation

Migrating from Canada to the American Southwest between 1300 and 1500 A.D., the Jicarilla Apaches settled in an area of some 50 million acres spread over present day New Mexico, Colorado, and western Oklahoma. The traditional lifestyle of the Jicarilla was hunting for a wide variety of game and gathering plants for food and medicine. They maintained semi-permanent campsites at favored locations for hunting and gathering. Today, their land is a combination of mountains and rugged mesas, and is considered a sportsman's paradise with trout fishing, waterfowl hunting, and turkey, elk, and deer hunting. Jicarilla means little basket maker in Spanish and refers to the fine quality baskets created by the Jicarilla. See examples in the Arts and Craft Museum in Dulce, the largest community on the reservation and tribal headquarters. Take a look too at the Jicarilla Culture Center, where you'll see a couple of boxcars from the old D&RGW. The byway begins on Dulce's Narrow Gauge Street. www.jicarillaonline.com