



## Denver and Boulder

Known as the “Mile-High City,” Denver, Colorado sits on the plains, right up against the Rocky Mountains. First settled by gold-rush miners in 1858, it’s grown up to be a modern, thriving metropolis with plenty of attractions to enjoy.

Forty miles (64 km) to the northwest, set off by the beautiful Flatirons rock formation, Boulder is the home of the University of Colorado and of the world’s largest herbal tea maker.

To the west of Denver, you can visit the world’s largest brewery and Buffalo Bill’s museum and grave, drive up a 14,000-foot (4,267 m) mountain, and visit spectacular Red Rocks Amphitheater.

If you plan to drive to the top of Mount Evans, the best time to visit the Denver area is during the months of June, July and August; otherwise, it’s May through mid-October. To see the Aspen leaves change from green to yellow-gold, the last week of September and the first week of October are usually best.

Be sure to bring your camera. The greater Denver area averages 300 days of sunshine a year.

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# *Pathfinder* Newsletter

Spring 2011

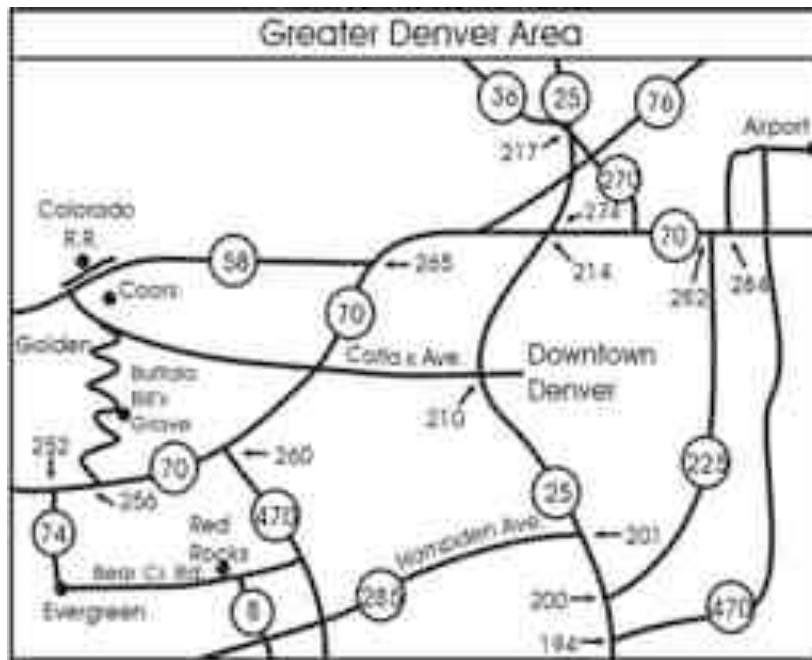
Guided Tours of Cities, Towns, and National Parks in the American West

by the authors of *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado*,

*Seven Perfect Days in Arizona* and *Seven Perfect Days in Northern California*

If you have additional time and want to add on a three-day mountain experience, we recommend that you visit Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park (only 65 miles/105 km from Denver). See our Summer 2010 issue, “Rocky and Estes: Parks Superb” at [www.traveltheamericanwest.com](http://www.traveltheamericanwest.com). If you want more details, so you can plan a longer stay in the Denver area, Mindy Sink’s excellent guidebook, *Moon Denver*, will provide them, and you can get more information online from Denver’s ([www.denver.org](http://www.denver.org)) and Boulder’s ([www.bouldercoloradousa.com](http://www.bouldercoloradousa.com)) Convention and Visitors Bureaus.

**Here is an overview map that will help you get around the Denver area. It will be particularly useful as you tour to the west on Day Two.**



## Day One

Today, we’ll visit Denver’s fabulous natural history museum, a block-full of historic buildings, the city’s main shopping street, the state capitol building, Colorado’s history center, the art museum, and an historic home. There are also a few alternative attractions to choose from at the end of this day’s information. For example, the United States Mint and Denver Botanic Gardens are excellent alternatives to our chosen afternoon attractions.

**Denver Museum of Nature & Science** - 2001 Colorado Boulevard; open daily 9am to 5pm, except Christmas Day; 303-322-7009, [www.dmns.org](http://www.dmns.org).

We begin our tour here, because it’s the only museum that opens before 10 am. If you arrive about 9 o’clock when it opens, that should allow sufficient time to complete this day’s itinerary. We believe you’ll need two full hours to see the Colorado-related exhibits that we’ve selected for you in this, the fifth-largest natural history museum in the United States.

To get to the museum, drive east on 17th Street about two and one-half miles (4 km) from downtown, past City Park, to Colorado Boulevard. Then turn left, and left again into the museum's parking lot.



There are exhibits on all three floors of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science that focus on Colorado. We found it best to start with the Prehistoric Journey exhibit and the bird and small animal displays on the third floor, move to the large animal dioramas on the second floor, and finish with the gems and minerals on the first floor.

When you reach the third floor, you'll find the Prehistoric Journey exhibit near the top of the escalator. Here, you'll learn how the earth was formed and how Colorado evolved from ocean floor to tropics to grasslands. You'll also see fossils and skeletons of sea life, insects and dinosaurs found in what is now Colorado. Look especially for the Long-Necked Dinosaur uncovered near the Colorado-Utah border, and for the map that shows how much of the United States and Canada was underwater 95 to 68 million years ago—from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean!

Next, move to Explore Colorado in the center of the third floor. We found these beautiful, full-size dioramas to be of special value, because you not only see indigenous birds, small animals, insects, trees, plants and wildflowers; you see them depicted in the elevations where they live.

On the second floor, in the Edge of the Wild exhibit, you'll find more of the museum's exceptionally realistic dioramas. This time, you'll see large Colorado animals in their natural habitats: mule and white tail deer, a mountain lion with cubs, buffalo, pronghorns, bighorn sheep and wapiti, better known as elk. We also suggest a quick walk through the North American Wildlife exhibit, where you'll see coyote and beaver dioramas, plus displays of Native American clothing, weapons and various utensils, and an exhibit of mountain men and their beaver traps.

Finally, head for the Gems and Minerals Hall on the first floor. There is so much beauty in the glass cases that you could spend hours studying the tremendous variety of gems and minerals. For our purposes, we suggest that you move quickly through the first three quarters of this exhibit and focus on the section called “Colorado’s Economic Minerals.” Here, you’ll find metals that have been mined in Colorado, including, gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, pyrite, molybdenum and others. You’ll also see old photographs of mining operations, such as those at Cripple Creek. You’ll be surprised by the various forms in which gold is found, and by Tom’s Baby, the largest gold nugget ever found in Colorado (it’s 8-1/2 pounds and is located in a small side room to the left).

There is so much to see in this museum, including the IMAX movie, that you’ll probably find it difficult to disengage yourself after only two hours. But we’ve got a lot of wonderful things to do during this one day in downtown Denver, so we’ll move right along.

We suggest you return to downtown via 18th Avenue, and that you try to arrive at Larimer Square about 11:30 am to allow enough time for lunch and a good look at Denver’s most historic district.

**Larimer Square** - Larimer Street, between 14th and 15th Streets.

Well, what should we do first....find a restaurant, do some window-shopping or tour the area? Our suggestion, so you don’t have to wait in a line for lunch, is to settle into a restaurant and let us regale you with a little historical patter while you wait for your food. Then head off to the shops or a brief historical walking tour. All of these restaurants are well recommended by locals. We very much like the quiet and the food at Josephina’s.

- **Cafe Colore**, Italian, casual, 1512 Larimer St., 303-534-6844, [www.cafecoloredenver.com](http://www.cafecoloredenver.com).
- **Josephina’s**, Northern Italian, early 1940’s decor, 1433 Larimer St., 303-623-0166, no website.
- **The Market**, gourmet fast food deli plus bakery and espresso bar, casual, 1445 Larimer St., 303-534-5140, no website.

Now that you’re settled, here’s the brief history lesson that we promised:

The first major gold strike occurred in the mountains west of Denver in 1859, ten years after the California gold rush began. But “color” (flakes of gold that wash downstream from the gold source) had been found in Colorado many years earlier. One such find was near where we are now, at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek.

The first organized group of gold seekers, led by Green Russell, came from the State of Georgia in 1858—yes, Georgia has its gold-mining history. They established a camp on the west side of Cherry Creek, calling it Auraria. Soon, another group arrived and drove in their town stakes across the creek, calling the site St. Charles. That group left to register their town site in Leavenworth, Kansas, the territorial capitol. But a third group, led by General William Larimer, “jumped” the claim, naming the town site Denver City, after James Denver, the territorial governor of Kansas.

Auraria and Denver remained rival towns until 1860 when they united and agreed upon the name Denver. By then, there were 25 rough-wood stores on Larimer Street.

Three years later, a fire destroyed the original buildings. Following the dictates of a new building code, all new structures were made of brick...and you can see the result for yourself. Larimer Square was added to the National Register of Historic Places after its restoration in 1973.

Following lunch, walk where Buffalo Bill Cody, Bat Masterson and the early gold miners, gamblers and ladies of the evening walked. Can you imagine the sounds and general hubbub of the saloons, hotels, stores, horses, wagons and people of Larimer Street in its heyday?

If you're interested in a walking tour of Larimer Square, you can pick up a pamphlet at the kiosk next to the Granite Building at the corner of 15th and Larimer.

**16th Street Mall** - This is a chance to work off some of the calories you just consumed and to do some window-shopping on the way to our next site. So, take the 12-block walk (about a mile/1.6 km) down the 16th Street Mall to Broadway and then another two blocks south/right to the State Capitol building. Or, if you prefer or must, you can hop on one of the free shuttle buses that come by every couple of minutes. Later, we'll be returning to Larimer Square and your car via the mall, so if you'd like to ride the shuttle just for the fun of it, you can do it then.

What you'll find is a treed pedestrian promenade lined with outdoor cafes, renovated historic office buildings, and many shops, restaurants and department stores. The *piece de resistance* of the 16th Street Mall is the Tabor Center, a two-block, glass-enclosed galleria between Larimer and Arapaho Streets, which houses 70 specialty shops.

When you reach the bottom of the mall, take a few minutes to walk through the lobby of the **Brown Palace Hotel**, which is located one block north at 321 17<sup>th</sup> Street, 303-297-3111, [www.brownpalace.com](http://www.brownpalace.com). Historic (opened in 1892) and yet modern (recently listed by *Travel + Leisure* magazine as one of the world's 500 best hotels), the hotel is an iconic Denver landmark.

**Colorado State Capitol** - Enter on Grant St., between 14th and Colfax. Open Monday through Friday, 7:30 to 5pm; 303-866-2604; hourly drop-in tours leave at 10am through 3pm from the first floor reception desk.

You'll notice upon approaching the capitol building that its design is similar to that of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC—except that its dome is covered with 24-carat Colorado gold leaf (see the photo on page 1). If you walk up to the 15<sup>th</sup> gray-colored step on the west side of the building, you'll be exactly one mile (5,280 feet/1,609 km) above sea level. This act will validate that you are really in the “mile-high city.”

Inside the capitol building, the highlight for us was the observation deck just below the capitol dome. If it's a clear day, and you have the interest, energy and stamina, go to the third floor, where you'll find the staircase to the dome. There are 93 steps to climb, and you may find yourself short of breath because of the altitude. But the spectacular panoramic view of the mountains and city is worth the effort. *You should not do this if you have a history of heart or respiratory problems.* An unexpected bonus for us was the interesting display around the inside of the rotunda consisting of 16 stained glass portraits and descriptive texts of Colorado's major historical and political figures.

Now, take a long hard look at the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. Native Americans and the French and Spanish explorers called them “The Shining Mountains.” Whether seen from a distance with the sun shining on their snowy peaks, or seen from within, with moonlight and starlight reflecting from rock and water, the Colorado Rockies exhibit a luminescence and aliveness that those early inhabitants and visitors appreciated.

As you leave the capitol building, it would be a good idea to check your available time. You have two museums and a historical home to cover before the Denver Art Museum closes at 5 pm.

**History Colorado Center (may not yet be reopened)** - 12th Avenue and Broadway. Construction on this center will be completed in 2011. As of April 2011, no date had been set for the public opening. The Center will replace the Colorado History Museum which was located one block north. Click here to get the latest information:  
[www.coloradohistory.org/hist\\_sites/chm/colorado\\_history\\_museum.htm](http://www.coloradohistory.org/hist_sites/chm/colorado_history_museum.htm).

As of this date, information about the new museum's displays has not been released. Following is the description of the museum that we included in our book, *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado: A Guided Driving Tour*.

To us, this is a special place, one that focuses on the ordinary and extraordinary people who have inhabited and built the State of Colorado: Native Americans, fur traders, pioneers, miners, gamblers, shopkeepers, outlaws, politicians and railroaders. The best starting point is The Colorado Chronicle, a 150-year timeline display on the lower level, where you'll find the state's history beautifully encapsulated in photographs, news clippings and descriptions. Then, check out the many other displays on that same level, including the very realistic Indian dioramas, Anasazi cliff dwelling, 19th century Denver, gold rush era log cabin, sod house, mining tools and machinery, and Baby Doe Tabor's \$7,000 wedding dress (about \$70,000 in today's money; she was the second wife of Colorado's richest man, H.A.W. Tabor).

The Center also houses the Colorado Historical Society, which runs a bookstore on the main level.

**Byers-Evans House** – You'll find this historic home just one building south of the art museum, at 1310 Bannock Street, Denver 80204. (We suggest you visit this site before the Art Museum, because it closes at 4pm.) It's open Monday through Saturday, 10am to 4pm, 303-620-4933, [www.historycolorado.org](http://www.historycolorado.org) and click on "Museums."

The house was built in 1883 by Rocky Mountain News editor William Byers and sold in 1889 to William Gray Evans, the son of Colorado Territorial governor John Evans. The Evans family lived there until 1981 when ownership was passed to the Colorado Historical Society. This Victorian home was restored to the 1912-1924 period and contains all original Evans family furnishings.

**Denver Art Museum** – On 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, between Broadway and Bannock Streets.; open Tuesday through Thursday, 10 am to 5pm; Friday 10-8; Saturday and Sunday, 10 to 5. It's closed Monday. 720-865-5000, [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org).

As with the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, you could probably keep happily occupied here for a full day. The museum is said to have the world's greatest collection of Native American artwork. It's certainly one of the classiest. You'll find it on the second and third levels. Many of these beautiful artifacts are similar to the clothing and equipment that were used by the Arapahoe and Ute tribes of Colorado.

Time permitting, you may want to examine the Art of the American West collection on the seventh floor.

## **Alternative Attractions in Denver:**

**Black American West Museum** - 3091 California St., open Tues. through Sat. 10 to 5pm from June 1 to August 31, and until 2pm the rest of the year except major holidays, 720-242-7428, [www.blackamericanwestmuseum.com](http://www.blackamericanwestmuseum.com).

This is perhaps the country's best collection of historic photographs, artifacts and information about African American cowboys, doctors, teachers, miners, farmers, newspaper reporters, legislators and barbers in the West. Several surprising findings: African Americans constituted nearly one-third of all cowboys and some of the earliest millionaires in the Wild West, and families came west in covered wagons and established self-sufficient, all-African American settlements.

**Denver Botanic Gardens** - 1007 York Street, Denver 80206; open daily Sept. 16-Apr 30, from 9am to 5pm, and daily May 1-Sept. 15, 9am to 9pm; 720-865-3500, [www.denverbotanicgardens.org](http://www.denverbotanicgardens.org).

Highlights here are the Rock Alpine Garden displaying the many varieties of plants that grow in the mountains, and the other gardens showing the flora common to the desert, plains and foothills. There's also a Japanese garden and a conservatory that houses 800 tropical and subtropical plant species.

**Molly Brown House Museum** - 1340 Pennsylvania St., Denver; open June through August, Monday through Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday 12-4; and September through May, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10am to 4pm, and Sunday 12-4. 303-832-4092, [www.mollybrownmuseum.com](http://www.mollybrownmuseum.com).

This is the Victorian home of the "Unsinkable Molly Brown," who became a national heroine when the Titanic sank in 1912. It was built in 1889 and has been restored to its appearance in 1910. It has a large collection of art and antique furnishings. Here, you'll get a good feel for how the wealthy lived in the early part of the last century.

**United States Mint** - 320 W. Colfax Ave., Denver 90204; guided tours are available on the hour, Monday through Friday, 8am to 2pm, excluding federal holidays; admission is free; advance reservations are required; make reservations online at [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov) or at 303-405-4761.

If you've never visited one of our country's four mints, here's your opportunity to take an interesting 20-minute walk through a glass-enclosed visitor's gallery and watch some of the mint's annual production of six billion coins being made. There is also a coin exhibit and coin sales.

## **It's Dinnertime!**

We offer the following recommendations, or you can ask your innkeeper or concierge for their suggestions. We have rarely gone wrong doing that, because these folks have had the world's best restaurant critics available to them—the guests who preceded you. Also, most B&B's have a binder or folder of menus that you can view.

**Buckhorn Exchange**, 1000 Osage Street, Denver, 303-534-9505, [www.buckhorn.com](http://www.buckhorn.com), If you want an historic (established 1893) downtown restaurant with Western-style food and ambiance, this is it. Specializes in beef, buffalo and ribs, but also serves game and fish. The restau-

rant and saloon have memorabilia, artifacts and mounted wildlife hanging from all available wall space. Reservations are strongly recommended. Pricy but worth it.

The following restaurants you read about earlier today, when you were trying to decide where to eat lunch (dinner prices may be higher):

- **Cafe Colore**
- **Josephina's**
- **The Market**

Here are some additional downtown Denver restaurants:

- **Broker**, steaks and seafood, fine-dining ambiance, 821 17th St., 303-292-5065, [www.thebrokerrestaurant.com](http://www.thebrokerrestaurant.com).
- **Cafe Berlin**, German, cozy, 323 14th St., 303-377-5896, [www.cafeberlin.com](http://www.cafeberlin.com).
- **Carmine's on Penn**, family-style Italian, comfortable-candlelit, 92 S. Pennsylvania St., 303-777-6443, [www.carminesonpenn.net](http://www.carminesonpenn.net).
- **Wynkoop Brewing Company**, hearty pub fare, brew pub atmosphere, 1634 18th St., 303-297-2700, [www.wynkoop.com](http://www.wynkoop.com).

For more restaurants, consult Denver's Convention and Visitor's Bureau website at [www.denver.org/dining-nightlife/restaurants](http://www.denver.org/dining-nightlife/restaurants).

### Where to Sleep

Similarly, we suggest consulting Denver's Convention and Visitor's Bureau website at [www.denver.org/hotels](http://www.denver.org/hotels).

We personally prefer bed and breakfasts when we travel and can, therefore, recommend two convenient favorites in downtown Denver:

- **Capitol Hill Mansion**, 1207 Pennsylvania St., 800-839-9329, [www.capitolhillmansion.com](http://www.capitolhillmansion.com).
- **Queen Anne Bed and Breakfast Inn**, 2147-51 Tremont Place, Denver 80205m 303-296-6666, [www.queenannebnb.com](http://www.queenannebnb.com).

See more B&Bs at [www.innsofcolorado.org](http://www.innsofcolorado.org), and [www.colorado-bnb.com](http://www.colorado-bnb.com).

## Day Two

Today, we suggest that you drive to the quaint foothills town of Golden, tour the brewery, see some railroad equipment and history, and learn about a master Western showman. Then, drive up the tallest mountain in the area and tour a spectacular music venue. Finally, we offer a special meal in a special place. The map on page 2 will be especially useful to you today.

**Colorado Railroad Museum** - 17155 W. 44th Ave., Golden 80403, open daily from 9am to 5pm except major holidays (open until 6pm during June, July and August); 303-279-4591, 800-365-6263, [www.coloradorailroadmuseum.org](http://www.coloradorailroadmuseum.org).

Here, you'll learn about the history of the narrow gauge and standard gauge steam railroads in Colorado. There are more than 100 old locomotives and cars to see outside in simulated railroad yards. Inside the replica of an 1880 railroad depot, you'll find a model railroad (on the lower level), as well as exhibits with thousands of rare old photographs and artifacts from rail lines that supplied mining camps during Colorado's gold rush.



**Miller/Coors Brewery** - 13th and Ford Streets, Golden 80401, free tours from Memorial Day through Labor day on Sundays from noon to 4pm and on Mondays through Saturdays from 10-4pm, and the rest of the year from 10-4 Thursday through Monday; 866-812-2337, 303-277-2337; [www.coors.com](http://www.coors.com). Reservations are not taken; it's first-come first-served.

The Adolph Coors Brewing Company has been doing its thing here since 1873. It's the world's largest single brewing facility at a single site. The self-guided audio tour lasting 35-minutes includes the main steps of the brewing process, and free sampling at the end of the tour (soft drinks for kids). The entire visit takes about an hour and a half. We were especially impressed with the cleanliness and efficiency of the place.

If you choose to not drive up Mount Evans, we suggest that you visit the Golden Visitors Center, in the middle of town at 1010 Washington St., to learn about other museums and things to do in town. Open 8:30-5, Monday through Friday and 10-4 on Saturdays; 303-279-3113; [www.goldenvisitorscenter.net](http://www.goldenvisitorscenter.net).

### **It's Lunchtime!**

We offer two alternatives:

Try one of the very good burgers, sandwiches or salads at the Old Capitol Grill, 1122 Washington Avenue in charming and historic downtown Golden; 303-279-6390. The restaurant gets mixed reviews on TripAdvisor.com, but our experience was very positive and the restaurant is readily recommended by locals.

Or, you can enjoy a buffalo burger or buffalo chili, soup, sandwiches and other grilled items at the Buffalo Bill Museum café, at our next stop.

**Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave** - 987-1/2 Lookout Mountain Rd., Golden 80401, open daily 9am to 5pm from May through October, and 9 am to 4 pm from November through April, (closed Mondays and Christmas Day); 303-526-0747, [www.buffalobill.org](http://www.buffalobill.org). To get there, drive up 19<sup>th</sup> Street onto twisty-turney Lookout Mountain Road.

Genuine western hero, and showman extraordinaire, William R. Cody was a phenomenon during his adult life. First a Pony Express rider, then an Indian fighter, army scout, stage coach driver and, of course, buffalo hunter, he gained international fame by taking his Wild West show throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

The museum is full of memorabilia from his shows, including posters, outfits, firearms and more. In addition, there's a permanent exhibit of Native American artifacts, and exhibits on the Pony Express and life on the frontier.

By the way, you may be wondering why Buffalo Bill's grave is located here instead of in Cody, Wyoming, which was his home. Well, to put it simply, he died here while on a trip and Denver decided to keep him!

**Mount Evans Scenic Byway** – To get there, continue on Lookout Mountain Road until it dead-ends at Highway 40. Turn right, and soon thereafter, drive onto Interstate 70. Look to your right as you approach I-70; you may see a herd of buffalo. In 16 miles (26 km), you'll arrive at Idaho Springs. Take Exit 240 and drive south on Colorados 103 and 5 to the top of Mount Evans. [www.mountevans.com](http://www.mountevans.com). This is the #1-rated attraction in the Denver area on TripAdvisor.com— but please read the warnings in the following paragraph before deciding to go.



This is the highest paved auto road in North America. Look for Echo Lake about halfway up and Summit Lake near the top. The road is very twisty-turney (and sometimes scary) after Summit Lake. Look for white mountain goats along this stretch. When you get to the parking lot, you'll have a short but moderately difficult walk up to the grandest scene that you may ever see: a spectacular 360-degree view of the Rocky Mountains to the west, north and south, and Denver and the plains to the east (see the photo on page 1). You'll be standing on top of one of Colorado's famous four-

teeners, at 14,264 feet (4,348 m)—154 feet (47 m) higher than the better-known Pikes Peak. The road is generally open from Memorial Day to Labor Day (end of May to early September). *We strongly recommend against this activity if you have heart or respiratory problems, and that you not drive up the mountain if there is threatening weather. Afternoon thunderstorms are common in the summer; please call the Clear Creek Ranger Station automated line at 303-567-3000, and press 1 for a weather forecast before venturing up the mountain—even if the skies appear to be clear. And be prepared for it to be as much as 40 degrees (4.4 C) colder than in Denver!*

**When you return to Interstate 70, drive east toward Denver, then turn south at Exit 252, and head toward Evergreen.** In Evergreen, a Denver commuters' haven, you'll find a quaint downtown and a nice small lake. If you're short on time, we suggest that you bypass Evergreen and continue to Red Rocks Park and Amphitheater. The amphitheater and dinner at The Fort shouldn't be missed.

**Red Rocks Park and Amphitheater** - North of Morrison on Hogback Road, 303-697-6486, [www.redrocksonline.com](http://www.redrocksonline.com). To get to Red Rocks Park and Amphitheater from Evergreen, take winding and beautiful Bear Creek Road (Highway 74) to a mile before you reach Morrison (it's on your left).

This is a stunning, 9,450-seat amphitheater that's set within two 400-foot-high (122 m) red sandstone formations. It's the only naturally-occurring acoustically perfect amphitheater in the world. At 6,450 feet (1,966 m) elevation, the seating and stage were built between 1936 and 1941 by the Civilian Conservation Corps and was the CCC's largest project. The site of frequent summer evening concerts, the amphitheater is positioned within a spectacular red rocks setting. Free except for performances. The park and amphitheater are open 5am to 11pm, but close about 4pm on event days (call 720-865-2494).

The very interesting Red Rocks Visitor Center can be entered on the plaza level opposite the top of the amphitheater. There, you'll learn about the CCC project, and in the Performers Hall of Fame, the individuals and groups who have performed here since the opening of the amphitheater in 1941, including the Beatles, Willy Nelson, Ella Fitzgerald, Bruce Springsteen and many others. The brief movie on the history and geology of the Red Rocks is very worthwhile.

The visitor center is open year-round, from 8am to 7pm May through September and 9am to 4pm, October through April. [www.redrocksonline.com](http://www.redrocksonline.com).

**The Fort**, 19192 Highway 8, Morrison 80465; 303-697-4771; reservations are strongly recommended; [www.thefort.com](http://www.thefort.com); pricey but worth it. To get there from Red Rocks, exit left onto Bear Creek Rd. (Highway 74), turn right/south on Highway 8 and drive about one mile (1.6 km) to the restaurant, which will be on your left.



This not just an excellent restaurant, it's an experience. Known nationally for its unusual Rocky Mountain cuisine, The Fort has an ambiance that can't be beat, a panoramic view of Denver, and servers who wear frontier dress. It's a reproduction of Bent's Fort, which was an 1830's-1840's fur trading post 160 miles (257 km) away in southeastern Colorado near La Junta.

As for the food, it's fashioned after what you would have found in Colorado Territory during the gold-rush days. We usually tend toward different or local fare while on vacation, so we head to The Fort for buffalo, elk, quail, catfish, rattlesnake or The Bowl of the Wife of Kit Carson (a spicy chicken meal-in-a-bowl). Even the ordinary dishes—beef, lamb, pork, chicken, trout, and salmon—are given a western treatment.

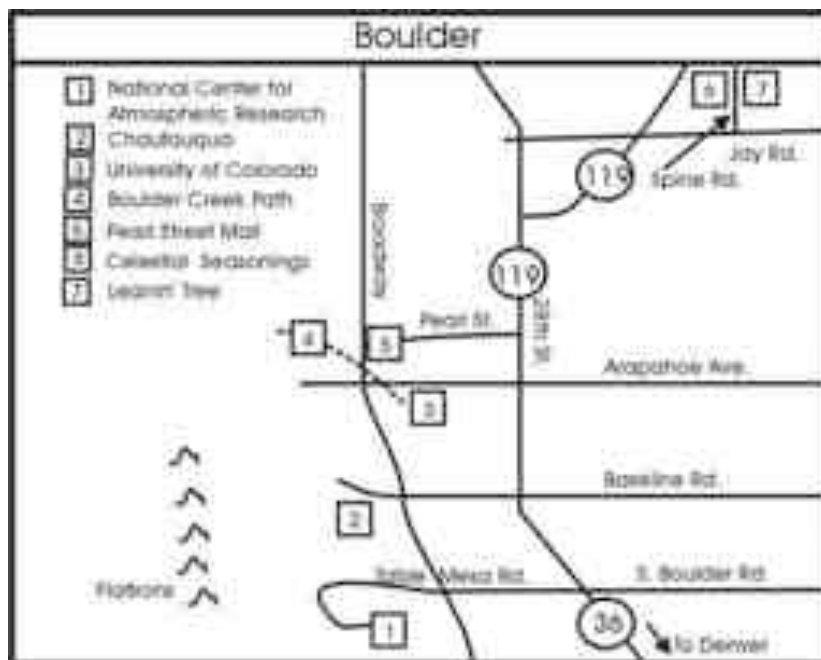
Buffalo meat, by the way, tastes a bit sweeter than beef, has less than half the cholesterol and only 2% fat, versus 28-34% for comparable beefsteaks.

Along with the usual libations, The Fort serves unusual drinks, such as the authentic 1840 Hailstorm Premiere Julep, Jim Bridger, Bear's Blood, and the Frozen Prickly Pear Margarita. For dessert, try the Negrita, which is an award-winning chocolate-lover's delight.

To return to Denver from here, continue south about one-half mile on Highway 8 to the entrance ramp of Highway 285 and head east for about 19 miles (30 km) to Interstate 25.

## *Day Three*

Today, you'll enjoy these highlights of the Boulder area: a place to learn about how the earth's weather is created and unfolds; an historic special music venue; a walking view of the Flatirons; a drive through the University; a nice walk along a downtown creek; some window shopping; a look at how herbal tea is made; and an outstanding collection of Western art.



**National Center for Atmospheric Research** - To get there, drive northwest from Denver on Highway 36 and then west on Table Mesa Drive to its end.

If you're at all interested in how the earth's weather is created and unfolds, you'll find the center's self-guided tour to be fascinating. The center is open for free tours from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday, Sunday and holidays. 303-497-1174 (closed only on April 19), <http://eo.ucar.edu/visit>.

**Chautauqua's** large, all-wood auditorium is an historic and currently-active music, lecture and silent movie venue. It's also home to the Colorado Music Festival, a summertime presentation of mostly classical concerts. To get there, drive north on Broadway and turn left/west to 900 Baseline Road.

Begun in 1898 as one of many family-oriented education and entertainment Chautauquas around the country, this is the only one remaining west of the Mississippi River and the only one that operates year-round. This is a National Historic Landmark. Yes, you can have breakfast, lunch and dinner in the historic dining hall from May through October (brunch only on Sundays). [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado\\_Chautauqua](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado_Chautauqua).

Immediately west and south of Chautauqua is a network of hiking trails that extend from a half-mile to nine miles (14 km) in length. If you're interested in a level walk across the meadows toward the beautiful Flatirons, you can start it behind the Chautauqua auditorium on a spur of the Mesa Trail. Just stroll until you're satisfied! For any hike longer or more strenuous, be sure to take along water.

Are you wondering how the Flatirons came about and how they got their name? They are part of the sandstone Fountain Formation that can also be seen at Red Rocks Amphitheater, and at the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. They were lifted and tilted during the Rocky Mountain uplift between 35 and 80 million years ago. It's thought that they were named by pioneer women, who used flat, metal irons to press their clothes.

**University of Colorado** – No one should visit Boulder without at least driving through the main campus of the University. (There are three other CU campuses in Denver and Colorado Springs.) However, many streets on the campus have limited access, so driving opportunities are also limited.

Here's the route that we suggest: Return to Broadway; turn left; travel north less than a half mile and turn right on Regent Drive into the campus; when Regent Drive dead-ends, turn left on Colorado Avenue; turn right on Folsom Street; and turn left on Arapahoe as you exit the campus. Along the way, you'll drive by numerous residence halls, the Leeds School of Business, the Engineering Center, the Mathematics Building, the Benson Earth Sciences Building and Folsom Stadium, CU's outdoor football venue.

**Pearl Street Mall** – After leaving the campus, head west on Arapahoe and turn right on Broadway. Then, find a place to park and walk several blocks north to the Pearl Street Mall.

The mall is an open-air, four-block pedestrians-only walkway between 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets that's full of shops and galleries. Even if you're not a shopper, you'll enjoy the beauty of the wide mall, the street entertainers, the galleries, and people-watching.

### **It's Lunch Time!**

There are plenty of restaurants to choose from on the mall. We recommend **Antica Roma** at 1308 Pearl Street, 303-449-1787, [www.anticaroma.com](http://www.anticaroma.com), with its extensive Italian menu, and **The Kitchen** at 1039 Pearl Street, 303-544-5973, [www.thekitchencafe.com](http://www.thekitchencafe.com), with its artisan salads, sandwiches and entrees. Off the mall, two streets south and one block west of Broadway is locals-recommended **Mediterranean Restaurant**, 1002 Walnut Street, 303-444-5335, [www.themedboulder.com](http://www.themedboulder.com); it has an extensive menu of tapas, salads, seafoods and more.

**Boulder Creek Path** – If you'd like to walk off that big lunch and do it in a wonderful setting, we suggest that you head to the corner of Broadway and Arapahoe and enjoy the Boulder Creek Path. As you've probably guessed, it's a path that parallels Boulder Creek. Seven and one-half miles (12 km) long, paved and free of motorized vehicles, this refreshing oasis is set aside for joggers, walkers, bike riders and inline skaters. Start at the library and walk west toward the mountains until you feel ready to proceed with the final two tours of the day.

To get there: drive east to 28<sup>th</sup> Street/Highway 119; turn left/north; turn right onto Diagonal Highway (at Iris Avenue; still Highway 119); turn right on Jay Road; then left on Spine Road. You'll see the Celestial Seasonings plant on your left at 4600 Sleepytime Drive.

**Celestial Seasonings** is the largest herbal tea manufacturer in the United States. Each year, more than 80,000 people take advantage of the company's free 45-minute guided tours, given Monday through Saturday, on the hour from 10am through 4pm and hourly on Sunday from 11am through 3pm. The tour includes the herb garden, the art gallery, the manufacturing plant, and tea tasting. Visitors may have lunch in the company cafeteria Monday through Friday from 11:00am to 2:00pm. 303-530-5300, [www.celestialseasonings.com](http://www.celestialseasonings.com).

**Leanin' Tree Museum and Sculpture Garden of Western Art** is just a few blocks away at 6055 Longbow Dr. Turn left on Spine Rd., and then right (at the curve) onto Longbow.

Greeting card company owner, Ed Trumble, wants to share his world-class Western art collection of 400 original paintings and sculptures with the public in this 12,000 square-foot

(1,115 square-meter) museum. It's the best single collection of Western art that we've ever seen. It contains works by 100 artists created from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Our favorites were the "Kiwi Magic" water cascade, "Moment With the Grandkids" Indian family, "Canyon Passage" waterfall and pack train, and the many faces of the Indians and cowboys. Don't miss the second floor! Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 5pm. 303-530-1442 x4299, [www.leanintreemuseum.com](http://www.leanintreemuseum.com); free admission.

Well, that's all, folks. Try the Denver/Boulder area, you'll enjoy it!

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Bill and Celia Ginnodo are residents of Arlington Heights, Illinois. They have lived and traveled extensively in the American West, including Colorado. They are the authors of *Seven Perfect Days in Colorado: A Guided Driving Tour*, *Seven Perfect Days in Northern California: A Guided Driving Tour*, and *Seven Perfect Days in Arizona: A Guided Driving Tour*, which can be seen at [www.pridepublications.com](http://www.pridepublications.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (enter keyword Ginnodo).

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**Next Issue: "Yosemite National Park"**