

**INSIDER**  
**GUIDES**  
from VisitTheUSA

# ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND THE GREAT PLAINS

COLORADO – WYOMING – MONTANA – NORTH DAKOTA - SOUTH DAKOTA – NEBRASKA

# ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND THE GREAT PLAINS



Denver to Canon City, Colorado	2 hours and 3 minutes / 186km
Canon City to Vail, Colorado	2 hours and 39 minutes / 214km
Vail to Grand Junction, Colorado	2 hours and 20 minutes / 237km
Grand Junction, Colorado to Rock Springs, Wyoming	4 hours and 43 minutes / 409km
Rock Springs, Wyoming to Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming/Montana/Idaho	4 hours and 49 minutes / 415km
Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming/Montana/Idaho to Billings, Montana	4 hours and 17 minutes / 323km
Billings, Montana to Medora, North Dakota	4 hours and 9 minutes / 452km
Medora, North Dakota to Rapid City, South Dakota	3 hours and 55 minutes / 378km
Rapid City to Hot Springs, South Dakota	59 minutes / 92km
Hot Springs, South Dakota to Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska	2 hours and 28 minutes / 234km
Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska to Estes Park, Colorado	3 hours and 7 minutes / 294km
Estes Park to Denver, Colorado	1 hour and 21 minutes / 103km

# DENVER, COLORADO

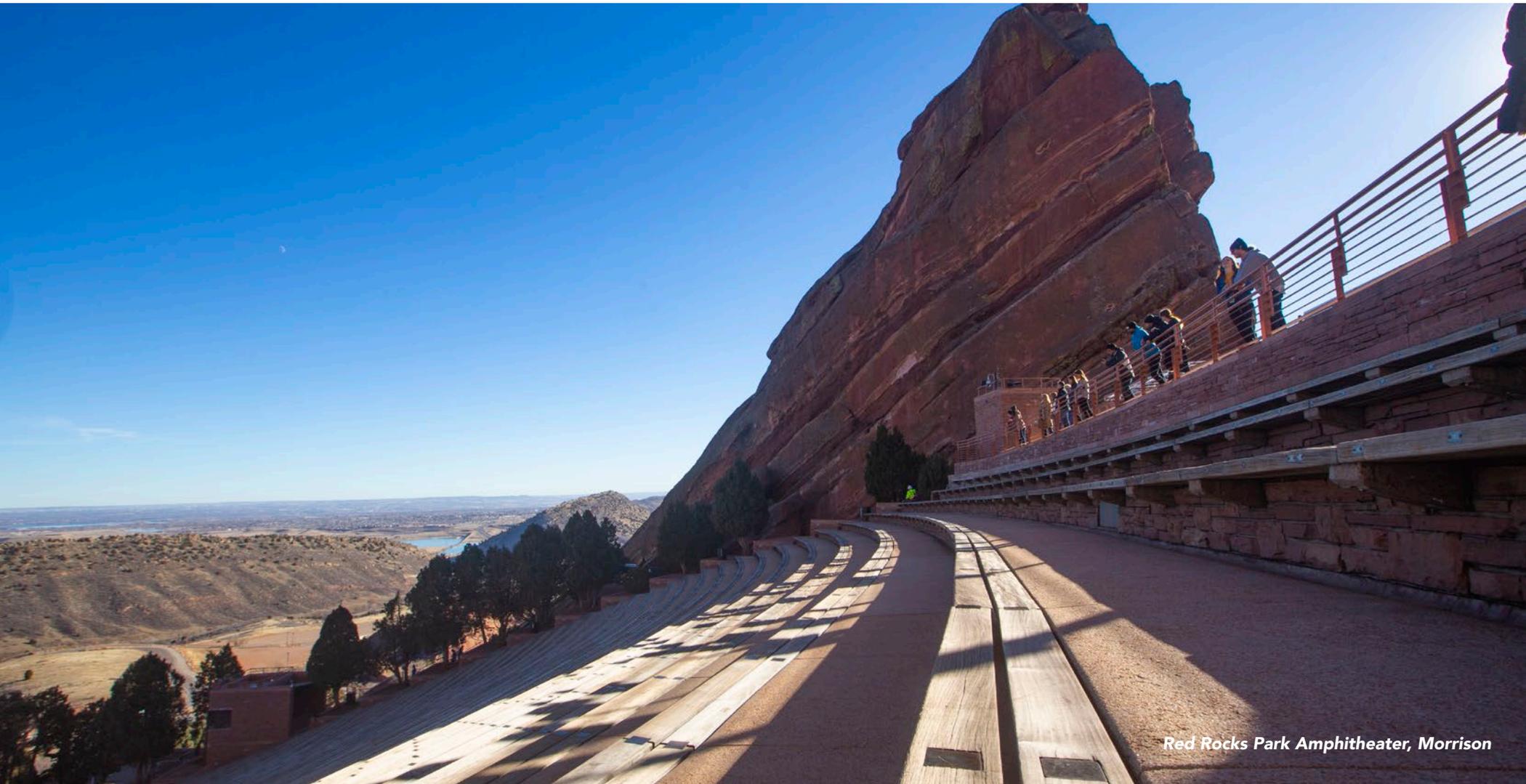
## Day 1

Denver is the perfect blend of outdoor beauty and big-city charm. It was also one of the first U.S. cities to embrace the craft brewing movement. To celebrate this fact, grab a pint and join a tour of the **Denver Beer Trail**, home to some 20 craft breweries, including the city's oldest microbrewery, **Wynkoop Brewing Company**. Denver's **Larimer Square**, now a bustling hub of shops, restaurants, bars and clubs, was the city's first block, founded before Colorado became a territory. **LoDo**, the city's lower downtown area, is Denver's oldest neighborhood. It's also where you'll find the Colorado Rockies baseball stadium, numerous art galleries and boutiques, and dozens of restaurants and bars. Denver's visual arts scene is impressive; begin exploring at the **Denver**

**Art Museum**, one of the largest art museums in the West, boasting a major collection of Native American art. Save time to visit **Denver's Museum of Contemporary Art** to see cutting-edge works in a variety of mediums, or get outside and meander through the Mile High City's many galleries. The **Art District** on Santa Fe, with some 60 galleries, hosts an art walk the first Friday of each month, as does the **Golden Triangle Museum District**, home to more than 50 galleries. While strolling around Denver, make note of the city's collection of more than 300 pieces of public art, including sculptures, murals, and sound- and light-based works.

*Accommodation: Denver, Colorado*

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*Red Rocks Park Amphitheater, Morrison*



Little Man Ice Cream, Denver

## DENVER TO CAÑON CITY, COLORADO

● ● ● ● ● 2 hours and 3 minutes / 186km

### Day 2

Stop in Colorado Springs at **Garden of the Gods Park**, which features dramatic sandstone formations set against the breathtaking backdrop of **Pikes Peak**. Another must-see stop is **Seven Falls**, a series of waterfalls cascading 181 feet through a box canyon. Go to the fabulous **Broadmoor** luxury resort for lunch before continuing to **Royal Gorge Bridge & Park** just outside tonight's destination, Cañon City. In addition to seeing one of the world's highest suspension bridges, take in the stunning scenery and experience some amazing thrill rides, including the **Cloudscraper Zip Line** and **Royal Rush Skycoaster**.

*Accommodation: Canon City, Colorado*

## CAÑON CITY TO VAIL, COLORADO

● ● ● ● ● 2 hours and 39 minutes / 214km

### Day 3

Depart Canon City via the **Gold Belt Byway**, and experience spectacular views of deep canyons and lush parklands. Stop and enjoy lunch in the charming ski destination of **Breckenridge**, once a mining town and now home to unique boutiques and restaurants in quaint historic buildings. Continue to Vail, where you will overnight in the upscale resort town at the base of **Vail Mountain**. It's a haven for skiers and snowboarders. Guests can choose from a variety of lodges with world-class spas and restaurants. In the summer, the city buzzes with mountain bikers, hikers and golfers. Vail hosts an annual **Hot Summer Nights Concert** series as well as a bustling farmers market and art show each summer Sunday. Get ready to browse hundreds of boutiques and galleries in this pedestrian-friendly city. Shops sell everything from cowboy gear and ski equipment to jewelry, art and clothing.

*Accommodation: Vail, Colorado*

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## VAIL TO GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

● ● ● ● ● 2 hours and 20 minutes / 237km

### Day 4

Drive an hour west to scenic Glenwood Springs, known for its hot springs and caves. Springs such as **Glenwood Hot Springs Pool** and **Iron Mountain Hot Springs** are said to have healing powers. For the more adventurous, get your adrenaline roaring with a whitewater-rafting trip on the **Colorado and Roaring Fork rivers**. Tour companies offer options for experienced rafters as well as for families desiring a milder adventure. Find even more fun activities at **Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park**, where there are cave tours, thrill rides (including Colorado's longest alpine roller coaster) and numerous restaurants. Drive an hour west to Grand Junction, where you will overnight and can enjoy a truly immersive food and beverage experience. Grand Junction has been Colorado's fruit-growing hub since the late 1800s. Stroll through local vineyards and stay for a wine tasting at places such as gorgeous **Grande River Vineyards** and **Plum Creek Winery** in Palisade. In summer and early fall, grab a basket and tour the downtown farmers market for the day's freshest produce and prepared goods. Just a few minutes outside the city, take in the stunning, panoramic views of the red rock canyons at **Colorado National Monument** on the 23-mile Rim Rock Drive. You may see wildlife such as desert bighorn sheep or collared lizards.

**Accommodation:** *Grand Junction, Colorado*

*Glenwood Hot Springs Pool*









## RAPID CITY TO HOT SPRINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA

● ● ● 59 minutes / 92km

### Day 11

For a great experience, and to encounter fewer crowds, depart early for Keystone to see the sun rising over **Mount Rushmore National Memorial**. The hand-carved monument, jutting from the granite of the Black Hills of South Dakota, depicts the faces of U.S. Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. While there, stop in the **Lincoln Borglum Visitor Center** to learn more about the monument's creation. Continue to another South Dakota wonder, **Crazy Horse Memorial**, a mountain monument under construction of the famed Lakota leader. After a 15-minute drive, arrive at **Custer State Park**, famous for its buffalo herds and scenic drives. Explore the history, nature and sheer beauty of this park, the state's largest. The next destination is Hot Springs, where after a day of exploring and driving, a must-stop place is **Evans Plunge Mineral Springs**, the town's oldest attraction. Do not miss the **Mammoth Site**, an ancient sinkhole, where the fossilized remains of more than 61 mammoths have been discovered.

*Accommodation: Hot Springs, South Dakota*



# ESTES PARK TO DENVER, COLORADO

● ● ● 1 hour and 21 minutes / 103km

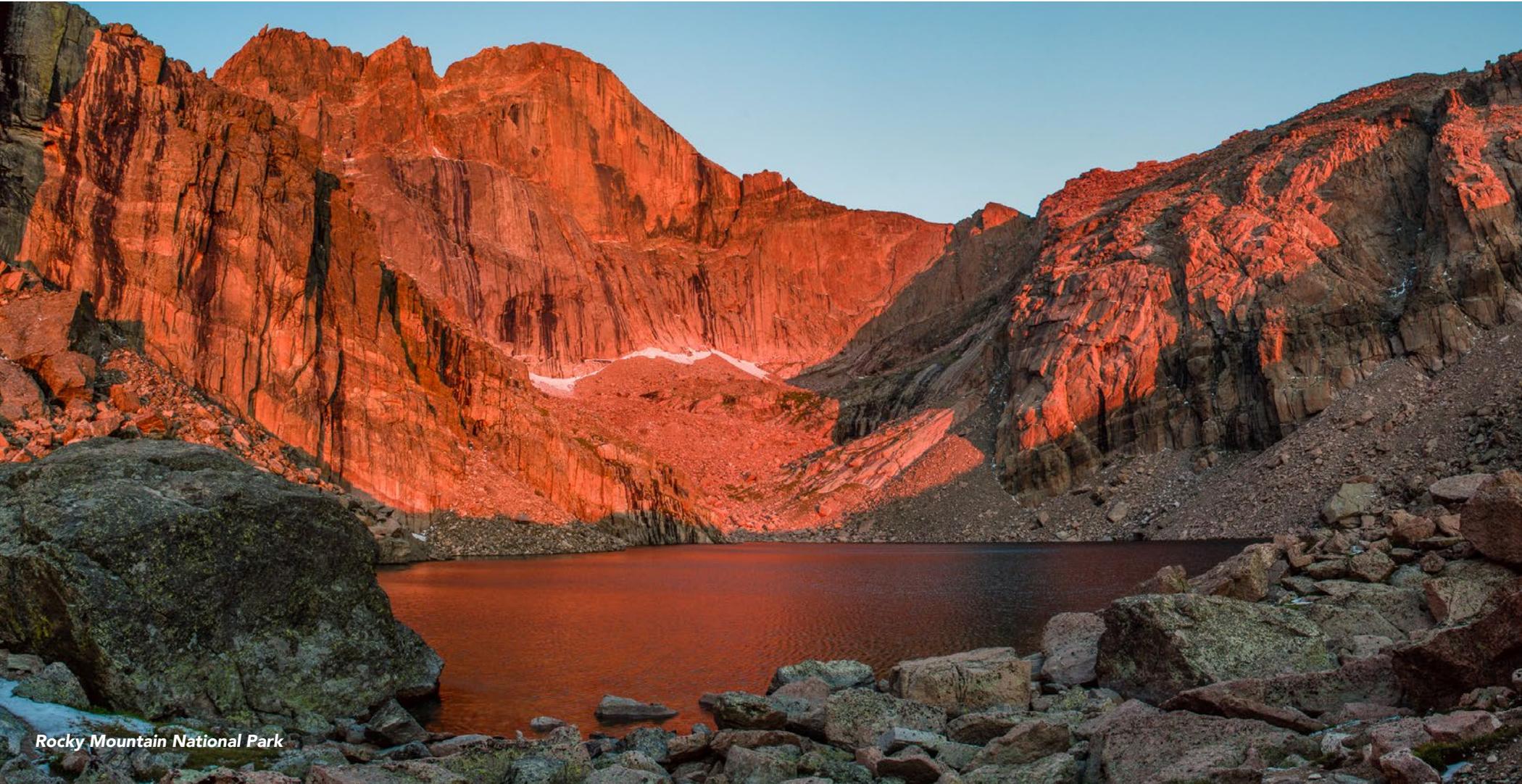
## Day 14

Enter **Rocky Mountain National Park** and explore this wilderness. In the summer months, take the Trail Ridge Road. Start at the **Beaver Meadows Visitor Center** and follow the trail to the **Alpine Visitor Center**; see spectacular views of **Sundance Mountain** and **Tombstone Ridge** along the way. Continue to Grand Lake for lunch on the historic boardwalk with views of the pristine mountain lake.

The journey will continue along the shores of Lake Granby. Travel to the beautiful **Winter Park Resort**, and hike trails through meadows bursting with flowers. Tonight, return to Denver to discover anything you missed at the start of your journey.

*Accommodation: Denver, Colorado*

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Rocky Mountain National Park

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