



A 16-Day Inspirational Itinerary

Outdoor Adventure in Utah & Colorado

Outdoor Adventure in Utah & Colorado



2 states



26 hours drive time



16 days / 17 nights



1,370 miles / 2,200 km

It's time for an outdoor adventure of epic proportions on this journey through Utah and Colorado. Prepare to see breathtaking terrain and iconic destinations, and participate in truly bucket-list-worthy activities. This trip will be unforgettable, so let's hit the road for this "Outdoor Adventure in Utah & Colorado" road trip!

Please be prepared to practice responsible travel in Colorado and Utah. Small but mighty actions make all the difference as we work together to protect our natural wonders and vibrant cultures for generations to come. Do your part to visit respectfully and [Leave No Trace](#), and remember to come prepared to visit these outdoor locations safely:

Plan to pack out your own trash.

Bring more water than you think you need.

Adhere to fire restrictions, extinguish campfires completely and practice fire safety.

Respect wildlife – do not touch, get close to, feed or pick up wild animals.

Leave rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts and other objects of interest as you find them – Mother Nature should not come home with you.

Travel on designated motorized routes and trails – do not create new trails with your car or your feet.

Be prepared for limited services – and limited cellphone reception – in remote areas.

Try to avoid crowded areas when possible and think of ways you can impact the local communities so these areas can thrive and welcome visitors for years to come.



Day 1: Salt Lake City & Antelope Island SP, Utah



Day 2: Zion National Park, Utah



Day 3: Zion National Park, Utah



Day 4: Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah



Day 5: Escalante, Utah



Day 6: Capitol Reef National Park, Utah



Day 7: Canyonlands National Park, Utah



Day 8: Arches National Park, Utah



Day 9: Colorado National Monument, Colorado



Day 10: Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP, Colorado



Day 11: Browns Canyon NM, Colorado



Day 12: Leadville & Camp Hale, Colorado



Day 13: Winter Park, Colorado



Day 14: Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado



Day 15: Estes Park, Colorado



Day 16: Denver, Colorado



Arrival: Salt Lake City

Welcome to the United States and the great state of Utah! Your adventure begins once you land at the [Salt Lake City International Airport](#) and begin exploring the modern city that is “west of conventional.”

[Salt Lake](#) offers a thriving downtown experience. Discover historic architecture, art galleries, live music, museums, chocolate tastings, professional sporting events and some amazing local shops in Salt Lake City's 9th and 9th neighborhood. But this trip is all about the great outdoors, and Salt Lake does not disappoint!

Sleep off the jet lag in a boutique hotel or a relaxing 5-diamond luxury hotel – there are amazing lodging options for every taste and budget – and gear up for a day of wildlife exploration at [Antelope Island State Park](#).

YOU SAW IT FROM THE AIRPLANE:

Some of Salt Lake's most iconic sights are large enough to enjoy from a bird's-eye-view, but do yourself a favor and experience them firsthand:

- **Great Salt Lake** – It's the largest saltwater lake in the Western Hemisphere and the eighth largest in the world! For some sensational photo ops, check out the [Bonneville Salt Flats](#) at sunrise or sunset.
- **Temple Square** – The 35-acre area contains more than 15 attractions related to Mormon heritage and beliefs. It brings together rich history, gorgeous gardens and architecture, and vivid art and culture in the center of downtown. The impressive Salt Lake Temple is an iconic landmark you'll want to see up close.
- **Wasatch Mountains** – The stunning [Wasatch Mountain Range](#) is the defining characteristic of Northern Utah. Spanning 260 kilometers, it's a “backyard” playground for Salt Lake City and other communities along the Wasatch Front corridor. Don't miss a chance to ride the [Snowbird Tram](#) for 360-degree views at over 3,350 meters!

Overnight: [Salt Lake City, Utah](#)



Day 1: Salt Lake City & Antelope Island State Park, Utah

🕒 **Drive Time: 1 hour** 📍 **Distance: 45 miles/72 km**

No need to travel far today to explore the great outdoors – a mere 40 kilometers outside of Salt Lake is [Antelope Island State Park](#). The park rests on the east side of the Great Salt Lake and is one of the most popular ways to experience the lake due to the endless activities and easy-to-spot wildlife.

There's no lack of activities to enjoy at the park, including hiking, horseback riding, cycling, paddling, sailing and scenic drives. A climb to the top of Frary Peak – the park's highest mountain – is a 9.5-kilometer journey that delivers beautiful views. You can also swim in the Great Salt Lake, but remember it is five times saltier than the ocean, so be sure to rinse off and re-hydrate your skin.

The park is an internationally certified [Dark Sky Park](#), and you can experience the wonder of Utah's night skies by camping at one of several [campgrounds](#) throughout the park. If you'd rather explore the bustling culinary and brewing scenes, head back down to Salt Lake City for the evening. Either way, rest up – you'll be visiting an iconic Utah national park tomorrow!

AUTHENTICALLY WESTERN WILDLIFE:

No trip to the western United States would be complete without spotting some of these unique animals:

- **Bison** – An American icon, free-roaming bison scatter the park. The [Annual Bison Roundup](#) takes place each fall, and visitors are invited to watch cowboys herd up 700 bison to ensure they stay healthy and thriving on the island.
- **Antelope** – The park isn't named Antelope Island for nothing! Get out your binoculars and enjoy watching these "speed goats" also known as American pronghorn antelope.
- **Bald Eagles** – Spotting the USA's mascot is just the beginning. The park has world-class bird-watching, and you can catch a glimpse of eagles, falcons, owls, finches, doves and many more!

Overnight: [Salt Lake City, Utah](#)



Day 2: Zion National Park, Utah

🕒 **Drive Time: 4 hours, 30 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 309 miles/497 km**

Start the day early to maximize your time at [Zion National Park](#) – an 1,800-meter-deep red rock canyon nestled in dramatic surroundings. From above, Zion looks like a picture of fractured red rock expanse, split by a network of narrow slot canyons. These canyons have become some of the most sought-after destinations in the country for canyoneers, with routes available for any ability level.

A scenic drive through the park is a great adventure, or you can hop onto the convenient [Zion National Park shuttle](#), where you can share stories and experiences with visitors from all over the world who will ride the bus as well. The Zion shuttle system consists of two free shuttle routes: the [Town of Springdale shuttle](#) and the [Zion Canyon](#)

DID YOU KNOW?:

The famous Zion-Mount Carmel Tunnel on Highway 9 was built in 1930 and at the time was the longest tunnel of its kind in the country. Motorhomes are required to be measured and pay a fee before entering the tunnel because rangers have to stop traffic so they can actually fit!

[park shuttle](#). In peak seasons, shuttles stop by every seven minutes, so you can grab an easy ride into the park at any time and you'll never have to search for parking in the park.

Zion has three campgrounds, and the beautiful [Zion Lodge](#) – the only lodging inside the park – offers historic

cabins and hotel rooms with a private porch or balcony. Numerous lodging options – including hotels, bed and breakfasts, lodges and campgrounds – can be found in nearby communities such as [Springdale](#), [St. George](#), [Cedar City](#), [East Zion](#) or [Kanab](#). Let's head into Springdale to cap off your first night in Zion country!

The small but mighty town of [Springdale](#) is a gateway to scenery and adventure. It's home to several beautiful galleries of fine art, photography, Native art and crafts, jewelry, and local gems and minerals. Plan your epic adventure with the help of a local guide and expert: Local outfitters are ready to help you float the Virgin River, backpack through the park, or try out your rock climbing and canyoneering skills.

Overnight: [Springdale, Utah](#)



Day 3: Zion National Park, Utah

Enjoy a second day in the beauty and wonder of [Zion National Park](#). Use this day to get your boots dirty on the many trails and hiking paths throughout the park.

Zion carries a reputation as a bucket list destination for adventurous trail-seekers around the world. No matter your skill level or schedule, you can find a memory-making hiking experience in Zion National Park!

Zion National Park is so picturesque, it's no wonder [Hollywood has made it the backdrop for so many movies](#). Some say that the [ghost town of Grafton](#) is the most photographed ghost town in the West and it's set the stage for several Hollywood films. Plus, the iconic Robert Redford film "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" was filmed in southern Utah, including the town of [St. George](#) and within Zion National Park. If you're a movie fan, you'll enjoy searching for iconic backdrops as you wander through this Utah wonderland.

TOP 5:

These are the most popular hikes in Zion – which ones are going on your bucket list?

1. [Angels Landing](#) – One of the most spectacular day hikes in the world! This 2-4-hour hike is strenuous and rock-covered but will reward vigilant hikers with memorable, vast vistas of [Zion Canyon](#) 300 vertical meters below their boots. Permit required.
2. [Emerald Pools Trails](#) – Three trails take you to three different Emerald Pools – Upper, Middle and Lower. The trails are easy or moderate, take about an hour to complete, and offer a peaceful, shaded and enjoyable hiking experience.
3. [The Narrows](#) – This moderately strenuous hike can take you three hours or all day as you explore a slot canyon trail that takes you through some of the most beautiful rock forms in the American Southwest.
4. [Zion Canyon Overlook Trail](#) – This trail is relatively flat and less than 1 kilometer long, but it offers some of the most remarkable views in the park.
5. [The Watchman](#) – A 1-2-hour out-and-back hike that passes overhanging cliffs and stratified rock layers as it leads into the foothills below The Watchman and Bridge Mountain.

Overnight: [Springdale, Utah](#)



Day 4: Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah

🕒 **Drive Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 73 miles/117 km**

Your national park adventures continue today with a trip to [Bryce Canyon National Park](#) – a geological marvel where red rock desert meets high alpine forest. The park itself drops away from a flat, sagebrush-filled plateau and opens onto steep slot canyons and distinctive red rock spires. The alpine environment is home to dozens of species of mammals and birds, and the high elevation offers a chance at winter activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Shuttles travel back and forth the length of the park from the visitor center 27 kilometers south to Rainbow

EVER HEARD OF A HOODOO?

An iconic feature of Bryce Canyon National Park, “hoodoos” are red rock spires carved over millions of years by wind, water, and endless freezing and thawing experiences. Thousands of hoodoos jut out of the canyon floor, and the Paiute culture claimed they were “legend people” who had been turned to stone.

Point, with plenty to do at every stop along the way. From ranger programs highlighting the park’s unique geology to horseback rides to guided hikes under a full moon, Bryce Canyon is

PRO TIP:

Just after passing the park boundary (and before the entrance/fee station) watch on your left for the road to [Fairyland Canyon](#). Many visitors, in their eagerness to enter the park, miss this viewpoint just 1.5 kilometers off the main road that allows you an up-close view of the hoodoos.

much more than simple sightseeing. [Reserve a camping site](#) at one of two large campgrounds in Bryce Canyon, or book a hotel just outside the park gate in [Bryce Canyon City](#).

Overnight: [Bryce Canyon City, Utah](#)



Day 5: Escalante, Utah

🕒 Drive Time: 55 minutes 📍 Distance: 49 miles/79 km

To visit **Kodachrome Basin** 🕒 Drive Time: 26 minutes roundtrip 📍 Distance: 14 miles/23 km

Let's continue onward to the town of [Escalante](#) and the massive [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#). This national recreation area covers 1.2 million acres and stretches from the beginning of the Grand Canyon at Lees Ferry in Arizona to the Orange Cliffs of southern Utah. It's graced with scenic views, unique geology and evidence of 10,000 years of human history.

The [Escalante Canyons](#) are the premier hiking destination in the Glen Canyon region. Active waterfalls, arches, narrow canyons, riparian oases and sculpted slickrock are among the attractions of the Escalante's backcountry. Hiking routes traverse the spectrum of difficulty, making this region an increasingly popular alternative destination to the state's national parks.

Enjoy a relaxing night in [Escalante](#). A handful of down-home cafés and diners, along with a number of cozy inns and motels, serve the visitors who come through town.

UTAH'S ALL-AMERICAN ROAD:

Scenic Byway 12 is one of the most fascinating stretches of road you'll ever drive. The landscape is ever-changing, and it acts as the entry point to a variety of must-see destinations. If time allows, plan stopovers at the following destinations – your adventurous spirit will thank you:

- **Kodachrome Basin State Park** – This state park earned its name because of its wildly photographable landscape: 67 monolithic stone spires of wildly varying sizes litter the area. Their multicolored sandstone layers are beautiful and seem to glow in juxtaposition to any color sky. With many short, family-friendly trails, you can give yourself and your camera a workout!
- **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument** – Breathtaking doesn't quite cover it. This area boasts a mixture of colorful sandstone cliffs soaring above narrow slot canyons, picturesque washes and seemingly endless slickrock, prehistoric sites and abandoned old Western movie sets, among many other treasures.

Overnight: [Escalante, Utah](#)



Day 6: Capitol Reef National Park, Utah

🕒 **Drive Time: 1 hour, 40 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 74 miles/119 km**

Utah has no shortage of national parks, and over the next three days you'll see some of the best! First up: [Capitol Reef National Park](#).

As one of Utah's less-crowded national parks, the area is a collision of geologic formations: red rock mixed with slickrock mixed with round tops and spires. But you'll quickly realize that some of the best scenery is only accessible by dropping in 5, 10, even 30 meters or more. This is why Capitol Reef is an amazing destination for canyoneering, so grab a permit and a guide and let yourself experience the thrill of rappelling down into a spectacular slot canyon.

In many parks, the most beautiful sights can't be seen from the road, but that's not so in Capitol Reef:

- Ramble down the 13-kilometer [Capitol Reef Scenic Drive](#), a fully paved road lined with pullouts that allow you to stop and take it all in.
- Don't be afraid to get dirty and head down a dirt road or two. [Grand Wash](#) and [Capitol Gorge](#) are two dirt spur roads that enter canyons and lead to trailheads. They are worth every penny you will spend at the car wash!

If you're itching to put your hiking boots to use, the smaller crowds allow for an extra-enjoyable hiking experience. [Goosenecks Overlook](#) is a short, easy hike right off [Scenic Byway 24](#) that offers amazing canyon views. Want to sprinkle in some local history? Hike out to a rock wall called [Pioneer Register](#), where you can see

A TASTY TREAT:

From June to October, visit the district of [Fruita](#) to harvest your own fruit from its famous orchards. Over 3,000 apple, peach, apricot, pear, plum and nut trees are ripe for the picking in this historical agricultural site.

the inscribed names of miners, settlers and other adventurers who passed through in 1871. Or explore an even older civilization when you hike to the petroglyph rock carvings left by the Fremont people, who lived in this area between 600-1300 A.D.

Camping is abundant in the park, or you can find comfortable rooms, cabins, ranch stays or even a traditional teepee stay in the nearby town of [Torrey](#).

Overnight: [Torrey, Utah](#)



Day 7: Canyonlands National Park, Utah

🕒 Drive Time: 2 hours, 30 minutes 📍 Distance: 153 miles/246 km

[Canyonlands National Park](#) is a true showcase of Utah's deep canyons, goosenecks and buttes. The landscapes here are equally harsh, intimidating, intriguing and alluring. As the largest national park in Utah, Canyonlands is brimming with iconic landscapes and adventures for everyone. An absolute can't-miss-experience is [Mesa Arch](#) – one of the most-photographed arches in the country.

You came for outdoor adventure, and Canyonlands ups the ante:

- **Rafting Cataract Canyon** – If your bucket list had a bucket list, whitewater rafting on Cataract Canyon would be on it. Whether it's braving Class V rapids at high flow or a more relaxing float during low waters, this is an experience you won't soon forget.

- **Road Cycling** – [The Island in the Sky Cruise](#) is a 82-kilometer out-and-back ride over undulating terrain between and through Dead Horse Point State Park and Canyonlands National Park. Cycling enthusiasts can't pass up this ride.
- **Backpacking** – If you love hiking, backpacking takes this passion to the next level. Gear up for incredible views when you take off on secluded trails for one-day or multi-day trips through this stunning country.

Camping and glamping options abound in the area and make for phenomenal overnights in this Gold-Tier International Dark Sky Park. You can also pop into [Moab](#) for a variety of hotel and lodging options.

THE PARK IS DIVIDED INTO 3 REGIONS:

1. **The Needles** – The Needles district is named for its profusion of red rock spires and sandstone fins. It can be difficult to navigate by car, but Needles is a backpacker's dream with over 110 km of hiking. Book a guided tour with [Moab Adventure Center](#) for the most fun and safest backcountry experience.
2. **Island in the Sky** – This is the popular northern section accessible from Moab, where easy and moderate hikes access views of the Colorado River to the east and the Green River to the west.
3. **The Maze** – The remote Maze district is Canyonlands' jumbled stone playground, requiring backcountry use permits and a high-clearance, four-wheel drive vehicle.

Overnight: [Moab, Utah](#)



Day 8: Arches National Park, Utah

🕒 **Drive Time: 30 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 27 miles/43 km**

What better way to end your stay in [Utah](#) than with a visit to one of America's top national parks: [Arches National Park](#). Arches is a wonderland of eroded sandstone fins, towers, ribs, gargoyles, hoodoos, balanced rocks and the largest proliferation of arches (over 2,000) in the world.

Arches is a photographer's dream, and you won't want to leave without capturing the most iconic arches and viewpoints in the park:

1. **Delicate Arch Viewpoint** – Delicate Arch stands out as a symbol of the state of Utah. It's the largest free-standing arch in the park, and – as the name implies – it seems to defy gravity in its size and design.
2. **The Windows Section** – The scenery is sensational on this

short, easy hike where you can see the North and South Window arches, often referred to as the "Spectacles."

3. **Balanced Rock** – This iconic Arches landmark is a teetering giant, standing 39 meters tall and offering a gravity-defying spectacle you have to see to believe.
4. **La Sal Mountains Viewpoint** – Enjoy an excellent overview of red rock scenery both inside and outside the park. It's even more beautiful if you catch it at sunrise or sunset.
5. **Fiery Furnace** – This area was named for the reddish glow it often takes on at sunset, resembling a furnace, but it actually remains quite cool due to

its many shady canyons.

When planning, be aware that a timed entry system will be utilized between April and early October and you will need a reservation to secure your time slot. This system not only helps to manage the crowds, but it more importantly helps to protect this stunning and fragile ecosystem.

Leave some time to enjoy the town of [Moab](#). The town is bustling with mountain bikers, river rafters, climbers, canyoneerers, hikers and off-roaders who have come to play. Connect with these fellow adventurers at local breweries, pizzerias, boutique cafés and diners. Camping sites fill up early, but Moab offers plenty of lodging options from rustic cabins and yurts to luxurious resorts and spas and everything in between.

Overnight: [Moab, Utah](#)



Day 9: Colorado National Monument, Colorado

🕒 **Drive Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 100 miles, 161 km**

Today you'll say farewell to [Utah](#) and make your way to the great state of [Colorado](#)! First on the agenda is [Colorado National Monument](#). The monument's 52 square kilometers of quiet, wild country have an otherworldly feel and are home to an exciting variety of animals, from bighorn sheep to collared lizards and a little bit of everything in between.

Traveling along the iconic [Rim Rock Drive](#) and stopping at 19 scenic overlooks, visitors can check off a list of wind- and water-sculpted rock formations with shape-inspired names like Window Rock, Pipe Organ, Kissing Couple, Praying Hands and Sentinel Spire. You can hike, camp, picnic, rock climb and take ranger-led tours, so

ON TOP OF THE WORLD:

At 140 meters, [Independence Monument](#) is the canyon's tallest freestanding formation and its most iconic landmark. There are several ways to experience it: Drive to Rim Rock's Independence Monument View pullout; follow the easy, 1.6-kilometer-roundtrip Otto's Trail to another dramatic overlook; or make the 19-kilometer-roundtrip hike to its base.

there is no limit to the fun experiences you can have in the Colorado National Monument area.

Your first night in Colorado will be in the largest city on Colorado's Western

Slope, [Grand Junction](#). The mighty Colorado River flows through town, offering mild to wild river raft rides. Or enjoy a round of golf at the [Tiara Rado Golf Course](#) with the Monument's red cliffs towering over the links. The Grand Valley area is also home to 20 wineries and Colorado's famous peach groves, so let yourself indulge in a tasty treat after a day of exploring!

Did You Know?

Colorado peaches are most famously grown in the town of [Palisade](#), and they are known for being extra juicy and extra sweet thanks to the long sunny days and cool summer nights in Colorado, which help all those delicious fruity sugars develop.

Overnight: [Grand Junction, Colorado](#)



Day 10: Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Colorado

🕒 **Drive Time: 1 hour, 45 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 86 miles/138 km**

Today you will examine the remarkable [Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#). Big enough to be overwhelming, yet intimate enough to feel the pulse of time, Black Canyon of the Gunnison exposes you to some of the steepest cliffs, oldest rock and craggiest spires in North America. For 2 million years, the Gunnison River has sculpted this vertical wilderness out of pure granite, and now these dark canyon walls plunge an impressive 820 meters to the river below.

[Hiking](#) is a great way to experience the Black Canyon at its best. Unique perspectives of the canyon, enhanced wildlife viewing and solitude await those willing to venture out on foot. Hikes can

CAST A LINE:

Your grandpa never fished like this! A [guided fly fishing trip](#) through [Gunnison Gorge](#) is an absolute bucket list experience. Choose from wilderness float fishing, walk/wade trips or even white-water rafting experiences as you chase world-class rainbow and brown trout. And keep your eyes open for bighorn sheep, river otters, peregrine falcon and eagles as you make your way through the canyon.

range from short, easy treks to rugged overnight excursions that will test your nerve.

Swing into [Montrose](#) to overnight. This town caters to all kinds of outdoor thrill-seekers and is the perfect base camp as you explore the numerous scenic drives, hiking trails and rock-climbing adventures in the area. Into cycling? Montrose has trails for amateurs and pros alike.

Cycling Pro Tip:

Within 32 kilometers of town, you can find flat roads for an easy spin or long, tough climbs. A dozen steep, 1-kilometer climbs reach the tops of the surrounding mesas. They resemble the “walls” of famous European races but with more moderate grades ranging from 5-9%.

Overnight: [Montrose, Colorado](#)



Day 11: Browns Canyon National Monument, Colorado

🕒 Drive Time: 2 hours, 45 minutes 📍 Distance: 141 miles/227 km

Today you will hit the road and head for [Browns Canyon National Monument](#), where you'll find sweeping views of the Arkansas River Valley – the true architect of the canyon – and the Sawatch Mountain Range in south-central Colorado. The area's unusual geology and roughly 900-meter range in elevation support a diversity of life and a wealth of geological, ecological, cultural and historic resources.

The Arkansas River is the most accessible way to enjoy the Monument. [Whitewater rafting](#) is the most popular recreational activity in the canyon, offering a unique and remote rafting experience. Watch in solitude as the changing light of day in turn alters the

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK:

Browns Canyon may be multi-millennia-years-old, but President Barack Obama only recently designated it a national monument in February 2015.

HARNESS THE CHALLENGE:

[Browns Canyon Adventure Park](#) is an aerial playground at the entrance to the renowned Browns Canyon National Monument. Soak in the incredible scenery as you zipline, jump, swing and crawl your way through 66 unique challenges suspended alongside the Arkansas River. Buy a ["Glow in the Park"](#) pass for extra fun under the lights at night!

hues of the canyon's walls and rock formations, often compared to cathedral spires. And keep an eye out for bighorn sheep, black bears, elk, mule deer, bobcats, falcons and other species that call the canyon home.

Tonight, enjoy the laid-back vibes

of mountain town [Buena Vista](#). There's always a new, hip, scrumptious restaurant to check out, and you're sure to find a gallery, gift shop, outdoor store and more on nearly every corner with an eclectic, original item waiting to make the trip home with you.

Overnight: [Buena Vista, Colorado](#)



Day 12: Leadville & Camp Hale, Colorado

🕒 **Drive Time: 55 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 43 miles/69 km**

To Camp Hale: 🕒 **Drive Time: 20 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 16 miles/26 km**

Get just a little bit closer to heaven as you visit [Leadville](#), the highest incorporated city in North America. Perched at an impressive 3,094 meters, it is also flanked by two of Colorado's highest "fourteeners" (the local nickname for mountain peaks higher than 14,000 feet, or 4,267 meters) – [Mount Elbert](#) and [Mount Massive](#). Scaling both mountain peaks is possible if you want to sit atop the first (Mount Elbert) and second (Mount Massive) tallest points in all of Colorado.

Leadville has a colorful past and sprang into existence at the start of the silver boom. The lure of striking it rich brought an array of [charismatic characters](#) to town. You'll want to discover their stories and the town's

A TIE TO THE TITANIC:

Margaret Brown arrived in Leadville as a teenager in the early 1880s, working as a seamstress in a dry goods store. Her trip on the maiden voyage of the Titanic and her heroic actions as it sank earned her the nickname the "Unsinkable" Molly Brown.

remarkable past by visiting local museums, walking the Victorian-influenced downtown, peering deep into the [Matchless Mine](#) shaft and touring the historic [Tabor Opera House](#).

A town at such high elevation offers great snowfall for winter sport activities,

and the U.S. military took full advantage of the area's extreme winter weather, altitude and tough terrain to train approximately 15,000 World War II soldiers to fight on skis at nearby [Camp Hale](#). Today you can take a self-guided tour among the camp's footprint or explore the [Colorado Trail](#) by foot or mountain bike. In colder months, the area is prime snowmobiling territory in addition to fantastic and affordable skiing at [Ski Cooper](#).

Worth the Stop: [Turquoise Lake](#)

While you might think this stunning lake is named for its blue waters, the fresh glacial lake actually earned its moniker because it was once home to a turquoise gemstone mine!

Overnight: [Leadville, Colorado](#)



Day 13: Winter Park, Colorado

🕒 **Drive Time: 1 hour, 45 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 86 miles/138 km**

Don't let the name fool you – [Winter Park, Colorado](#), is an amazing four-season destination. But make no mistake, the skiing and snowboarding is top-notch, while offering plenty of trails and amenities for cross-country skiers and snowshoers as well. Sleigh rides, hayrides, snow-tubing and dogsledding are also part of the local winter scene, making Winter Park an ideal cold-weather getaway. Today we'll be ditching the snow and exploring the summery side of Winter Park.

Enjoy all the benefits of a mountain hike without the uphill climb – take the [gondola ride](#) at [Winter Park Resort](#) for

UNLIMITED FUN:

For a nearly unlimited list of **outdoor activities**, consider staying at the [Snow Mountain Ranch](#) or grab a day pass and try your hand at archery, canoeing, disc golf, summer tubing, ziplining and so much more.

panoramic views at 3,260 meters and enjoy a leisurely stroll back down among trees, creeks and bountiful wildflowers. Buy the Unlimited Activities Day Pass and enjoy all-day access to the gondola ride, Colorado's longest [Alpine Slide](#), a putting course, climbing wall and two

ropes courses!

"Festival" is Winter Park's middle name! Some amazing summer events happen annually in this year-round playground. If you're lucky enough to be in town during the [Winter Park Jazz Festival](#), [Music Festival](#) or [Beer Festival](#), you'll have a blast experiencing great food, drink, music and plenty of fun-loving people!

You're sure to be worn out after such a fun day, so grab some shut-eye before you spend the next two days in Colorado's spectacular [Rocky Mountain National Park](#).

Overnight: [Winter Park, Colorado](#)



Day 14: Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado

To Grand Lake Park Entrance 🕒 Drive Time: 45 minutes 📍 Distance: 36 miles/58 km

Trail Ridge Road (Grand Lake to Estes Park): 🕒 Drive Time: 2 hours 📍 Distance: 48 miles/77 km

An outdoor adventure in Colorado wouldn't be complete without time spent in the spectacular [Rocky Mountain National Park](#). When you picture Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park is what your mind sees: rugged postcard-perfect peaks, glistening lakes, abundant elk herds and alpine wonderlands. Let's kick this day off with an epic scenic drive.

Enter the park through the [Grand Lake](#) entrance and hop onto [Trail Ridge Road](#) – the highest paved through-road in the United States. Soaring to an elevation of 3,713 meters, Trail Ridge Road passes through the park between the towns of Grand Lake and [Estes Park](#). Along this 77-kilometer drive, you'll catch views of glacier-carved valleys, daunting peak summits that loom in all directions, and distant crystalline lakes.

3,000 elk, 800 bighorn sheep, and herds of mule deer and moose live in the

BE PREPARED:

Beginning in late May and running through early October, a [timed entry permit reservation system](#) will be in place to enter Rocky Mountain National Park, so plan ahead and sign up early for your scheduled entry time. And double-check that Trail Ridge Road is open – snowstorms can close the road in the spring and late fall.

park, so it's no wonder [wildlife viewing](#) is the park's number one attraction. But hiking some of the park's 570 kilometers of hiking trails is a must – there are dozens of great trails to choose from. Consider some of these popular routes:

1. **Limited time?** Check out the quick-and-easy [Bear Lake loop](#). Right at 1 kilometer long, it's an excellent interpretive trail that circles this popular subalpine lake.

2. **One of the park's best waterfall routes** is the hike to [Ouzel Falls](#). 4.3 kilometers long and gaining nearly 300 meters in elevation, watching the "ouzel" (or dipper) plunge into the rushing stream is a great reward at the end of this beautiful hike!

3. **Can't leave without summiting a mountain?** The pleasant hike up [Deer Mountain](#) rewards you with views of Longs Peak, Moraine Park, Upper Beavers Meadows and Estes Park. Pack a picnic for this 5-kilometer hike that takes you 333 meters closer to the sun.

There is no better place to hang your hat for the night than [Estes Park](#). The picturesque mountain village offers travelers the best of outdoor recreation, wildlife (there's bound to be more elk on the local golf course than people) and hometown hospitality.

Overnight: [Estes Park, Colorado](#)



Day 15: Estes Park, Colorado

Start your morning with a coffee and a stroll through charming [downtown Estes Park](#). With more than 200 independent retailers, restaurants and attractions lining Elkhorn and Moraine avenues, you can enjoy shops and galleries that offer unique and whimsical gifts and mementos.

There is so much to explore in and around Rocky Mountain National Park! If you want to disappear into the beauty of Colorado's wilderness, explore the [Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests](#) along the North and East sides of the park. These areas encompass many of Colorado's peaks and forested terrain which are popular with hikers, backpackers, and mountain climbers. A can't-miss-drive along the [Cache la Poudre River](#) may reward you with a

DID YOU KNOW:

The historic, stunning and romantic [Stanley Hotel](#) inspired Stephen King to write his horror novel "The Shining" while staying in room 217. Pop into the hotel to give yourself some goosebumps and cool your nerves with a drink at the beautifully crafted antique [Cascades Whiskey Bar](#), offering the largest whiskey collection in the state.

glimpse at Colorado's state mammal, the majestic bighorn sheep.

Enjoy another scenic drive along the [Peak to Peak Byway](#). Beyond the stunning mountain views that are especially vibrant when the golden brilliance of fall foliage lights up the

route, this 88-kilometer journey helps you experience the history of the Colorado mountains.

As you wander your way back to [Estes Park](#) for the night, make one final stop at the [Camp Saint Malo chapel](#) nestled roadside of Highway 7 near [Allenspark](#) for a moment of serenity. One more night in Estes Park means you have time to stroll along the scenic Riverwalk or make time to rent a kayak, canoe, or pontoon boat and cruise around [Lake Estes](#). You could also ride 335 meters up the side of Prospect Mountain on the [Aerial Tramway](#) for fantastic views of Estes and the surrounding peaks.

Get ready to visit Denver tomorrow – an urban metropolitan that still manages to be an outdoor playground!

Overnight: [Estes Park, Colorado](#)



Day 16: Denver, Colorado

🕒 **Drive Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes** 📍 **Distance: 69 miles/111 km**

Your holiday is winding down, but a day in [Denver](#) is a great way to go! Experience one of America's most vibrant and walkable cities, with spectacular views of the Rocky Mountains, outdoor cafés, farm-to-table cuisine, local breweries serving craft beer, and plenty of shopping!

You won't want to miss [Red Rocks Amphitheatre](#), named America's best outdoor amphitheater by Rolling Stone magazine. If you can't catch a [concert](#), you can still enjoy the giant sandstone outcroppings that create the walls of this "acoustically perfect" venue. Take a hike along [Trade Post Trail](#) to explore the park's dramatic geology, pines, wildflowers, wildlife and views. Or do as the locals do and attend [Yoga on the Rocks](#) or run up and down the stone steps of the amphitheater for a real high-burner.

One of the best museums in Denver is the city itself. Denver street artists

FILM ON THE ROCKS:

Take in some classic and cult-favorite films on the big-big-big screen at the Red Rocks "Film on the Rocks" events. Each night features an opening comedian or band and fun audience participation contests.

have been busy brightening (and enlightening) the urban landscape for decades by making canvases of the city's alleyways, building exteriors, warehouses, garage doors and storefronts. Hit the pavement and follow [this guide](#) to discover these passionate works of art.

These city parks and outdoor attractions provide an urban oasis for locals and visitors alike:

- [City Park](#), Denver's largest park, has several lakes, spectacular

mountain views, a public golf course, flower gardens and a hiking/jogging trail that is exactly 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) high. It's also where you'll find [Denver Zoo](#) and the [Denver Museum of Nature & Science](#).

- [Denver Botanic Gardens](#), a 23-acre escape in the middle of the city, has 45 different gardens housing some 33,000 plants, as well as one of the nation's top 10 conservatories.
- For an authentically American experience, catch a baseball game at [Coors Field](#) or grab a tour for a behind-the-scenes look at one of the nation's premier ballparks.

Stay in the heart of downtown for easy access to Denver's large variety of chef-owned restaurants and amazing craft beer scene.

Overnight: [Denver, Colorado](#)



Departure: Denver, Colorado

Departure day is here, but before you head to [Denver International Airport](#) – one of the largest connecting airports in the world – take time for some last-minute fun in downtown [Denver](#).

At downtown [Union Station](#), visitors are greeted with an opulent and fully restored 1914 Beaux-Arts train station, home to swanky bars, restaurants and shops. The thriving art scene is one of Denver's shining stars, and here are some of the best ways to immerse yourself in the city's vibrant performing arts and culture:

- [Denver Art Museum](#) – World-

class art in amazing spaces right in the heart of Denver.

- [River North Art District \(RiNo\)](#) – This is where art is made! Enjoy art galleries, craft breweries, restaurants and eye-popping street art on nearly every corner.
- [The Art District on Sante Fe](#) – A haven for art lovers with 30-plus art galleries and colorful murals depicting the neighborhood's Hispanic roots.
- [Denver Center for the](#)

[Performing Arts](#) – Bringing Broadway tours, locally-produced Theatre Company productions, immersive experiences, intimate cabaret shows and more to downtown Denver.

- [Meow Wolf](#) – An immersive art experience that transports participants of all ages into new dimensions of storytelling and creative exploration.

We hope you've had an amazing outdoor adventure in Utah and Colorado – safe travels on your journey home!

Share your trip with us on social media! #LargerThanLifeRoadTrip





Outdoor Adventure in Utah & Colorado

Images provided by: Utah Office of Tourism, Colorado Tourism Office, Jay Dash Photography, Hage Photo, Matt Morgan, Frank Jensen, Tom Till, Visit Grand Junction, @catherineeichelphotography, Diana Lange, Cfrey, Matt Inden/Miles, Denise Chambers/Miles and Visit Denver.