COLORFUL COLORADO

SPONSORED BY COLORADO TOURISM OFFICE

Individual, 15 days/14 nights, DENVER - DENVER, Total distance approx. 1066 miles/ 1706 km

Located at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, the modern city of Denver is the gateway to a fascinating tour through the ever changing but always beautiful landscape of Colorado. Garden of the Gods, Maroon Bells, Great Sand Dunes National Park - Nature shows its best side! Upon reaching the western town Durango you will be reliving the time when the stagecoach was the main method of travel. The cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde National Park give you a glimpse into the Native American culture of the Southwest. Follow some of Colorado's most beautiful Scenic Byways into the breathtaking High Country, before returning back to the Mile-High City of Denver. This is a tour full of contrasts!

DAY 1&2: ARRIVAL IN DENVER, "THE MILE-HIGH CITY" AND THE GATEWAY TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Overnight: Denver, Colorado (2 nights)
See Page 28 for Denver inspiration

DAY 3 &4: DENVER TO COLORADO SPRINGS (APPROX. 1 HOUR AND 15 MIN/70 MILES/112 KM)

Depart Denver southward to the famous vacation spot Colorado Springs. The town boasts over 300 days of blue skies a year, sits at an elevation of 6,035 feet and is home to the "Garden of the Gods". The 1,364-acre park features magnificent rock formations, including the famous Balanced Rock, Steamboat Rock, Kissing Camels and Three Graces. When it comes to magnificent scenery and natural beauty, Colorado Springs has it all, including a rich Western heritage.

Walk through the Old Colorado City Historic District. Marvel at the waterfalls at Seven Falls and in nearby Manitou Springs you can look at the open air Cliff Dwellings Museum or ride the The Broadmoor Manitou & Pikes Peak Cog Railway to the top of Pikes Peak, to 14,110 ft or 4, 233 meters. To reach the Summit of Pikes Peak is to share the vision that inspired Katharine Lee Bates to write "America the Beautiful". Traveling the 19 miles of Pikes Peak Highway, the world's highest toll road, you will enjoy the spectacular scenic vistas and beautiful wilderness areas. Stay at The Broadmoor, one of the most elegant resorts in the country.
Overnight: Colorado Springs, Colorado (2 nights)







DAY 5: COLORADO SPRINGS TO ALAMOSA (APPROX. 3 HOURS 30 MIN/185 MILES/ 296 KM)

Visit the historic town of Cripple Creek sitting on the southwest slopes of majestic Pikes Peak. More than 100 years ago the boom of the Gold Rush days put Cripple Creek on the map. More gold was extracted from Cripple Creek than from the California and Alaskan gold rushes combined.

Continue to Canon City, home of the world-famous Royal Gorge Bridge. The bridge is an amazing 1,053 feet above the rushing Arkansas River.

The afternoon will find you in Great Sand Dunes National Park. The tallest dunes in North America are the centerpiece in a diverse landscape of grasslands, wetlands, conifer and aspen forests, alpine lakes, and tundra.

Experience this diversity through hiking, sand sledding, splashing in Medano Creek, wildlife watching, and more.
Overnight: Alamosa, Colorado

DAY 6 & 7: ALAMOSA TO DURANGO (APPROX. 3 HOURS/150 MILES/240 KM)

Take some time to relax and pamper yourself "Pagosa Style." Discover the life enriching, soul-soothing, spirit elevating and enduring effects of a soak in one of Pagosa Springs' downtown hot springs facilities!

Then it is onto Chimney Rock National Monument - a place of mystery, a sacred place, a celestial observatory, and seasonal calendar for the Ancestral Puebloans over 1,000 years ago. Chimney Rock is a place of unparalleled natural beauty sitting on a high mesa at the southern edge of the San Juan Mountains. The late afternoon finds you in Durango, founded in 1880 by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, when they extended their line from Durango to Silverton in order to haul precious metals from high country mines.

Enjoy your stay in this picturesque Western town, including an adventure of your lifetime! Leave Durango on a morning bus to meet up with the professional drivers of a local Jeep Tours company who will take you on trails high above Silverton! Once you return you can enjoy shopping and lunch on your own before you return to Durango via the rails of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.
Overnight: Durango, Colorado (2 nights)



DAY 8 & 9: DURANGO TO MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK (APPROX. 45 MIN/35 MILES/ 55 KM)

One visit and you will know why an early civilization made it their home for 700 years. Protecting thousands of archaeological sites, including hundreds of cliff dwellings, Mesa Verde National Park is perched high in Southwest Colorado where the air is thin, the history is rich, and the views are spectacular. You will discover how Ancestral Puebloans lived with remarkable respect for the land – and learn why they left this awe-inspiring place.



The ceremonial houses, or kivas, reveal thousands of well-preserved artifacts. Along with ancient petroglyphs, the kivas help tell the story of the Anasazi people. Mesa Verde has been designated a World Cultural Heritage Site by the United Nations.

Enjoy the "700 Years tour" which provides you with an overall historical view of the Ancestral Puebloans architectural, horticultural, cultural, and religious dimensions of their lives in the Southwest. You will be taken through a chronological journey starting with the earliest recorded Pit House villages (600 A.D.) in history to the classic Pueblo era of cliff dwellings dated from the 13th century.

Cliff Palace, the largest of cliff dwellings in Mesa Verde National Park, is viewed as one of the top ten places to visit in a lifetime.

The tour duration is 4-hours, which includes short hikes to archaeological sites along the Mesa Loop Road and a walking tour of Cliff Palace. Comfortable motor coaches will transport you to Chapin Mesa, where short walks on simple trails will take you to both the earliest Mesa Top archaeological sites and the magnificent Cliff Palace. The afternoon is yours to explore at your own pace.
Overnight: Far View Lodge, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado (2 nights)

DAY 10 & 11: MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK TO MONTROSE (APPROX. 3 HOURS/162 MILES/261 KM)

Montrose, Colorado, is the perfect blend of rugged beauty and small town charm. Nestled at the foot of the Rockies, it's a gateway to the dramatic Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and an outdoor lover's dream—think hiking, fishing, and stunning views at every turn. But it's not just about the wilds here. Montrose's vibrant arts scene, cozy cafes, and farm-to-table dining make it an ideal place to unwind after a day of adventure. Whether you're just passing through or staying a while, Montrose offers a laid-back, authentic Colorado experience.
Overnight: Montrose, Colorado (2 nights)



DAY 12: MONTROSE TO CRESTED BUTTE (APPROX. 1 HOURS 45 MIN/93 MILES/148 KM)

Visit the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, one of the steepest, darkest, and most rugged of such canyons formed by the Gunnison river as it flows through hard ancient rocks. The canyon walls are composed of volcanic schist, predominantly black in color, and as the gorge reaches depths of over 2,000 feet while often being only 1500 feet across, sunlight illuminates the walls only briefly, hence the name 'Black Canyon'. The afternoon finds you in Crested Butte. As Colorado's eighth largest National Historic District the evidence if its roots are inescapable. In 1990 Crested Butte became the official Wildflower Capital of Colorado.
Overnight: Crested Butte, Colorado



DAY 13 & 14: CRESTED BUTTE TO VAIL (APPROX. 3 HOURS 45 MIN/183 MILES/292 KM)

Follow yet another Colorado Scenic Byway to Vail! The "Top of the World " route crosses the Continental Divide twice and traces the Arkansas River nearly to its source in the vicinity of Fremont Pass.



At 10,200 feet, Leadville is the highest incorporated community in the United States. Yet in this setting, surrounded by 14,000-foot behemoths, the city occupies the lowlands.



South of town, Colorado's two loftiest mountains - Elbert and Massive - stand side by side like Jupiter and Saturn.

Spend the nights in the world renowned ski resort town Vail – and in the daytime hours explore the area around Vail - we recommend a trip to visit Breckenridge.

Or maybe shopping anyone? A stop at the Outlets at Silverthorne will fill up everybody's suitcase while racking up the savings.
Overnight: Vail, Colorado (2 nights)

DAY 15: VAIL TO DENVER (APPROX. 2 HOURS/100 MILES/ 160 KM)

Enjoy a leisurely drive back to Denver or onto your next destination



Discover Denver: Where City Spirit Blends with Mountain Soul

Denver, Colorado, is the perfect multi-night starting point for travelers looking to explore the Centennial State's natural beauty, vibrant culture, and outdoor adventures. As the largest city within a 1,000-km radius, Denver offers an ideal blend of city charm and access to some of the nation's most iconic landscapes. Whether your clients are outdoor enthusiasts, culture seekers, or foodies, Denver offers a diverse range of experiences that will leave them inspired.



CITY EXPLORATION

Denver's walkable downtown area seamlessly blends historic charm with modern amenities, making it a captivating destination for all types of travelers.



ADVENTURE AWAITS

While Denver's attractions and cultural experiences are undeniably exceptional, the surrounding natural landscapes are equally compelling for those seeking outdoor adventure. For those looking for adventure close to the city, Denver's City Park and Confluence Park offer expansive green spaces perfect for jogging, cycling along scenic paths, or enjoying a leisurely paddle on the water. Additionally, the nearby Cherry Creek State Park provides further opportunities for outdoor recreation, including fishing, hiking trails, and wildlife viewing. And of course, Red Rocks Park & Amphitheater is an absolute must-see, not only for its world-renowned concert venue but also for its stunning geological formations and hiking opportunities amidst towering red sandstone.

PERFECT FOR EVERY TRAVELER

Denver offers an exceptional balance of walkable neighborhoods, cultural experiences, and outdoor exploration, making it an ideal destination for all types of travelers:

- Culture Seekers will find a wealth of art, history, and live performances to enjoy.
- Foodies will relish the local culinary scene, from fine dining to casual eats, and craft breweries.
- Families will have a blast exploring the many museums, zoos, and parks that Denver has to offer.
- Nature Lovers will be captivated by the nearby Rocky Mountains and endless outdoor activities.
- Shoppers will enjoy the mix of trendy boutiques, large shopping districts like Cherry Creek North, western-wear specialty stores, and local artisan markets throughout Denver.

With its walkable downtown, stunning natural surroundings, and a robust event calendar featuring everything from concerts & sports to the National Western Stock Show, there is always something to see and do in Denver.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK



Consider adding a trip to Rocky Mountain National Park to see one of Colorado's four national parks. Rocky Mountain National Park, just 114 kilometers from Denver in northern Colorado, spans the Continental Divide and encompasses protected mountains, forests and alpine tundra. Known for its towering peaks, alpine lakes, and diverse wildlife, this national park offers year-round activities, including hiking, snowshoeing, and seasonal scenic drives along Trail Ridge Road, the highest paved road in North America.

Estes Park is a well known gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, where visitors often spot elk, mule deer, and other wildlife in and around town. The town blends mountain charm with outdoor adventure and visitor amenities, making it a natural stop when for exploring the park.

COLORADO'S DUDE RANCHES



Experience the West as you've never seen it before. Colorado offers over 30 Dude & Guest Ranches throughout the state ranging from rustic mountain retreats to modern-day mountain resorts. Just an hour's drive from Denver and Rocky Mountain National Park, Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch, for example, offers an unforgettable experience. Nestled along the serene Big Thompson River in Colorado's breathtaking Front Range, this historic working ranch blends the charm of the Old West with the comforts of the New West. The 3,200-acre ranch offers a wide range of horseback riding opportunities, from gentle trail rides to exhilarating climbs with sweeping ridge-top vistas. Whether clients are looking to reconnect with nature, improve their riding skills, or simply experience the magic of the Wild West, ranches offer a memorable escape into Colorado's heartland.