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Colorado

OFFICIAL TRAVEL GUIDE



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WELCOME TO THE Centennial State!



As the Governor of colorful Colorado, I'm happy to invite you and your loved ones to visit and experience everything our great state has to offer.

There's something very special about Colorado, a place where unparalleled natural beauty and a sense of exploration bring your vacation to life. From the majesty of our Rocky Mountains and the thrill of outdoor recreation to the charm of our vibrant cities and world-class amenities, Colorado has something special for everyone. We are known for our Western hospitality and unique Colorado spirit, which make our state a place where diversity is celebrated and visitors are embraced as part of the extended family.

While exploring our beautiful state, we encourage everyone to Do Colorado Right and travel thoughtfully. Small actions, like using public transportation to get from one destination to the next, keeping our trails clean and even renting an e-bike to explore a new town, can all help us preserve our pristine environment for future generations to experience, while also adding to your adventure.

I wish you safe travels as you create memories that will last a lifetime. We can't wait to see you!



Mineral Belt Trail near Leadville

Land Acknowledgment

In the spirit of healing and education, the Colorado Tourism Office acknowledges the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and the 51 contemporary tribes with historic ties to the land currently known as Colorado. We recognize and honor these Indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants of this land.

COME TO LIFE



STATE OF COLORADO
Jared Polis Governor

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Covers: Summer: Andrew Maguire; Winter: Noah Wetzel

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DARYLENE A. IACOVETTO

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DO COLORADO RIGHT

We've created the Care for Colorado Leave No Trace Principles to make it easy for you to do simple things that have big impacts on our rippling rivers and streams, evergreen-carpeted mountains and swaying grasslands. Keep these tips in mind as you travel through our natural places, and you'll be a part of the special group helping future visitors experience our beautiful state to its fullest, all while you make the most of your Colorado adventures.



Jumbo Ridge Loop near Paonia

Know Before You Go

- Almost half of Colorado is public land. Learn about the area you plan to visit before adventuring out so you can enjoy and help protect the spaces we all share.
- Colorado's weather and scenic terrain are stunning but can change drastically. Check conditions before you depart, pack layers, sun protection and rain gear, wear appropriate footwear ... and enjoy your trip.
- Journey to places with minimal crowds to maximize your connection with the great outdoors. Have a backup plan in case the parking lot at your original destination is full.
- Pack reusable water bottles to stay hydrated, limit waste and save money.

Stick to Trails

- Embrace the adventure as intended by only walking on designated trails — even if it's wet, muddy, slushy or icy. This will help avoid erosion and protect the homes of local wildlife.
- Shortcuts and that perfect selfie can be tempting, but staying on the path will decrease your risk of injury and protect trailside plants.
- Camping? Set up in one of thousands of designated campsites in Colorado. They boast some of the most scenic views and protect the landscapes. And remember to camp at least 200 feet from waterways to leave space for wildlife.

Leave It As You Find It

- Enjoy discovering plants? Rocks? Historical and cultural items? Be sure to leave them as you found them so everyone can experience the joy of discovery.
- Colorado has more than 2,000 different species of wildflowers, all with their own unique part to play in our ecosystem. Admire their beauty by taking a photo, not a flower.
- Cleaning boots, bike tires and water crafts before and after every outing not only makes your gear last longer, it prevents the spread of harmful invasive species.
- Colorado's trees give us beautiful leaf-peeping photos, shade on summer days, unmatched ski runs and, of course, oxygen (which at this altitude, is a big help). But the smallest carving can kill or disfigure them.

Trash the Trash

- Pack in the beautiful views by packing out the trash and leaving a place better than you found it. And make sure not to forget the peels and cores. Just because it's good for you, doesn't mean it's good for the wildlife.
- No bathroom around? No worries. Be prepared with a disposable WAG bag (found in most outdoor stores), and conveniently pack out your waste. Some locations may allow you to bury your business: Find privacy 70 steps from water and the trail, dig a 6- to 8-inch hole and then bury your business. Check the website of your destination to be sure you're following their guidelines.

Be Careful With Fire

- Build the perfect Colorado campfire (and avoid sparking a wildfire) by first making sure campfires are allowed in the area. Then, keep them small, manageable and attended. When it's time to extinguish, make sure the embers are cold to the touch to avoid reigniting a flame.
- Buy or gather firewood locally; it'll save you space in your car, plus it prevents the introduction of any invasive species like the destructive pine beetle.
- Use care when smoking anything (and we do mean anything) in Colorado's dry climate. One of the biggest causes of fires is discarded butts.

Keep Wildlife Wild

- Colorado is home to tens of thousands of furry, scaly and feathered creatures. To keep them — and you — safe, make sure to keep your (and your dog's) distance. And if you're ever unsure, follow the rule of thumb: If you can cover the entire animal with your thumb, you're at a safe distance.
- Everyone loves the smell of bacon (not just humans). So always store food, trash and anything with a scent in bear-proof lockers, canisters or secured vehicles. This will protect you and prevent wildlife from being exposed to behavior changes, predators or even euthanasia.



Share Our Trails & Parks

- Everyone experiences and enjoys the outdoors in different ways. Be mindful of your group's noise level so everyone can appreciate our shared spaces.
- Yield to the uphill hiker and biker — they need the momentum. Wheelchair users and equestrians always have the right of way.



 From packing the backcountry essentials to taking EV-friendly road trips, visit DoColoradoRight.com for more ways to know before you go!

ANDREA SHAYER

Trout Lake near Telluride

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4.5K Reviews



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10 Reasons You Need a Colorado Vacation

Across our pristine landscapes, vibrant cities and charming mountain towns, it feels like there are endless ways to enjoy the beauty and spirit of the Centennial State. From heart-racing adventure to moments of relaxation, add these 10 bucket-list ideas to your itinerary for a quintessential experience. Whether you fit them all in one trip or spread over many, we're sure you'll have a Colorado vacation to remember.



Lory State Park near Fort Collins



Know Before You Go

Rivers are powerful and always changing, so be sure to check water levels before getting wet. Remember to wear a personal flotation device — even when SUPing. And for smooth sailing, hire a guide.



Gunnison

1 Soak Up Our Water

Each spring, our renowned winter snow transforms into fresh, cool water that fills our rivers and lakes. It happens just in time for you to set up your umbrella on a sandy beach at our more than 2,000 lakes, book a whitewater-rafting trip with an experienced guide, plot which inlets and currents you'll drift into on your stand-up paddleboard, or choose a hike where the refreshing mist of a waterfall revives you with a mid-trek cool down.

Thirty steamy, mineral-rich hot springs bubble up to welcome you in any season. Options range from luxurious resorts where elegant cabins and holistically centered spas sit steps from the water to family-focused fun with slides and diving boards to backcountry locales that require hiking a few miles to reach.

And when things are frosty above ground, give our frozen water a whirl atop a pair of ice skates. From rinks with sun-soaked winter skies to city and resort locales surrounded by busy shops and restaurants, this pastime serves up back-to-basics winter joy.



Animas River near Durango

2 Spend a Night Under the Stars



Maroon Bells near Aspen

With high elevations that let you see farther into the galaxy — without even needing a telescope — and a proliferation of mountain ranges shielding skies from light pollution, Colorado offers a wide variety of ways to gaze at our spectacularly dark skies.

Glimpse the vast, shimmering of the Milky Way and see rocky peaks illuminated by starlight. Take a guided trip through the solar system at an astronomer-led star party or cozy up for a private viewing from your sleeping bag in a backcountry campsite. With 17 certified

International Dark Sky Parks and Communities, you won't travel far to see constellations speckled across a clear Colorado sky.

Add a soundtrack to your night under the stars by grabbing tickets at one of our dozens of renowned outdoor music venues, where notes dance off surrounding summits and the stars illuminate forest groves. From the incredible acoustics at some of the world's most unique venues to music festivals that echo through surrounding mountain ranges, our open-air stages will ignite your soul.



Owl Creek Pass near Ouray

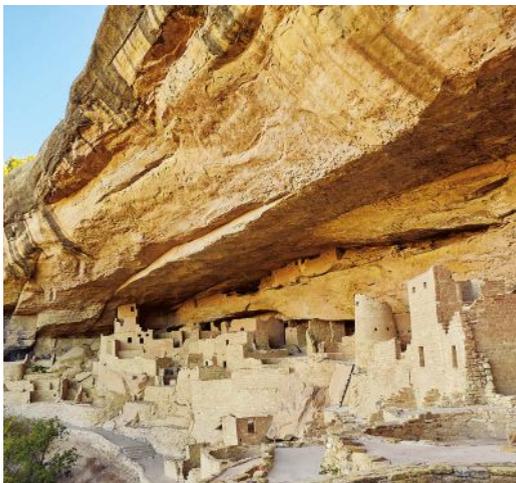
BEN MOSCANA, JASON J. HATFIELD



Timed Entry

Some popular natural attractions, including national parks, Maroon Bells, Mount Blue Sky, the Manitou Incline, Pikes Peak and Hanging Lake, require reservations certain times of year, so check in advance to see if you need one. These systems keep the areas from getting too crowded and ensure you enjoy your visit while you're there.

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve



Mesa Verde National Park

3 Explore Our Parks & Monuments

Colorado's natural assets awaken the imagination and stir the senses. Come to life walking a trail to the twinkling tune of aspen leaves, wrangling a feisty rainbow trout, crunching over pine needles while twisting along on a mountain bike, sitting beside a babbling creek for a picnic or witnessing

the wonder of bighorn sheep moving from one rocky ledge to another.

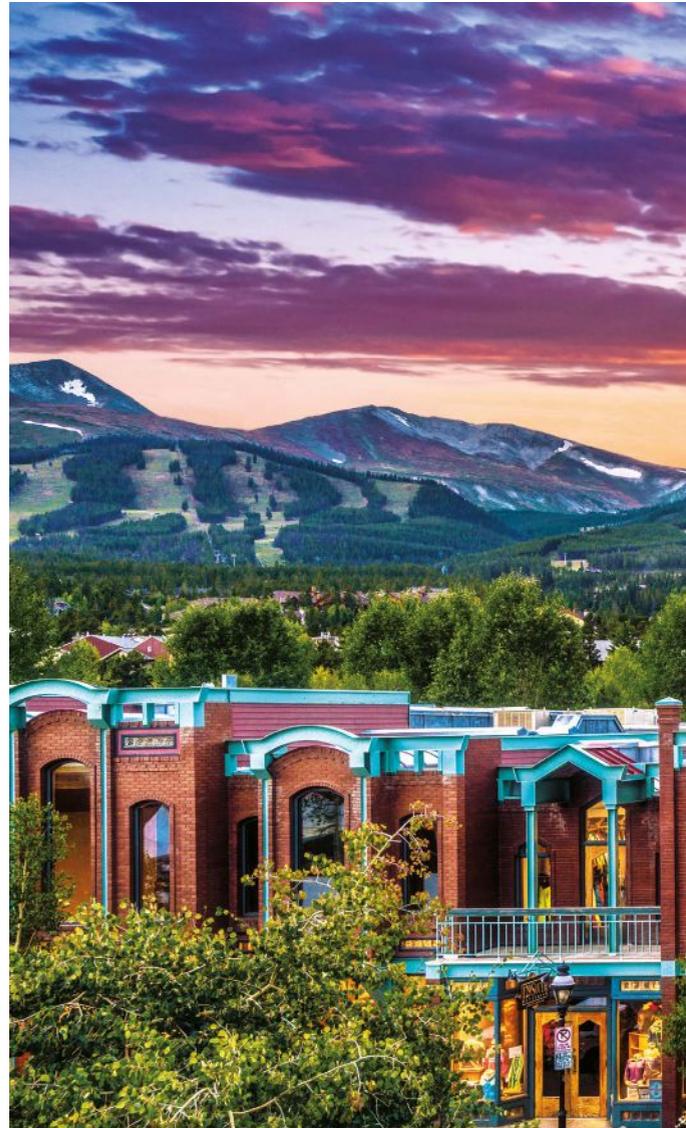
Our four national parks, nine national monuments and 43 state parks have preserved special moments like these — and millions of others — for visitors to carry with them for a lifetime.

4 Discover Your Favorite Mountain Town

Colorado's small towns cultivate big memories with their charming Main Streets, dining and shopping, and easy access to outdoor encounters. Pick up a trail right in town to hear the crunch of your snowshoes upon freshly fallen snow. Snuggle up in a horse-drawn sleigh as it jingles along to a hot-chocolate pit stop. Or sit back while a chairlift whisks you to North America's best skiing and boarding. As mild summer and fall weather dawns,

those same snowshoe and ski trails open to birders, hikers and mountain bikers, and those same chairlifts ferry you over fields of candy-colored wildflowers and rock faces set aglow with fall's reds, oranges and yellows.

For some Rocky Mountain nightlife, head to our towns with local casinos, where you can catch live music, try your luck at the tables and spin the reels on slot machines to see if you strike gold.



Crested Butte



Telluride



ANDREW MAGUIRE, JEFF ANDREW NATHAN BLOW

Breckenridge





ANDREW MAGUIRE (ALL PHOTOS)

Bar Lazy J Guest Ranch in Parshall

5

Live Our Western Heritage

In order to honor Colorado's true roots, we remember the land's original inhabitants. Dozens of archaeological sites, museums, byways and roadside plaques dedicated to our Indigenous peoples will have your imagination floating back in time to the first and most fascinating human experiences in Colorado.

Mining towns and tours tell the stories of early explorers, fur trappers and prospectors who came in search of treasure after hearing tales of rivers overflowing with gold rocks free for the taking. The Colorado Gold Rush was on, with covered wagons crossing the Great Plains to cries of "Pikes Peak or Bust!" Today, you can visit

many of these historical towns and ride our rails to see remnants of this gold- and silver-dusted past.

Nothing embodies the Wild West of our imagination like a dude ranch. There's something special about their down-home hospitality — by the end of your stay, you'll really feel like family. Whether you're looking to live out your on-screen dreams of being a tough-skinned ranch hand or simply wanting a taste of life outside of the city, more than 30 dude ranches supply an incredible getaway. Plan your trip around one of our Western events or small-town rodeos to see cowpoke culture come alive in a spectacular performance.



Overland Trail Museum in Sterling

6

Find Your Sense of Adventure

Adventure in Colorado doesn't have to mean barreling down a dizzying singletrack trail on two wheels or dodging moguls on a black-diamond ski slope — though it certainly can mean those things! There's adventure to be had atop an e-bike, where you can travel more miles and see more sights while the bike does most of the work. Cover even more ground by ziplining over a rushing river, hopping in a hot-air balloon at dawn to see the sunrise or

buckling onto steel cables to traverse a mountainside from great heights on a via ferrata. If you yearn to explore our outdoors but are hesitant to wander the wide blue yonder on your own, adventure guides can show you the way. These pros set you up with all the gear you need, share their expertise, and guide you safely and easily to the best spots for backpacking, fishing, climbing, hunting, OHVing, kayaking, hut tripping, backcountry skiing and more.



Cripple Creek



Yampa River near Steamboat Springs



Urban Farmer in Denver

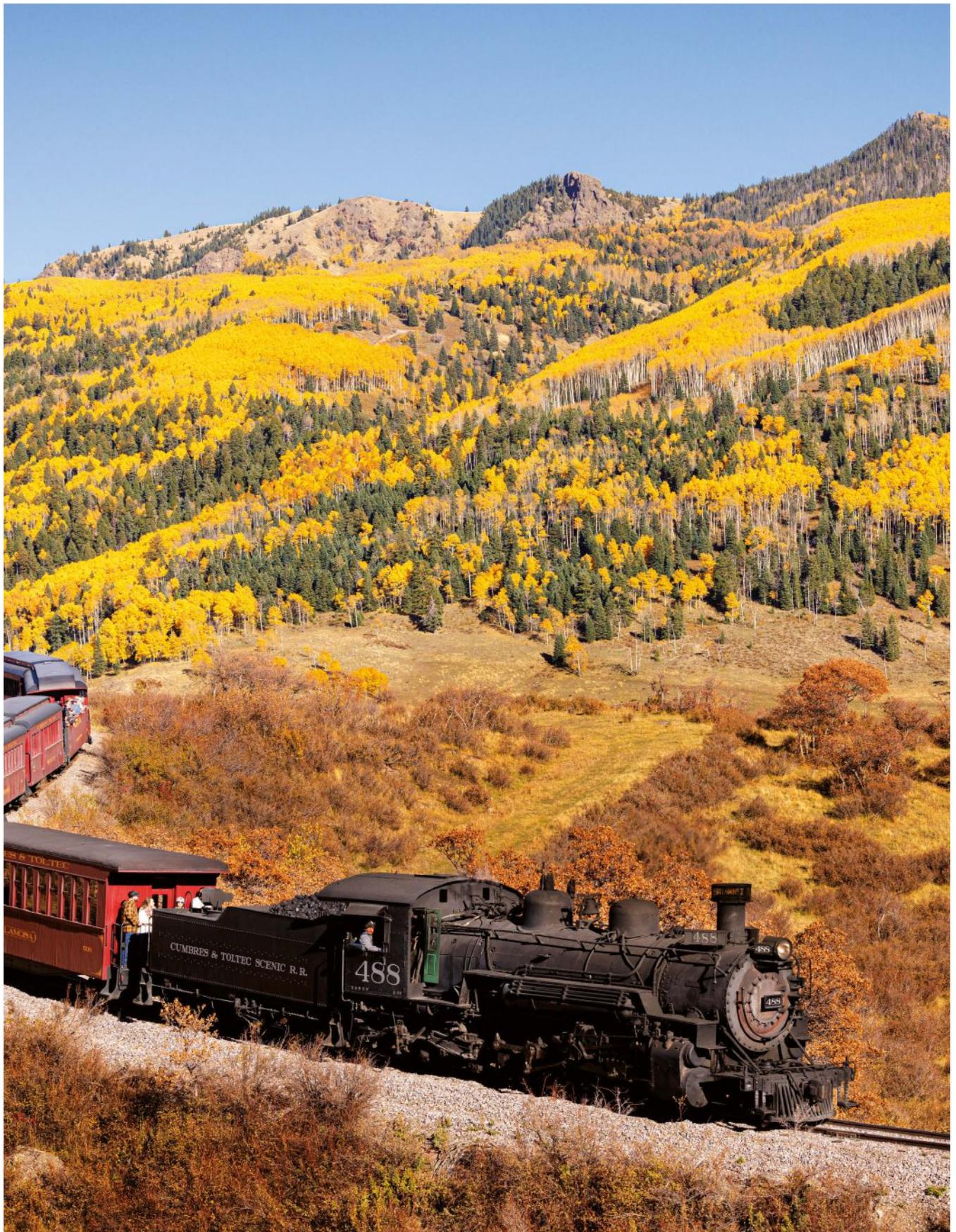
7 Eat & Drink Local

Rich in homegrown ingredients, diverse cuisines, an influx of internationally recognized chefs and a strong maker culture, it's no wonder Colorado menus are bursting with creativity and fresh flavors — and there are so many ways to taste them.

Going beyond farm-to-table, many Colorado chefs bring the table to the farm with hyper-seasonal dinners crafted from ingredients grown just a

few steps from where you sit. For the next-best thing, hit one or more of our roughly 100 farmers' markets for only-in-Colorado produce varieties to fill your basket. Those markets are where you just may find chefs gathering ingredients for that day's menu. Taste the exquisitely prepared bounty at restaurants across the state and keep an eye out for those praised by the Michelin Guide and James Beard Awards.

Our world-class craft-beer scene can trace its roots to the same wealth of local fruit, veggies and grains that brought these amazing chefs to our altitude. In fact, the Colorado Liquid Arts™ scene includes more than 400 breweries and 250-plus wineries, distilleries, cideries and meaderies. And a growing number of these makers partner with farmers to turn our native crops into liquid gold you can taste on site or at local restaurants.



Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad



Silver Thread scenic byway near Creede



Near South Fork

8

Take a Scenic Ride

Our 26 scenic byways connect the dots between historic sites and acres of majestic scenery that span red-rock canyons, Rocky Mountain peaks and sun-kissed prairies. The byways are truly a collection of must-see vistas. Picking a couple — and coming back for more later — will ensure you understand the true meaning of Colorful Colorado.

Rent or bring your own electric vehicle and head out on one of our 17 certified Electric Byways, each with charging stations spaced out just right for seeing the sights.

Or consider our scenic and historical railroads, which have held travelers' fascination since the 1800s. From multiday journeys to day trips with five-star dining experiences or seasonal encounters with Santa, you'll carve through jagged gorges and find yourself hugging steep cliffs on narrow-gauge tracks or traversing the banks of crystal-blue rivers.

Come winter, the mountains open to snowmobilers gliding across trails and fields of powder in the crisp, dry air. Find yourself on a meandering, family-friendly jaunt or opt for a high-speed odyssey over endless snowy hills.

JEFF CRICO PHOTOGRAPHY; ANDREW MAGUIRE



Delta

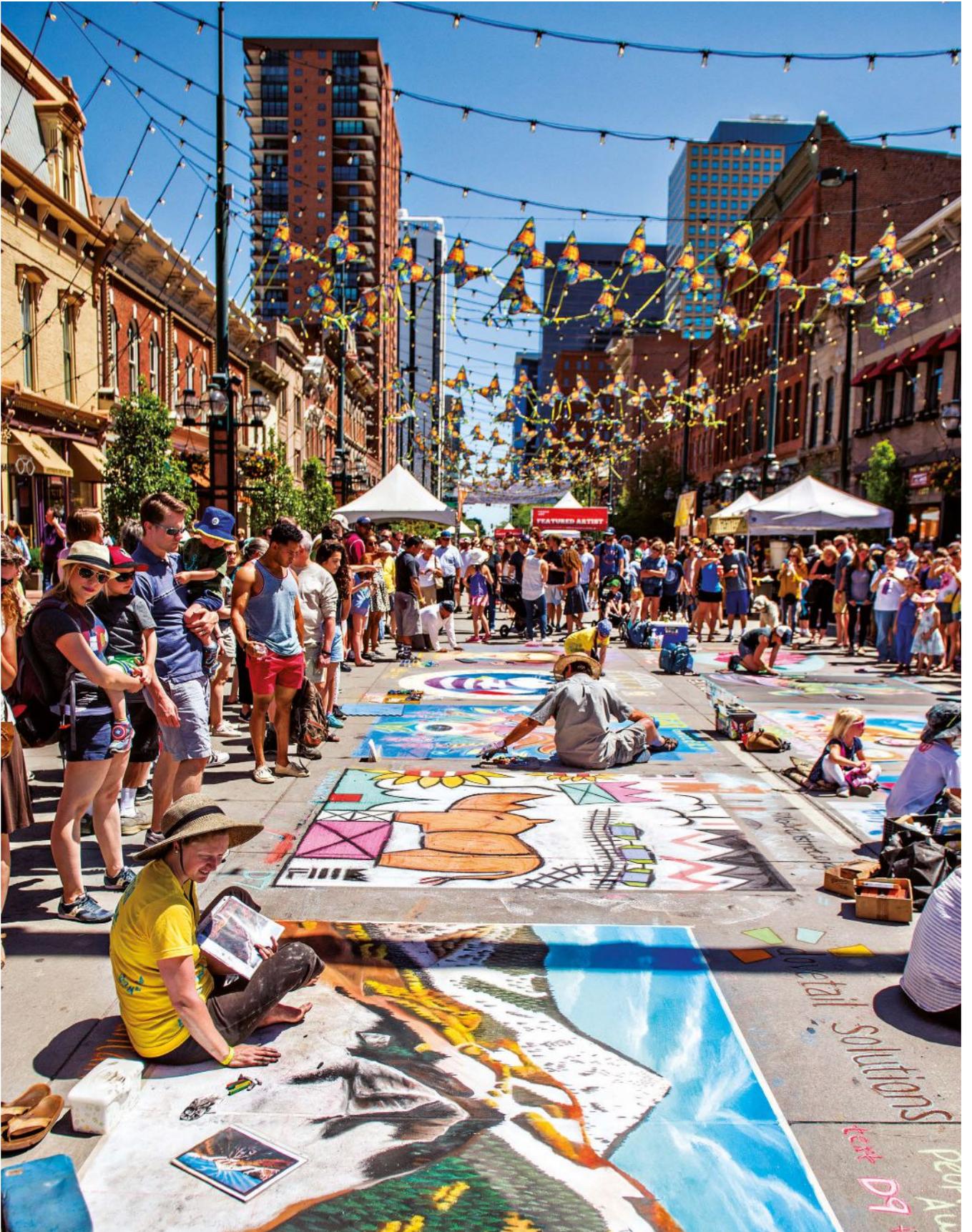
9 Experience Our Unique Arts & Culture

Surrounded by natural beauty, it's hard to imagine NOT being inspired to create something here. In fact, 30 communities brimming with galleries, artists in residence and special arts events have been designated Certified Colorado Creative Districts. You can find each locale's distinct creative flair through art walks, sculpture tours, concerts, street art, cultural festivals and more.

Much of our artistic credibility can also be traced to acclaimed art collections, many of which are found in architectural marvels and amid scenery that are destinations in their own rights. Whether you browse artistic attractions in our big cities or stumble into a

hidden small-town nook of a gallery, you'll be sure to find something crafted with a Colorado perspective.

That point of view can also be found in our collection of historical theaters and opera houses along the Colorado Historic Opera Houses Circuit. These venues have been serving up beautiful performances to Coloradans since the 1800s — and you can feel the history when you take in a show amid their gilded columns and chandeliers today. But there's much more: Our state also boasts the largest performing-arts complex under one roof in the country and several world-class theater companies, so there's always something spectacular on stage while you're in town.



JONATHAN PHILLIPS

Denver Chalk Art Festival

10 Enjoy Our Wildlife

Few places in North America offer the bounty of wildlife-watching opportunities available in Colorado. Our mountains, forests, plains, rivers and mesas harbor 960 different species, luring binocular-toting guests into our natural spaces.

Ensure at least a couple of them are part of your stay by following the birding trails — there are 54 of them! — known to harbor that elusive songbird or raptor you've been seeking. With nearly 400 different species of birds migrating through the state, there's a winged creature to be spotted in every season. Another option is attending

a wildlife festival with friends similarly in awe of an elk, moose or bighorn sheep to hear their bugles and see them prance and strut for their mates.

Or spend a day casting your line: Fly-fishers, ice-fishers and pure rod-and-reelers will find plenty of options along 8,000 miles of rivers and more than 2,000 lakes. Those seeking a bigger catch will find it in our quiet spaces: 23 million acres of pretty pines, plentiful pocket meadows and pure-water ponds host excellent opportunities for hunting, fishing or simply viewing majestic animals in motion.



Rifle Gap State Park in Rifle



Keep Wildlife Wild

Colorado is home to tens of thousands of furry, scaly and feathered creatures. To keep them — and you — safe, make sure to maintain your (and your dog's) distance. And if you're ever unsure, follow the rule of thumb: If you can cover the view of the entire animal with your thumb when your arm is extended, you're at a safe distance.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge near Denver

DUSTIN DOSKOCIL; JONATHAN PHILLIPS

State Parks, Four Seasons of Fun



Lake Pueblo

Wherever you go in Colorado, there's a state park waiting to welcome you. Mountains or prairies, rivers or forests, out in the country or next to the city. Colorado's 42 state parks (soon to be 43) are as diverse as the state itself, and they offer something for everyone.



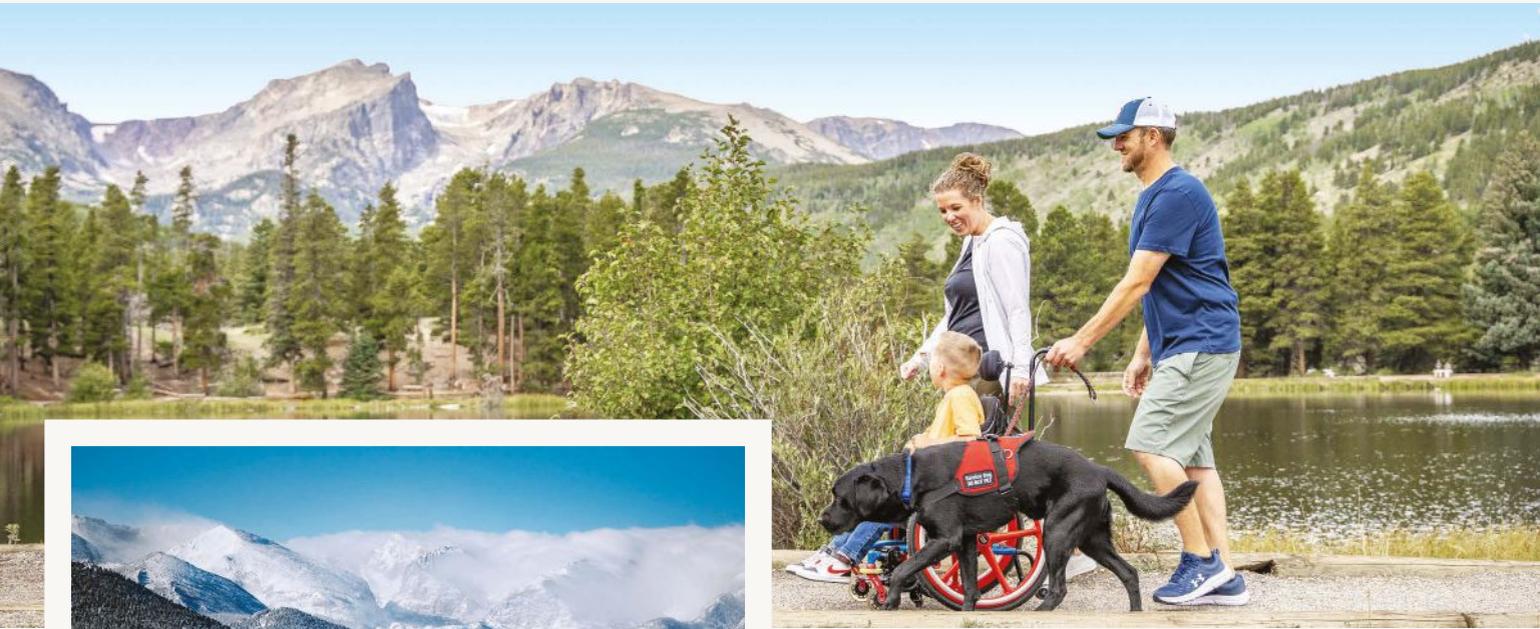
Motorized wheelchairs are offered in three parks.

Experience Colorado

Take a hair-raising whitewater river trip, or kick back in a lawn chair and watch the sunset. Enjoy a family picnic, cast a line in the water, take a hike, ride a horse, try snowshoeing or discover geocaching. From Eastern Plains parks at 3,800 feet to high-mountain parks at 9,500, the network of state parks offers a wealth of activities for busy people of all ages, or the chance to do nothing at all. In winter, spring, summer or fall, more than 4,000 campsites, cabins and yurts are available under star-filled skies. Reservations are required and can be made at CPWshop.com six months in advance.



Put Estes Park at the Top of Your List



Only 90 minutes from Denver and the basecamp to Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park invites you to experience the joy of the great outdoors. Find awe climbing the via ferrata. Find a surprising trail guide in llamas. Discover vibrant events year-round, cozy stays for everyone and charming shops and eateries, ensuring a memorable trip that'll leave you wanting to come back for more.

Get Outside

In Estes Park, the outdoor experiences speak for themselves. Climb the via ferrata with KMAC Guides, hike with llamas through Kirks Mountain Adventures, enjoy a snowcat ride to a backcountry cabin with Estes Park Outfitters, and snowshoe, hike, climb and more in Rocky Mountain National Park.

“Add to Calendar”

Take part in the revelry of Frozen Dead Guy Days, celebrate the elk rut at the Estes Park Elk Fest® or get lost in the holiday magic during Catch the Glow. Estes Park even now has its very own Skijor! You know, where a horse and rider pull a skier through a course! Estes Park has an event for everyone.

Find Your Home Base

Staying awhile is the single best way to see more of the backcountry, find solitude and experience this wondrous valley like a local. Traveling with the family? The YMCA of the Rockies is for you. Looking for an adventure-themed stay? Trailborn is a match. Dreaming of solitude? Check out Castle Mountain Lodge.

Eat, Drink & Shop

Stroll down the idyllic Elkhorn Avenue and get lost in shops like Trendz, Macdonald Bookshop and Aspen & Evergreen. With all that shopping comes a large appetite. Fuel up at Coffee on the Rocks, fill up at Bird & Jim and unwind at the Stanley Hotel's 217 Wine Bar.

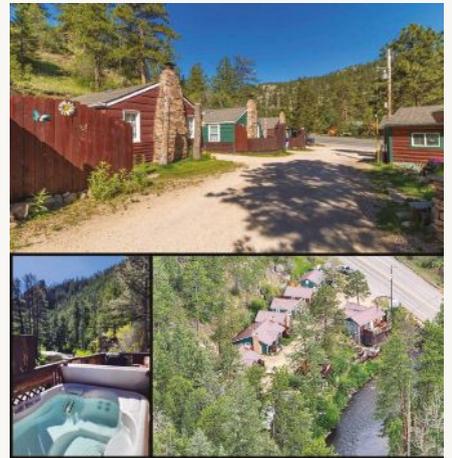
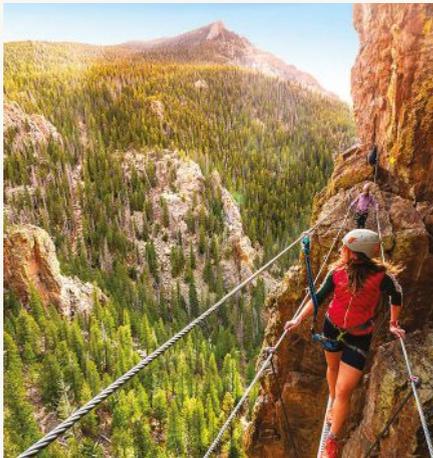


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Explore Estes Park With an AI Travel Assistant

A new way to plan travel to Estes Park and the Colorado Rocky Mountains. Rely on the Rocky Mountain Roamer to get fast answers and instantly find the best in lodging, things to do, restaurants and bars, travel routes, safety information and more. How can we assist you today?

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Since 1945, Rustic River Cabins has been your gateway to the breathtaking beauty of Rocky Mountain National Park and the charming town of Estes Park. For eight decades, we've welcomed adventure seekers and nature lovers looking to create lasting memories in the heart of beautiful Colorado.

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Where Every Season Shines Bright

Colorado reveals new adventures with each changing season. Conquer roaring whitewater rapids in summer, carve down powdery slopes in winter, behold budding trees on spring treks and marvel at the blazing beauty of autumn aspens. Whatever the time of year, there's no shortage of activities.



Avalanche Ranch in Redstone

Winter

Snowshoeing

Strap on your snowshoes and hit the trails for some crystal-covered alpine scenery. Set off two hours south of Denver to **Mueller State Park** in Divide, where you can find both beginner paths and advanced summits. Or explore **Breckenridge Nordic Center's** snow-draped pine forests, open meadows and icy streams, with well-marked routes ranging from leisurely strolls to challenging expeditions toward historical huts. **Carpenter Peak Trail** in Littleton winds through switchbacks below striking red rocks that lead you to the ridge's pinnacle, where you can snap a snowcapped selfie.

Hot Springs

There are few things as fun as donning a bathing suit and a winter hat, dashing outside and stepping into a steamy hot spring. Relax in Redstone at **Avalanche Ranch**, where you can unwind in natural pools fed by a 3-foot waterfall while soaking in views of Mount Sopris. Dip into natural blue water at **Desert Reef** in Florence, and stare at the dry desert terrain and rugged ranges that surround you. **Valley View Hot Springs** in Moffat is aptly named for its warm rock ponds overlooking the snow-sprinkled desert of the Mystic San Luis Valley.

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Keystone Resort

Ice Skating

Tighten up your skates, throw on a scarf and head to **Lake San Cristobal** in Lake City. When frozen over, it becomes a clean sheet of ice, ideal for perfecting your crossovers in a winter scene easily mistaken for the North Pole. **Keystone Resort** also has a dedicated skating rink, so you can hop off the slopes and spend an evening carving the ice with the picture-perfect alpine backdrop. Or glide over to **Cherry Creek State Park** in Aurora. When the ice becomes thick, you can head to this skating spot and snap your holiday-card photo.

Sleigh Rides

In winter, Colorado's fluffy blankets of snow make a cozy sleigh ride a must. When you visit **Dashing Thru the Snow** in Tabernash, snuggle under wool blankets and bound through glistening trails led by mighty horses, ending the night with some fireside cocoa. Or journey to **Bearcat Stables** in Edwards, where cowpokes guide you through a wonderland of white-crowned alps and frosty stands of aspens to a hearty dinner and drinks. See southwest Colorado via old-fashioned sleigh at **Bears Ranch** in Durango, where you can spot snowy views of Engineer Mountain, Hermosa Cliffs and icy Haviland Lake.

Snow Tubing

Hop into a tube and hold on tight at the **Frisco Adventure Park Tubing Hill** to spend the day flying down pillowy, lift-served runs, each tailored to a different speed. In Leadville, snag a tube and head down the free **Dutch Henry Tubing Hill** overlooking the former silver-mining town. For an evening activity, check out **Hoedown Hill** in Windsor, where you can slide under the stars on the longest tubing hill in North America.

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DOWNTOWN GRAND JUNCTION

The Western Slope's Cultural Hub

Welcome to Downtown Grand Junction! We are home to over 500 locally owned shops, galleries, spas, and more! You'll also find over 45 unique restaurants, breweries, tasting rooms, and coffee shops. Meet us on Main Street for seasonal block party events, and take a walk through our outdoor sculpture and mural collection, all part of GJ Creates – our state-certified creative district!

DowntownGJ.org | gjcreates.org | 970.245.9697

NAVIGATE COLORADO

Colorado is the eighth-largest state in the U.S., measuring 380 miles east to west and 280 miles north to south. Yes, that's more than 100,000 total square miles to explore. Luckily, with so much to see and do, Colorado is very easy to navigate. The articles starting on page 8 will give you ideas for exploring each corner of the state — and everywhere in between.

If you already know exactly where you want to go, use the list below to locate a specific city or town.

COLORADO WELCOME CENTERS

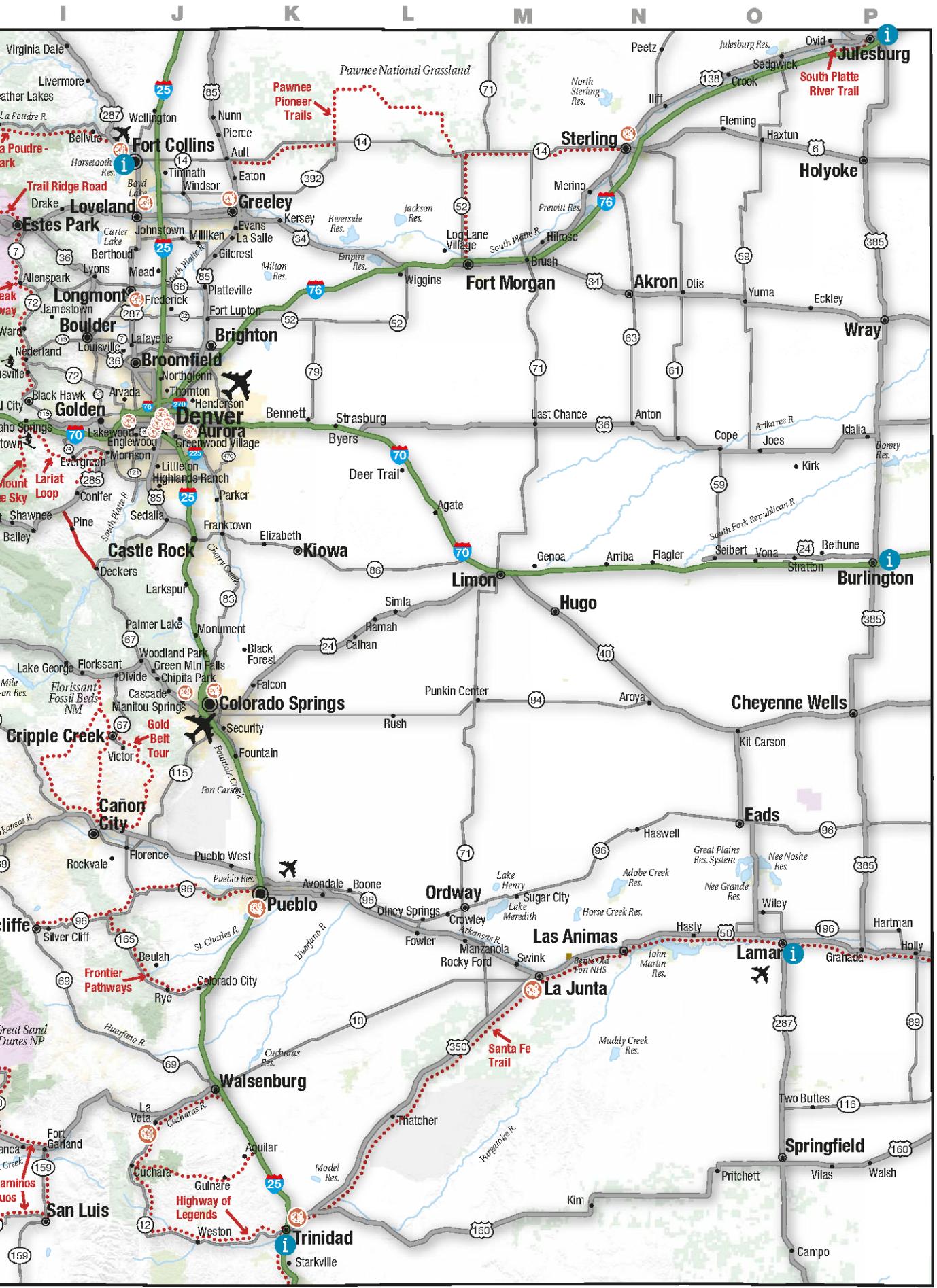
- Alamosa.....719-589-4840 H-11
- Burlington719-346-5554 P-6
- Cortez970-565-4048A-11
- Dinosaur970-374-2205A-3
- Fort Collins...970-491-3583J-2
- Fruita970-858-9335A-6
- Julesburg.....970-474-2054P-1
- Lamar719-336-3483O-9
- Trinidad.....719-846-9512K-12

COLO-Road TRIPS

We have even more itineraries on our website that will get you around Colorado with the ease of a local — especially to the places many visitors don't even know about!

Visit Colorado.com/ColoRoadTrips.

City	Map Location	City	Map Location	City	Map Location	City	Map Location	City	Map Location
Agate.....	L-5	Conifer.....	I-5	Glenwood Springs.....	E-5	Manassa.....	H-12	Romeo.....	G-12
Aguilar.....	K-11	Cope.....	N-5	Golden.....	I-4	Mancos.....	B-11	Rush.....	L-7
Akron.....	N-3	Copper Mountain.....	G-5	Granada.....	P-9	Manitou Springs.....	J-7	Rustic.....	I-2
Alamosa.....	H-11	Cortez.....	A-11	Granby.....	H-3	Manzanola.....	L-9	Rye.....	J-10
Allenspark.....	I-3	Cotopaxi.....	H-8	Grand Junction.....	B-6	Marble.....	E-6	Saguache.....	G-9
Alma.....	G-6	Craig.....	D-2	Grand Lake.....	H-3	Marshall.....	I-4	Salida.....	G-8
Almont.....	E-7	Crawford.....	D-7	Grant.....	H-5	Maybell.....	C-2	Sanford.....	H-12
Anton.....	N-4	Creede.....	E-10	Greeley.....	J-3	Mead.....	J-3	San Luis.....	I-12
Antonito.....	G-12	Crested Butte.....	E-7	Green Mtn. Falls.....	J-7	Meeker.....	C-4	Sargents.....	F-8
Arboles.....	D-12	Crestone.....	H-9	Greenwood Village.....	J-5	Merino.....	M-2	Security.....	J-7
Aroya.....	N-7	Cripple Creek.....	I-7	Grover.....	K-1	Mesa.....	C-6	Sedalia.....	J-5
Arriba.....	N-6	Crook.....	N-1	Gunnison.....	E-8	Mesa Verde.....	B-12	Sedgwick.....	O-1
Arvada.....	J-4	Crowley.....	L-9	Gypsum.....	E-5	Milliken.....	J-3	Seibert.....	O-6
Aspen.....	F-6	Cuchara.....	J-11	Hartman.....	P-8	Minturn.....	F-5	Severance.....	J-2
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Colorado Springs.....	J-7	Georgetown.....	H-5	Louisville.....	I-4	Rockvale.....	I-8	Woodland Park.....	J-7
Columbine Valley.....	J-5	Gilcrest.....	J-3	Loveland.....	I-3	Rocky Ford.....	M-9	Wray.....	P-3
Commerce City.....	J-4	Glendale.....	J-5	Lyons.....	I-3	Rollinsville.....	I-4	Yampa.....	E-3
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Certified Creative District

Scenic & Historic Byway

National Park/Monument

KEY

Do Denver Your Way

There's no right or wrong way to experience The Mile High City. There's only your way. Come discover unique neighborhoods, award-winning cuisine, craft breweries, performing arts, museums, art galleries, and so much more.



1 Find Inspiration

Denver's thriving arts and culture scene is an energizing experience for anyone in search of inspiration. Find a new perspective at Denver Art Museum's global collection, featuring more than 70,000 works of art in 12 galleries. Expand your mind at Meow Wolf *Convergence Station*, where visitors are transported to another dimension through immersive, psychedelic creations. Or take a look at the colorful murals bringing new life to alleyways and buildings in the River North Art District.



3 Eat & Drink

Elevate your tastebuds and find flavor throughout The Mile High City at any of Denver's 28 MICHELIN-rated restaurants, known for serving creative, locally sourced cuisine. And, if you can't decide where to dine, head to one of the city's many food halls or markets, like Avanti F&B or Denver Central Market.



4 Get Outside

The spirit of Colorado infuses everything in Denver, from outdoor dining to concerts under the stars. Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre hosts its world-famous summer concert series April-October every year. Get to the show early to take advantage of the hiking trails that meander through the majestic sandstone monoliths.



2 Gather the Family

Bring the whole family on your Denver adventure! The City Park neighborhood features both the Denver Zoo and the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, while Elyse Gardens Theme & Water Park, the Downtown Aquarium and the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus offer all-ages fun in the heart of downtown.

Learn more and find great hotel deals at [VISITDENVER.com](https://www.visitdenver.com)





Coors Field in Denver

Spring

Desert Getaways

Spring is the perfect time to cruise west to **Unaweep Canyon** near Gateway, where you can find ancient petroglyphs above the flowing East Creek. In Alamosa, see the flocks of sandhill cranes wake up for the season at **Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge**, flying through the air in a breathtaking display. Over on the eastern plains, you'll find remains of Apatosaurus and Allosaurus at **Picketwire Canyonlands**, south of La Junta. As the largest dinosaur tracksite in North America, this paleontological site has ancient footprints big enough to sit in.

Urban Escapes

In Denver, embrace the blooming season with a visit to the **Denver Botanic Gardens**, where you can weave through exhibits of colorful plants that thrive in our Western climate as well as internationally inspired gardens featuring florals from Japan, China and the tropics. Head to outdoor spaces like **Washington Park** or **Cheesman Park**, where you can lay down a blanket and picnic or jump in on a pickup volleyball game. Grab a ballpark dog and slide into early baseball season by catching a Colorado Rockies game at **Coors Field**, where the 20th row marks exactly 1 mile high above sea level. Savor local cuisine at spots like **Tocabe**, an American Indian eatery where you can pile crispy fry bread high with ingredients from Native and Indigenous producers.

Bound over to Boulder's **Pearl Street Mall**, bustling with street performers, local vendors and shops showcasing Rockies-ready spring fashion. Take a hike in **Chautauqua Park**, where the jutting Flatirons are on full display or bike along the water on the **Boulder Creek Path**. Don't forget to stop at the **Boulder Farmers Market** on Wednesdays and Saturdays, where you can pick up some juicy produce, fresh-baked bread and handmade crafts. As the day winds down, take a seat for farm-to-table dining, savoring the flavors of the season at local favorites like Michelin-recognized **Bramble & Hare**, known for "Dirt Dinners" that celebrate seasonal ingredients at peak flavor and freshness.

Hop on your bike and soak up the pure fun of downtown Fort Collins. Craft-beer connoisseurs will be in heaven touring the **New Belgium** and **Odell** breweries to learn the secrets to making their perfect pints — and maybe sampling a couple while you're there! Take a hike to **Horsetooth Falls** (bring shoe spikes in early spring) to uncover a tumbling waterfall and stunning outlooks of the city's massive reservoir. Wander the charming **Old Town** area, famous for inspiring Disneyland's Main Street, which is lined with historical buildings housing boutique shops, art galleries and eateries with cool patios and live music.

Welcome the first flowers of the season in Grand Junction. Stop by **Belli Fiori Lavender Farm** to walk through billowy purple fields and buy some fragrant bunches. Or spot osprey, blue heron and hawks on the Audubon Section of the **Riverfront Trail** system. Bring your binoculars and bask in cool air and sunny rays as you hike along the 1.5-mile path. Cyclists will want to plan their trip around spring's thrill-filled mountain-biking events like the **Grand Junction Rides and Vibes**, where you can hit the dirt and compete or just groove to live music. For a dose of culture, catch a performance at the historic **Avalon Theatre**, where symphonies, ballerinas and comedians regularly take the stage.



Boulder Farmers Market

Experience Pagosa Springs: The Perfect Escape Every Season!



Soak in natural hot springs heated by the earth's geothermal energy. Float above stunning mountain vistas in a hot-air balloon or explore Chimney Rock's ancient mysteries. Kayak the San Juan River, hike scenic trails or hit Wolf Creek's snowy slopes. Disconnect, breathe deep and Just Be Here.



Tranquil Hot Springs

Discover the world's deepest geothermal hot springs, with three welcoming resorts in downtown Pagosa. Unwind in mineral-rich waters amid stunning surroundings and experience ultimate rejuvenation. Whether you seek relaxation or adventure, these hot springs offer the perfect escape.

Year-Round Outdoor Adventure

Experience year-round adventure surrounded by 2.5 million acres of wilderness and national forest. Enjoy hot-air-balloon rides, river and lake activities, fishing, hiking, waterfalls, skiing and snowboarding. With four distinct seasons, there's always something exciting to explore in our great outdoors.

Sustainability

In a community powered by nature, geothermal energy heats a grid of downtown homes, businesses and the local community greenhouses. This sustainable, earth-powered approach fuels the hot springs and fosters a vibrant, eco-friendly lifestyle, reducing environmental impact and promoting a healthier future for all.

Inspiring Arts & Culture

Immerse yourself in a vibrant arts scene at the Pagosa Springs Center for the Arts, known as our own Broadway in the Mountains. Explore local art studios and festivals. Discover the region's rich cultural heritage and star-filled dark skies at the nearby Chimney Rock National Monument.



Rhythms on the Rio in Del Norte

Summer

Wildflowers

In the summer, the challenging **Goose Creek and Molly Gulch** trail near Deckers is painted with a stunning array of smooth aster, bellflower and yarrow wildflowers among granite rock arches and spires. Sprawling fields of bright yellows, purples and pinks will welcome you for a midsummer sunset hike in **Crested Butte**, the Wildflower Capital of Colorado. Or get your fix of wispy, red Indian paintbrush and a rainbow of columbines at **Lake Isabel** near Colorado City as you make your way to a bowl of rugged gray peaks, where a sparkling reservoir awaits.

Music Festivals

Music festivals are the best way to see some of your favorite acts — but in Colorado they often come with alpine views and waterfront fun. At the **Aspen Music Festival and School**, swelling orchestras, enchanting chamber concerts and dramatic opera arias echo through the town's bright-green poplar stands all summer long. Sway and sing along to intimate performances under star-filled skies during **Beanstalk Music Festival** in Bond, where many attendees paddleboard along the river between sets. Support music-education programs while dancing to your favorite folk rockers at **Rhythms on the Rio** in Del Norte, known for its family-friendly atmosphere and foot-stomping acts.



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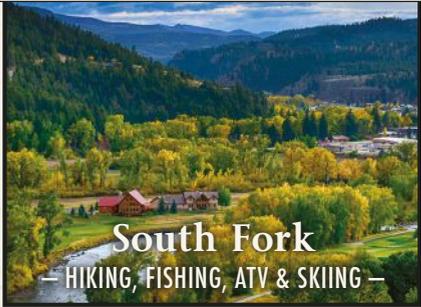


VISIT ALAMOSA

Where Culture Meets Adventure

In the heart of the San Luis Valley, Alamosa is surrounded by stunning beauty and outdoor adventure. Explore miles of trails under endless blue skies and enjoy spectacular stargazing when the sun goes down. Gateway to the Great Sand Dunes National Park, climb North America's tallest sand dunes, then immerse yourself in our rich history and vibrant culture. Experience our lively art, music and food scenes when you visit Alamosa!

Alamosa.org | **800.258.7597**



South Fork
— HIKING, FISHING, ATV & SKIING —



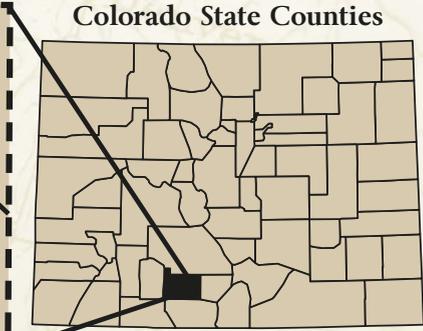
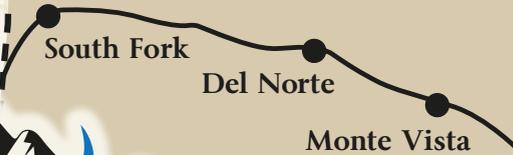
Del Norte
— BIKING & RIVERWALK PLAYWAVE PARK —



Monte Vista
— WILDLIFE, FISHING, HIKING & ATV —



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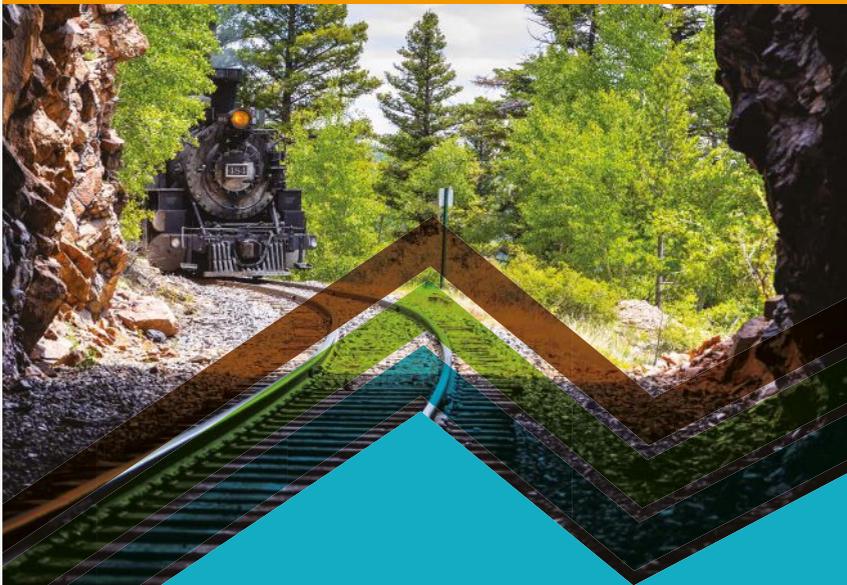
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Discover Conejos County Still Wild



Take a ride on the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, or explore the backcountry with miles of fishable streams and creeks, hiking trails and abundant wildlife. Come stay awhile.

ConejosVacation.com



Cache la Poudre River near Fort Collins

Whitewater Rafting

Spend a day rafting past ponderosa pines and bighorn sheep along the **Cache la Poudre River** — Colorado's only nationally designated Wild and Scenic River — in Fort Collins, where you'll find routes for every age and ability. Gaze at towering rock-canyon walls and desert ecology from your boat on the **Gunnison River**, where fast-paced rapid expeditions whoosh you through heart-racing water features and relaxed floats allow you to jump in and swim. Or spot crimson cliffs and Ancestral Puebloan ruins as you sail down the **Dolores River** in Cortez.

Winery Tours

Sip award-winning wines and breeze through the rows of speckled grapevines at **Colterris Winery** in Palisade. Make your way to **The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey** in Cañon City to try award-winning blends and roam serene gardens alongside views of the Wet Mountains. Or reserve a timeslot to visit **Jack Rabbit Hill** near Hotchkiss, where you can tour the lush grounds and learn about their biodynamic farming practices — and of course, try a glass or two of their organic vino.



Colterris Winery in Palisade

Durango: Where Adventure Begins



Where the high-desert mesas meet the towering San Juan Mountains! Durango is your gateway to all things adventure. Explore over 300 miles of high-desert and high-alpine trails, take a journey to yesteryear aboard a historical steam train, or paddle down the Gold Medal waters of the Animas River. Whatever your activity, Durango is the place to start your adventure.



No Matter the Time of Year, There's an Adventure to Be Had

Whether you're chasing fresh powder while skiing in the San Juan National Forest or basking in the warm summer sun on a paddleboard, Durango offers excitement in every season. With year-round activities and 300 days of sunshine, every visit unveils a new adventure. Come explore Durango!

VISIT
DURANGO
COLORADO

Discover Your Perfect Vail Getaway



Set beneath majestic peaks and boasting bucket list-worthy experiences, Vail's a place of discovery and connection. Here, special moments await at signature events, on treks across alpine meadows or on strolls through European-inspired villages. Splash in fountains, find tucked-away gems, dine out and make your forever memories in Vail.



Top Summer Activities

Answer the mountain's call and explore. Catch a gondola ride to the summit for panoramic valley views and miles of trails. Pedal thrilling singletrack to wildflower-filled meadows or hike through a thick aspen forest to cascading waterfalls.

A Foodie's Dream

Sample global flavors at Avanti F&B, from Mediterranean falafel wraps to savory pork ramen. Nom on brunch fare like Vintage's bacon-topped avocado toast. At night, relish all the live music at The Red Lion and artisanal sips at spots like Root and Flower.

Unique Events

In summer, Bravo! Vail Music Festival and Hot Summer Night concerts fill the air with music. Streets transform into a lively farmers' market or tasting room at Vail Wine Classic, while Kids Adventure Games brings family-centric fun with mountain races, rope courses and more.

Family-Friendly Fun

Vail is your doggy playground with pup-welcoming hotels, like Antlers at Vail and Gravity Haus Vail, and mountains of tail-wagging activities. Romp at bark parks and trails, dine on outdoor patios or enter doggo contests at the GoPro Mountain Games.

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EagleVailGolfClub.com



Vail's Mountain Haus

Nestled along Gore Creek at the Covered Bridge in the heart of Vail Village. Offering accommodations only steps from world-class skiing at Vail Mountain, dining & shopping. Enjoy everything from indoor and outdoor hot tubs, an outdoor heated pool, steam showers, saunas and a newly renovated fitness center.

MountainHaus.com
800.237.0922



Vail Racquet Club Mountain Resort

Nestled along the banks of Gore Creek in East Vail, 1-3 bedroom residences offer all the comforts of home combined with resort-style amenities. Guests enjoy access to a pool, hot tubs, a private health club, seasonal tennis and pickleball courts, parking and Wi-Fi — all at hotel prices. Book directly for cash back rewards.

VailRacquetClub.com
970.476.4840



Visit Minturn & Red Cliff

Framed by the Colorado Rockies, Minturn and Red Cliff offer a gateway to year-round outdoor adventure. Surrounded by the Holy Cross Wilderness, White River National Forest and the Eagle River, the area is a paradise for nature enthusiasts. Close to Leadville, Camp Hale National Monument, and Vail and Beaver Creek ski resorts, Minturn and Red Cliff promote responsible recreation and offer a more casual and affordable option for visitors.

VisitMinturnRedCliff.com



Antlers at Vail Condominiums

Nestled on Gore Creek facing Vail Mountain. Lodging options range from studio condominiums to four-bedroom residences. Antlers offers comforts of home with hotel amenities, full kitchens, private balconies, a creekside pool, hot tubs and more. Discover why guests return year after year.

AntlersVail.com
888.268.5377



Vail Spa Condominiums

Luxurious Vail condominium homes. Steps to Vail Mountain and Lionshead Village. Full kitchen, fireplace, indoor and outdoor pool and hot tub, tennis, pickleball, free parking. Choose exceptional service, resort amenities, and the comfort and convenience of a private residence for your next Vail vacation.

VailSpa.com
866.840.1861



Kenosha Pass near Fairplay

Fall

Scenic Drives

Load everyone in the car and discover golden pathways throughout the Rockies. The views are especially breathtaking on the **Gold Belt Tour** winding through Florissant, Cañon City and Florence, where you can stop and take a mine tour or see ancient ecosystems at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Uncover **Kenosha Pass** between Conifer and Fairplay, pausing to scout Segment 6 of the famed long-distance Colorado Trail. Reflect on some of our state's scenic water sources along the **Colorado River Headwaters** from Grand Lake to State Bridge. Rent kayaks and paddle on Lake Granby or discover cascades on the hike to Adams Falls.

Festivals

Don your lederhosen and raise your stein at **Vail Oktoberfest**, where the Bavarian-style buildings and yodel-worthy peaks are the picture-perfect backdrop for fall celebration. Sweeten things up at the **Cedaredge Applefest** to shop at street vendors for Southwestern crafts, sample bowls at the chili-cookoff competition and eat plenty of the city's signature fruit. For those with a penchant for history, the **Emma Crawford Coffin Races & Festival** in Manitou Springs pays homage to a woman who was buried atop Red Mountain in 1891. During a rainstorm, the site eroded, causing her coffin to slide into town, an event now commemorated by a tongue-in-cheek race where people push decorated coffins down the streets.



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BUT YOU

Colorado Springs has everything you're looking for: from jaw-dropping views to countless unique attractions and plenty of locally crafted brews.

But if you ask us, the best part of this city is getting to share it with you. Because what's the point of being the perfect vacation spot if you aren't here to enjoy it?

Learn more at [VisitCOS.com](https://www.visitcos.com).





Saint Elmo near Buena Vista

Ghost Towns

For an eerie alternative to a museum exhibit, peer into a Wild West ghost town. **Teller City**, near Walden, is a solid place to start. Step back in time 150 years when this silver-mining town was home to more than 1,500 people, 27 saloons and a hotel. Now, you can hike in to spot remaining cabin structures and imagine the lives of those who called it home. Hear the wind whistle through **Animas Forks** near Silverton as you walk down the abandoned main street, stepping into cabins, a remaining mill and the old jail. Or steer your bike to **Saint Elmo** near Buena Vista to see the town's 43 remaining buildings, including an abandoned courthouse and a general store that still operates seasonally.



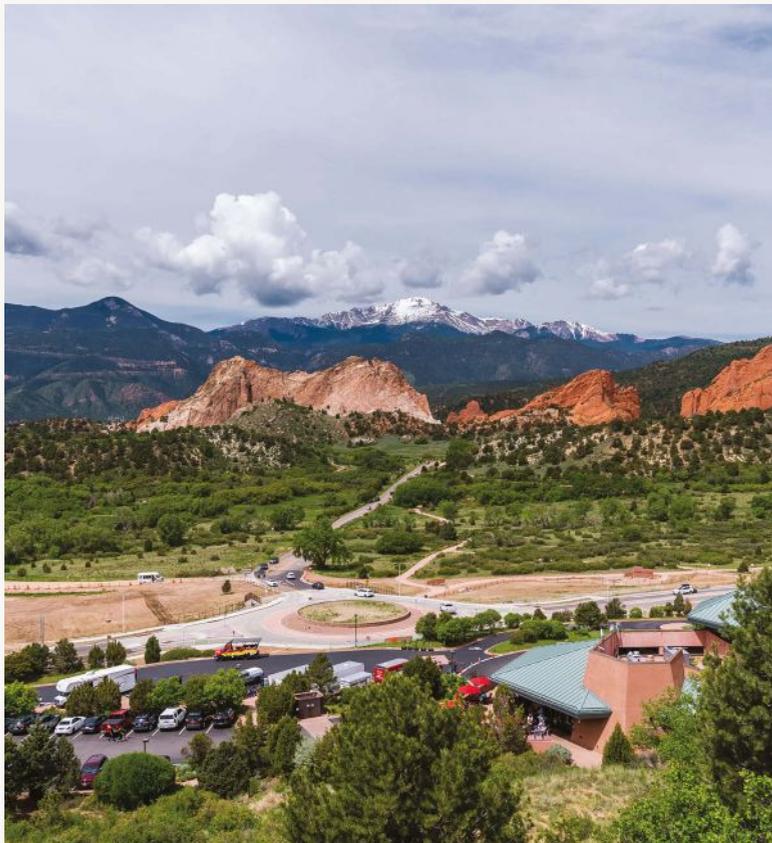
What to Pack

You might notice that we love our activewear. And there's a reason for that — weather conditions can change quickly, and we like to be prepared for whatever nature throws our way — like an afternoon thunderstorm that rolls in on a sunny day. From packing layers and comfy shoes to homegrown styles, check Colorado.com/WhatToWear for packing tips.

Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs

Hiking

While thousands of gorgeous hikes can be found in Colorado's foothills and high peaks, these options really sing when the leaves change around mid-September. Golden Gate Canyon State Park's **Raccoon Trail**, near Rollinsville, opens to panoramic summit views topped with plenty of chromatic trees. Along the wheelchair-accessible **Perkins Central Garden Trail** in Garden of the Gods, you'll spot stone formations like Kissing Camels and White Rock. And leashed pups are welcome on the **Jud Wiebe Memorial Trail** near Telluride, where you can see yellow leaves light up the San Juan Mountains. Fall's cooler temperatures also mean desert areas are more welcoming: **Rattlesnake Arches** near Grand Junction has more than 35 natural rock arches. The hike to see them can be strenuous, but the gravity-defying red-rock wonders make it worth the effort.



PIKES PEAK REGION ATTRACTIONS

Stay for the Memories

The Pikes Peak Region is packed with iconic Colorado landmarks, Wild West history, parks the whole family can enjoy and epic thrills for a surge of adrenaline. With so much to do, it can be difficult to plan your itinerary to suit your crew and budget. All the need-to-know info is curated in one place to make planning easy. Head to pikes-peak.com for attraction videos, hours, rates, itineraries, events and discounts.

Pikes-Peak.com | 1.800.525.2250



HISTORIC MANITOU SPRINGS

Chock-Full of Charm

The mountain town of Manitou Springs, nestled between Garden of the Gods and Pikes Peak, is the perfect basecamp for many Pikes Peak Region adventures. Minutes from hiking and biking trails — including the famed and challenging Manitou Incline — and packed with local restaurants, art galleries, boutiques and a variety of locally-owned accommodations, this town has a wealth of choices. Historic Manitou Springs also hosts unusual and lively events, the best of authentic Colorado.

ManitouSprings.org | 719.685.5089



SPONSORED CONTENT



PIKES PEAK — AMERICA'S MOUNTAIN

The Summit of a Lifetime

Road trip to 14,115 ft. on Pikes Peak — America's Mountain! Stop along the way to take stunning photos, hike scenic trails and kayak on serene waters. Be sure to keep an eye out for bighorn sheep roaming the slopes! The summit promises unlimited views, world-famous doughnuts and learning exhibits that explore the rich history of the mountain. Your unforgettable adventure begins the moment you fuel up!

DrivePikesPeak.com | 719.385.7325



CAVE OF THE WINDS MOUNTAIN PARK

Find What Lies Beneath

Cave of the Winds Mountain Park has been a must-see Colorado attraction since the late 1800s! Choose from three underground cave tours: the scientific Discovery, Haunted Lantern and down-and-dirty Spelunking tours. The above-ground attractions include the 100-mph Terror-dactyl giant canyon swing, three-story ropes challenge course, cliff climbing along the Via Ferrata, and the harness and hard-chair ziplines! Everyone will be sharing these memories for years to come!

CaveoftheWinds.com | 719.685.5444





GARDEN OF THE GODS TRADING POST

Beyond the Garden

A trip to the Garden of the Gods isn't complete until you visit the Garden of the Gods Trading Post. It's an attraction all its own, with on-site restaurants, gift shops and boutiques with artisanal finds. Enjoy lunch on the shaded outdoor patio with your favorite coffee before browsing an array of souvenirs to commemorate your visit. From T-shirts and local art to handmade jewelry and Native American crafts, they've got something special for everyone.

GardenoftheGodsTradingPost.com
719.685.9045



MANITOU CLIFF DWELLINGS

Explore Ancient Pasts

Encounter the history of the Native Puebloan people at the awe-inspiring Manitou Cliff Dwellings, a popular locale that encourages visitors to get interactive and touch history. Step back in time as you explore each preserved cliff dwelling, relocated from the Four Corners region near McElmo Canyon in southwest Colorado in the early 1900s. These 40 unique rooms, remnants of ancient Native American culture, illustrate what life was like for the Indigenous peoples of the state.

CliffDwellingsMuseum.com
719.685.5242





HISTORIC CRIPPLE CREEK

There's More To Do in Cripple Creek

Discover the historic mining sites, museums, trains and theater. Visit the Cripple Creek Heritage Center, tour the Outlaws & Lawmen Jail Museum, ride the Cripple Creek & Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad or venture into the Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine. Be sure to see Rita the Rock Planter, Colorado's newest troll. Meet the Cripple Creek donkeys roaming the streets all summer. Explore the historic buildings rebuilt following the fires of 1896 and enjoy historic games. Take a drive on the Gold Belt Tour Scenic & Historic Byway.

VisitCrippleCreek.com | 719.689.3315



Cheyenne Mountain Zoo

Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, named the fifth-best zoo in North America in 2024 by *USA Today* 10Best Readers' Choice Awards, gets you closer to your favorite animals. Hand-feed their giraffe herd on the mountainside overlooking Colorado Springs. Every visit is conservation in action, with 75¢ from every admission adding up to millions helping animals in the wild. Advance tickets required.

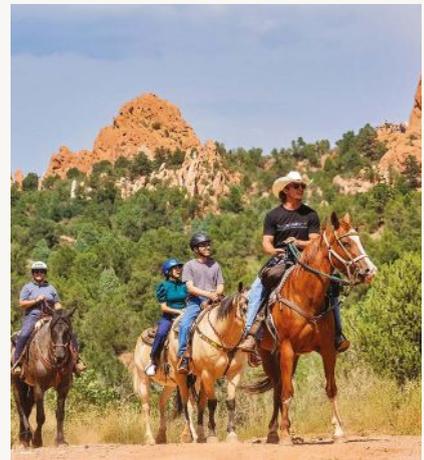
CMZoo.org
719.633.9925



Ghost Town Museum

The Ghost Town Museum is a living-history exhibit of Colorado's Wild West past with fun and educational activities for the whole family. Explore the preserved Gold-Rush-era town displaying authentic artifacts, crank a butter churn, operate an old-time arcade game or pan for real gold in the summer. Plus, you can shop for gifts or sip an old-fashioned sarsaparilla beverage.

GhostTownMuseum.com
719.634.0696



Academy Riding Stables

Enjoy the epic red sandstone and limestone landscape of the Garden of the Gods with Academy Riding Stables in an iconically Western way — on horseback. You'll make a new, neighing friend while learning horse-riding basics (or improving your current skills) on one- and two-hour scenic rides through giant rock formations or on pony rides for kids ages two to seven.

AcademyRidingStables.com
719.633.5667

SPONSORED CONTENT

THE NORTH POLE SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Experience the Magic

Welcome to The North Pole Santa's Workshop, an enchanting amusement park nestled at the foot of Pikes Peak. Bring the kiddos for a ride on the Ferris wheel or small-scale train, enjoy an ice-cream cone and say hello to Santa. With more than two dozen rides, charming shops and treats, this attraction's fun never stops. Home to Santa's Village and the jolly man himself, the park celebrates the spirit of Christmas all year.

NorthPoleColorado.com | 719.684.9432



ADVENTURES OUT WEST

Iconic Tours and Guides

If witnessing waterfalls, cruising dirt roads, biking through a scenic byway or soaring on a zipline is on your Colorado bucket list, look no further than Adventures Out West. This top-rated tour company has all your thrill-seeking and sightseeing needs, including hot-air balloons, Jeep and Segway tours, group hikes and more. All are sure to make memories that will last a lifetime.

AdventuresOutWest.com | 719.578.0935

PIKES PEAK REGION ATTRACTIONS

#1 Travel Channel in the Pikes Peak Region

There's a lot to do in Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region, and we're here to help you plan the best possible vacation. Check out @VisitPikesPeak on YouTube for insider info, local tips, reservations, vlogs, awe-inspiring time lapses, drone shots and a little Bigfoot content just for fun. We'll see you soon!

Pikes-Peak.com | 800.525.2250



Your Perfect Ski Trip On the Slopes & Beyond

When you meet a Colorado skier, you can sense they've uncovered the secret to true winter bliss. Our 28 ski resorts are nestled near charming mountain towns packed with delicious eats, exciting rest-day adventures and, of course, some of the best descents in the world. But not everyone grows up learning how to shred and knows how to navigate alpine runs; that doesn't mean it's too late to schedule a lesson and plan the ski trip of your dreams. Whether you're an aspiring skier, snowboarder or adaptive skier, or you're already a seasoned powder enthusiast, you can plan the perfect winter getaway in the Rockies. Here's some ski-trip inspiration, with tips from adaptive-ski champion, instructor and motivational speaker Tony Drees.

Aspen

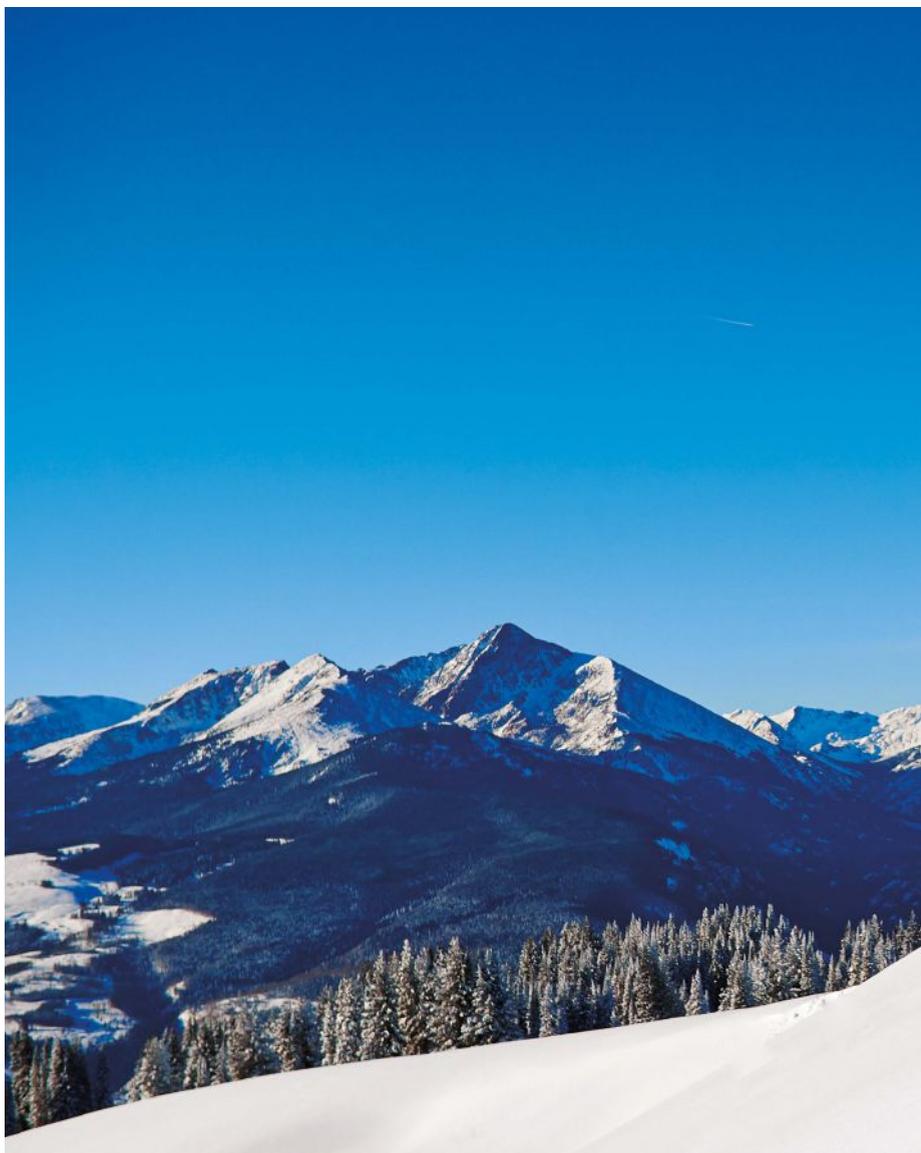
Aspen Snowmass boasts four distinct mountains. Aspen Mountain and Aspen Highlands cater to intermediate and expert skiers, while Buttermilk is ideal for families and freestyle enthusiasts. Snowmass, the largest mountain, has something for all skill levels. When you've set down your gear for the evening, head to **Mawa's Kitchen**, a Michelin Guide-recommended restaurant serving Afro-Mediterranean cuisine with a French-American twist in Aspen. Order buttery bread boards and spicy West African peanut curry. Then spend an afternoon exploring the latest eclectic exhibition at the **Aspen Art Museum**.

Salida

Hailed for its high-elevation terrain and short lift lines, **Monarch Mountain** near Salida is a bit of a hidden gem. Ride to the top of the narrow, between-trees Panorama Lift for 360-degree views of the Continental Divide. On your rest day, roam through downtown Salida, a Certified Colorado Creative District, where the Arkansas River runs through the community. Pop into **The Mad Potter** to browse handmade ceramic pieces by local artists. At night, stop by **High Side! Bar & Grill** and dig into their signature burger topped with "Salida Sauce" as you jam out to weekly live-music sets.

Vail

As one of the largest ski resorts in North America, and with seven legendary back bowls, it's no wonder **Vail Ski Resort** is one of the most iconic ski destinations in the world. While you're in town, dive into the sport's history. Step into the **Colorado Snowsports Museum and Hall of Fame** and uncover exhibits about the ski-clad soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division and Olympic racers who train on our slopes. For an intimate evening, reserve a spot at **La Nonna Ristorante** for a candle-lit dinner of fresh-made pasta with Italian wine.



Note: All resorts listed offer adaptive-ski programs.



Monarch Mountain Ski Area near Salida



Meet Tony Drees

If you visit Aspen Highlands, don't be surprised if you spot Tony Drees surrounded by an eager group of students or whooshing past you on three-track skis. As an instructor and avid adaptive skier, he easily clocks over 100 days on the mountain each season.

However, as a military veteran who lost his leg in 2018, his sunny ski days were not born from an easy journey. The award-winning documentary "One For All" tells his story of resilience through the unimaginable as he becomes the first Black amputee to do a ski-jump backflip at 55 years old. Today, he translates the lessons he's learned to inspire skiers of all stripes, ages and abilities, so they too can get a piece of that joy.

"For me, to be able to show up every day and have this [mountain] as my office view — and that I get to do this thing that I love so much around a bunch of people that also love it so much — what that does for my mental health is almost unquantifiable."

Experience the wonder of skiing in Colorado for yourself. From beginner-friendly bunny hills to black-diamond glades, there's a route for every skier at these resorts. Get to know them all on Colorado.com.



Vail Ski Resort

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MONARCH MOUNTAIN SKI AREA, TRANSITION-EXPERT TONY DREES, JACK AFFLECK/MAIL RESORTS



Backcountry Safety



Headed into backcountry territory?

Be sure to research your destination, check the avalanche forecast, and get proper equipment and training. Pro tip: Go with an experienced guide!

Be sure to research your destination, check the avalanche forecast, and get proper equipment and training. Pro tip: Go with an experienced guide!

Beaver Creek Resort



Telluride Ski Resort

Beaver Creek

If you're seeking out a family-friendly mountain, look no further than **Beaver Creek Resort**. It's known for both steep, expert terrain like the Stickline glades and beautiful beginner descents like the McCoy Park bunny hills. But what the kids will inevitably remember most are the fresh chocolate-chip cookies handed out at the base every afternoon. Once you've gotten your fix of sweets and slopes, shower up and head to the **Vilar Performing Arts Center** for fun-loving children's performances or moving symphony orchestras.

Telluride

Hop on the gondola in downtown Telluride and soar over to the **Telluride Ski Resort's** European-style terrain, much of which is situated above treeline. Once you slide down to a lower elevation for the day, plan for an Old West après. Hang up your saddle and head to **New Sheridan Hotel's Historic Bar**, the town's oldest saloon, which feels right out of a John Wayne movie. On your day off, let fluffy huskies whisk you through the San Juan Mountains' backcountry trails by booking a session with **Idarado Sled Dog Adventures**.



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Glenwood Springs

Sunlight Mountain Resort has budget-friendly day passes and lots of fluffy powder. Post-après, swap out your ski gear for swimsuits and take a dip in **Iron Mountain Hot Springs**, where the newest pools replicate mineral formulas from hot springs around the globe. Towel off and head to dinner and drinks at **Doc Holliday's Saloon & Restaurant** for loaded potato skins and triple-decker club sandwiches.

Mesa

Powderhorn Mountain Resort is in the Grand Junction area on the northern edge of the world's largest flat-top mountain, and is an ideal family ski-trip destination. Spend a day on the trails, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing through their scenic pathways near the mountain. For dinner, **Pêche**, in nearby Palisade shines a spotlight on the area's homegrown flavors, with produce from local farms and, of course, wine from the town's sprawling vineyards.



Sunlight Mountain Resort in Glenwood Springs



Overcoming Fear as a Beginner

Whether it's your first time on the slopes or you're trying your very first black diamond, fear is a natural part of visiting the mountain. Drees sees the process of overcoming that feeling as one of the most rewarding parts of the sport. In fact, he often compares the learning curve to everyday challenges — saying that conquering obstacles on the mountain can help you to face life's obstacles after you return from vacation.

"You're going to fall. You're going to take a hit ... that's what life is full of. No one goes to après ski and talks about how many times you fall. What you talk about is how you were able to get back up and conquer that thing that you were initially scared of."

Crested Butte

Crested Butte Mountain Resort is known for gnarly terrain parks, lots of expert-level runs and some of the steepest tree-cut trails in North America. This is the place to go if you want to step up your ski game, but there are also plenty of easy routes for beginners. Remember to wander downtown Crested Butte to discover work by local artists. And for dinner, you'll thank yourself for making a reservation at **Izakaya Cabin** for craft cocktails and fresh sushi rolls.



Adaptive Ski Programs

After losing his leg, training for adaptive skiing helped Drees through the difficult transition. At the time, his teenage sons were getting excited about winter sports, so he made it a goal to get out on the mountain with them.

"It's liberating. It helps you gain a sense of independence. It helps you gain a sense of community and for me, it gave me a purpose. I wanted to ski with my sons."

While Drees teaches all forms of skiing, one-third of his year is dedicated to adaptive lessons through Challenge Aspen, where he instructs and skis alongside people with disabilities. And he notes that there are adaptive programs throughout Colorado that can accommodate people with various forms of adaptive equipment.

"What I love about adaptive and what I love about skiing, in general, is that regardless of your ability level, there's something for you."



TRANSITION-EXPERT TONY DREES, CRESTED BUTTE MOUNTAIN RESORT

Crested Butte Mountain Resort



Winter Park Resort

Ski-Trip Tips

When it comes to ski-trip tips, Drees suggests drinking plenty of water, eating a good breakfast and scheduling in some extra time to adjust to the mountains' high elevation.

"If you fly into Denver, I recommend that you stay in Denver for a day and acclimate to the altitude. Even if you come straight to the mountain, don't ski your first day. Maybe go get your gear and wander around to get used to the environment."

And if it's your first time taking on the slopes, be sure to schedule a lesson to ensure a safe start for you and everyone else on the hill. Prepare for a few falls and challenges — and most importantly, lots of fun and laughs.

"There's going to be joy. There's going to be accomplishment. There's going to be adrenaline. ... They all have an opportunity to be present, to light up. That's the beautiful part."

Learn more about Tony Drees' story at transition-expert.com.

Winter Park

Winter Park Resort's two peaks have something for everyone, from Mary Jane Mountain's expert-level tree runs to Winter Park Mountain's family-friendly greens and blues. The resort is home to the **National Sport Center for the Disabled**, one of the best adaptive programs in central Colorado. To sneak in some extra thrills, zip through Continental Divide trails on a snowmobile with **Grand Adventures**. At night, grab a specialty drink at **Devil's Craft** and groove to bands in the lively downtown.



Granby Ranch

Granby

Granby Ranch has smaller crowds and big fun. Beginners should take advantage of the ski-and-ride school and flowy green terrain, but seasoned skiers will also find plenty of thrill-filled routes. On a day off, drive over to the west side of **Rocky Mountain National Park** for a serene, snowy hike through frosty pine trees to snowcapped peaks. Steer over to the **Granby Garage Roadhouse** to order saucy, slow-roasted barbecue sandwiches and an old fashioned.



Arapahoe Basin near Frisco

Frisco

Usually one of the first resorts to open and the last to close for the season, **Arapahoe Basin** is beloved by locals. Expert skiers hail the hike-to terrain on the East Wall for its steep chutes and breathtaking descents. Afternoon shredders should spend mornings dipping fresh croissants in cocoa at **Butterhorn Bakery & Café** in downtown Frisco before heading to the slopes. For a slower-paced day, rent snowshoes or cross-country skis and traverse sparkling trails at **Frisco Nordic Center**.

NOAH WETZEL; ARAPAHOE BASIN SKI AREA

Discover the Modern West



Photo credit: Grand Adventure Balloon Tours

In Grand County, the Modern West means high-altitude adventure meets an independent spirit. Explore six distinct towns that offer local events, shopping and dining alongside year-round access to alpine waters and trails.

VisitGrandCounty.com



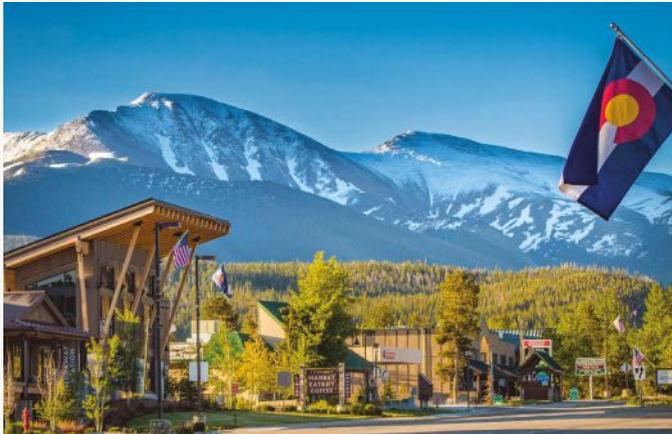
HOT SULPHUR SPRINGS

Outdoor Paradise

Located along the banks of the Colorado River, enjoy Gold Medal fishing and relax in the hot springs. Visit the museum filled with pioneer, railroad and Native American history. Experience the outdoors with trails to hike, bike, snowshoe, cross-country ski and more!

HSSChamber.com | 970.531.7588

SPONSORED CONTENT



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Experience Colorado unfiltered surrounded by groves of trees, wildlife, and beautiful mountain scenery. Known as the Front Porch of the Rockies, you won't want to miss out on it. There's a reason everyone loves Winter Park.

PlayWinterPark.com | 970.726.4118



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Kremmling, Colorado: A Sportsman's Paradise

Kremmling, Colorado, lies at the confluence of the Muddy Creek and Blue and Colorado rivers. We are within minutes of the Wolford Mountain, Williams Fork and Green Mountain reservoirs, and at the crossroads of Hwy 9 and historic Hwy 40. Known as a sportsman's paradise, Kremmling is your ultimate base camp for adventure.

KremmlingChamber.com



GO GRAND LAKE

The Quieter, Wilder Side

Just two hours from Denver, Grand Lake is a lakefront mountain paradise nestled against Rocky Mountain National Park. Uncover the wild side of every season with boating on warm summer days, hiking through stunning fall colors, snowmobiling across winter landscapes and skating on Colorado's largest natural lake.

GoGrandLake.com | 970.627.3402



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Located in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, Granby is an all-season basecamp for adventure, offering stunning vistas, outdoor experiences, and small-town charm. Hit the trails on foot, bike, horseback, or ATV, or cast your line in the Colorado River or Lake Granby. Come winter, Granby is a snow-covered wonderland with sledding, snowboarding, skiing, and snowshoeing. No matter the season, Granby offers opportunities to spot wildlife, take in the views, and enjoy the fresh mountain air.

DestinationGranby.com | 970.887.2311

From Rodeos to Dude Ranches Experience the Old West

Colorado's history is etched with tales of travelers drawn in by the promise of wealth after prospectors struck gold in modern-day Idaho Springs in 1859. The Old West spirit predates the Gold Rush, however, as this era is intricately woven with the vibrant heritage of Native American nations such as the Ute, Arapaho and Cheyenne, among others.



Bar Lazy J Guest Ranch in Parshall

After the discovery of potential riches, hopeful settlers from across the nation flocked to the territory to help develop homesteads, advance technology and cultivate booming communities of new businesses and vocations. This rapid expansion not only shaped the landscape but also left a lasting mark on the state's cultural identity.

While this period as we know it is history, there are still opportunities to appreciate what it was all about, from thrilling rodeos to Indigenous art and chuckwagon dinners. Saddle up and experience the Old West in Colorado.

Horseback Riding

Browns Creek Falls, Salida

Trails among waterfalls and craggy cliffsides make Browns Creek Falls a picture-perfect horseback adventure. Settle into a saddle and experience a quintessential Old West mode of transportation on a laid-back trail ride through pine forests. Gaze upon rocky vistas flanked with aspen trees, hear the gentle babbling of streams and witness the majesty of the flowing Browns Creek waterfall.

Staunton State Park, Pine

Sweeping forests and impressive natural landmarks like the towering Lion's Head, Chimney Rock and Black Mountain will greet you in this area that once operated as a medical-care homestead in the early 20th century. Sway on a horse's back along Elk Creek, a trickling waterway supplied by the flowing Elk Falls.

A&A Historical Trails Stables, Idaho Springs

Idaho Springs is rich with Colorado history, and you'll spot remnants of its storied past on an enlightening ride. Hear gentle hoofbeats as your horse walks paved trails, revel in views of Rocky Mountain peaks, explore a cemetery from the 1800s, learn about Colorado's Gold Rush background at mines or ride under a night sky twinkling with bright stars.

Hundreds of years ago, members of the Ute Tribe were among the first Indigenous people to integrate horse travel into their lifestyles in the region that is now Colorado.

Chuckwagon Dinners & Sleigh Rides

Flying W Ranch, Colorado Springs

Don't miss this tribute to Colorado Western heritage nestled at the base of Pikes Peak. Enjoy tender steak or a steaming baked potato and tap your foot to lively country and folk music from the renowned Flying W Wranglers. Walk the grounds outside to see red-granite formations and admire chuckwagon decor nodding to the past of this former cattle ranch.

Bar D Chuckwagon, Durango

Towering Durango plateaus and rock formations are the backdrop as you fill up your old-fashioned tin plate with roast beef, chargrilled rib-eye steak and homemade biscuits, while enjoying live performances at the Supper Show. Roll along on a miniature train ride amid the charming surrounding buildings, learn about the historical importance of leather goods or appreciate local Western-inspired art at the gallery.

Keystone Stables, Keystone

Snuggle up in a provided blanket and watch hills of spruce trees pass by while horses trot on smooth, snow-blanketed landscapes with you in tow. Knowledgeable guides will impart countless facts about the Soda Creek Valley, which once housed one of the region's earliest ranches in the 1880s. After the ride, warm up with a hearty meal of grilled beef or fish paired with seasoned veggies in a cozy cabin while live bands play.

The chuckwagon was invented by a rancher named Charles Goodnight in 1866. The portable food wagons towed by horses helped travelers carry their eats to Colorado and other states during Westward Expansion.



MATT BASS



C Lazy U Ranch in Granby

Ranch Stays

Canyon of the Ancients Guest Ranch, Cortez

Stay in one of the log-and-stone cabins and greet your neighbors — friendly dogs, cats and farm animals like sheep, chickens and cattle who live here. Nearby trails amid forest-laden hills, the meandering McElmo Creek and numerous historical Native American villages and landmarks allow you to immerse yourself in the area's nature, culture and history.

Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch, Loveland

Preserving its humble, early 1900s beginnings as a relaxing resort with chances to appreciate Colorado's outdoors, this cattle ranch invites you to unplug and unwind at one of its rustic guest houses. The ranch's offerings mix traditional Old West fun with modern activities —

learn how to ride a horse, venture out on a guided fly-fishing excursion or challenge a friend to a game of table tennis.

Cherokee Park Ranch, Livermore

Livermore is a small town with a mineral-prospecting past tucked off the beaten path for ultimate seclusion. Here, rustic lodging, mountainous landscapes and comforting hospitality await. Take to nearby trails to find fields of wildflowers, cast your fly-fishing line into a Gold Medal stream or simply get away from it all on this northern Colorado ranch.

Ancestral Puebloans once called Canyons of the Ancients home thousands of years ago. Learn more about them at the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Dolores.



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Your New Favorite Place to Slow Down and Breathe!

North Park is an out-of-the-way place where things move just a little bit slower. The sleepy town of Walden and surrounding communities of Jackson County offer panoramic mountain views, endless blue skies and an abundance of wildlife — from elk, deer, pronghorn and bears to the iconic moose.

Slow things down in this four-season destination, where you can experience world-class camping, fishing, backpacking and hunting or even check out winter adventure sports like snowmobiling and dog-sled races.

Whether it's watching the night sky on a summer evening or teeing off with the locals at the annual ice golf tournament in winter, North Park has everything you've been looking for in your new favorite place.

VisitNorthParkCO.com



Museums

A.R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art, Trinidad

Opened in 1981, “The Mitch” houses 350-plus paintings of Western action scenes, landscapes, livestock and cowboys created by Arthur Roy Mitchell and his 20th-century contemporaries. Don’t miss the collection of Hispanic, Spanish and Native American folk art, featuring pottery, textiles and intricate retablos — devotional art enclosed in panels, as if presented on an altar.

Museum of Northwest Colorado, Craig

With exhibits showcasing shotguns, Native American artifacts and centuries-old family records, this small-town museum delivers comprehensive chronicles of the region’s past. Check out entertaining and interactive collections detailing the history of gunfighters, cowboys and even dinosaurs in Colorado.

Black American West Museum & Heritage Center, Denver

Learn about the important roles that Black Americans played in developing the West at this museum dedicated to dispelling stereotypes and misconceptions about Black cowboys. The programs and collections tell impactful stories of Black miners, ranchers, teachers, soldiers, blacksmiths and more.

The Black American West Museum & Heritage Center is located in the former home of Colorado’s first Black physician, Dr. Justina Ford.



A.R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art in Trinidad

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The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad & Museum, a national historic landmark, is located in the heart of America's Southwest Grand Circle; it is the only point in the U.S. shared by four states. This circle has the largest concentration of national parks and monuments in the U.S. including Colorado's Mesa Verde National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



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Background Photo: Anthony D'Amato



Kit Carson County Fair-Rodeo in Burlington

Rodeos & Fairs

High Country Stampede Rodeo, Fraser

Don your cowboy hat and watch in awe as cowpokes fight to stay on bucking bulls and teams of expert ropers showcase their lassoing skills. In between competitions, indulge in fall-off-the-bone brisket from SMOKE restaurant and enjoy a rodeo clown show, complete with inflatable horses and vibrant face paint, that will have the whole family laughing.

Stampede Ranch & PRCA-WPRA Rodeo, Westcliffe

Soak in the stately views of the jagged Wet Mountain Valley as you witness horseback competitors wrangling calves and steer, and cheer on barrel-racing cowgirls weaving speedy horses in a cloverleaf shape. With plenty of kid-friendly events, including a wooden-horse race, this special function dedicated to preserving Colorado's Old West history is a must for the whole family.

Evergreen Rodeo, Evergreen

Prepare to be dazzled by entertaining classics like mutton bustin' and bucking broncos with chap fringes and tassels whipping in the wind. Don't miss impressive performances from the drill team, the Rocky Mountain Renegades; hear the clops of synchronized horse trotting as the group parades around the arena holding flags and weaving into precise shapes. Stick around for the parade of patriotic floats, air shows and antique automobiles along the idyllic streets of Evergreen.

Colorado's first rodeo competition happened in Deer Trail on July 4, 1869, sparking popularization of the rip-roaring sensation throughout the territory.

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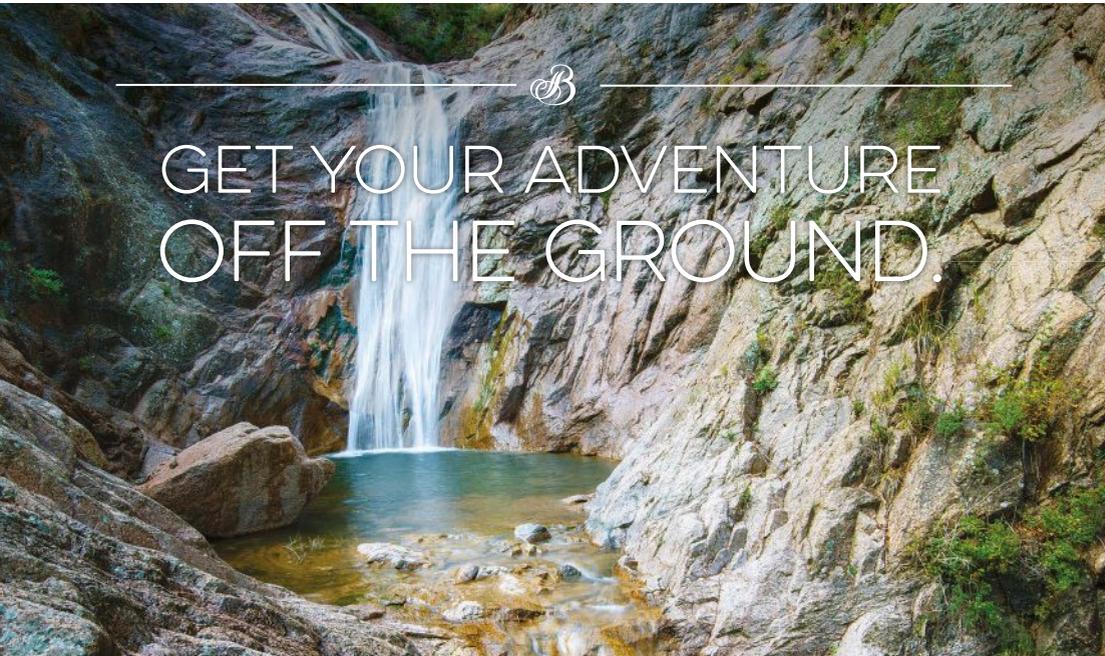
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Scenic Music Venues

in the Mountains

The electric energy and stunning sounds that come from live-concert performances can feel otherworldly; but at these scenic venues, the views from your seat add even more magic to the music. From crimson monoliths at Red Rocks Amphitheatre to the peaceful waves behind the lakeside Dillon Amphitheater, get ready for a musical journey that engages all your senses.



Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison

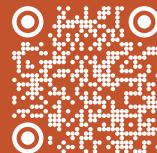
Red Rocks Amphitheatre

The naturally occurring, acoustically perfect, jaw-droppingly scenic Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison is the mother of all outdoor music venues. Built into the rust-colored cliffs just outside of Denver, this stage is renowned for its impeccable sound quality, which complements performances ranging from folky rambles to bass-pumping EDM sets. And it's been captivating audiences and musicians alike for more than 100 years now, hosting icons like The Beatles and John Denver.

Red Rocks History

The giant sandstone outcroppings that form the walls of Red Rocks Amphitheatre are higher than Niagara Falls and are part of the geological Fountain Formation, deposited approximately 280 million years ago.

Discover even more reasons to love Red Rocks on Colorado.com.





Know Before You Go

Colorado’s weather and terrain are stunning, but they can change drastically. Before you depart for the show, check conditions, wear appropriate footwear and pack layers, sun protection and rain gear.

Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater in Vail

Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater

Locals affectionately refer to the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater as “The Amp,” but visitors will also want to get familiar with this Vail Valley stage for its tunes and rugged views of the Gore Range. Lay down a blanket and lounge on the lawn or get closer to the performers by reserving seats near your favorite artists in the pavilion. In the evening, watch as the sky sets ablaze with rose-colored clouds. And once the sun descends westward over the mountains and stars begin to appear, the celestial show above just might rival the on-stage performances. The natural beauty surrounding this venue sets the scene for events like the Vail Dance Festival, Bravo! Vail Music Festival and the free Hot Summer Nights series.

Ford Amphitheater

One of Colorado’s newest outdoor music venues, Ford Amphitheater in Colorado Springs offers a wide range of soulful performances and spectacular sunsets behind Pikes Peak. Dozens of highly anticipated shows are slated to appear on the stage already. And there’s no such thing as a bad seat at this amphitheater. Near the front, you can see your favorite artists up close; farther back, you can gaze at the Rocky Mountain views that made Gold Rush pioneers giddy when they first spied them as they crossed the Great Plains.

The Michael Klein Music Tent at Aspen Music Festival and School

Echoing the Sawatch Range's white peaks, The Michael Klein Music Tent's canopy boasts the acoustics of a concert hall and the romance and freshness of an open-air pavilion. Surrounded by tall, white-trunked poplars and bright-green grass dotted with a rainbow of wildflowers, this venue is encompassed by serene natural beauty. If you walk the grounds on a warm summer day, you might even spot a music student practicing a violin tune among the trees. Step inside the tent to hear recitals from the Aspen School of Music, Jazz Aspen Snowmass and the Aspen Chamber Symphony.

Dillon Amphitheater

Sailboats crisscross the crystal-blue alpine lake that serves as the backdrop for this stunning stage on the banks of Lake Dillon. Sit back and relax as you watch a vibrant summer sunset reflect across the sparkling water, listening to the voices of established and emerging artists echo through the valley. The Dillon Amphitheater is a bit of a hidden gem in Colorado, where fans of the venue itself often book tickets every year, with the music as a secondary — but crucial — factor.



The Fred Shellman Memorial Stage in Telluride

The Fred Shellman Memorial Stage

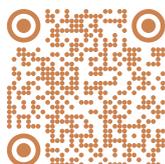
Jagged San Juan peaks tower over Telluride Town Park, where you can soak in 360 degrees of mountain views from your spot by The Fred Shellman Memorial Stage. The craggy landscape that surrounds the box canyon creates a breathtaking setting for signature music events like Telluride's Blues & Brews Festival, Jazz Celebration and Bluegrass Festival. And when the season transitions from summer to early fall, the aspen groves that frame the stage glow bright gold. Many visitors set up tents at the park campground during multiday musical events and summertime shows so they can wake up amid the action.

Mishawaka Amphitheatre

Set on the wooded banks of the Cache la Poudre River, Mishawaka Amphitheatre in Bellvue, just west of Fort Collins, attracts big crowds with its lineup of jam bands, all set against the background of a rustic, lodgepole-pine stage. While you're rocking out, you can peer at the rocky hills beyond the performance platform where you just might see bighorn sheep grazing. Between sets, listen for whitewater whooshing past in the river below this locally loved venue.



Dillon Amphitheater



Explore upcoming concerts and festivals on **Colorado.com**.



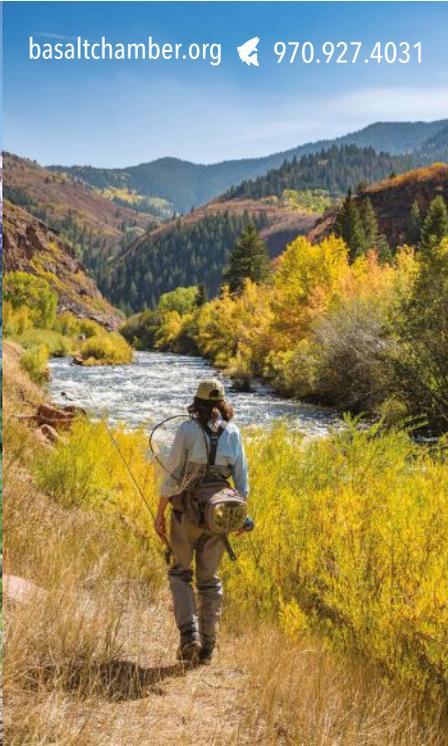
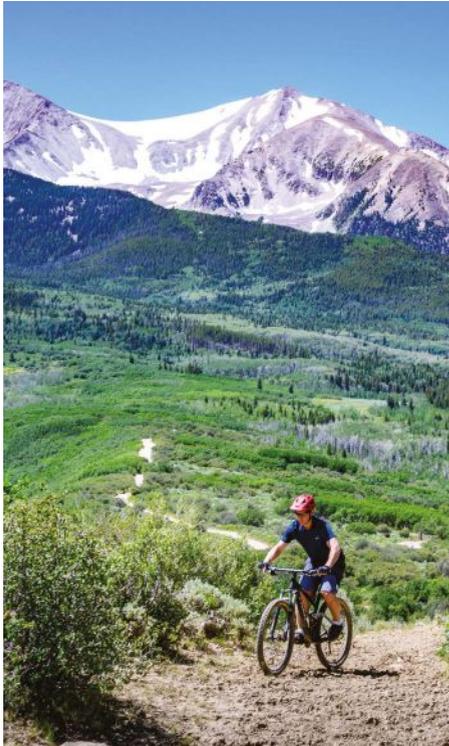
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Chimney Rock National Monument near Pagosa Springs

Traverse the Ancestral Lands

of Colorado's Southwest

Colorado's southwest is a haven for those seeking a sense of history, cultural immersion and rugged beauty.

Located in the Colorado Plateau, the sandstone canyons and sage-covered plains of the **Mesa Verde region** are home to one of the largest concentrations of ancestral sites in the country. Here, you can step into the past and traverse the same paths as the Ancestral Puebloans did over 800 years ago, or walk among their homes and sacred sites to gather a sense of a day in their lives.

While marveling at the landscape and its architectural wonders, it's important to remember that Colorado was colonized on Native territory, and that this region serves as an opportunity to connect with and learn from Indigenous cultures, as well as appreciate the land that joins us all.

Take the time to travel thoughtfully through this landscape by learning the history of the area's first inhabitants, as well as how to respect their culture and ancestral sites.



Experience Colorado’s Native Roots

Colorado is home to two federally recognized tribes, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and the Southern Ute Mountain Tribe in the southwestern region of the state. However, Colorado has historical ties with 51 contemporary tribes.

At the heart of this region, the **Crow Canyon Archaeological Center** in Cortez strives to make the past accessible and relevant for people of all ages so they can learn about the diversity, dynamic cultures and histories of the American Southwest.

“We really like to highlight the unbroken continuity of past and present people. A lot of visitors who are coming from out-of-state often think about Indigenous people as being of the past, that they are no longer here or they abandoned their area or they moved away, and it’s really not the case,” said Sarah Payne, chief outreach officer at the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center.

“There are many different language groups within the Pueblo world. There are also Diné (Navajo), Jicarilla Apache, Paiute and Ute — many diverse cultures and vibrant communities today that maintain their language, traditions and connections to these ancestral places that are very much alive in that sense.”

The nonprofit was founded in 1983 when its co-founders had a vision to build a center that could study the long-term occupation of human history in southwest Colorado. Working in collaboration with Indigenous peoples — preceding the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 — the center has been able to produce valuable research and bring free education to the public about this remote part of the world. The center’s website

shares 40 years of resources, as well as one of the largest archaeological databases in North America that is accessible to the public.

Crow Canyon’s weeklong travel seminars and workshops incorporate many different perspectives and voices while providing a cultural-immersion experience. Guided by the Cultural Explorations team of tribal members, cultural specialists and archaeologists, small group tours are led into ancestral landscapes and tribal communities in a way that helps travelers connect the past to the present.

However, if you have an itch to become a citizen scientist, Crow Canyon collaborates with the **Cortez Cultural Center** to host two weeklong archaeological surveys of Hawkins Preserve, a natural and cultural area just south of Cortez. Participants are invited to contribute to the research actively being done in the area to better understand the human occupation of this landscape over thousands of years.

While in the area, Jon Ghahate — Crow Canyon Archaeological Center educator and Pueblo member of the Laguna and Zuni tribes — recommends a visit to **Mesa Verde National Park**.

As the largest archaeological preserve in the U.S., this park protects the rich cultural heritage of 26 tribes, offering a unique window into the past. The park’s cliff-dwelling tours allow visitors to explore the world-famous masterpiece of architecture and design at Cliff Palace — the largest cliff dwelling in North America. Take the Balcony House tour to follow in the footsteps of the Ancestral Puebloans that once lived there. On this tour, you’ll scale the face of a cliff via several tall ladders, squeeze

Ute Tribal Park in Towaoc

COME TO LIFE

your way through a narrow tunnel on your hands and knees, and explore some of the same passages used over 800 years ago.

The neighboring **Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park** is one of Payne's favorite places to visit. Located on the land of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe who serve as the stewards of the park, this land is accessible only by tour with one of their Native guides. These sacred landscapes also contain ancestral connections to many cultures, including the Pueblo, Ute, Diné (Navajo), Jicarilla Apache and Paiute.

"It's a memorable experience when you can learn directly from tribal members who are carrying the stories, songs and traditions that are tied to such magnificent landscapes," Payne said. "It's almost like stepping back in time, hiking along backcountry trails and through remote canyons with remarkably well-preserved sites."

Then, make your way to the **Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Visitor Center & Museum** in Dolores for world-class interpretive exhibits, as well as their guidance for exploring trails within the monument. Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance also partners with the Bureau of Land Management to offer guided tours of the monument.

To the east of these destinations lies the Southern Ute Reservation, where you can deepen your knowledge of Ute history through the exhibits at the **Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum** in Ignacio. For an off-the-beaten-path immersion, make your way to nearby **Chimney Rock National Monument**, the highest elevation Chacoan site in the U.S. Follow in the footsteps of the Ancestral Puebloans of the Chaco Canyon by traversing primitive pathways that have remained unchanged over the past 1,000 years. Explore over

200 preserved homes and ceremonial buildings and make the short half-mile hike to the top of the monument for rewarding 360-degree views of Colorado and New Mexico.

Or experience wellness as the Southern Ute people once did with a stay at **The Springs Resort** in Pagosa Springs and soak in the rejuvenating mineral waters of the Mother Spring, the deepest geothermal hot spring on Earth. Rooted to the original inhabitants of the area, the town's name "Pagosa" comes from the Ute word meaning "healing waters." As legend would have it, the hot springs water emerged from the ground as an answer to the tribe's prayers, curing them of a great plague that ailed their people. These waters now feed into 25 pools of varying temperatures to soak in and restore your body and soul as the Southern Ute people once did.

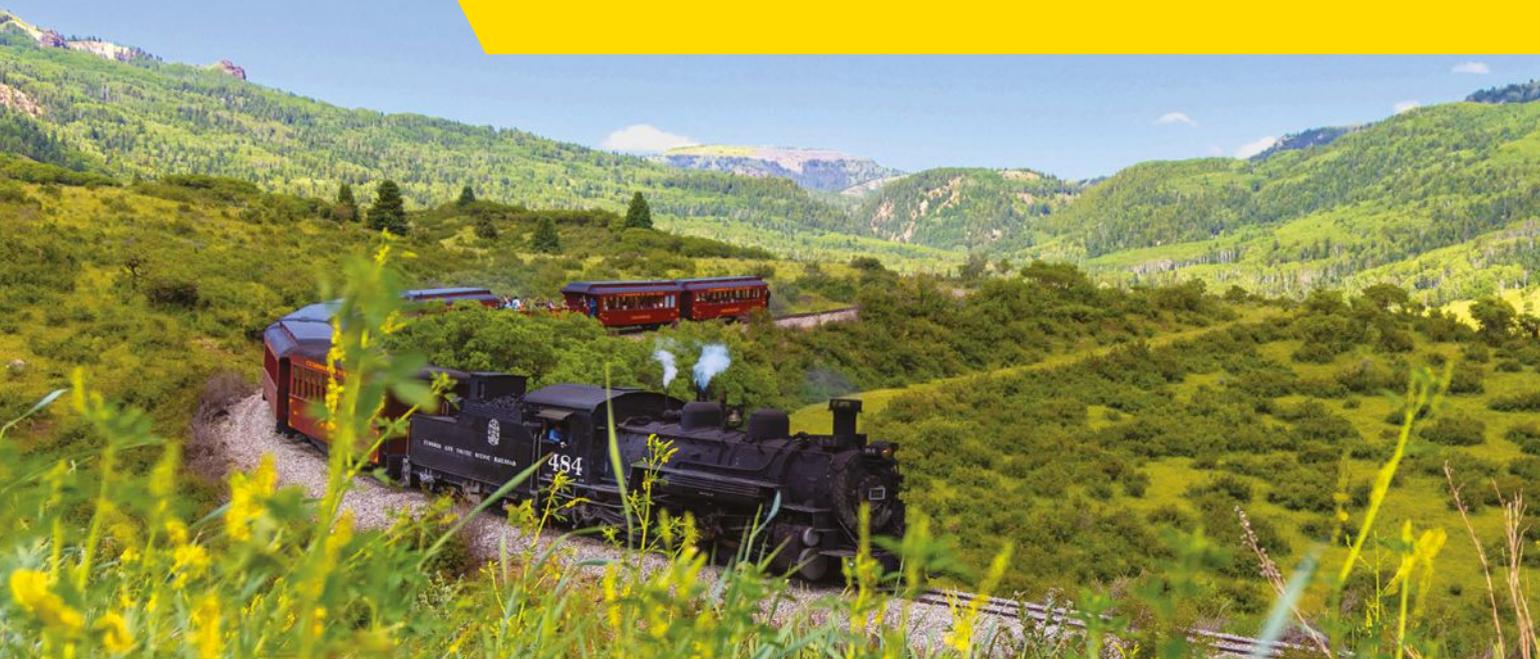


Mesa Verde National Park near Cortez

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Mesa Verde National Park near Cortez

Leave It As You Find It

From petroglyphs to cliff dwellings and pithouses to masonry towers, there's so much to discover and explore, but it's important to remember to tread thoughtfully. By leaving pottery, rocks, plants, petroglyphs and artifacts as you found them, you'll be helping to preserve these ancestral sites in their true forms. You'll also be allowing visitors the joy of discovery, as well as future anthropologists and archaeologists the opportunity to learn and teach others through experience.

Being mindful of protecting these carefully preserved cultural lands is paramount in ensuring their longevity, while appreciating those that allow us to be here.

"As human beings, it's like you're a guest wherever you go and you're trying to be mindful of those who came before us," Ghahate said.

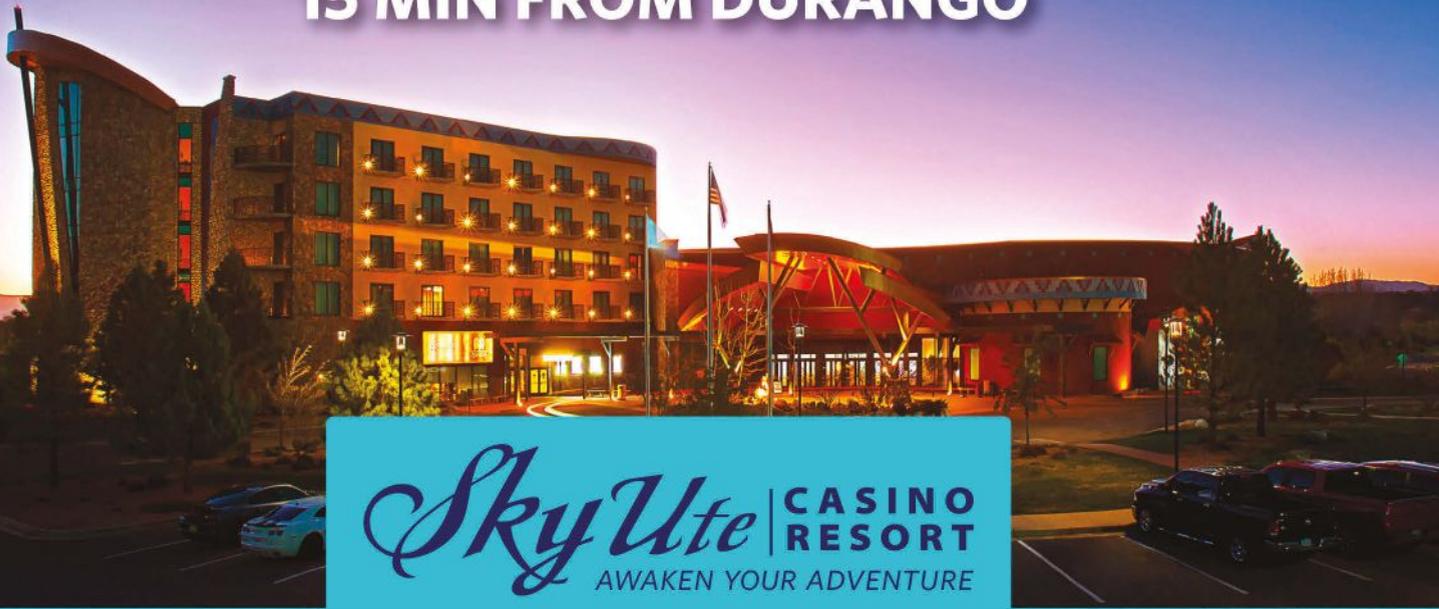
"When we think about going to visit national parks, national forests and public lands, we're saving them for the future. There are others that are going to be coming down the line and hopefully they can experience the sunset, smell the flowers and see the animals running around. Maybe they'll get the chance to do that in 50, 100 or maybe even 500 years, but again, if we don't take care of it now, that may not come about."



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument west of Cortez

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Rocky Mountain Hot Springs

No Two the Same

While all Colorado hot springs offer the comfort of warm, soothing pools, their similarities end there. These rejuvenating spots vary from luxurious spa escapes to rugged, natural springs, offering a perfect option for every type of traveler seeking a relaxing respite during an adventure-filled vacation.

Luxurious Spa Day

Sometimes, an ideal hot-springs getaway means waking up slowly, sitting in geothermal waters and sipping smoothies as you wait for your massage reservation. At **Mount Princeton Hot Springs Resort** near Salida, this level of tranquility is easy to achieve. In the evening, dip into several spots alongside the flowing Chalk Creek and stare up at the twinkling stars, listening to the water trickle past for the ultimate laid-back experience.

Meanwhile, at **Dunton Hot Springs** near Telluride, elegance blends with whimsy and peaceful seclusion as you sink into a steaming natural tub steps away from your restored cabin, many hand built in the 1800s. The site was once an old mining camp, but now hosts luxurious lodging within the ghost town's authentic homes, stores and barns. The toasty springs — some reserved exclusively for your little chalet — are just one piece of the all-inclusive experience, best combined with fine dining, custom massages and day trips exploring the aspen-lined trails.





Strawberry Park Hot Springs in Steamboat Springs

Rustic Experience

When visiting the West, a rustic retreat can feel like you're stepping back in time. At **Strawberry Park Hot Springs** in Steamboat Springs, the rock formations that make up the pools are surrounded by blush-colored wildflowers in summer and tall, golden trees in fall. And when you stay in one of the resort's converted chuckwagons, you'll wake up feeling like a pioneer. During the day it's a family-friendly affair where all ages are welcome, and at night the pools are adults only and clothing optional. Once the lights turn off, you can peer up and spot bright constellations across the nighttime sky.

For another historical hangout, head to **Hot Sulphur Springs Resort & Spa** in the town of Hot Sulphur Springs. The area was first visited by Ute and Arapaho hunting parties who discovered the steaming pools, calling them "big medicine." It was believed that the mineral-rich water healed pains and ailments — and many modern visitors can attest to feeling restored and remedied after a soak. Once you dry off, the on-site cabins offer cozy, frill-free accommodations for a peaceful evening sipping wine by the fireplace.

BRIAN BENNETT/FLOKOR



Ouray Hot Springs

Family-Friendly Fun

The world's largest mineral pool can be found at **Glenwood Hot Springs Resort** in Glenwood Springs. Fortunately, those record-breaking waters also offer big-time fun for families. Let the older kids romp around the dedicated splash zone modeled after Glenwood Canyon's Hanging Lake or bring the tots to the kiddie-pool fountain to frolic. Hop on an inner tube and take a trip down the whitewater "river" that twists and turns you through thrill-filled chutes. Check out their brand-new swimming area with five additional pools, including a shiver-inducing cold plunge. Or just kick back and picnic on the patio surrounded by towering red mountains while you snack on juicy burgers from the grill.

Kids feel right at home at **Ouray Hot Springs Pool & Fitness Center**. The diving board, winding waterslide and giggle-filled game area with a volleyball net and inflatable obstacle course will entertain your whole crew for hours. Their restorative waters are rich in potassium, manganese and iron, and don't have a strong sulfur smell. While the kids play, parents can also wade around in the infinity-edge overlook pool and soak in the views of the snowcapped San Juan Mountains.

Experience Oakwell Beer Spa



Treat yourself to an award-winning, beer-inspired spa day. Oakwell Beer Spa's cozy taproom and unique spa packages make for one of Colorado's most memorable wellness experiences. Stop in for a drink or spend a few hours and you'll quickly see why it's considered one of Denver's top day spas.

Award-Winning Spa Services

Oakwell Beer Spa has been named one of the best things to do in Denver for travelers and locals alike. Treat yourself to the ultimate relaxation and wellness benefits with unique spa services. Enjoy Beer Bath Hydrotherapy, an Infrared Sauna and a Zero Gravity Massage Experience.

Cozy Taproom

Oakwell Beer Spa's cozy taproom has luxurious seating and a self-serve beer wall — the perfect space to unwind. Every month, Oakwell Beer Spa highlights a local Colorado brewery and five of its best drafts. Sip a refreshing craft beer, cider, wine, tea or kombucha while relaxing in the taproom or enjoying spa services.

Unique Experience

Indulge in one of Denver's most unique and memorable self-care experiences. Oakwell Beer Spa is perfect for a date night, group celebration or solo getaway. For your spa day, you get access to a private spa suite, and various packages and enhancements allow you to customize your visit.

Inclusive Environment

Everyone deserves self care. Oakwell Beer Spa offers an inclusive environment where everyone is welcome to relax. No matter who you are, you're invited to enjoy a one-of-a-kind spa day and wellness experience.



Romantic Getaways

Few things are as romantic as spending a day relaxing in the steaming waters at **Durango Hot Springs**. Sip rosé with your sweetheart as you settle into one of 32 natural hot springs. Spend some time just the two of you by reserving one of the small ofuro-style soaking tubs, where you can lounge together and set the temperature to your precise preference. Add a couples' hot-stone massage and unwind next to each other as the smooth, heated rocks infuse your skin with therapeutic essential oils and boost circulation.

At **The Springs Resort** in Pagosa Springs, romance flows as naturally as the water. Snuggle up next to your partner in the warm, terraced lagoons surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of the San Juan range. The resort boasts the world's deepest geothermal spring, where the bottom has yet to be discovered. And their 25 soaking pools, each with its own unique character and mineral profile, provide a peaceful setting for connection. For a more intimate experience, reserve a private tub for a quiet, moonlit evening, best paired with a cool cocktail from the canteen. An upcoming expansion will add 20 new pools, a geothermal spa, a greenhouse and a greenhouse-to-table restaurant.

Breathtaking Views

If gorgeous scenery is your primary criterion, several hot springs offer views as captivating as the baths themselves. **Orvis Hot Springs** in Ridgway is a secluded, clothing-optional oasis of pools tucked in a narrow valley, offering unrivaled vistas of the majestic 14,150-foot Mount Sneffels. Sink your feet into the warm waters, feel the pebbles beneath your toes and lean back to gaze at the craggy, natural amphitheater that surrounds you. Somehow the sights become even more spectacular when the sun sets and the Milky Way pours across the pitch-black sky.

Spy on ancient peaks and sun-scorched desert plains dotted with sagebrush at **Joyful Journey Hot Springs Spa** in Moffat. Nestled at the northern edge of the Mystic San Luis Valley, the resort's tiled pools invite hours of indulgent soaking at varying temperatures. And as you steep, you can treat your eyes to the stunning scenery of the Sangre de Cristo summits, where fiery sunsets paint the sky and cast a golden glow over the valley landscape.



Off-Peak Visits

Want more pools to yourself? Plan to visit on a weekday for a more private experience.



The Springs Resort in Pagosa Springs



Get a guide to the state's 30 hot springs on **Colorado.com**.

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Grand Junction's majestic landscapes are very different than the rest of Colorado.

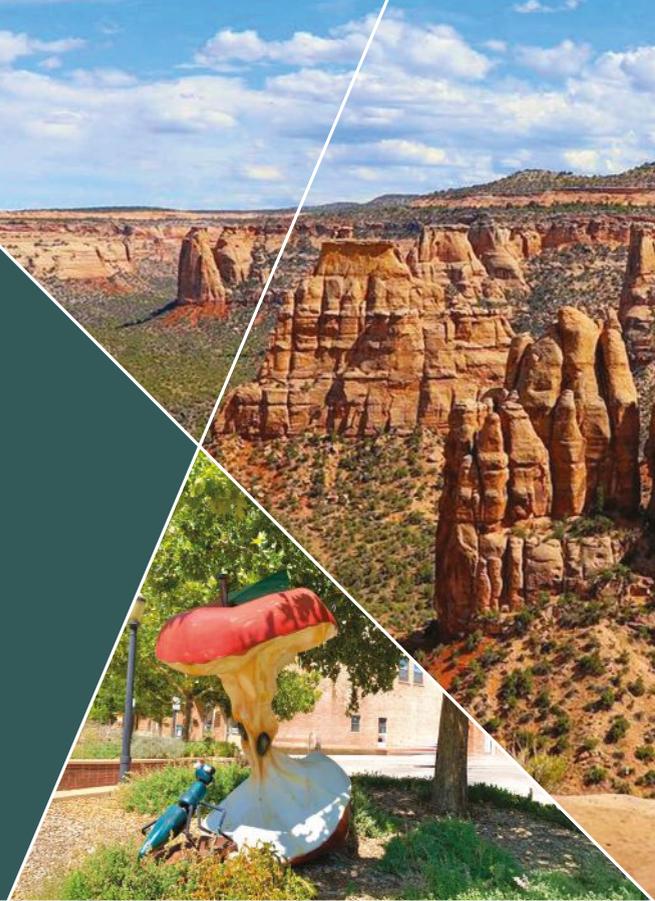
GRAND JUNCTION

WHERE LIFE LEADS

PLAY YOUR WAY

Grand Junction is where vibrant music, farm-fresh cuisine and a lively art scene converge with countless outdoor adventures. Here, alpine terrain meets dramatic high desert. Powerful rivers course through verdant valleys, and opportunities for embracing the vast wilderness that surrounds Grand Junction are abundant in every season.

Come follow your passions, indulge your senses and go where life leads. You'll soon see that Mother Nature really does play favorites.



NATURE'S TRIFECTA

Grand Junction is the only place in the world where you can experience three extraordinary geological wonders known as "Nature's Trifecta." Colorado National Monument is a mini-Grand Canyon, affectionately known as "the heart of the world." The Grand Mesa is bursting with over 300 alpine lakes. Rattlesnake Arches is the second-largest concentration of natural arches in the world. Nature did smile on Grand Junction a little bit more!



COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT

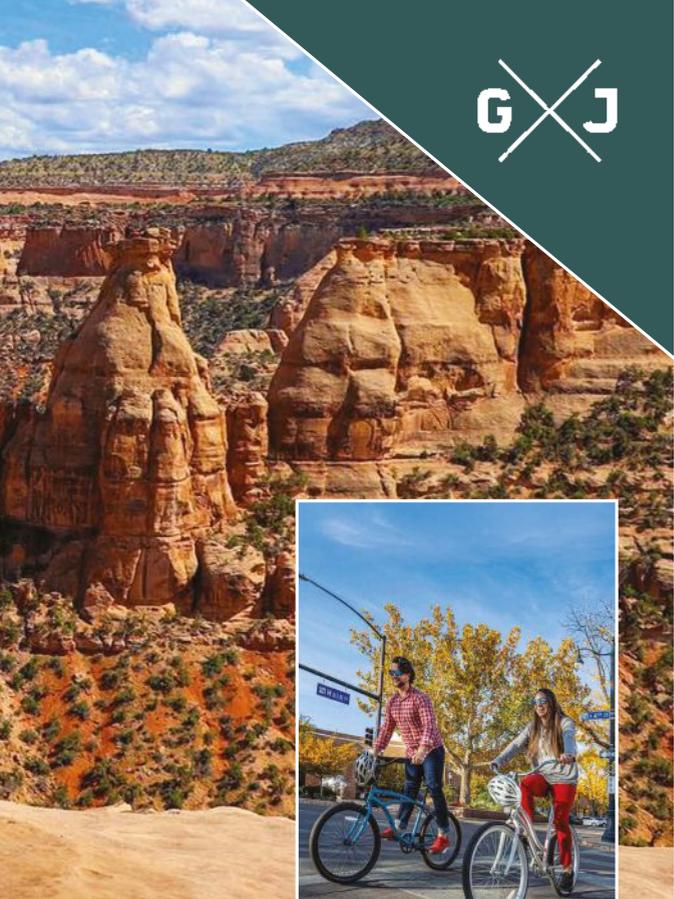
Just six miles from Downtown Grand Junction, Colorado's secret national park towers over the city. The Monument is famous for scenic hiking, road biking, and its pristine sunrise and sunset views. Journey up Rim Rock Drive, pausing at convenient pullouts and majestic overlooks. Stop at Upper Ute Canyon View for the most amazing echo you've ever heard. At night, the clear desert sky shows off the magnificent Milky Way with shooting stars.

GRAND MESA

Standing tall in the eastern landscape of Grand Junction is the Grand Mesa, the largest flat-top mountain in the world. The Mesa has four distinct seasons of outdoor pursuits, making it a year-round outdoor recreation wonderland. Fishing, camping, hiking, biking, kayaking, skiing, snowmobiling and snowshoeing are just some of the activities that are enjoyed on the Mesa. This unspoiled wilderness is flourishing with aspen groves and pine forests atop the lush plateau.

ARCHES

The McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area's remote canyons slice through colorful sandstone layers to form cliffs, pinnacles, alcoves and arches. Rattlesnake Canyon surprises and excites hikers with over 35 natural arches, the most in the world outside of Arches National Park. All without the crowds!



DOWNTOWN

Grand Junction’s historic Downtown is a designated park and pedestrian-friendly area with 115 outdoor sculptures and murals that frame the wide sidewalks. Peruse the many avant-garde galleries, chic boutiques, hip cafes and trendy restaurants. Buy a piece of art, bring your DIY idea to life or relax on a patio and enjoy an après microbrew.



PEDAL PLEASERS

Grand Junction is a utopia for cyclists. Rim Rock Drive, through the Colorado National Monument, is an iconic road bike ride with sweeping views of the canyon country. Mountain bikers dive into the technical twists and turns on Lunch Loops, a local favorite. The Palisade Plunge expert-only singletrack is a 32-mile, adrenaline-fest that drops 6,000 feet from the top of the Grand Mesa to the high-desert floor.



HIT THE TRAIL

The Grand Junction area has over 1.5 million acres of public land — that’s 76% of the county and is larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined! From snowmobiling through the alpine forest on the Grand Mesa to OHV’ing serpentine desert canyons in McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area, there are thousands of miles of uncrowded trails for you to explore. For some truly inspiring views, snowmobile to Land’s End Observatory or OHV down Rabbit Valley to the mighty Colorado River.

A SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE

Between the Colorado and Gunnison rivers and the 300 alpine lakes on the Grand Mesa, plentiful water beckons anglers. When hunting season arrives, the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National forests are prime destinations for big game. Trophy elk, pronghorn, deer, moose and other game abound, including a healthy population of winter waterfowl.



FARM-FRESH FARE

From the famous Palisade Peach harvest to pick-your-own cherry and apple orchards, the agricultural character of the Grand Junction area is thriving. Taste farm-to-fork cuisine and pair with award-winning craft beverages. Local breweries, distilleries, wineries, cideries and meaderies round out the refreshing libations. Here, the gifts from the land are always in season.

GET WET

Whether your idea of fun is a refreshing float down the Colorado on SUPs right through town or an exhilarating whitewater run in Westwater Canyon, area waters serve up plenty of places to float leisurely and safely on countless sunny days. Playboaters can hop into the standing waves at Las Colonias River Park near the confluence of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers, hence the name Grand Junction.



INTO THE WILD

The diverse ecosystems of the area are home to a variety of Colorado fauna. Bighorn sheep, elk, deer, lynx and moose ply the high country. Just across the Colorado River from Downtown, the Riverfront Trail traverses a 1.5-mile paved Audubon path providing delightful opportunities to spot over 200 bird species, including blue heron, osprey, hawks and eagles. As one of only three wild-horse sanctuaries designated to protect wild horses in the country, be sure to check out the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range to see the protected bands of wild mustangs who roam freely here. It's a life-changing experience!



VisitGrandJunction.com

WINTER FUN

The Grand Mesa averages 250 inches of light, dry powder each year and has some of the best glade skiing in the state. Powderhorn Mountain Resort is affordable, approachable and only a short, 45-minute drive from Grand Junction. The Mesa also offers backcountry skiing and 31 miles of groomed trails for Nordic and skate skiing. If speed is more your thing, there is access to over 180 miles of backcountry snowmobiling trails to shred.

TEE TIMES

Enjoy a great day on the links with immaculately groomed greens and red-rock canyons rising in the distance at some of Grand Junction's unique golf courses. Tiara Rado and Redlands Mesa (rated the No. 1 public course in Colorado by Golfweek) afford golfers stunning vistas of Colorado National Monument. Spectacular views of the sandstone Book Cliffs and other surrounding mountain ranges can be found at Chipeta and Lincoln Park golf courses.

ANCIENT ARTIFACTS & DINOSAURS

Channel your inner paleontologist and step back in time 600 million years at Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. The rugged canyons are etched with petroglyphs, bridging the chasm between past and present, serving as silent storytellers. Other ancient mysteries are preserved in Rabbit Valley along an interpretive trail through a working fossil quarry, where the remains of 140-million-year-old dinosaurs can be viewed.

STAY A WHILE

Grand Junction has the most affordable lodging in Colorado and easy access from Grand Junction Regional Airport. Here, you'll find 32 hotels, six RV parks with campgrounds and hundreds of vacation homes to choose from. Just minutes from the city, Grand Junction's outdoor attractions offer the Colorado experience you expect—without the crowds of other mountain towns. Bonus: The number one comment from guests who visit is, "the locals are so friendly and welcoming!" **So come play with us, we look forward to meeting you!**



Welcome to Glenwood Springs

Glenwood Springs is the genuine Colorado mountain town famous for hot springs, outdoor recreation, spectacular scenery, and nonstop fun.



Colorado River through the spectacular Glenwood Canyon



Welcome to the Land of Water

Glenwood Springs is a year-round recreational paradise famous for the world's largest hot springs pool, natural vapor caves and nearly 30 mineral springs on the banks of the Colorado River. Enjoy Gold Medal fishing, rafting and kayaking. Bike or hike for awe-inspiring scenery or discover winter sports without the crowds.



Thrills for Everyone

Discover Colorado's favorite mountain playground. Glenwood Springs offers America's only mountaintop theme park with thrill rides and historic cavern tours. The charming downtown is the center for shopping, dining, rich western history and culture. Be sure to reserve a time to hike to Hanging Lake, a National Natural Landmark and Colorado favorite.

SPONSORED CONTENT



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A WORLDSPRINGS PROPERTY

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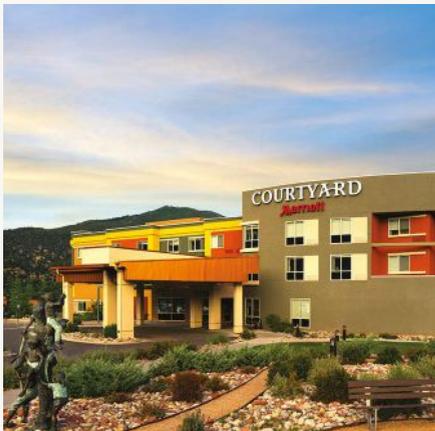


GLENWOOD CAVERNS ADVENTURE PARK

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Take adventure to a whole new level at America's only mountaintop theme park. The fun starts by taking a gondola up to 7,132 feet above sea level. Breathtaking views, exhilarating thrill rides, stunning cave tours and more. There's something to thrill and delight all ages. It's the perfect getaway for families who love to play together. Located just off I-70 in the heart of Glenwood Springs. **Get up here!**

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Our hotel is the perfect place to relax and recharge, just one mile from downtown Glenwood Springs and within walking distance of shops, restaurants and trails. Pets are welcome! The Bistro serves breakfast and dinner. Explore deals and plan your stay at Courtyard Glenwood Springs.

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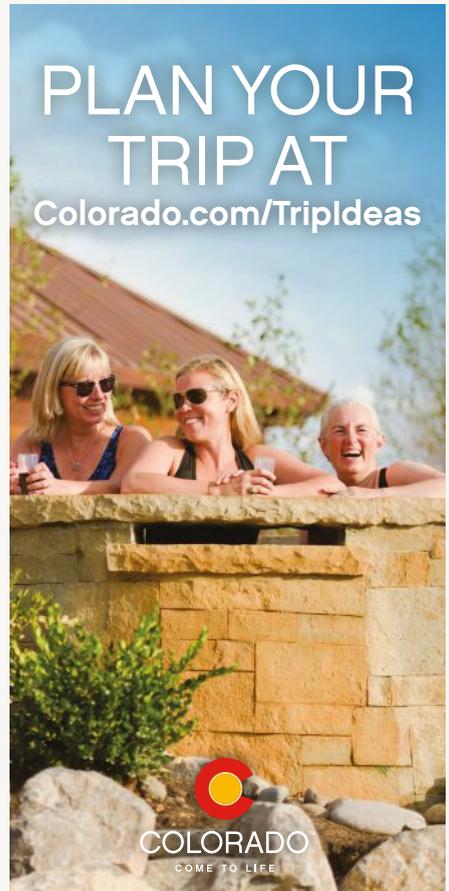


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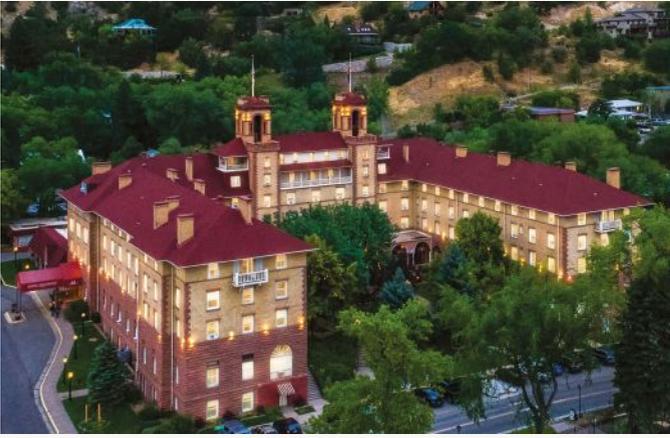


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Patricia Cameron

Your Guide to Getting Outside

With Backpackers
Founder
Patricia Cameron

When Colorado Springs resident Patricia Cameron decided to through-hike the **Colorado Trail** for the first time in 2020, she was blown away by the beauty.

“I had a campsite that was at 12,000 feet,” she said. “And to this day, my brain will just go back to that campsite. It is gorgeous out here, and to walk across the mountains makes you feel so small in a good way. ... None of my problems are as big as a mountain.”

Exploring Colorado’s vast, beautiful landscape — especially when she’s on a multiday trip — is always inspiring. And being able to share that love with her son and community of friends later motivated her to bring that passion to a bigger audience through her nonprofit, Backpackers. But Cameron wasn’t always outdoorsy. When she decided to go backpacking for the first time in 2017, she wasn’t sure where to start — so she Googled it.

At the time, Cameron worked in emergency medicine, first as an EMT before moving into urgent-care and practice-manager work. She was also a divorced mom,





Do Colorado Right

Check out the Care for Colorado Leave No Trace Principles, and see how to Do Colorado Right, by turning to p. 4.

KENNAN HARVEY



Eleven Mile State Park in Lake George

sharing custody with her ex-husband who grew up playing outside, and she wanted her son to have similar experiences. So, she tried camping by the blue water and craggy rock formations at **Eleven Mile State Park** in Lake George. She knew she was hooked when she woke up and looked outside her tent to see the sun's rays shimmering on the lake, creating dazzling prisms.

Almost every weekend that summer, Cameron headed west to explore. She backpacked, taught herself to fish and asked her friends to come along. "So many people were OK with coming," she said. "They just expressed they didn't have the gear to go. So, I started buying gear."

After a couple years of purchasing equipment, Cameron realized she needed a more sustainable format for her passion, so Backpackers — a nonprofit founded to address Colorado's representation gap in the outdoors space — was born.

By investing in gear and educational opportunities, along with providing recreation-based programs (camping, backpacking, swimming, climbing and skiing), Backpackers works to break down barriers and helps its participants access the great outdoors.

"We meet people at the intersection of underrepresentation and economic vulnerability," she said, "and all that means is we're trying to provide these curriculum-based, professionally guided and outfitted programs for little to no cost to our participants."

During outings, the group not only learns their chosen activity; they are also taught about protecting and preserving Colorado's wildlife and diverse ecosystems.

Colorado Trail near Durango



Find Your Site

Know the weekend you want to camp, but aren't sure where to go? Use the Colorado Parks & Wildlife website or app, type in the dates you want to stay, and it will tell you where space is available across the state.



Dallas Divide near Ridgway

Tips for Adventuring Across Colorado

While Cameron is a backpacker at heart — she prefers to spend at least one night outdoors — she does occasionally go for day hikes. Looking for something easier? She likes the trails at **Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre** in Morrison or **Palmer Park** in Colorado Springs, an expansive high-desert landscape easily accessed via the city's public transportation.

Thinking about challenging yourself? Cameron suggests backpacking a multiday segment of the Colorado Trail. Hiking through these peaceful, rugged pathways is a great chance to relax, reflect and take in the beauty of your surroundings. You can start your trek from destinations like Denver, Breckenridge and Durango, which lead you through wildflower-filled alpine meadows and tree-lined forests to soaring peak views.

"The Colorado Trail changed my life, and I am absolutely in love with it," Cameron said.

New to overnights outside? Cameron is an avid supporter of car camping

because you can bring more gear, like a cookstove. She recommends booking **Colorado State Park** campsites, which are on a reservation system and often offer basic amenities like vaulted toilets, showers and picnic tables.

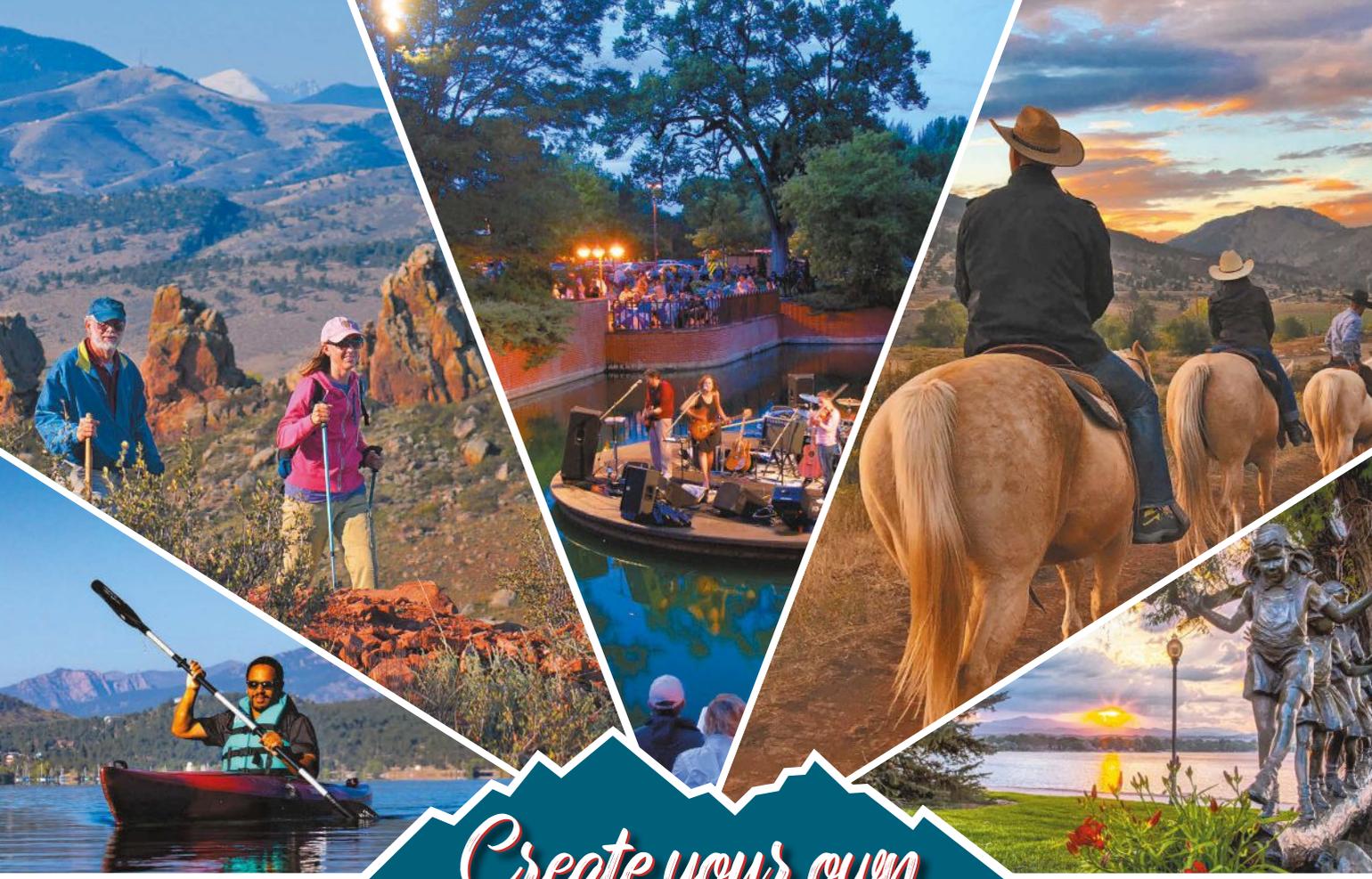
A particularly stunning, Cameron-approved camping spot is **Cottonwood Lake Campground** near Buena Vista. Choose between dispersed sites for more privacy or the established campground for its amenities. When you're not cooking up a gourmet camp dinner, you can dip a fishing line in the reflective lake or trek through national forestland.

Whether you're a beginner to exploring panoramic peaks and meandering trails or a seasoned pro, there's an adventure for everyone in Colorado. You can always plan a long hike or thrill-filled camping trip, but sometimes an easy walk in a Colorado State Park is a solid way to spend a day. Time in nature doesn't have to be physically challenging or intimidating; it's just outside your door, after all.



Want to Get Involved?

Check [Blackpackers.org](https://www.blackpackers.org) for upcoming events, plus educational and volunteer opportunities for your vacation dates. Find Blackpackers on Facebook and Instagram @COBlackpackers.



Create your own adventure in Loveland, Colorado

Loveland displays over 500 pieces of public art, and is home to four distinct sculpture parks, one-of-a-kind festivals, 12 breweries and fabulous shopping throughout Centerra and historic Downtown.

Loveland is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise from hiking Devil's Backbone to boating at Carter Lake, riding the range at Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch to golfing one of our three courses. What's not to LOVE about Loveland, Colorado?

*Only 35 minutes to Rocky Mountain National Park
45 minutes north of Denver*

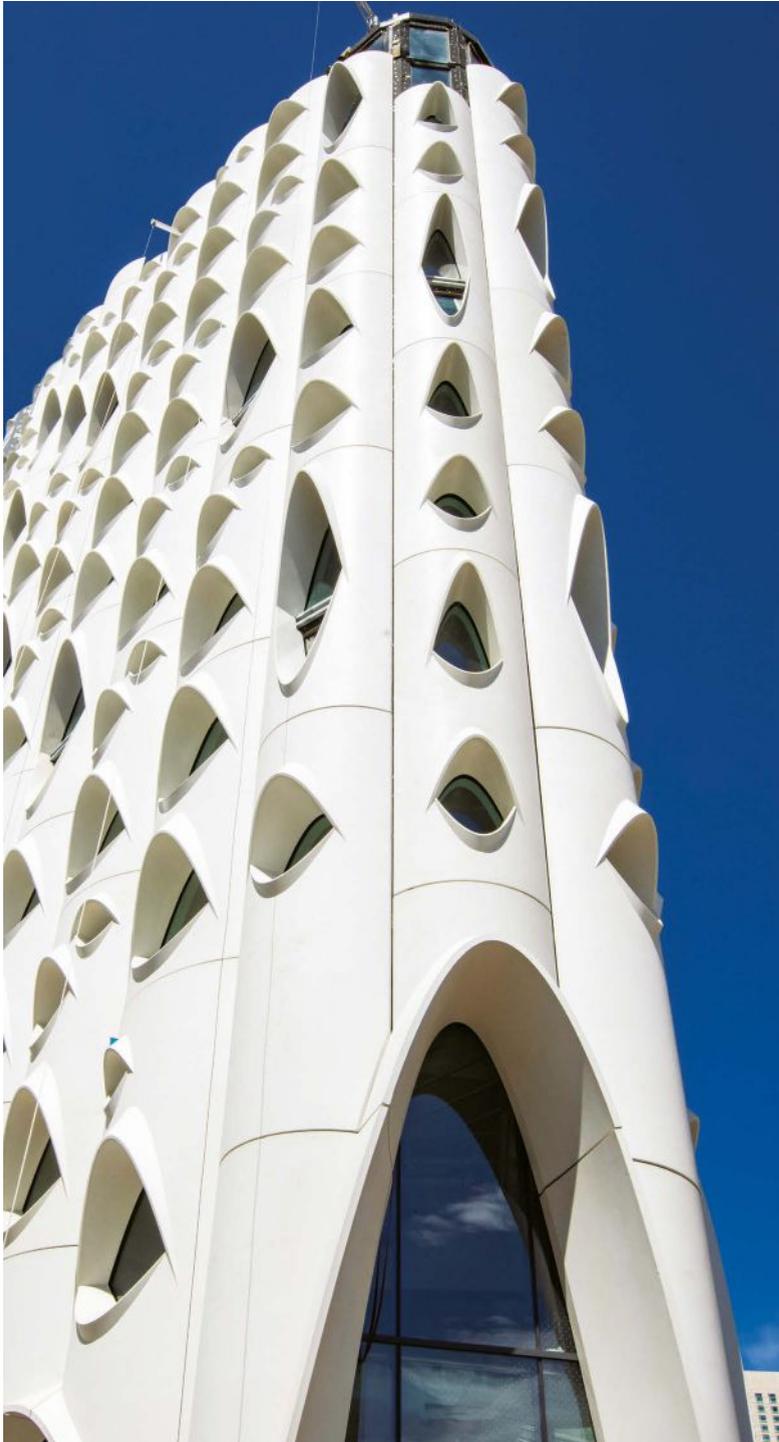


SCAN HERE
To start planning your vacation



Sleep Somewhere Cool

Make your Colorado trip truly unforgettable with accommodations as unique and inspiring as the stunning landscapes and charming towns you'll explore. Discover intimate B&Bs tucked away in picturesque valleys, funky hostels with a flair for design or even historical hotels that offer a glimpse into Colorado's rich past. Check out these special places to stay during your visit.



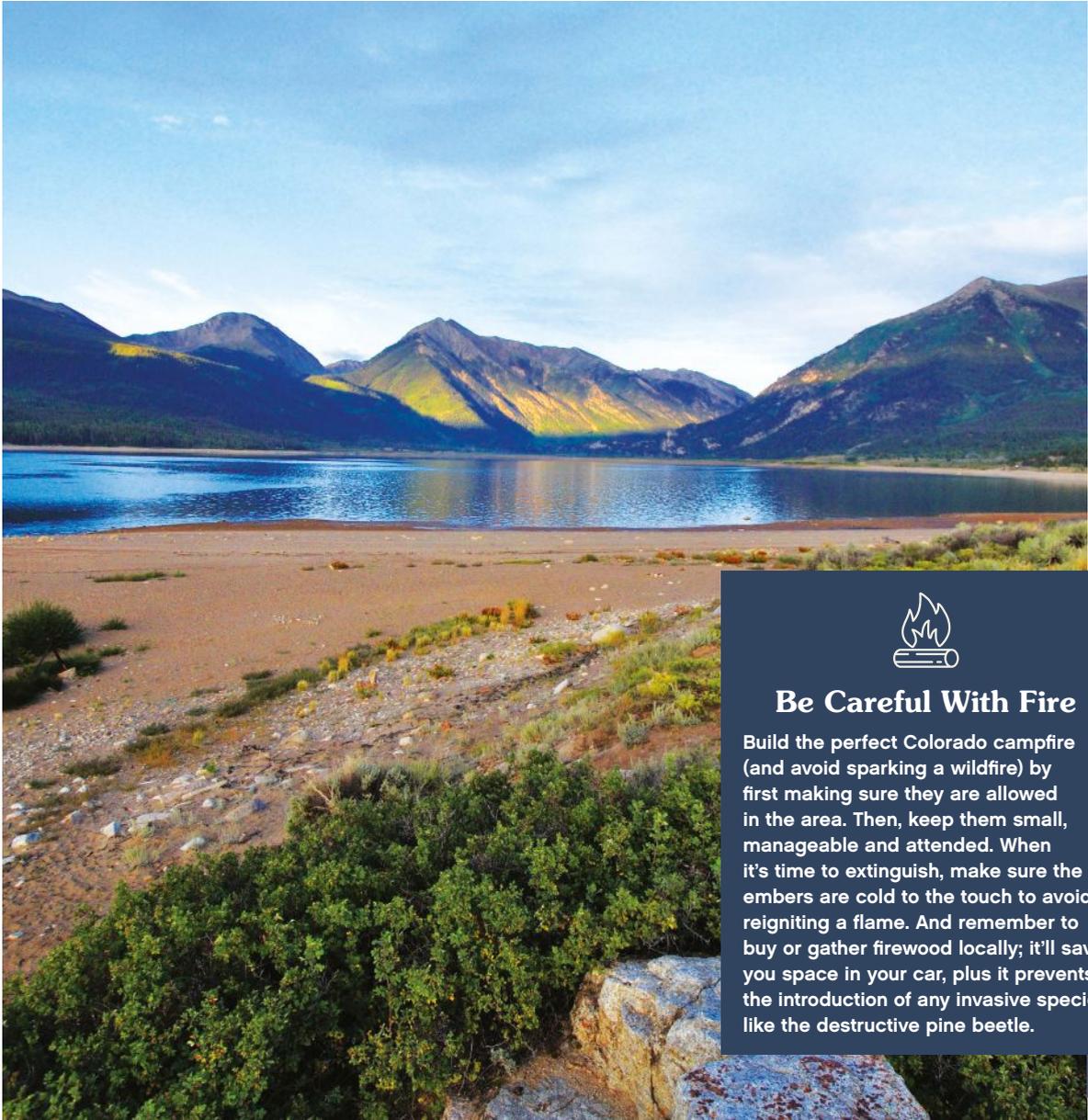
Populus in Denver

Modern City Hotel

As the first carbon-positive hotel in the United States, the new **Populus** in Denver combines nature-influenced design with environmentally friendly construction. Its white facade features an eyelet pattern mimicking the bark of the state's iconic aspen tree (*Populus tremuloides*) — which is also the hotel's namesake. The building not only honors Colorado's great outdoors, but also preserves it through composting practices, carbon offsets, and solar- and wind-powered facilities. On the roof, enjoy a cocktail and conversation at the open-air bar. When you're ready to wander, take a short walk across Civic Center Park to view collections by Colorado artists at the Denver Art Museum or hop on an e-bike to shop boutique stores at Larimer Square.

Nature Lover's Retreat

Rest your head in your own private snow globe at the **Pagosa River Domes**, just minutes from Pagosa Springs' famous geothermal pools. Insulated and equipped with solar-powered fans and heaters, you can admire nature year-round from your geodesic dome. Relax outside on the hammock and appreciate the vibrant fall foliage or cozy up around the gas-lit fire pit and listen to the sounds of the river on cool summer evenings. Inside, you'll find a curtained window wall for in-bed stargazing, a mini-kitchen and a private bathroom with a shower. The accessible Queen Dome features a more spacious bathroom with a roll-in shower for easier movement. Though perched on the San Juan riverbanks, the domes have easy access to the delights of town. Sample fried catfish and po'boys at The Lost Cajun Restaurant or pale ale and IPA suds at Riff Raff Brewing Co.



Be Careful With Fire

Build the perfect Colorado campfire (and avoid sparking a wildfire) by first making sure they are allowed in the area. Then, keep them small, manageable and attended. When it's time to extinguish, make sure the embers are cold to the touch to avoid reigniting a flame. And remember to buy or gather firewood locally; it'll save you space in your car, plus it prevents the introduction of any invasive species like the destructive pine beetle.

Twin Peaks Campground near Twin Lakes

Rustic Campground

Sleep beneath star-filled skies and reconnect with nature at **Twin Peaks Campground** outside Twin Lakes. Open May through September, this rustic spot sits above the rushing whitewater of Lake Creek, with humbling views of the towering Sawatch mountain range. Sites are first-come, first-served and open to tent camping and camper-trailer use. Here, you'll find amenities like picnic tables and vaulted toilets, along with oodles of space and tranquility. Watch sly foxes and dappled fawns scamper between trees — always from a safe distance — read a book, meditate in a shady stand of aspens or learn a new card game — rummy, anyone? Once you're rested, hike the nearby Continental Divide and Mount Elbert trails, or swim and boat on alpine lakes.

Historical Hotel

Get off the beaten path with a stay at the **Black Monarch Hotel** in the Gold Rush town of Victor. Originally built in 1899 after a fire razed the town to the ground, the Black Monarch embodies Victor's well-preserved history and Victorian-era roots. Once a brothel and gaming hall, the hotel now welcomes guests with a Western-gothic charm, complete with mounted antlers, faux-fur blankets and pillows and lavish, dark-hued fabrics. The rooms, which are believed to be haunted, are named and themed after famous murderers like Lizzie Borden and Jack the Ripper — except for the Nikola Tesla Room. According to local lore, the famous inventor wired the town — including the Black Monarch — after the fire. Experience cool hikes and historical fun around Victor, or come for an annual festival like the Victor Pack Burro Race.



Great Wolf Lodge in Colorado Springs

Family-Friendly Resort

Take your family pack where they can run wild at **Great Wolf Lodge** in Colorado Springs. Kids of all ages will relish time in the humongous water park where they can zip down slides, explore the four-story play fort and trek across the obstacle course. And after drying off, they can spend hours winning games and prizes in the arcade, going on mystical MagiQuest journeys, panning for gemstones and braving treetop heights on the indoor rope course. When it's time to rest, the kids can stay in themed bunk rooms surrounded by murals of nature and woodland characters. With so many thrills, you may not want to leave the resort; however, those seeking additional adventures nearby can explore tunnels of underground caves and above-ground rides at Cave of the Winds Mountain Park or see mountain goats, moose and wolves up close at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

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CHERRY CREEK
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Throughout the 16 sun-soaked blocks of Cherry Creek North you'll find everything you need from high fashion, to designer furniture, to handcrafted one-of-a-kind goods from local talent. Everywhere you look there's something new to inspire and delight, and more than enough to keep those arms weighed down by the best haul you'll have all year.

SIPS & BITES

A stay in Cherry Creek North is not complete without trying a few of our 30+ different restaurant bars with open air patios where you can get great weather, amazing drinks, and a dish to write home about all at the same time.

IT'S A "YOU" DAY

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- Moxy Denver Cherry Creek
- The Jacquard Hotel & Rooftop
- The Halcyon
- Hotel Clio

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**CHERRY(CREEK
NORTH
DENVER, CO**

Quirky Hostel

Whether you're traveling solo, in a group or as a couple, you'll be welcomed with open arms at **The Wanderlust Hostel** in Gunnison. Choose a co-ed dorm or a private room, each of which have access to a communal kitchen, dining area and living room. Outside you'll find a front patio and a spacious backyard, complete with a porch and comfy hammock. Wanderlust's eclectic blend of vibrant colors, mix-and-match furniture and whimsical decor — especially Abby, the dress-up-loving mannequin — creates a bright and cheery atmosphere that'll make any traveler smile. During your stay, unwind and swap stories with fellow wanderers or bike down the road to High Alpine Brewing Company or Back Country Cafe. Adventurers can hike through the stunning Gunnison National Forest, mountain bike epic trails at Hartman Rocks and battle whitewater rapids on the Gunnison River.



The Wanderlust Hostel in Gunnison

Welcome to More at Gaylord Rockies



Nestled at the base of the Colorado Front Range, Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center offers a refreshing departure from the ordinary mountain getaway. From the exhilarating Arapahoe Springs Water Park to family-friendly activities and entertainment, this 85-acre resort promises an unforgettable experience for all.



GaylordRockies.com | 720.452.6900

Aquatic Oasis

Dive into year-round bliss at Arapahoe Springs Water Park, featuring heated pools, thrilling slides, a serene lazy river, and more. Reserved exclusively for overnight guests, this aquatic haven offers relaxation and excitement in equal measure.

Culinary Delights

Embark on a culinary journey with a variety of dining venues, ranging from the laid-back ambiance of Mountain Pass Sports Bar to the upscale elegance of Old Hickory Steakhouse. Exciting additions to our eclectic assortment of restaurants include Embers Lodge Bar, Copper Table, Garden + Grain, and The Fortunate Prospector.

Family Escapade

Create lasting memories with an abundance of seasonal activities, onsite shopping, outdoor adventures, and family suites adorned with charming bunk beds. Whether hosting a small gathering or a large reunion, there's ample space and entertainment to keep everyone delighted, complemented by seasonal specials year-round.

Holiday Splendor

Immerse yourself in the enchanting world of Christmas at Gaylord Rockies, featuring live entertainment, interactive exhibits, and the beloved ICE! attraction. Crafted by master artisans from Harbin, China, using 2 million pounds of ice, this captivating spectacle breathes new life into timeless Christmas tales, promising a magical experience for all.

Cozy Mountain Lodge

Nestled amid aspens and pines atop a 10,200-foot cliff, **The Lodge at Breckenridge** brings coziness to new heights — quite literally. Marvel at the million-dollar views around every corner, including the Tenmile Range's lofty peaks with golden leaves in autumn and snow-covered ski slopes in winter. Take a snowy hike on the Moonstone or Barney Ford trails or just relax in a hot tub on the lodge's massive wraparound deck. Then, retreat to the lobby where you can kick off your boots and warm up by the floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace. Grab a cup of cocoa and embrace the chalet atmosphere with ski-equipment decor and log-cabin-style craftsmanship.

Quaint Bed & Breakfast

Looking for a romantic getaway or a retreat from urban life? **Arbor House Inn Bed & Breakfast on the River** in South Fork is an ideal high-country hideaway. You'll love the peaceful, riverside property with its luxurious rooms, lush garden spaces and secluded corners with draping river willows and purple catmint bushes. Breakfasts here are top-notch, with gourmet dishes like Swedish-pancake soufflés topped with maple syrup, vanilla yogurt and fresh berries, or eggs Benedict. While snuggling in your room with your partner is always an option, especially if you're staying in The Lovin' Oven Honeymoon Suite, there's also plenty of fun nearby. Hit the fresh powder at Wolf Creek Ski Area or fish the Rio Grande River at the back of the property.



Colorado Fishing Requirements

Remember, fishing licenses are required to drop a line in Colorado's lakes and rivers. You can also purchase one-day and five-day passes through Colorado Parks and Wildlife.



The Lodge at Breckenridge

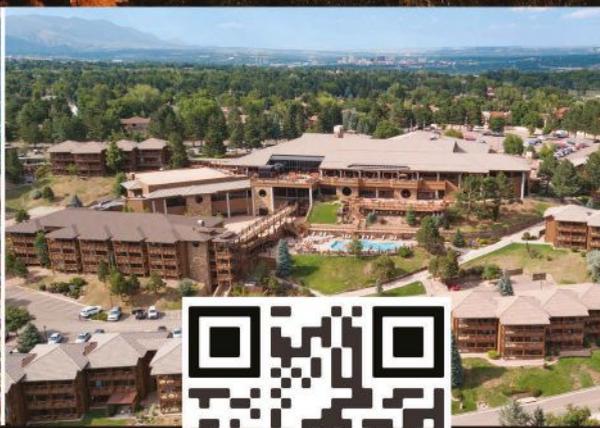
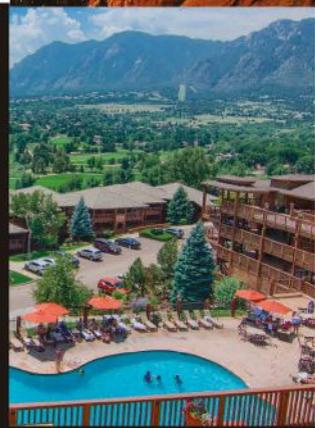


Find more lodging inspiration on the Sleep Somewhere Cool in Colorado blog.



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Including our Signature Pete Dye 18-hole golf course, Alluvia Spa & Wellness Retreat, state of the art fitness center, multiple swimming pools/tennis courts, and so much more!

Where Farm-to-Table Meets Michelin Guide

The secret's out: Colorado's pristine landscapes are not just for exploring, they're for growing some of the best produce imaginable. From the sprawling vineyards and orchards of the Western Slope to the rolling fields on the Eastern Plains and the lush valleys between, the high elevation and diverse temperatures found across the Centennial State make for some of the most fertile soils in the nation. Here, warm days and cool nights help lock in the sweetness of fruits like Palisade peaches and Rocky Ford melons, while Colorado vegetables — including Pueblo green chiles and Olathe sweet corn — are crisp and full of flavor.



Mawa's Kitchen in Aspen

ALEXIS AHLING

It's no wonder the Michelin Guide was drawn to Colorado. The state's commitment to farm-to-table dining predates any trend, relying on the resources of the land and creativity of its chefs to produce seasonal, hyper-local cuisine. It's why Colorado chefs celebrated a whopping six One Michelin Stars, four Green Stars, nine Bib Gourmand recognitions and 31 Selected restaurants since the state's inaugural guide in 2023. Focused on the Front Range cities of Denver and Boulder — as well as the mountain towns of Aspen, Snowmass Village, Vail and Beaver Creek — the guide features just a sampling of the bounty that can be found across the state.

And the gastronomic options have only grown over the years. Chefs from around the world are venturing to Colorado to discover the cornucopia of crops and livestock that thrive here, so they can leave their mark on the blooming culinary scene.

In Denver, chef and restaurant owner Tommy Lee caught the Michelin Guide's eye with his innovative take on regional Chinese cuisine, adding a modern flair to traditional dishes with seasonal, locally grown ingredients at his Bib Gourmand restaurant, Hop Alley.

"The direction of the menu is kind of 'what's a regional Chinese restaurant in Denver, Colorado, look like?'" Lee said. "Some dishes may not look Chinese at all, but they're influenced by seasonal produce."

Just northwest of Denver, among the picturesque backdrop of the foothills and rugged Flatiron mountains, Lee works closely with Esoterra Culinary Garden in Boulder to source organic produce grown on their 1.5-acre farm. Constantly adapting his menu to the ebbs and flows of each season's growth, Lee always looks forward to late spring and early summer for harvests of salad greens, pea tendrils, ramps and morel mushrooms. As temperatures rise, Pueblo green chiles, Palisade peaches and Olathe sweet corn take the spotlight, but Lee's favorites are Rocky Ford melons (especially the cantaloupe) and asparagus.

Hop Alley's offerings are constantly changing with the seasons, modifying classic Chinese dishes with the availability of fresh produce and adding a modern flair. But building umami always takes precedence; incorporating monosodium glutamate

(MSG), dried fish and vegetable products achieves savory flavor, while adding a punch of spice makes up a balanced portion of the menu.

The Beijing duck roll is probably the most iconic crowd-pleaser at Hop Alley, according to Lee, and has become a permanent staple on the menu. The dish takes on the familiar flavor of Peking duck, with Lee's spin of smoking confit duck leg and rolling it up in a scallion pancake with cabbage and house hoisin sauce. The La Zi Ji — battered and fried chunks of chicken thigh tossed with dry Sichuan chili — is another must-try that brings the heat with its tongue-tingling spice.

Meanwhile, Hop Alley's energetic atmosphere and imaginative drinks menu have earned the restaurant a reputation for boozy beverages alone, from baijiu (a Chinese liquor) acquired with the help of a family friend to inventive spins on classic cocktails, this drinks list is not to be overlooked. Case in point: The seasonal Bee's Knees cocktail landed on the Michelin Guide inspector's selection of top three cocktails in Colorado —

it's Hop Alley's twist on the Prohibition-era classic featuring chili-crisp-infused honey. "Helping create within the place you grew up, and having one minuscule say of what our restaurant and culture scene is, is pretty cool," Lee said.

Born in Denver with Chinese roots, Lee notes that there wasn't much in the way of Sichuan food in Denver when Hop Alley opened in 2015.

"I was a 27-year-old living in Denver and figuring out where we would dine out, but there weren't many options that would appeal to me," Lee said, remembering the culinary landscape as being mostly New American at the time.

Unbeknownst to him when signing the lease, Hop Alley's connection to the area is "serendipitous" and steeped in Asian American history. The restaurant takes residence in an old soy-sauce factory owned by the family behind the Pacific Mercantile Market on the outskirts of what was once Denver's Chinatown, founded in the 1860s, until a race riot in 1880 destroyed the neighborhood.

After discovering the history of the building and neighborhood, he decided



Hop Alley in Denver

COME TO LIFE

to name the restaurant after the area's moniker: Hop Alley.

"I think, ultimately, a lot of chefs are feeling the same way of wanting to create a place that they want to go to," Lee said, naming the biggest change in Colorado's culinary scene over the past few years as the rise of the minority restaurant owner's voice through their food.

"They're not afraid to keep things authentic," Lee added. "They're creating the cuisine that they grew up with and that they're familiar with, and presenting it in a modern way that's not necessarily compromising to American palates."

"I think it's cool that it's become dynamic and diverse as far as people sticking to their guns of what they really want to do, which is always a hard business decision of 'are people really going to like this?'"

For James Beard Best Chef: Mountain category semifinalist Mawa McQueen, cooking up her Afro-Mediterranean cuisine with French-American flair in Aspen and Snowmass was a risk that nearly drove her to give up her life's passion.

However, her flagship restaurant Mawa's Kitchen earned its Michelin Guide Recommended distinction in 2023, lauded as delivering "extraordinary quality with everyday value."

Her signature must-tries fuse her French and African roots, like chicken Mafee, a West African peanut curry with charred cauliflower and forbidden rice, or Jollof Fonio with roasted summer vegetables, spicy African red sauce and chili crunch. Meanwhile, Mawa's seafood gumbo with andouille sausage, chicken, shrimp, crawfish, okra and fofou caught the attention of the Michelin Guide inspector's palate with its use of bold spices.

"[Aspen is] basically the worst place to put a restaurant like this. It would be great in Denver, but I was in Aspen and I was sick and tired of steakhouses and sushi, and I thought we need more culture," McQueen said. "I had to be true to myself. People finally embraced it and it became a success."

The chef was inspired to come to the mountain town after seeing an episode of "The Young and The Restless."

"When I saw Aspen, it looked like a Hallmark Channel movie," McQueen said. "It was such a magical moment that it just stuck with me."

At the time, she was just a kid living in France with the idea of pursuing the American dream. She vowed that she would one day come to America and visit Aspen as part of her bucket list. And years later, she found herself splitting her time between working summers in Maine and winters at The Little Nell in Aspen, falling in love with the warmth and magic of the small community. After years of back-and-forth, she finally decided to make the Hallmark mountain town her home.

"When I arrived in Aspen, it was even better than what I thought it was," McQueen said.

She kickstarted her own catering service as a private chef, cooking modern American cuisine with a slight French flair for her clients by day, and going home to recreate the flavors of her upbringing by night. Growing up on the Ivory Coast in Africa and later living in a ghetto in Paris, her taste was heavily influenced by her



Hop Alley in Denver

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Recipe for the perfect Colorado getaway

1 day at the
Pueblo Chile Festival

2 bushels of roasted chiles

1 dinner on the Historic
Arkansas Riverwalk

3 waves on the paddle board

2 drinks at a brewery

Sloppers to taste

A pinch of historic sight seeing

Notes: The combination of these events
are known to create the best memories!



VisitPueblo.org



Mawa's Kitchen in Aspen

Tunisian, Moroccan and Arabic neighbors, who shared their culture's teas, couscous, honey cakes and tagines with McQueen and her 10 younger siblings.

"Our only currency when we were in the ghetto was food. We shared culture, we shared things," McQueen said. "I didn't know it was a gift and the more I remembered, the more I was craving that flavor."

Inspired to be more true to her French and African roots, she began incorporating more Mediterranean food into her cooking while maintaining a hyper-seasonal menu with local ingredients.

Now, she has a growing empire on her hands. In addition to Mawa's Kitchen, the Latin-inspired Mawita, two Crepe Shacks, her private-chef catering service and health-focused granola brand, GrainFreeNola, she's expanding beyond the Rockies Playground. A Mawa's Kitchen and two more Crepe Shacks are set to open in Denver this year.

Lee is also expanding with a third iteration of his ramen restaurant, Uncle, opening at Denver International Airport this year.

Looking back to when he opened his first restaurant 12 years ago, he's recognizing that he may not be the "cool kid on the block" anymore as a new generation of chefs is rising in Colorado and he finds

himself in a place of giving advice, rather than seeking it.

"It's more exciting for me to see what the newer, younger chefs are trying," Lee said. "They have less to lose because they're just starting out, but it's cool that they're not sticking to the same formula that everyone in the past has."

"In 10 years we're going to be competing with New York," McQueen added. "It's amazing, if you go to Denver, there's amazing, refined choices ... I think people need to watch out, we're coming and we're coming with style."

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Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

Stellar Views

That Are Out of This World

Colorado's bluebird skies are beloved by just about anyone who finds themselves outside during daylight hours. But when night falls, those clear days turn into dark, cloudless nights with nothing obscuring crisp constellations, rocketing meteors and glowing planets. It's no coincidence that our state has some of the best stargazing in the country — its alpine setting creates the perfect conditions for unforgettable evening views.

In fact, in recent years, 17 areas throughout Colorado were designated as Dark Sky Places by DarkSky International. Let's dive into what makes those spots — and so many others throughout the state — perfect for unhindered vistas of the Milky Way.

Gazing skyward at a high altitude increases your limited magnitude — the faintest object visible with the naked eye — so you can see stars that are farther out in the galaxy. And as you go up in elevation, you'll likely start to see more and more clusters appear.



Smokey Jack Observatory in Westcliffe

Since mountainous areas get you that much closer to the skies above, you can simply unzip the tent, step outside and observe the cosmos in their full magnificence. Bordered by the vast open spaces of western Colorado, **Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park** near Montrose has always been a phenomenal place to see the stars. The Black Canyon Astronomical Society and other stargazing groups conduct nighttime programs throughout the year, with experienced astronomers and astro-photographers on hand to assist visitors in the darkness.

Light pollution is the biggest enemy of proper stargazing. The closer you steer to cities, the less twinkling you see above. Higher-population areas typically rest within the “light dome,” where street lights, glowing signage and other luminaries prevent us from seeing the vast expanses of space. Here, dark places are easy to find for a quick weekend away in the mountains, where the soaring peaks play their part to block the lights from urban areas. Towns like **Westcliffe** and **Silver Cliff** keep the lights off to support nearby **Smokey Jack Observatory**, where one of Colorado’s most powerful telescopes magnifies the sky’s celestial show. Classes and stargazing events welcome the community and visitors.

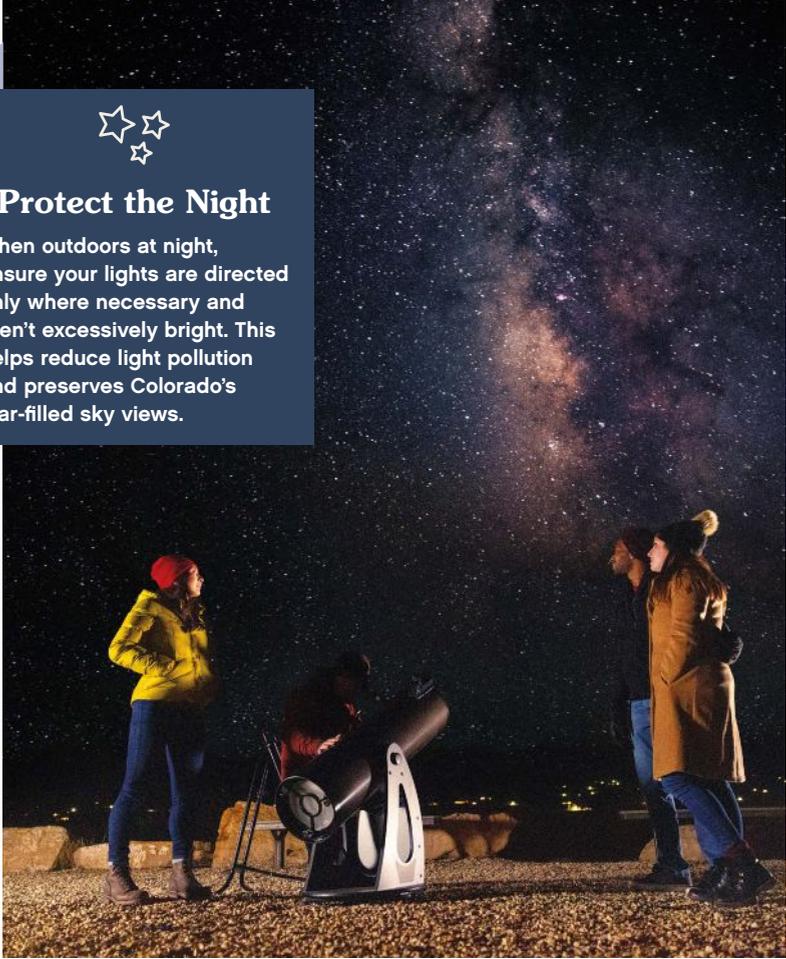
But you don’t need a telescope to get started here — simply head 20 to 30 minutes beyond the city limits of your favorite mountain town, hang a hammock at a campsite and stare for hours at the untouched beauty of space. Late summer to early autumn is the best time to make the trip to towns like **Pagosa Springs**, when the Milky Way is the most visible. The archaeological sites of the Chaco culture have remained largely unchanged for 1,000 years at nearby **Chimney Rock National Monument**. There, ancestral wisdom and modern telescopic technology meet with unique Night Sky Archaeoastronomy Programs, where you can learn how the Chaco people used the stars for navigation, timekeeping and spiritual guidance.

Our less-populated lower elevations have their advantages, too. **Jackson Lake State Park** in northeastern Colorado is one of the most scenic places to watch the Colorado sky. It was named an International Dark Sky Park in 2020, making it the first Colorado State Park to hold the coveted designation. With its large, glassy surface, the lake acts as the perfect mirror for the constellations. Known as “the oasis in the plains,” the lake’s peaceful evenings, sandy beaches and breathtaking view of the stars are definitely a sight worth seeing.



Protect the Night

When outdoors at night, ensure your lights are directed only where necessary and aren’t excessively bright. This helps reduce light pollution and preserves Colorado’s star-filled sky views.



Westcliffe

SCOTT DANKOF PHOTOGRAPHY; ANDREW MAGUIRE

Guided Outdoor Experiences

Across the Rockies

Look around and you'll see it's no wonder people flock to Colorado every year to get their outdoor-adventure fix. Whether exploring our staggering peaks and pristine waters or our lush forests and vibrant landscapes, immersing yourself in the Colorado backcountry is a rewarding experience that will refuel your soul. But oftentimes, the biggest hurdle is knowing where to start. Activities like rafting, fly-fishing, mountain biking and backpacking can seem unapproachable to newcomers, and this is where a local guide can come in handy. These experts can help you feel comfortable, safe and confident in venturing out for a wide range of outdoor activities, no matter your experience or skill level. They can also lead you to a sense of accomplishment and communion with nature that could be the most enlightening and restorative experience you've ever had.

Fly-Fishing

Some call it a sport, while others call it a lifestyle — either way, fly-fishing is a peaceful pastime for many Coloradans. It's hard to know if you want to invest in poles, waders, flies and other equipment if you've never felt that magical and sudden tug on your line and the frenzied effort to bring your catch in. Going with an outfitter gives you the perfect taste of this specialized activity. A guided excursion with **Noah's Ark** in Buena Vista will have you creating graceful arcs with your line in no time. Their team of seasoned anglers offers full-day and overnight trips, evening floats with dinner and walk-and-wade trips that are perfect for those dipping their first wader-covered toe in the water.



Lost Lake near Crested Butte

ANDREW MAGUIRE



Echo Canyon River Expeditions in Cañon City

Rafting

Fast, fun rapids. Unparalleled scenery. Abundant wildlife. Multiday rafting tours are a once-in-a-lifetime experience. You'll form deep bonds with your raft companions and never have to worry about preparing meals or keeping yourself safe thanks to the knowledgeable and seasoned guides that are integral to making these trips successful. **Echo Canyon River Expeditions'** multiday Arkansas River rafting trips take place on one of the nation's most popular waterways amid family-friendly rapids not far from Cañon City, though you can opt for more adventurous sections of the river if you're up for it. Along your journey, you're likely to spot bighorn sheep, golden eagles and peregrine falcons, as well as many of our state's highest peaks.

Backpacking

Ready for an iconic land-based excursion? The Chicago Basin is a gloriously colorful part of one of the nation's most remote wilderness areas — the Weminuche. **San Juan Mountain Guides** offers an exhilarating trek and well-rounded journey you'll never forget. Over three days, even those with no previous backpacking experience (though some endurance and cardio prep is required) will pass cascading creeks and wildflowers galore, climb up Windom Peak, where you'll see mountain goats scampering along cliff faces, and more. Part of the fun is getting to the basin on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, which drops you, your guides and your gear off midway on its trip to Silverton. Opt for the meal package so you don't have to do any extra work after a long day of soaking up mountain majesty.

Mountain Biking

Ride through crisp alpine air and panoramic views as you descend through the Gunnison Valley's flower-lined trails. **Colorado Backcountry** in Crested Butte offers mountain-biking trips for visitors ranging from first-time trail riders to singletrack experts. Make your mark on the trails at Hartman Rocks in Gunnison, known for having over 50 miles of flowy paths that rollercoaster past sweet-smelling sagebrush and tall granite boulders. Whether you're looking for calf-busting ascents or aspen-grove tunnels, your guide can lead you to some of the best segments in the region. And they'll help you conquer sneaky rock moves and overcome complicated features all along the way.



Hartman Rocks in Gunnison

ECHO CANYON RIVER EXPEDITIONS; GUNNISON CRESTED BUTTE TOURISM



Kirks Mountain Adventures near Estes Park

Llama Hikes

Did you know llamas can carry up to 30 percent of their body weight? This is just one reason they make exemplary hiking companions — they'll tote everything you need for overnights in Colorado's forestland. That frees you up to take in the beautiful scenery as you mosey along trails in Rocky Mountain National Park. **Kirks Mountain Adventures** in Estes Park will take you on overnight excursions through lush mountain landscapes tailored to your desired timeframe. The llamas will keep you company as well as free you of the burden of your food, water and other gear. Kirks also offers three-, six- and eight-hour hiking trips with the llamas. You'll miss singing by the campfire, but still get to know the quirky personalities of these gentle trekkers.

Climbing

You've likely seen spectacular images of climbers scaling some of Colorado's most dramatic rock faces and thought you'd never take that daring leap. But with a climbing guide, you'll learn the basics of the gear and how to use it to rappel, move and finesse techniques. The patient outfitters at **Colorado Mountain School** will craft an educational expedition that's designed to your specific goals, and lead everything from a half-day fun climb to a five-day immersion series in Eldorado, Boulder and Clear Creek canyons, on Boulder's famous Flatiron mountains and beyond.



Clear Creek Canyon near Golden

BETH SCHNEIDER (ALL PHOTOS)

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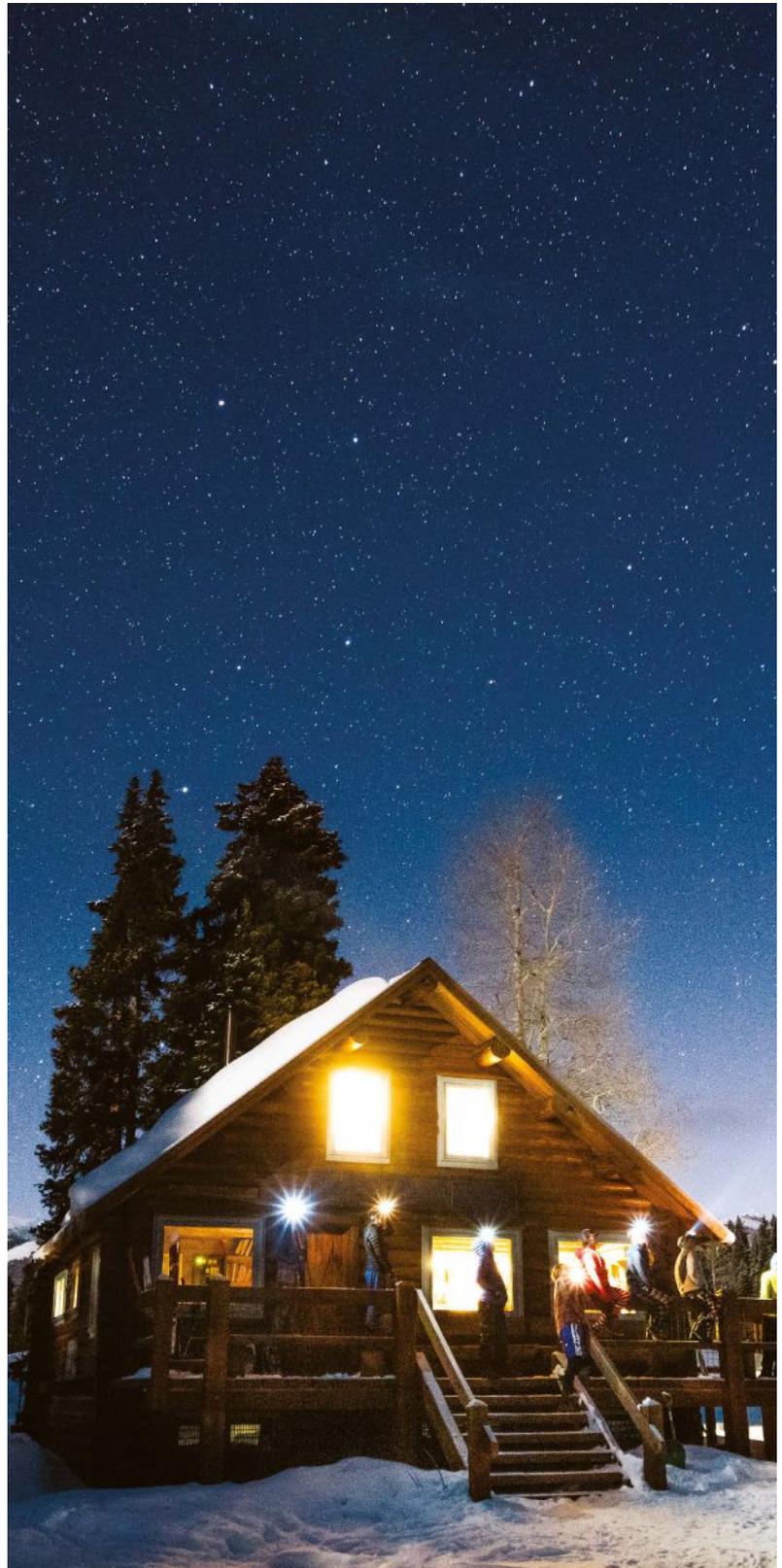
Photo © Christoph Stopka

Hut Trips

Hut trips are one of the best ways to embrace the true essence of a Colorado high-country winter, offering the coziest reward at the end of an invigorating day of snowshoeing or cross-country skiing through remote landscapes. The 10th Mountain Division Hut system provides a framework that's considered the apex of these excursions. The huts were built to house WWII soldiers training to fight in high altitudes. And while they're well-equipped to provide warmth and rest after a day in the sun and snow, making your way between them requires knowledge of the area, maps and superior navigation skills. **Paragon Guides** near Vail provides a complete escape into the wilderness, all customized for your group's experience and fitness levels. They take care of the food, hut reservations, sleeping bags, backpacks and avalanche-safety equipment — leaving you to focus on making your way to a hot-chocolate reward.

Hunting

As the sun appears on the horizon and the grass rustles under your boots, a majestic creature casually walks into your field of vision. There's tension in your knees from the position you've been holding, but — at last — the time has come. The thrill of the hunt is upon you. Most people don't have the leisure time required to scout out and plan a successful big-game hunt. When you team up with folks who do this for a living, all you have to do is throw on your high-visibility orange and set off for adventure. With **J&D Outfitters**, you'll prowl the rolling grassland near Hugo, enjoying comfortable accommodations, home-cooked meals and roundtrip transportation while hunting on private land. By the end of the day, you'll have gained a lot of knowledge from your guides and have many stories to tell back home.



Harry Gates Hut near Basalt



Find more beginner-friendly guided tours on **Colorado.com**.

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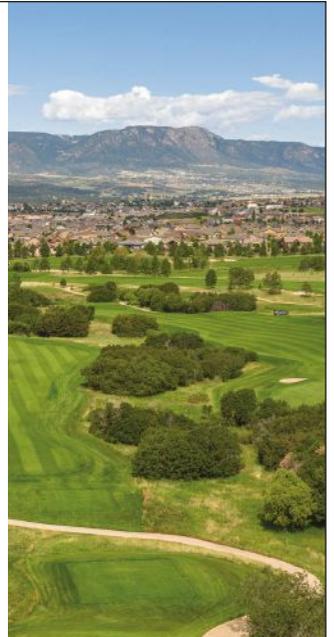
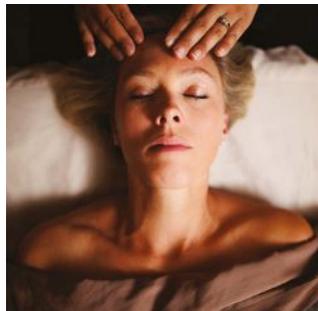
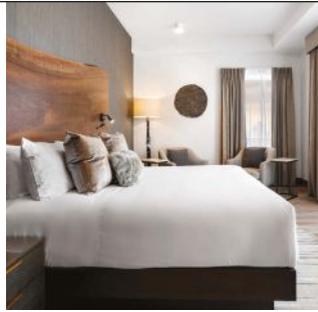
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5 Outdoor Activities

For All Abilities

Colorado's mountains and parks welcome visitors of all abilities. From skiing and biking to horseback riding and camping, there are many adaptive ways to venture through the Rockies, and many organizations that make it easy to do so.

1 Skiing in Colorado's High Country

As one of the top winter-sports destinations in the country, Colorado provides endless skiing opportunities, from Vail and Beaver Creek to Breckenridge and Eldora. Learn how to ski or snowboard on Aspen Snowmass' world-class slopes with a private adaptive lesson through **Challenge Aspen**. Trained professionals will show you how to shred gnarly powder using specialized equipment. Try out a mono-ski or buddy-board as you descend from what feels like the top of the world. Book in advance to reserve your spot — especially during peak season.

2 Biking in Breckenridge

Feel the cool mountain breeze on your face as you cycle on an adaptive road bike from **Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center**. Ride tree-lined concrete paths around the education center, traverse paved trails along the blue waters of Lake Dillon or cruise through downtown Breckenridge to admire Main Street's Gold Rush-era buildings. Be sure to call at least two weeks ahead of time for private rentals. Two trails in town, Reiling Dredge and Sawmill Reservoir, are newly wheelchair friendly and have parking spaces at the trailheads that are accessible.

3 Horseback Riding in Steamboat

Bond with your own trusty steed on a therapeutic horseback ride with **STARS Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports**. At their Zen Ranch in Steamboat Springs, you'll develop basic horsemanship skills and learn how to communicate with your animal companion in a group or private lesson. Trot in the shadows of the Rocky Mountains as you uncover a bounty of aspen-lined pathways, sun-colored wildflowers and rolling green foothills.

4 Camping Near Kenosha Pass

There's nothing like an evening beneath a sky of glittering stars. At **Wilderness on Wheels** near Grant, campers of all ages and abilities can spend a night in the great outdoors with five affordable, wheelchair-accessible huts, plus the Ridge Top Cabin, which has space for a portable Hoyer lift and an in-bathtub transfer bench. During the day, visitors can travel along the mile-long boardwalk to the summit. There are some steep climbs, so wheeling yourself can be a fun challenge with rewarding views of Pikes Peak across the valley. Or just hang out at the base and drop a line at the wheelchair-accessible fishing pier.

5 All-Terrain Wheelchairs at Several Parks

In Colorado Springs, visitors can register to use free Trackchairs — motorized wheelchairs with tank-style treads — to navigate the rocky trail of **Red Canyon Open Space**. Delight in the flaming-red rock formations, meadows of vibrant-yellow wildflowers and glimpses of bighorn sheep as you cruise along. In **Rocky Mountain National Park**, the GRIT Freedom Chair conquers the park's terrain to give guests in wheelchairs expansive mountain displays. Explore fields of towering sand dunes with the balloon-tire chairs at **Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve** in Mosca. These chairs help prevent sinking on the soft, shifting sands; you just need a strong companion to push you.





Share Our Parks & Trails

Everyone experiences and enjoys the outdoors in different ways. Be mindful: Wheelchair users, adaptive cyclists and equestrians always have the right of way. In all other instances, always yield to the uphill hiker and biker — they need the momentum.

Poudre Trail near Fort Collins



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Boulder: Outdoor Town, Artist's Heart

At the foot of Colorado's Rockies is a small city with a huge, creative heart. Come see why Boulder's natural beauty draws the nation's third-highest concentration of artists in the country.



Boulder's Flatirons have inspired countless artists, with new views every season.



Wildly Creative

Plan a vacation to Boulder and you'll notice that art and outdoors come together here. Find murals around every corner, street performers up and down historic Pearl Street, and theater happening everywhere — even right on the trails. Spend the day hiking then catch a mind-opening film or concert at night.



Downtown Boulder

In downtown Boulder, we celebrate ultra runners, marathon shoppers, foodies and artists alike. Visit the heart of the city — home to countless independent businesses and prime people-watching. There are endless discoveries and everlasting memories waiting for you in downtown Boulder!

VisitDowntownBoulder.com



Hear Nature's Stories

The outdoors is bound to call you outside in Boulder, whether it's for a gentle nature walk or a heart-pounding rock climb. While you're out e-biking to the Flatirons, hiking to a red sandstone pinnacle, snowshoeing through a powder-covered wilderness or paddleboarding on the Boulder Reservoir, you'll see how adventure is a window to inspiration. The landscape is at once the city's playground and its muse. Bring a notebook, your camera or sketchbook to capture your own inspiration in the fresh air. You won't be alone among plein-air artists, photographers and filmmakers on the trails, too.

Taste Crafted Cuisine

From MICHELIN Guide-starred restaurants to street carts serving hot dumplings on Pearl Street, this is a city that loves to eat. Boulder's chefs seem to find endless inspiration for diners' adventurous palates, and they have at their disposal the freshest ingredients from 1,000 farms surrounding Boulder County. When combined with the artistic culture of the city, the result is a fresh take on the culinary arts — one you'll love to savor. At the end of an adventurous day, enjoy a meal with a view on Boulder's patios and rooftops, or beside picture windows that let you take in the splendor of your surroundings while you dine.



PHOTO CREDIT: CASEY WILSON



Feel the Good Vibrations

As one of the top live-music cities in the West, tunes spill out of Boulder coffeehouses and big names light up the marquees of the of the Fox and Boulder theaters nightly. Famous festivals like the Colorado Music Festival, Bands on the Bricks, Bluebird Music Festival and Chautauqua Concert Series are reasons alone to plan a trip, and in summer there are outdoor concert series several nights a week. Boulder is also home to eTown, a nationally syndicated music radio show, and the legacy of nearby Caribou Ranch, a storied recording studio in the hills west of town.

Festival Calendar

Plan around an annual event or festival at BoulderColoradoUSA.com/festivals.



6 Iconic Events

You Won't Want to Miss

Colorado's arts, culture and wildlife are on display with a multitude of annual traditions and events. From observing the soaring cranes of the San Luis Valley to taking part in Estes Park's oddball weekend of frosty fun, there are so many ways to appreciate our state. Mark your calendar and use our tips to help you maximize your experience at these festivities.

1

Tarantula Fest

Each fall, hundreds of male tarantulas roam across Comanche National Grassland near La Junta in a mating ritual. The extraordinary phenomenon has drawn visitors from near and far for the chance to see the eight-legged critters up close. So, the Tarantula Fest was born in honor of these furry friends. This September celebration includes a costume-filled parade, an education pavilion, contests, food trucks, live entertainment, face-painting, vendors selling spidery swag and, of course, tarantula tours.

Make the most of it:

As you explore the area, cruise down Hwy. 50 to stop at the numerous farm stands for fresh produce, including corn, cantaloupe and watermelon.



Tarantula Fest near La Junta



Frozen Dead Guy Days in Estes Park

2

Frozen Dead Guy Days

The backstory behind this quirky fest is a fascinating tale involving a Norwegian man, cryonics and a storage shed in Colorado. After Bredo Morstoel's death in 1989, his family brought his body to the U.S. where it was cryogenically frozen and later relocated to Nederland and the aforementioned shed. Packed in dry ice, "Grandpa" Bredo and his journey inspired the offbeat Frozen Dead Guy Days each March — held in Nederland for more than 20 years before its resurrection in Estes Park in 2023. The multiday fête has grown to include a lineup of musical acts on three different stages and a zombie bar crawl around town, in addition to spectacles like coffin races and a polar plunge.

Make the most of it:

Take a tour of the International Cryonics Museum located in the Stanley Hotel's historical Ice House. Dedicated to the science of human preservation, it's also the new home of Morstoel's body, preserved with liquid nitrogen in a steel chamber.

SEAN MCWULLEN/COLORADO SNAKE HUNTERS, JONATHAN PHILLIPS



Stay Hydrated

One thing's for sure at Colorado's high-elevation events and festivals, you'll need more water than you do at sea level — sometimes twice what you'd normally drink. Fill up that reusable bottle to stay hydrated, and also apply sunscreen to protect your skin in our sunny altitudes!

Colorado Mountain Winefest in Palisade

3

Colorado Mountain Winefest

Palisade is home to towering mesas, the winding Colorado River and acres of vineyards, so it's only natural that the Colorado Mountain Winefest shines here. During the third weekend of September, more than 50 of the state's wineries congregate on Riverbend Park's lawn to top off your glass with vino and celebrations of their craft. Enjoy unlimited samples from dozens of producers, stop by food trucks serving delicious bites, swoop your dance partner around to live music, partake in barefoot grape stomping, and post up for educational seminars and chef demonstrations. Want to take wine home with you? Drop your purchases off at the storage tent and pick your bottles up on your way out, so you don't have to keep track of them while you're sipping.

Make the most of it: The festival is part of Colorado Wine Week, so look for additional events near Grand Junction like wine dinners, chocolate and wine tastings, tours and more.

4

Caveman Music Festival

Southern Colorado offers a Labor Day weekend bursting with lively entertainment and recreation at the Caveman Music Festival in Weston. Bring friends or family to Monument Lake Resort near Weston and embrace summer's close with back-to-back concerts and outdoor activities, surrounded by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Jam to more than 20 bands on two stages playing a range of genres, from rock and jazz to country and bluegrass. And the weekend promises more than just stellar live tunes — you can also rent pontoons, paddleboards and canoes to get out on the lake's rippling waters, dip your fishing line beneath the surface or set up camp and listen to singing crickets among the deep-green pines.

Make the most of it: Purchase the Caveman Pass for three-day access to all the shows and on-site parking; an upgraded version includes VIP access.

5 Monte Vista Crane Festival

What better way to immerse yourself in Colorado's majesty than watching thousands of birds with 6-foot wingspans dot the sky in front of the snowcapped San Juan Mountains? Now in its 42nd year, March's Monte Vista Crane Festival is an event-filled adventure. Offerings range from a craft and nature fair to movie screenings, speakers and expert-led bus tours in Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge to learn about sandhill crane migrations. Keep your binoculars ready to spot other birds, too, including ducks, geese, owls, eagles and raptors. If you prefer to explore on your own, the refuge has a walking trail, interpretive auto-tour route and designated pull-offs to maximize your viewing opportunities.

Make the most of it: Looking for an all-encompassing San Luis Valley trip? Just 40 miles east of Monte Vista are the tallest dunes in North America — found in Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.



Monte Vista Crane Festival



International Snow Sculpting Championship in Breckenridge

6 International Snow Sculpting Championship

Each January, visitors flock to this frosty fest in Breckenridge to watch pros from around the world gently coax intricate sculptures out of 25-ton blocks of snow. Over the course of five days, they create jaw-dropping and whimsical scenes of mythical creatures, larger-than-life natural phenomena and elaborate abstract artworks — all without the use of power tools. Food trucks, hot cocoa, music performances and a beer garden keep things lively, and those in the know go around sunset to see golden hour's sparkling effect on the frozen masterpieces.

Make the most of it: Viewing the sculptures while they're being carved is free, but timed-entry reservations may be required.

Find Your Kid's Favorite Things

Fuel your child's curiosity through Colorado's family-friendly attractions. Whether your little one would visit Jurassic Park if given the chance or can talk your ear off about their favorite wild animal, there are tons of attractions where they can learn and play.

Dinosaurs

Have an aspiring paleontologist on your hands? You've come to the right place because a plethora of prehistoric giants once roamed the Centennial State, leaving behind tracks and fossils to marvel at.

Grand Junction is an ideal starting point for a road trip along the **Dinosaur Diamond scenic and historic byway**. Heading northwest toward Fruita, stop to hike the "dinosaur trails" where important discoveries have been made, including Riggs Hill — the site of the first Brachiosaurus ever discovered — Dinosaur Hill and the Fruita Paleo Loop. Farther down the byway is the aptly named town of Dinosaur, which serves as a gateway to Dinosaur National Monument.

Fruita is home to the **Dinosaur Journey Museum**, where kids will be amazed at the vast collection of more than 15,000 fossil specimens. Here, they can make their own dino tracks and dig at a "quarry site" for actual dinosaur bones. Your family can also register for summertime Dinosaur Digs and Expeditions to go out in the field at a real dig site and search for Jurassic treasures.

Head eastward to the **Royal Gorge Dinosaur Experience** near Cañon City, which offers high-tech thrills in the form of life-size animatronic dinosaur exhibits, two ropes courses (including one for tykes), a state-of-the-art theater with rotating dino films and more. Kids will also geek out over the huge number of full-scale dinosaur casts and real fossils on display.



Royal Gorge Dinosaur Experience near Cañon City



Dinosaur Journey Museum in Fruita

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Snow Days

Does your child's face light up whenever snowflakes start to fall? Whisk them away to our winter wonderland with activities the whole family will love.

Book a family retreat at **YMCA of the Rockies - Snow Mountain Ranch** in Granby and stay in rustic cabins or hotel-style lodge rooms. With a variety of things to do on-site and in the area, you'll have no trouble filling out your itinerary for frosty fun. Head to the Winter Pavilion for ice skating and snow tubing, or arrange a sleigh ride or dog-sledding tour.

For kids with a daredevil streak, **Welder Ranch and Outfitting Services** in Meeker has the adventure for you: a family snowmobile tour through the backcountry of White River National Forest. Choose

from half- or full-day rides that are tailored to your group's abilities and experience level, with children riding as passengers. Cruising through the fluffy powder of Colorado's spectacular alpine environment is a brag-worthy memory that youngsters will never forget.

Make your little one's "Frozen" dreams come true at Cripple Creek's **Ice Castles**, a magical world built from thousands of hand-carved icicles. Explore frozen towers, caverns, archways and crawl tunnels, with sculptures and color-changing LED lights peppered throughout. Ice slides and chutes, including ones designed for younger kids, will have everyone singing "Let It Go" before you know it.



JIM DAVID PHOTOGRAPHY; LISA SEAMAN

YMCA of the Rockies - Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby



Georgetown Loop Railroad

Trains

All aboard! If there's one thing that tends to fascinate kids, it's trains. Luckily, we have no shortage of locomotive lore and railroad-related attractions to choose from.

At the **Colorado Model Railroad Museum** in Greeley, kids and adults alike are dazzled by the miniature world created here — 80 scale miles of train track, to be exact. Observe the model railroad from interactive stations and see how many little details you can “ooh” and “ahh” over. Check out the collection of rare model locomotives, walk through a restored 1919 caboose and encourage the kids to let off some steam in the play area.

Traversing between Georgetown and Silver Plume, the **Georgetown Loop Railroad** is one of the state's original

tourist attractions. Hop in the open-air cars of this narrow-gauge train and wind through pine and aspen trees, and over a rocky canyon. To fully immerse in the history of the area, add on a tour of Lebanon Mine and try your hand at gold panning.

For a journey any train enthusiast will never forget, look no further than the **Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad** in Antonito. At 64 miles in length, the route zig-zags through spectacular forests, wildflower-filled plains and a rugged gorge, chugging to a peak elevation of 10,015 feet at Cumbres Pass. Full- and half-day excursions include a stop at Osier Station for lunch, while express trips are a good option if you're short on time.



Bishop Castle in Rye

Fairy Tales

Seeking a sprinkle of magic for your wee explorer? Encourage their imagination and carefree spirit at these unique spots that feel right out of a storybook.

Built by one man over several decades, **Bishop Castle** in Rye is an impressive sight to behold. Perpetually open, it's free to visit the sprawling stone-and-iron structure — but use caution if you want to scale the steep spiral staircases, especially with small children. Even from the ground there's plenty to admire, from the towers and bridges to the Grand Ballroom accented with stained-glass windows, and the fire-breathing metal dragon perched off the front.

Though it's been a fixture of Nederland since 2010, the **Carousel of Happiness** dates back a century to its creation

in 1910. A town resident brought the original frame to Colorado, restored it and hand-carved a whimsical menagerie of 50-plus animals for the ride. Point out the hidden fairies perched in the nooks and crannies of the Carousel House, and listen to the Wurlitzer organ tune as your little ones gleefully whirl around.

Have a playful frolic at the **Denver Botanic Gardens**, an ethereal oasis away from the urban surroundings of the city. The Mordecai Children's Garden is a 3-acre area where kids can explore and learn about flora and fauna through interactive features, such as an alpine meadow, swinging bridges and splash streams. The facility also offers year-round children and family programs, including building a personal fairy garden to take home.



Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs

Animals & Insects

If furry friends are all your kid can think about, let them take a walk on the wild side and see their favorite critters up close.

In addition to an unconventional mountainside location at 6,714 feet in elevation, **Cheyenne Mountain Zoo** in Colorado Springs is known for its unforgettable animal experiences and demonstrations with an array of species, from penguins and rhinos to sloths and lions. Learn about caring for elephants or book a meet-and-feed with giraffes.

Specializing in spineless creatures, the **Butterfly Pavilion** in Westminster showcases everything from beetles and bees to sea stars and a tarantula named Rosie, utilizing immersive exhibits and interactive “touch” experiences. But the highlight is the Wings of the Tropics area, where you can walk among 1,600 free-flying butterflies in a lush tropical paradise. Peek into the Chrysalis Chamber and you might just catch a butterfly emerging for the first time.

In Keenesburg, the **Wild Animal Sanctuary** offers a bird’s-eye view from its 1.5-mile-long elevated walkway of more than 1,000 tigers, lions, bears, wolves and other species. This sprawling refuge takes in animals from captive situations and allows them to roam freely in large natural habitats, while visitors marvel at them from above. Watch as they run, play, relax and maybe even roar or howl as the sun lowers in the sky.

Explore Colorado's Rich Culture & Heritage

Colorado is known for craggy mountain peaks, hiking paths washed in periwinkle wildflowers and rushing waterfalls, but our Western roots also tell of resilient culture and heritage. In the bustling cities and small towns throughout the state, you can marvel at one-of-a-kind Native American sites, celebrate Hispanic traditions and dig into the history of mining towns steeped in Gold Rush lore. Here are just a handful of ways you can soak up the state's culture when you visit.

Denver

Our capital's cultural experiences span far and wide. Self-determining visitors will appreciate the **Five Points Historic Walking Tour**, where you can trace Denver's Black history, marker to marker. See the famed Roxy Theatre — the only Black cinema in the city during the Great Depression — and the Alta Cousins Terrace, affordable housing made by African Americans for African Americans during racial segregation. Hear the hollow, bass-like boom of taiko drummers at the **Cherry Blossom Festival** at Sakura Square, where you can also sip sweet sake and appreciate Japanese artwork. This festival is co-presented by the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple — whose grand, gold-studded interiors are worth a visit alone. In the heart of **Little Saigon**, find the **Far East Center** — an Asian and Pacific Islander-centered shopping district listed on Colorado's State Register of Historic Properties. Find authentic dim sum and boba in this cultural enclave, as well as seasonal celebrations, like Lunar New Year block parties. Glimpse Latin heritage at **Museo de las Americas**, where more than 4,800 pieces of artwork tell of ancient American and contemporary life. Swing by on Cinco de Mayo for dance performances, sugary sopapillas and buoyant mariachi music.





Global Fest in Aurora

Aurora

Aurora shines as one of the most culturally diverse cities in Colorado, offering a vibrant mix of traditions, languages and cuisines. This thriving community is home to more than 250 restaurants that showcase a wide array of cultures, so it's easy to find crispy yakitori (grilled-chicken skewers), berbere-spiced curry on injera (warm, fermented flatbread), oregano-dusted souvlaki (marinated pork, chicken or lamb) and umami-forward mohinga (rice-noodle soup). Continue your adventures at the **Aurora History Museum**, whose portrait-rich, biennial *Mosaic of Cultures* exhibit explores the city's countless communities. Feel the thrill of **Global Fest**, a celebration of international cultures complete with a kaleidoscopic parade of nations and a buzzing marketplace. Wander through the **Aurora Fox Arts Center**, where you can listen to sultry cabaret and soulful jazz. Or warm up at the **Plains Conservation Center**, where a replica homestead village and tipi camp — backdropped against waving short-grass prairie and the iconic Rocky Mountains — showcase Native American life in the late 1800s.

Cripple Creek & Victor

In central Colorado, find Cripple Creek, famous for its some-22 million ounces of mined gold. Experience this history firsthand on the **Vindicator Valley Trail**, a 2-mile gravel hike that highlights more than a dozen former mines. Downtown, find the **Outlaws & Lawmen Jail Museum**. This unassuming red-brick building features in-depth exhibitions that unravel the stories of people who were incarcerated within its walls — many who sought the grandeur of gold. In sharp contrast is the **Old Homestead House Museum**, once considered the most luxurious, expensive parlor house in Cripple Creek's red-light district. Learn about the city's 19th-century elite who visited the glamorous madams within.

Southeast Colorado

Perhaps the best place to see Colorado's switchgrass-covered valleys and horizon-hugging plains is in the southeast, where history is just as unique. Start in La Junta at **Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site**, a reconstructed 19th-century adobe fort that played a pivotal role in international trade and cultural exchange among Americans, Europeans, French-Canadians and Native American tribes. In Granada, the **Amache National Historic Site** was one of 10 incarceration camps used to imprison innocent Japanese Americans during World War II, and now serves as a memorial where citizens can recommit to the pursuit of freedom and justice. **Boggsville**, a key stop on the Santa Fe Trail, was a town that shaped the history of the American West through its extensive commerce and trade. Visitors can investigate the grounds and tour the home of founder Thomas Boggs.



Leave It As You Find It

Enjoy observing plants? Rocks? Historical and cultural items? Be sure to leave them as you found them so everyone can experience the joy of discovery.

RUTH ZALEWSKI

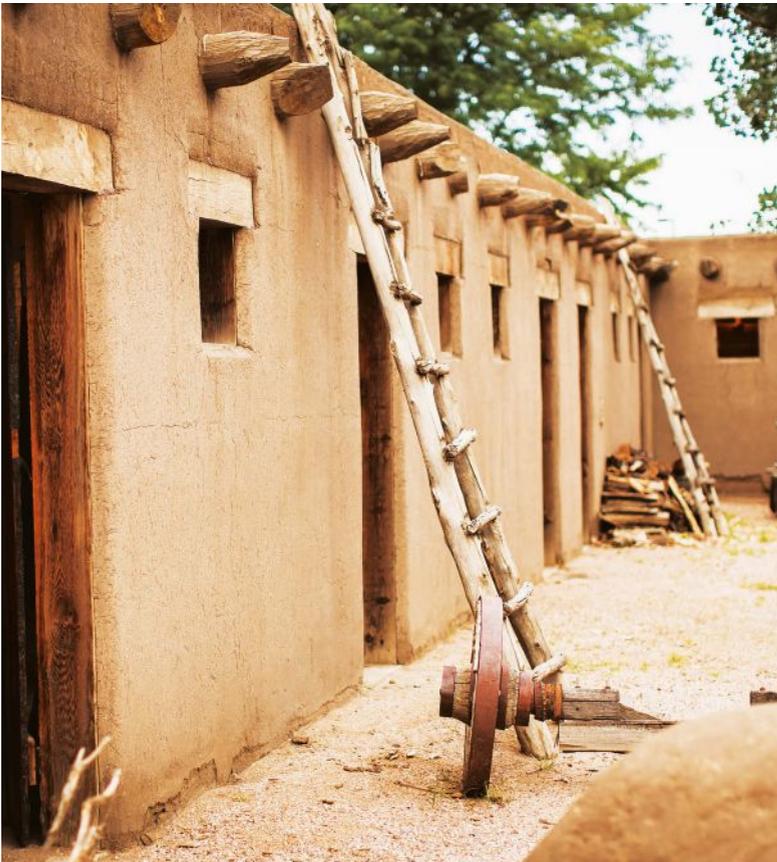
Vindicator Valley Trail near Cripple Creek



Estes Park Elk Fest

Estes Park

Estes Park rests on the eastern edge of Rocky Mountain National Park, making this quintessential Colorado town the perfect launchpad for outdoor adventure. Put your skills to the test or rally for your favorite kilt-clad player at the **Highland Games**, a roundup of traditional Scottish competitions like hammer throws, stone put and caber-throwing, hosted at the Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival. Experience a Scottish military tattoo (not unlike The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo), complete with an extraordinary marching band and dance ensemble. **Elk Fest** features Native American dancing, storytelling, music and art in the city's aspen-studded Bond Park. Leaf-peep spectacular stands of honey-colored leaves while packs of elk gather in town during rutting season. Looking for more immersive Native American experiences? Attend an Indigenous-inspired dinner and sweet-grass offering at **First Peoples Festival**, which also centers Native American potters, bead workers, sculptors and more at an illustrious vendors' market.



El Pueblo History Museum

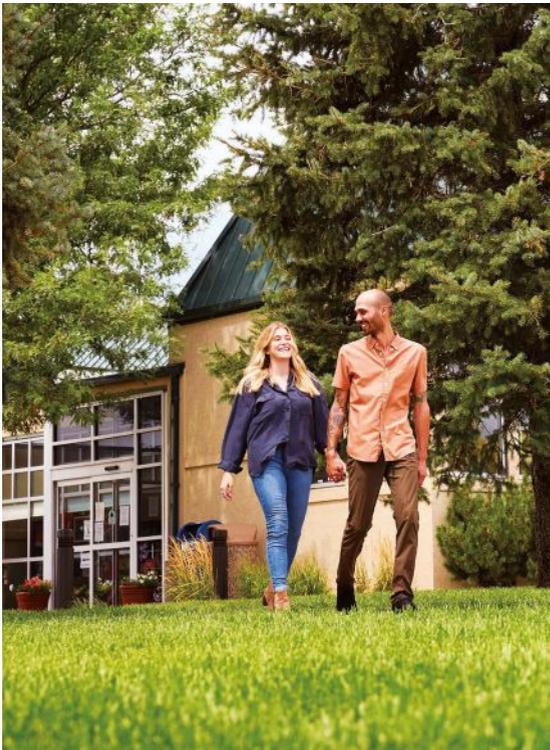
Pueblo

Pueblo's steel mill opened in 1872, which drew the interest of Italian, Greek, Slovenian, Polish, Irish and German immigrants for work, since being able to speak English was not a barrier to labor. The 40-plus languages eventually represented at the mill shaped the town's culture and heritage throughout the 20th century. Learn more at the **Steelworks Center of the West**, where fascinating archives and artifacts dot the walls of this renovated smokestack-topped factory. Permanent exhibitions include the mysterious **X-Ray Room**, a deep dive into 20th-century medical clinics. **El Pueblo History Museum** details the cultural and ethnic groups who lived along the borderlands of southern Colorado. See a re-creation of an adobe trading post and plaza, as well as the excavation site of the original 1842 El Pueblo trading post. Survey more of the city's creative culture at **Sangre de Cristo Arts Center**, where you can stroll through a vibrant children's museum and an art gallery with rotating special exhibits.

Colorado Welcome Centers

If you want to learn how to travel like a local during your visit, simply head to one of the many great Welcome Centers across Colorado.

Stop by for travel advice from our knowledgeable volunteers, and pick up maps, brochures and regional guides that will keep you inspired throughout your Colorado stay. Each center has internet access and clean restrooms at your disposal, as well as information on weather and road conditions for wherever your journey takes you.



Burlington Welcome Center



Impromptu Adventures

Need last-minute trip ideas? Drop by Colorado's Welcome Centers for scenic detours, nearby hiking trails, wildlife-viewing spots and local events happening that day.

1. Fort Collins

7 Old Town Square, Suite 100
I-25 at exit 269B, 970-491-3583
Located in Old Town Fort Collins.

2. Julesburg

20934 C.R. 28, I-76 at exit 180,
970-474-2054
Found in the northeast corner of Colorado, near major interstates I-80 and I-76.

3. Burlington

48265 I-70, I-70 between exits
437 and 438, 719-346-5554
Located on I-70 near the Kansas border.

4. Lamar

109 E. Beech St., U.S. Hwy. 50,
719-336-3483,
Situated near the Kansas border in southeastern Colorado.

5. Trinidad

309 Nevada Ave., 719-846-9512
Located off I-70 near the New Mexico border.

6. Alamosa

610 State Ave., U.S. Hwy. 160
and State Ave., 719-589-4840
On your way in from New Mexico at the intersection of highways 160 and 285.

7. Cortez

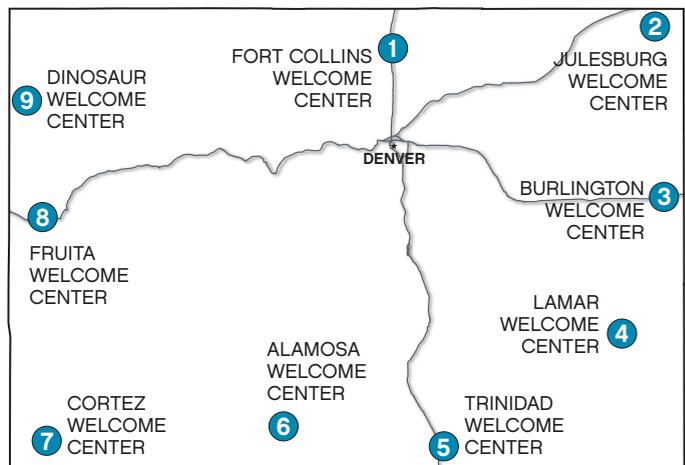
928 E. Main St., U.S. Hwy. 160/491,
970-565-4048
Located near the Four Corners region.

8. Fruita

340 Hwy. 340, I-70 at exit 19,
970-858-9335
Located just off I-70 near the Utah border.

9. Dinosaur

101 E. Stegosaurus St.
U.S. Hwy. 40, 970-374-2205
Located near Utah and Dinosaur National Monument.





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A photograph of two white tigers with brown stripes, sitting in a grassy field. The tiger in the foreground is looking directly at the camera, while the one in the background is slightly out of focus.

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