



## CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR ROUTE GUIDE



SAN FRANCISCO • SALT LAKE CITY • CHICAGO

We hope you enjoy reading this guide and learning about points of interest along our route. It is written starting from the western terminus of the train in San Francisco and proceeds to points east, ending in Chicago. If you boarded in Chicago, just read the guide in reverse, remembering to look in the opposite direction referenced.

**AMTRAK STATIONS** are shown in all capital letters, as opposed to upper and lower case for towns and geographical areas through which the train travels but does not stop. The Amtrak System Timetable or the California Zephyr panel card should be consulted for actual station times. While all service presented in this guide was accurate at the time of publication, routes and services are subject to change. Please contact Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL, visit [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com), or call your travel agent for the most current information.

Between Chicago and the great cities of the west lie narrow canyons, towering peaks and breathtakingly beautiful mountain wilderness areas as you cross two great mountain ranges, the Sierra Nevadas and the Rockies. This awesome challenge was taken up in 1869 when the first transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory, Utah, bringing thousands of pioneers west in search of their fortunes, many to San Francisco after the discovery of gold nearby. Modern-day travelers know it's the most beautiful train trip in North America – and the most comfortable way to travel between these two great cities.

Blowing away the alternatives is what Zephyrus, ancient Greek god of the west wind, and his namesake, the California Zephyr, do best. So sit back and be "blown away" by the otherwise unattainable views of the spectacular scenery along the route.

[Amtrak's California Zephyr was named for the original 2,438-mile passenger train route operated jointly by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad and Western Pacific Railroad. This "most talked about train in America" was inaugurated on March 19, 1949 with five "vista dome" cars and four sleeping cars. Today, Amtrak uses modern Superliner double-decker cars on the route.]



# WELCOME ABOARD



The *California Zephyr*<sup>®</sup> takes you from the Midwest's Windy City across the American heartland through Denver, over the front range of the Rockies, through the Continental Divide, Glenwood Canyon, the Utah desert and the High Sierras to the City by the Bay. On board, you will experience the comfort and relaxation of train travel while witnessing some of the very best American cultural and geographic icons. We are happy to have you aboard today and want to ensure your trip is everything you want it to be. If there is anything that can be done to make your trip more enjoyable, please do not hesitate to ask any Amtrak<sup>®</sup> employee.

## THE TRAIN STAFF:

The staff of the *California Zephyr* is here to make your trip a special and enjoyable experience.

**Conductor** is responsible for the entire On-Board Services staff including ticket collection, passenger safety and the safe operation of the train.

**Lead Service Attendant** is responsible for the operation of the Dining car and Dining car staff.

**Lounge car Attendant** is responsible for the operation of the Lounge/Café car.

**Sleeping car Attendant** is responsible for providing all service for passengers ticketed in Sleeping car accommodations, including room preparation, luggage service and any assistance necessary to ensure a comfortable journey. He or she can also assist with meal reservations or arrange for your meal to be served in the privacy and comfort of your accommodation.

**Coach Attendant** is responsible for providing service for passengers ticketed in coach. This includes seat assignment, luggage assistance, pillow service, and assistance to ensure a comfortable journey.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

**Sleeping car** accommodations provide a range of private rooms with amenities for day and night use. From Superliner roomettes to Superliner bedrooms featuring a private lavatory and shower, Sleeping car accommodations will suit any need and can be described in more detail by any member of the crew. Please ask to speak to the Conductor regarding the availability of rooms. Sleeping car passengers can enjoy the Amtrak Metropolitan Lounge available in Chicago.

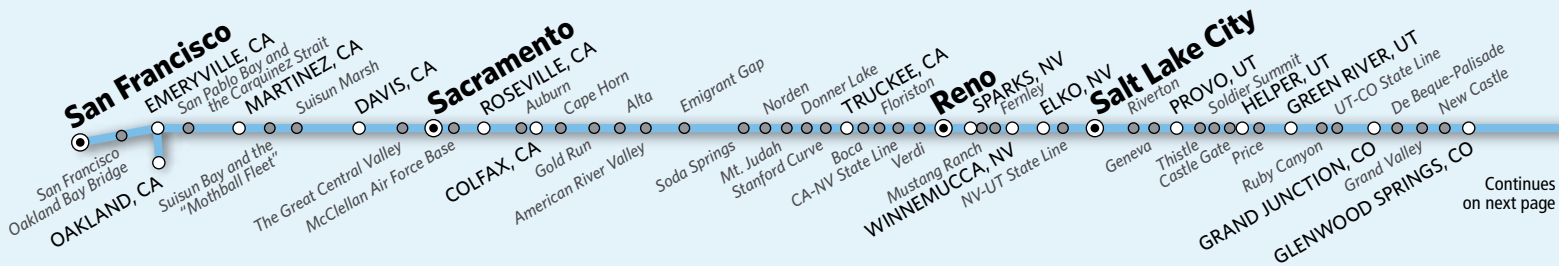
**Coach** seating provides a wide reclining seat with leg rest, folding tray table and overhead light. Free pillow service is also available.

**Dining car** features full-service hot meals prepared by Amtrak chefs. Here you will also have the chance to meet your fellow passengers for conversation and food while the scenery glides by your window. Sleeping car accommodation charges include meals in the Dining car while passengers ticketed in Coach may purchase Dining car meals at reasonable prices.

**Sightseer Lounge/Café** is the perfect car for scenic viewing the spectacular scenery along the *California Zephyr*. Large panoramic windows provide the perfect atmosphere for sightseeing and making new friends. The Café is located on the lower level of this car offering sandwiches, snacks and beverages. On-board guides from the California State Railroad Museum provide historical and sightseeing commentary between Reno and Sacramento seasonally.

**HOST RAILROADS** are the freight and commuter railroads that Amtrak contracts with to operate Amtrak passenger trains. The *California Zephyr* travels Chicago to Denver on the BNSF Railway Co., and Denver to Emeryville on the Union Pacific.

*Information contained in this route guide as well as described amenities and features are subject to change without notice. While gratuities are not required for services provided, it is an appreciated way to convey to an employee that he or she has made your trip more enjoyable.*



**SAN FRANCISCO** As we cross into Oakland over the Bay Bridge (see below), watch for a view of the unusual skyline marked by skyscrapers like the Transamerica Pyramid mixed with red tiled roofs of Spanish architecture and quaint Victorian homes. In the distance is the beautiful Golden Gate Bridge. The discovery of gold nearby in 1848 raised the population of San Francisco from 1,000 to 25,000 by the end of the following year. Today, this popular international tourist destination is renowned for its steep hills, famous landmarks, Alcatraz Island, Coit Tower, cable cars and Chinatown as well as for its diverse cosmopolitan population lending unmatched charm and character to the city. While early entrepreneurs capitalized on gold wealth to benefit banking, railroads and trade, the modern era saw the rise of the “Beat” and “Hippie” generations that crystallized the progressive political nature of the population unlike elsewhere in the U.S. Its world famous galleries, restaurants and shops share top billing with Fisherman’s Wharf and the financial district to lure vacation travelers from all over the globe. In the city where Tony Bennett left his heart, small businesses with fewer than ten employees make up 85 percent of city establishments. And in a city where the 49ers won five consecutive Super Bowls, its residents have been judged the fittest in the U.S.

**San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge** Crossing the San Francisco Bay to Oakland, the bridge spans 8.4 miles some 200 feet above the water. Opened in 1936, it carries approximately 280,000 vehicles per day. Watch for spectacular views of San Francisco, Alcatraz Island and the Golden Gate Bridge. On the Oakland side, the Alameda Naval Air station, closed in 1997, is on the right. Connecting the two halves of the bridge is the 539-ft. long Yerba Buena Tunnel, the largest diameter tunnel in the world in 1936. The enormous amount of rock and dirt excavated was used in part to create Treasure Island. Watch for the University of California’s Gothic clock tower on the left.

**EMERYVILLE** Located on the bay just north of the base of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, Emeryville has been a central part of Northern California’s commerce for more than a century. With prospering retail, entertainment and business centers, a sense of community pride and innovation are prevalent in this exciting community. Its inviting climate, diverse cultural attractions and unsurpassed bayside setting offer an unbeatable quality of life. It is also home to Pixar Animation Studios and several well-known biotech and software companies, making it an enclave of the Silicon Valley region.

**San Pablo Bay and the Carquinez Strait** We cross the shallow tidal estuary that forms the northern extension of San Francisco Bay shared between Contra Costa, Solano, Sonoma and Marin counties. Across the strait is the California Maritime Academy, one of only seven

degree-granting maritime academies in the U.S. On the Solano County side is the former Mare Island Naval Shipyard, the first such facility established on the West Coast in 1854. It was decommissioned in 1996.

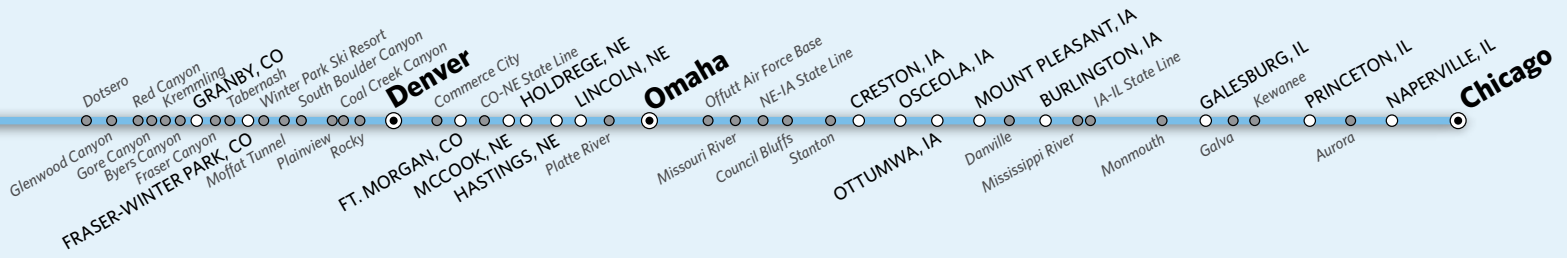
**MARTINEZ** is on the south side of the Carquinez Strait off the San Francisco Bay. From a trading post in 1849 to a flourishing town in 1876, Martinez became a hub for the gold and shipping industries. After the gold rush, Martinez boasted much of the lucrative grain trade between California’s Central Valley and international ports-of-call. The town is also the likely site of the martini’s invention; a plaque commemorating the event is on a prominent downtown corner. Born in Martinez and growing up in San Francisco, baseball legend Joe DiMaggio was a local legend with the Pacific Coast League’s San Francisco Seals before becoming a New York Yankee. Notable Martinez residents include John Muir, noted preservationist and founder of the Sierra Club, whose writings and philosophy strongly influenced the formation of the modern environmentalist movement. His house and ranch now comprise a National Historic Site. The station is the transfer point for Amtrak’s *San Joaquin* and *Capitol Corridor* routes to the San Joaquin Valley and Bay Area, respectively.

**Suisun Bay “Mothball Fleet”** (pronounced “soo-soon”) Linking the Sacramento Delta with San Francisco Bay, the bay is the site, on our right, of a 70-ship fleet of decommissioned warships kept afloat since World War II in case of another war. Lawsuits charging their toxic pollutants are hazards to the environment have resulted in the dismantling and recycling of two ships; however, various legal challenges have slowed the disposal process.

**Suisun Marsh** is the largest brackish marsh on the west coast of the U.S. and part of the San Francisco Bay tidal estuary. Formed by the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, it supports many species of birds and other wildlife. The *Montezuma Hills* at the northern banks of the Sacramento River Delta are known for their exceptional wind energy resource potential; a windfarm here boasts turbines up to 415 ft. tall.

**DAVIS** Agriculture and veterinary medicine are specialties studied at the Davis campus of the University of California. The 1913 Davis adobe-style train station is an historic landmark. The motto of Davis is “Most Bicycle-Friendly Town in the World.”

**The Great Central Valley** We now enter the middle of the large, flat valley that dominates the central portion of the state, the northern half of which is the Sacramento Valley and the southern half of which is the San Joaquin Valley. The halves are joined by the shared delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. Here is home to many of



California's most productive agricultural efforts; the Yolo Basin outside our train windows produces a billion pounds of rice annually.

**SACRAMENTO** The capital of California, Sacramento was founded in 1849 as California's original charter city, rich in the state's history. The gold rush at nearby Sutter's Mill, the pony express and the first transcontinental railroad originated here. Near Old Sacramento, the Towe Auto Museum exhibits 170 classic autos from the late 1800s to present, displayed within historically relevant surroundings. As we approach Sacramento station, note the remnants of the Southern Pacific's locomotive shops. The Central Pacific Railroad, Southern Pacific's predecessor railroad, began their construction in 1864, five years before it linked with the Union Pacific Railroad at Promontory, Utah, to create the country's first transcontinental route. The world-class California State Railroad Museum has historical exhibits and live steam locomotives that patrons may ride. Located here, the birthplace of the aforementioned Transcontinental Railroad, it showcases all of the ways that railroads have shaped Americans' lives, our economy and culture – along with a collection of more than 1,000 vintage toy trains. The historic Delta King riverboat is another must-see attraction. Among the city's more successful entrepreneurs are Russ Solomon of Tower Records and Sherwood Johnson of Shakey's Pizza.

**McClellan Air Force Base** on the left, closed in 2001, now operates as an uncontrolled joint civil-military airfield with mixed-use tenants as part of McClellan Park, a business park. Established in 1935, it was, for the majority of its lifetime, a logistics and maintenance facility for military aircraft.

**ROSEVILLE** This business-friendly city boasts one of the largest auto malls in the U.S. A regional shopping destination, it is the "skinniest" city in America, with an average body mass index of 24.5, according to a 2006 CNN study. Actress Molly Ringwald hails from Roseville.

**Auburn** Just south of town is Sutter's Mill, where gold was discovered, a key event in the California Gold Rush. Claude Chana, a young Frenchman who had come by wagon train to California, is said to have panned for gold and made his discovery on May 16, 1848, in what became known as the Auburn Ravine. A 45-ton statue commemorating the event stands downtown. (James Wilson Marshall's discovery five months earlier on the American River had set the stage for the gold rush. Forced off of his own land, he sadly never profited from his discovery.) A firehouse on our left was built in 1888 and housed the first volunteer department west of Boston. The courthouse on the right is where outlaws were tried and hanged. In 1865, the western portion of the Central Pacific Railroad reached Auburn, which would become

part of the first Transcontinental Railroad. *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle* was shot, in part, in Auburn.

**COLFAX** was named for Schuyler Colfax, seventeenth Vice President of the United States under the Ulysses S. Grant administration between 1869 and 1873. A statue at the station is featured immediately off Main Street, a charming section that can be seen on the left. From here to Reno we begin to cross the forbidding Sierra Nevada range.

**Cape Horn** is a rocky bluff on the right side of the train some 1,500 ft. above the American River. The story of constructing the railroad grading has been the subject of many writings, resulting in a remarkable collection of truths, fantasies and much that lies in between. A narrow rock ledge was expanded into the present track. Long Ravine Bridge provides one of the first clear views of the Sierras in the distance to the right.

**Gold Run** Only the post office remains of this successful "hydraulic mining" town that was once brimming with gold prospectors. The technique developed here -- using high pressure water to separate gold from soil -- was outlawed by a federal circuit judge injunction issued in 1884. Between the mid 1850s and then, it is estimated that the system yielded one third of the total gold produced by California.

**Emigrant Gap** As we cross Interstate 80, look for a gap in the ridge on the California Trail as it crosses the Sierra Nevada, west of Donner Pass. The cliffs here are so steep that 1840s pioneers crossing to California were said to have lowered their wagons on ropes in order to continue.

Two Cascade Lakes west of Soda Springs are actually above the train, with runoff flowing beneath the tracks under two bridges.

**Soda Springs** The former lodge of the Soda Springs Ski Resort, converted to condos, is on the left, next to Lake Van Norden. Chair lifts at the resort operate day and night over the tracks with the aid of illumination (the new lodge is off-site). Watch for Castle Peak on the left, a mountain with a rock formation that looks like a castle on top. The box on top of Black Butte Mountain on the left serves as a fire lookout some 8,000 ft. above sea level.

**Norden** was once the site of Southern Pacific maintenance, a turntable and check station plus wooden sheds to protect the line from snow. Today, Sugar Bowl Ski Resort is the big attraction to the area.

**Mt. Judah** Between Norden and Truckee we enter a tunnel through Mt. Judah some 7,000 ft. above sea level. The ski resort closed during World War II for fear the Germans might blow up the tunnel. A ski lift at Sugar Bowl Resort carries skiers over the track.

**Donner Lake** on the left hand side of the train (the eastern side of the tunnel) is where the famed Donner Party, traveling west from Illinois, was stranded during the winter of 1846-47. Some of the party of 87 resorted to cannibalism; only 48 survived.

**Stanford Flats** We now cross back and forth across a series of descending plateaus. Below is a panoramic view of the Truckee Basin.

**TRUCKEE** was named after a Paiute chief, Trukizo, father of Chief Winnemucca. The first settlers encountered his tribe with the friendly chief yelling "Tro-kay" at them, the Paiute word for "hello." Note the renovated former Bank of America on the right hand side of the train, now "The Bar of America," a popular downtown restaurant.

**Boca** was well known in its heyday for lumber, ice and a brewery. All that remains is a bridge and a dam. The town was dismantled in the 1920s after the sawmill was closed. The oddly shaped rock formations resembling castle spires that you now see were developed through erosion by wind and water and are known as "Hoodoo Pillars."

**Floriston** Here Rainbow Trout, Brook Trout and German Browns travel up and down the Truckee River to and from Verdi by means of a fish ladder.

**California/Nevada State Line** is indicated by a small marker on your left.

**Verdi** Here we see a hydroelectric generator powered by a water flume – a wooden trough that collects water at four sites in the mountains.

**RENO** "The Biggest Little City in the World" began as a modest gold mining service settlement which grew after the discovery of silver in 1859. Tailor Jacob Davis came to Reno in 1868 and began to use rivets to secure the pockets of his men's trousers. Worried that the idea would be copied, he contacted Levi Strauss to apply and pay for a patent, which was granted in 1873. After city fathers legalized prizefighting, the Jim Jeffries/Jack Johnson heavyweight championship bout, dubbed the "Battle of the Century," was held here in 1910. As mining waned, Nevada legalized casino gambling in 1931 and passed liberal divorce laws, both boons for Reno. An antique car collection and major entertainers entice gamblers to Reno today, along with special events all year. Actress Sharon Stone maintains a residence in Reno.

**SPARKS** is, for all practical purposes, a twin city with Reno, the border between them purely political. Begun in the 1850s as a cattle exchange for emigrants, the coming of the railroad in 1904 brought additional population. In the 1970s, favorable taxation resulted in a warehousing and distribution industry. The only high-rise casino, the Nugget, is on the left side. Locals are fond of saying that "Reno is so close to Hell you can see Sparks."

**Fernley** has evolved into an eastern suburb of the Reno/Sparks metro area, with former farmlands giving way to industry and subdivisions starting in the 1970s. It is best known as home of a 750,000 sq. ft. distribution center for Amazon.com. Here at the entrance to the Truckee Valley the railroad now follows the Truckee River as it originates in Lake Tahoe and winds its way north to empty into Pyramid Lake.

**Lovelock** was a stopping place for wagon trains in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, its economy is largely agricultural, producing bananas and alfalfa. Lovelock native Andrew Humbert Scott made the first military parachute jump in history. We follow along near the Humboldt River as it crisscrosses the desert for 300 miles.

**WINNEMUCCA** was the town where, in the 1850s, wagon trains crossed the Humboldt River and decided whether or not to attempt crossing the Sierra Nevada. Its most exciting single moment came in 1900, when Butch Cassidy and the Hole in the Wall Gang held up the local bank for \$2,000 in gold coins. Today, it caters mostly to travelers and most residents work in casinos, mining or service industries.

**ELKO** was once the eastern end of the first transcontinental railroad, named for the elk by the superintendent of the Central Pacific Railroad. The first commercial airmail flight in the U.S. took place in 1926 between Pasco, Washington and Elko. The town hosts the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering festival each January and the National Basque Festival every July. A stuffed ten-ft. tall polar bear graces the Commercial Casino.

**Time Change** At the Nevada/Utah state line, change your watch from Pacific to Mountain Time: one hour ahead if eastbound, one hour back if westbound.

**SALT LAKE CITY** is the world headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, founded in 1847 by a group of Mormon pioneers led by Brigham Young. Mining and the first transcontinental railroad brought initial economic growth. Today's economy is primarily service oriented around government, trade, transportation, utilities and professional and business services. Its political, religious and demographic makeup is diverse. Company headquarters situated here include Overstock.com. Comedian and actress Roseanne Barr hails from Salt Lake. A number of films, music videos, commercials and television shows have been recorded in the area. The valley in which the city lies is one of the safest and most attractive natural settings in North America.

**Riverton** is a bedroom community to Salt Lake City lying on a low plateau west of the Jordan River. The mountains on the right side of the train display multicolored tailings of the Kennecott mines in Bingham Canyon, which produces 300,000 tons of copper per year for use in electrical wiring, plumbing, roofing and coin making. The river empties into Utah Lake on the right.

**Geneva** on the left side is framed by the 11,000 ft. Mt. Timpanogos behind it, shaped, some believe, like the profile of a sleeping woman. Here is the former site of a division of U.S. Steel. A line near the top of the mountain is the water mark left by a prehistoric lake, the Bonneville Sea. A remnant of ice age glaciers in the valley below, "Timp Glacier," is a major attraction to hikers and climbers. The tall mountain on our right is Mt. Nebo.

**PROVO** hosts Brigham Young University and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints largest missionary training center. Third largest city in Utah, it lies in the Utah Valley at an elevation of 4,500 ft. The Wasatch Range "Y Mountain" towers over the city; the letter was built to commemorate the university. Here is home to software company Novell, Inc., as well as to the Osmond family of entertainers. Stephen Covey, the famous author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, also resides in Provo.

**Thistle** is a ghost town, the remains of which can be seen on the right side of the train, consisting of a few rooftops. A massive landslide in 1983 moved part of the mountain, blocked two creeks and formed an earthen dam. Water from creeks backed up, flooding and destroying the town. The landslide also closed the railroad for several months. The incident has so far been the only federal disaster area declared in the state of Utah.

**Soldier Summit** is where railfans gather to take pictures of the Gilluly loops, a series of switchbacks the train negotiates on the way to the summit of the Wasatch Range at an elevation of some 7,000 ft. One legend has it that the town, now abandoned, takes its name from a group of Southern soldiers en route to join the Confederate Army caught unexpectedly in a snowstorm here in July 1861. Other versions of the story differ as to the exact date and the soldiers involved. What is known is that later growth was driven by the former Rio Grande Western Railroad's machine shops, built to service "helper" steam engines used to cross the summit. The railroad's transfer of these

operations to nearby Thistle and Helper, along with later development of the diesel locomotive, effectively sank the town's fortunes.

**Castle Gate** is a former mining town dismantled in 1974. Its rock formation seems to open like a giant gate as the train approaches and close as leaves. Butch Cassidy is said to have held up the Pleasant Valley Coal Company here for \$7,000 in gold in 1897.

**HELPER** This railroad and coal town has ridden the tide of fluctuations, upturns and downswings since its development as a population center in 1881 with the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. Ethnic diversity was its chief characteristic due to the great amount of unskilled labor required by industrial expansion, railroading and coal mining. The city hosts the Western Mining and Railroad Museum, a tourist attraction that contains household and commercial artifacts from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is also home to the warrant holder of Jamba Juice®, Bradley Nelson.

**Price** may have a population of only 8,000, but it's the largest town between here and Grand Junction. It is home to the College of Eastern Utah and a large prehistoric museum. The Book Cliff mountain range on the left extends into Colorado and is one of the best places on earth to study the science of sequence stratigraphy, developed by Exxon scientists in the 1980s. An ancient western interior seaway once extended south to the Gulf of Mexico from here when the entire valley was under water.

**GREEN RIVER** sits at 4,078 ft. in elevation, lowest point between Salt Lake City and Denver. It is a popular spot for "freeride" mountain biking. The mountains to the right are the Marvine and Thousand Lake. Remain on the alert for herds of the apocryphal jackalope, hare-like antlered creatures said to appear without warning in these parts.

**Ruby Canyon** is a popular destination for rafting, taking its name from the red sandstone cliffs lining the canyon walls. A popular tourist attraction is the sign "Utah Colorado" painted on the wall at the border between the two states. Erosion via wind and water has hewn smooth textures and fascinating shapes in the striking red stone over eons of time.

**Utah/Colorado State Line** is marked by a sign.

**GRAND JUNCTION** is located at the junction of the Gunnison and Grand Rivers, Grand River having been the name of the upper Colorado before 1921. The city sits near the mid point of the Grand Valley, a major fruit-growing region. The Colorado National Monument, a series of canyons and mesas similar to the Grand Canyon, overlook the city. Large concentrations of oil shale are located here, but reserves are difficult to recover due to technical difficulties. The nearby Powderhorn ski resort attracts elite business and leisure travelers. It sits on the side of one of the world's largest flattop mountains, the Grand Mesa, the huge blue mountain to the east, allowing for extended views more than 20 miles across the desert.

**De Beque** was, at its founding in 1884, a town where wild horses were rounded up and sold. Today, it undertakes projects to protect the remaining wild horses and burros in the area, including construction of a public corral for care of injured and sick mustangs awaiting adoption. Each August, the town hosts "Wild Horse Days" featuring a rodeo and parade. Its history is commemorated with a mustang statue near town hall.

**Palisade** is known for its peach orchards and wine vineyards. The area produces over three million bushels of fruit annually.

**New Castle** Named for a town in England noted for its coal mines, New Castle was incorporated in 1888. Its mines yielded high-quality soft coal and high levels of methane gas. Explosions over the years have

resulted in a fire that still burns. While no threat to the community, the little known global problem of unchecked blazing underground coal seams is estimated to contribute significantly to carbon dioxide emissions worldwide.

**GLENWOOD SPRINGS** is located at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Colorado Rivers, a unique location that sees high recreational use by locals, visitors and commercial outfitters alike. Here are six world-class ski resorts within a 60-mile radius, quite a few noted mountain bike trails, whitewater rafting, numerous backpacking trails and Glenwood Caverns, a geological marvel. Doc Holliday, the Wild West legend of the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, spent the final months of his life here.

**Glenwood Canyon** is rugged, scenic 12.5 mile gorge on the Colorado River, the largest such canyon on the upper Colorado River. The spectacular high cliffs are dotted with aspen and evergreen trees. In 1906, the canyon served as the route of the Taylor State Road, the first gravel path for automobiles through the Colorado Rockies.

**Dotsero** is the approximate midpoint of the train's journey, located at the base of Colorado's most recently active volcano, Dotsero Crater, which erupted 4,140 years ago.

**Gore Canyon** is short and isolated on the upper Colorado River. Its steep walls ascend some 1,000 feet on each side over the river, which descends from 7,300 ft. to 7,000 ft. As such, it is roadless and inaccessible except by rail or kayak. Its Class V whitewater is the wildest commercially available rafting in the state -- some say the entire country.

**GRANBY** is the gateway city to the Rocky Mountain National Park. The town gained national prominence when, in 2004, a local businessman bulldozed several buildings in a dispute with the city government over zoning.

**Fraser Canyon** We follow the Fraser River through this remote canyon. Some of the best fishing for wild rainbows, browns and cutthroats is in the canyon downstream from Tabernash.

**Tabernash** was once a station where helper engines were added for the long, steep climb over Rollins Pass prior to the boring of the Moffat Tunnel. Today, it is an unincorporated town of 165.

**WINTER PARK (Fraser)** is the station for the nearby Winter Park Ski Resort. This is the "icebox of America," with winter temperatures of -50°F. Its claim to be the highest incorporated town in the U.S. at 9,000 ft. is disputed by Alma, Colorado, at an elevation of 10,361 ft. The area also has abundant cross-country skiing opportunities.

**Winter Park Ski Resort** is at the western portal of the Moffat Tunnel, built as part of Denver's mountain parks system. Its slopes come right up alongside the railroad.

**Moffat Tunnel** is 6.2 miles long, cutting the distance between Denver and the Pacific coast by 176 miles when it was opened in 1928. Prior to its construction, the original Denver, Northwestern and Pacific railroad crossed Rollins Pass with a series of switchback loops and steep grades. Constant snow removal made it unprofitable.

**South Boulder Canyon** is home to the Roosevelt National Forest, re-named in 1932 to honor former President Theodore Roosevelt, and Gross Reservoir, which supplies Denver with water. Plans are being considered to expand Gross substantially in order to enhance the stability of those water supplies. Watch for deer and elk in this region. We pass through 29 tunnels in this area, a steady 2% grade to Denver.

**Plainview** offers a spectacular view of Denver at night from 1,500 ft. above.



**Coal Creek Canyon** is home to 2,323 residents and is on our right as we pass over a small bridge. Nearby Central City was known as the "Richest Square Mile on Earth" when gold reserves were discovered here in 1859. Tracks can be seen far below as we wind between the front range of the Rockies and Denver.

**Rocky** We negotiate "Big 10 Curve" on the approach to Arvada, a Denver suburb. Winds can be so strong in this area that hopper cars welded to the rails and filled with sand sit on an adjacent track to act as a windbreak.

**DENVER** is also known as the Mile-High City because its official elevation, 5,280 feet, is measured at the 13<sup>th</sup> step of the state capitol building. Founded in 1858 by a land speculator, the original settlement was named Denver City to curry favor with a Kansas Territorial Governor who had, ironically, already resigned from office. The city is the only one ever to decline to host an Olympiad after being selected, doing so in 1976 based on environmental issues and cost. Its economy is based partially on its geographic position and connection to major transportation systems, making it a key trade point. It has more federal workers than any metropolitan area except for Washington, D.C. Its many skyscrapers, built during an energy boom in the late 1970s, are once again on the rise due to increased real estate investment. Denver was recently recognized for the third year in a row as the best city for singles. This is a refueling and service stop for our train.

**Commerce City** is a northern suburb of Denver known for greyhound racing and oil refining. Among the first establishments in Commerce City, founded in 1859, were cemeteries. Dick's Sporting Goods Park is home to the Colorado Rapids major league soccer club.

**FORT MORGAN** is the hometown of Big Band musician Glen Miller. During the night, we also stop at **McCOOK** and **HOLDREGE**.

**Colorado/Nebraska State Line** at which point you change your watch between Mountain and Central time -- one hour later if eastbound, or one hour earlier if westbound.

**HASTINGS** is the home of Hastings College, the Jacob Fisher Rainbow Fountain, and Kool-Aid, invented in 1927 by Edwin Perkins. Kool-Aid Days are celebrated the second week of each August.

**LINCOLN** became capital of Nebraska upon its admission to the Union in 1867. The golden-domed state capitol building dominates the skyline on the right hand side. The local economy is derived from state government, the University of Nebraska and a mix of service industries. Notable residents include talk-show hosts Dick Cavett, the late Johnny Carson and actress Hilary Swank.

**Platte River** is over 300 miles long and has served as the Oregon and Mormon Trails, the route of the Pony Express, the Union Pacific portion of the first transcontinental railroad and for Interstate Route 80.

**OMAHA** played a central role in the history of transportation across America, earning it the nickname "Gate City of the West." Construction began from here on the eastern portion of the first transcontinental railroad. It has been home to the Union Pacific Railroad since the company began, and ranks eighth among the nation's 50 largest cities in per-capita billionaires and Fortune 500 companies. Its most prominent businessman is Warren Buffett, the "Oracle of Omaha," one of the richest people in the world. Omaha is also the hometown of numerous actors, including Fred Astaire, Marlon Brando, Nick Nolte and Henry Fonda. Its historic downtown area, known as Old Market, rests on twelve city blocks recognized by the National Register of Historic Places.

**Offutt Air Force Base** to our right was once home to the Glenn L. Martin aircraft plant which, in 1945, constructed the two B-29 Superfortress bombers used to drop atomic weapons on Japan to end World War II. It was also the aerial command center in the U.S. for 30 years, supporting a 24-hour airborne command center called Operation Looking Glass between 1961 and 1990. On September 11, 2001, President Bush conducted one of the first major strategy sessions in the base bunker in response to the Twin Tower attacks.

### Nebraska/Iowa State Line

**Missouri River** crossing is also the state line between Nebraska and Iowa. The river is nicknamed “Big Muddy” for its high silt content. Today, some 72 miles of the river have been cut off in channeling; approximately 35 percent is impounded and 33 percent is unchannelized. At 2,341 miles in length, it drains about one-sixth of the North American continent – and is about the same length as the Mississippi.

**Council Bluffs** was the site of an 1804 meeting between Lewis and Clark and the Otoe tribe. By 1848 the town had become Kanesville, a main outfitting point for the Mormon exodus to Utah. The community was transformed by the California Gold Rush and renamed Council Bluffs, remaining a major outfitting point on the Missouri River for the Emigrant Trail, with a lively steamboat trade. President Lincoln chose Council Bluffs as the eastern location of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1862. The town has one of only three remaining examples of a rotary jail, with pie-shaped cells on a turntable. It remained in operation until 1969, after the rotary function was disabled nine years earlier. Today, Casino Row is located on and near the river. In 1972, Council Bluffs native Ron “The Bluffs Butcher” Stander fought Joe Frazier for the heavyweight title in the Omaha Civic Auditorium, losing on cuts in the fourth round. It was the most talked about sporting event ever to occur in that city.

**Stanton**, first settled by Swedish immigrants, is best known for its two water towers, one each on the left and on the right, the tanks of which are painted and shaped like giant coffee pots and coffee cups. These allude to the fact that Stanton is the hometown of actress Virginia Christine, better known to TV viewers as “Mrs. Olson” in classic Folgers coffee commercials.

**CRESTON** got its name from a railroad survey crew finding it to be the highest point between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The original railroad depot has been restored and now houses offices of the Chamber of Commerce, a museum and Creston City Hall. Southwestern Community College is located here, and Creston is the county seat of Union County. The annual Creston/Southwest Iowa Hot Air Balloon Race is hosted here during September.

**OSCEOLA** was named after a Seminole leader, and is also an anglicized form of the Native American word for a ceremonial holly tea. Terrible’s Lakeside Casino & Resort now occupies a boat on West Lake, and a 132 ft. cowboy was erected on the site to advertise the facility. A general economic upswing has accompanied the casino’s advent. Watch for a carved wooden bust of the chief on the right.

**OTTUMWA** is the county seat of Wapello County and is split into northern and southern halves by the Des Moines River. Formerly a campground of the Ottumwa Native American tribe, it was the hometown of the fictional character “Radar O’Reilly” on the TV show *M\*A\*S\*H*. Actor and comedian Tom Arnold also hails from Ottumwa.

**MT. PLEASANT** is home to Iowa Wesleyan College, founded in 1842, America’s oldest coeducational college west of the Mississippi. Arabella Babb was the first woman to pass the bar examination here in 1869. The first major attempt to construct a hard surface road came in 1852 when a wooden plank road was built from Mt. Pleasant to Burlington. Former

Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack once lived in Mt. Pleasant and was briefly a candidate for the 2008 Presidential nomination in the Democratic Party. The annual Midwest Old Threshers Reunion attracts thousands during a five-day weekend ending on Labor Day and pays tribute to the Midwest’s agricultural heritage.

**BURLINGTON** In 1803, Thomas Jefferson organized exploration parties to map the Louisiana Purchase, and Zebulon Pike followed the Mississippi River. He landed at the bluffs below Burlington and constructed a fort. The first American to purchase a lot named it for his former home, Burlington, Vermont. Today, it is the home of the most crooked alley in the world, Snake Alley, as well as national events at 34 Raceway. Notable natives include Dr. Wallace Carothers, the inventor of nylon, and actor William Frawley, better known as neighbor Fred Mertz on the “I Love Lucy” show.

### Iowa/Illinois State Line

**Mississippi River** is the border between Iowa and Illinois. Second longest in the U.S., it runs 2,320 miles between lake Itasca, Minnesota and its mouth near New Orleans at the Gulf of Mexico. It flows through ten states and is used to define many of their borders. Note the marshy bottomlands beneath the bridge.

**Monmouth** is the county seat of Warren County, home of Monmouth College and birthplace of western hero Marshal Wyatt Earp. It hosts a Prime Beef Festival annually the week after Labor Day. The first national secret college society of women to be modeled after the Greek-letter men’s fraternities was founded on the Monmouth campus.

**GALESBURG** was the home of writer and historian Carl Sandburg and the site of the fifth Lincoln-Douglas debate at Knox College in 1858. It was also home to the first anti-slavery society in Illinois and an important stop on the Underground Railroad. It will soon be home to the new National Railroad Hall of Fame. Galesburg plays host to the Railroad Days festival each June and the Black Earth Film Festival each September. Other notable residents include George Reeves, TV’s *Superman*, Charles Rudolph Walgreen, founder of the drug store of the same name, and George Washington Gale Ferris, inventor of the Ferris wheel. According to legend, the Marx Brothers received their nicknames here during a poker game in 1914.

**Galva** is located in a part of the state that was known as the Central Military Tract, the purpose of which was to give this land to soldiers who had served in the War of 1812. The original land was awarded to Jacob Joy, who owned it only one month before selling it to James Bonham. The name Galva is a revision to the original name of a Swedish seaport from which many of its early settlers had sailed, Gefle. Today, it has an extremely high ratio of green space to residents and hosts an annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July “Freedomfest” fireworks display and antique car show that attracts thousands from miles around.

**Kewanee** is a Native American word for prairie chicken. An industrial town, it was best known as home to the Kewanee Boiler Corporation, manufacturer and seller of steam boilers throughout the world for well over one hundred years. It is also the acknowledged Hog Capital of the World, holding an annual Hog Days festival every Labor Day weekend, complete with a parade, flea market and carnival.

**Princeton** was settled in the 1830s by families from New England and the Mid-Atlantic states. Its name was, according to one legend, drawn from a hat. Its former nickname, “The City of Elms,” is no longer used due to an epidemic that struck the elm trees and killed off almost every single one of them. Its major employers include Ace Hardware Retail Support Center and MTM Recognition, makers of world championship rings. Actor Richard Widmark’s parents owned a hardware store here during his early years.





**Aurora** is the second largest city in Illinois by 2007 estimates, up from third in 2000. It adopted the nickname “City of Lights” in 1908 after being one of the first cities in the state to adopt all-electric street lighting in 1881. Prominent manufacturers past and present include the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad (later Burlington Northern) and Caterpillar Incorporated. Author Clive Cussler hails from Aurora. The city was the setting for the 1992 movie *Wayne’s World*.

**NAPERVILLE** was founded in 1831 by Joseph Naper. Due to the enormous growth of high-tech companies and its globally renowned public schools, the city is the wealthiest in the U.S. with a population of 90,000 and over. The Naperville Public Library was ranked #1 in the U.S. for eight years running. The four-mile long Riverwalk along the west branch of the DuPage River is known as the “crown jewel” of the city.

**CHICAGO** Vibrant and energetic, Chicago is the industrial core of the Midwest and a major transportation hub. In the heart of America’s agriculture belt, it is a leading distributor of farm products. Its many regional food specialties reflect the city’s ethnic and working class roots. Chicago’s spirit is also exemplified in its unique architecture; it is here that the word “skyscraper” originated with the first one built in 1885. The arts and sciences are alive with an abundance of world-renowned theaters and museums. The city boasts Wrigley Field, one of baseball’s oldest parks, and the Sears Tower, tallest building in the U.S. The Merchandise Mart is the world’s largest commercial office building and rests on the banks of the Chicago River. The river became an engineering marvel in 1900 when engineers reversed its flow into the Mississippi River drainage. Most Amtrak long-distance trains either originate or terminate in Chicago, connecting to other service.