



BOULDER

Scenic Drives

FOUR SPECTACULAR ROUTES



UPDATES FROM BOULDER

Face coverings are required by public health order in Boulder County to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please make sure to bring yours, as it's likely you'll need to stop for bathroom breaks, gas and maybe a bite to eat.

Best to call ahead to see if businesses along your route are open, as things can change quickly due to COVID-19.

Rocky Mountain National Park is open (as of this printing) but at reduced capacity. Visit nps.gov/romo for reservations.

Hwy. 119 delays due to construction in Boulder Canyon are likely. Please see the map inside this brochure for alternate routes for accessing the Peak to Peak Byway. You can find updates at codot.gov/projects/co-119-boulder-canyon-improvements.



Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau
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BoulderColoradoUSA.com



THE *Peak to Peak* SCENIC AND HISTORIC BYWAY

See yellow route on inside map.

The Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway is Colorado's oldest scenic byway, established in 1918. The route winds 55 miles in and out of national forest lands through some of the state's most striking mountain landscapes and is very easily accessible from Boulder and Denver. This is one of the premier spots for autumn leaf peeping in Colorado, but it will give you access to spectacular scenery and outdoor recreation any time of year.

Make Boulder your starting point, pack up picnic provisions from the Boulder Farmers' Market or a gourmet grocer and head out on the road to enjoy a day of driving, hiking and photographing.

Take Canyon Blvd. (Hwy. 119) up through beautiful Boulder Canyon to Nederland, an easy drive on paved road that runs alongside Boulder Creek and takes you through narrow granite walls (look for rock climbers scaling them above you!). To avoid ongoing construction on Hwy. 119, please see the alternate route in purple on inside map. From Nederland, you can choose to go north (Hwy. 72) to Estes Park, or south (Hwy. 119) to the casino towns of Central City and Black Hawk.



Peak to Peak Scenic Byway
Dragon Long



Eldorado Canyon STATE PARK AND COAL CREEK CANYON

See blue route on inside map. | Total Drive Time: 2 hours, 15 minutes

It's just a 20-minute drive to Eldorado Canyon State Park ²⁶ — take Hwy. 93 south to Eldorado Springs Drive. Once in the park (entry fees apply), set off on a hiking trail through sandstone cliffs or along South Boulder Creek to find your perfect picnic spot among the pine trees and golden rock walls. Once you're finished exploring the park, backtrack east on Hwy. 170 to exit the park, then continue on Hwy. 93 again and turn west up beautiful Coal Creek Canyon. Return to Boulder via Gross Dam Road and famously scenic Flagstaff Road. This will take you at least a couple of hours, depending on how often you stop to explore. Along the way, you may want to fish at Gross Reservoir ²⁷ (check for closures in advance as an expansion project is currently underway), try the popular hiking and biking trails at Walker Ranch Loop ²¹, or stop at Sunrise Amphitheater ²² or Panorama Point ²³ on Flagstaff Mountain, both of which overlook all of Boulder.



Panorama Point
Max and Dee Bernt



Flatirons Vistas VIA HIGHWAYS 128 AND THE BOULDER TURNPIKE

See green route on inside map. | Total Drive Time: 40 minutes

This route is a great low-elevation option with views of Boulder's Flatirons. From Boulder, head south on Hwy. 93 and take a left on Hwy. 128. The road here is fit for a luxury car commercial. It snakes its ways through halcyon meadows and rolling hills, and you will pass several impressively large wind turbines at the National Wind Technology Center ²⁴ on your right. After three miles, stop at the pull-off at the top of the hill and look back to the Flatirons — a full, panoramic effect you can't get while in town. Continue on, making a left at McCaslin Road to connect to Hwy. 36 (also called the Boulder Turnpike). On Hwy. 36, pull off at Davidson Mesa ²⁵ (follow the signs for visitor information) for photo ops of Boulder Valley farmland, the red rooftops of University of Colorado and the snow-capped Rocky Mountains beyond. Continue back into Boulder to complete your loop.



High Plains Trail
Celin Serbo



Estes Park AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

See orange route on inside map. | Total Drive Time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Boulder is just an hour from Rocky Mountain National Park, one of the nation's most majestic parklands. Follow Hwy. 36 north toward the town of Lyons ²⁰, worth a stop for its cute cafes, shops and the landmark Oskar Blues Grill and Brew. Continue on to Estes Park ¹⁷, a charming tourist destination with a bustling downtown lined with fudge and ice cream parlors, souvenir shops and spectacular views. You're now just minutes from Rocky Mountain National Park ¹⁸, with its crystalline lakes, fragrant ponderosa pine forests and sprawling meadows. Hike, picnic, drive Trail Ridge Road ¹⁹, spot wildlife and enjoy the spectacular terrain. If you plan on camping, you'll need reservations, and please be aware dogs are not permitted in the park.



Trail Ridge Road
NPS Photo



Brainard Lake Recreation Area
Rich Grant



Scenic Drives

- The Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway
- Eldorado Canyon State Park and Coal Creek Canyon
- Flatirons Vistas via Highways 128 and the Boulder Turnpike
- Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park
- Access to Peak to Peak Byway via Boulder Canyon
- Alternate Route for Peak to Peak Byway Access from Boulder

Stops and Sights

- BOULDER** Enjoy the city's historic downtown Pearl Street, eat at acclaimed restaurants in what's been called "America's Foodiest Town," hike the famous Flatirons mountains, and explore the University of Colorado.
- BOULDER FALLS** Pull off of Canyon Blvd./Hwy. 119 on the way to Nederland to see this lovely 70-foot waterfall, accessible via a very short hike.
- NEREDLAND** Stop in this funky little mountain town to shop, grab a bite to eat and take a spin on the wonderfully whimsical Carousel of Happiness.
- BARKER RESERVOIR** This serene lake laps at Nederland's banks and is stocked with rainbow trout and other prized species (Colorado fishing license required).
- ELDORA** This local's favorite ski resort has 680 acres of varied terrain and is a great choice for families to learn and enjoy skiing.
- INDIAN PEAKS WILDERNESS AREA** This scenic area is one of the most popular near Denver for outdoor recreation. There are a total of seven peaks above 13,000 feet, more than 50 lakes and 28 trails covering some 130 miles. Late May to early Oct., access to the popular Hessie Trailhead is best via free shuttle from the Nederland Park-n-Ride (HessieTrailhead.com).
- BRAINARD LAKE RECREATION AREA** Set in a glacially carved valley, this is a hot spot for snowshoeing in winter and hiking and camping in summer. Lake Isabelle is an especially scenic hike in this area. Check fs.usda.gov for important info on timed entries.
- SAINT VRAIN CREEK** This refreshing tributary runs beside the highway between the town of Ward and the turnoff for Overland Road.
- ST. MALO'S CHAPEL ON THE ROCK** A lovely photo op awaits at Chapel on the Rock (St. Catherine of Siena Chapel), a classic chapel set against a mountain backdrop.
- LONGS PEAK** This famous fourteenner (mountains above 14,000 feet in elevation) is a spectacular behemoth to behold on the horizon.
- RAYMOND COUNTRY STORE** This little mountain general store is a good place to get out and stretch your legs, buy a cold soda and chat with the friendly purveyor.



Boulder's Pearl Street
Denise Chambers



Brainard Lake
Celin Serbo



Golden Gate Canyon State Park

- GOLDEN GATE CANYON STATE PARK** Just 12 miles off of the highway via Gap Road are 12,000 acres filled with aspen trees, granite boulders, tall grasses and wildflowers — a high-alpine landscape surprisingly close to Boulder and Denver.
- BLACK HAWK AND CENTRAL CITY** These historic gold rush towns are now known for their casinos and the Central City Opera House.
- ALLENSPARK** Stop at this cheery mountain town for legendary cinnamon rolls at Mountain Meadow Café and be sure to visit Eagle Plume's, a trading post and Native American art gallery that dates back to 1917.
- WILD BASIN** Heading north from Allenspark, pull over to take some photos of the Wild Basin forest area and views of imposing Mount Meeker and Longs Peak. This is a less-frequented entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park.
- BALDPATE INN** Stop at this historic lodge for a slice of pie and to see (and learn the story behind) the world's largest key collection.
- ESTES PARK** As the gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, this tourist destination offers a scenic riverwalk, elk trotting through town, hiking, picnicking on Lake Estes and tours of the historic Stanley Hotel.
- ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK** Crystalline lakes, jagged peaks, wildlife encounters, trickling alpine streams — it's all here in America's third most visited national park.
- TRAIL RIDGE ROAD** This "highway to the sky" in Rocky Mountain National Park is the highest continuous paved road in the country, traveling to more than 12,000 feet. Check nps.gov for opening and closure information.



Estes Park

Winter Wonderland

The alpine beauty along Peak to Peak is especially striking in winter. Even during times of light snow in Boulder, there is typically ample snow at these higher altitudes. Fill up a thermos of hot cocoa and head to Eldora to ski. Or turn north and explore one of the many snowshoe-ready trails, such as those at Brainard Lake, to enjoy the hushed, snow-blanketed winter wilderness.



Elk in Rocky Mountain National Park

Also explore

the Boulder Farm Trail Scenic Drive at BoulderColoradoUSA.com/farm-drive.