

BOULDER HIKING GUIDE



How to Hike Happy

Altitude Awareness

Boulder is 5,430 feet above sea level and, as you might imagine, the air is a little thinner up here. To help avoid altitude sickness – typified by headaches, nausea and fatigue – make sure to drink more water than usual, curb your alcohol consumption and protect yourself from the sun.

Sunscreen

Cover yourself with sunscreen and bring a hat. Boulder is a mile closer to the sun than the sandy beaches on the coast, which means it's easier to get a sunburn up here.

Water and Food

Our climate is very dry, and it's easy to get dehydrated. Drink often, even if you don't feel thirsty. Be sure to take plenty of water with you whenever you are hiking. Bring along an energy bar or two in case your energy level drops or you spend more time on the trail than planned!

Leave It as You Find It

Picking flowers, collecting rocks and picking berries may not seem to be a big deal, but it means others won't have a chance to enjoy them. With millions of people visiting Open Space and Mountain Parks, the less impact we each make, the longer we will enjoy what we have. Learn more at bouldercolorado.gov/osmp.

Stick to the Trail

Traveling on the trail leaves room for wildlife and their homes. Shortcutting trails causes erosion. Be ready to get muddy and step right through puddles. Boots dry overnight; plants take years to recover.

Share Our Trails

We all enjoy the outdoors in different ways. Pay attention, expect to encounter others and be courteous. Yield to all.

Dogs

On most trails, visitors can walk their dogs on leash. If dog guardians wish to walk their dogs off leash, they must be registered in Boulder's Voice and Sight Tag Program. Learn more at voiceandsight.org.



Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau
2440 Pearl St. Boulder, CO 80302

800.444.0447 | 303.442.2911 BoulderColoradoUSA.com

City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks
303.441.3440 • osmp.org

Free Summer Weekend Hiker Shuttles

Memorial Day Weekend–Labor Day

Full details at BoulderColoradoUSA.com/shuttles



Chautauqua Park-to-Park Shuttle

Ride the free weekend shuttle to get to Chautauqua stress-free and to avoid parking fees. Simply park for free at downtown parking garages, CU Regent lot or New Vista High School, and then hop on the shuttle.

- Free pickups every 20 minutes
- Saturdays and Sundays, 8am–8pm (plus Memorial Day, Labor Day and Fourth of July, 8am–8pm)
- Dogs, strollers and gear welcome

Prefer not to use the free satellite parking and shuttle? Paid parking (\$2.50/hr) is available in designated areas in and around Chautauqua. Another option is to take Lyft to/from Chautauqua. Receive \$2.50 off (each way) summer Saturdays and Sundays 8am–8pm with promo code: RIDE2HIKE.



Eldo Shuttle

New in 2020 is shuttle service from Boulder to Eldorado Canyon State Park. Pick up the shuttle from the University of Colorado Regent Lot (Broadway and Regent) or one of four other stops south of town and ride in comfort to the state park.

- Free pickups every 15 minutes
- Saturdays and Sundays, 8am–7pm (plus holidays)

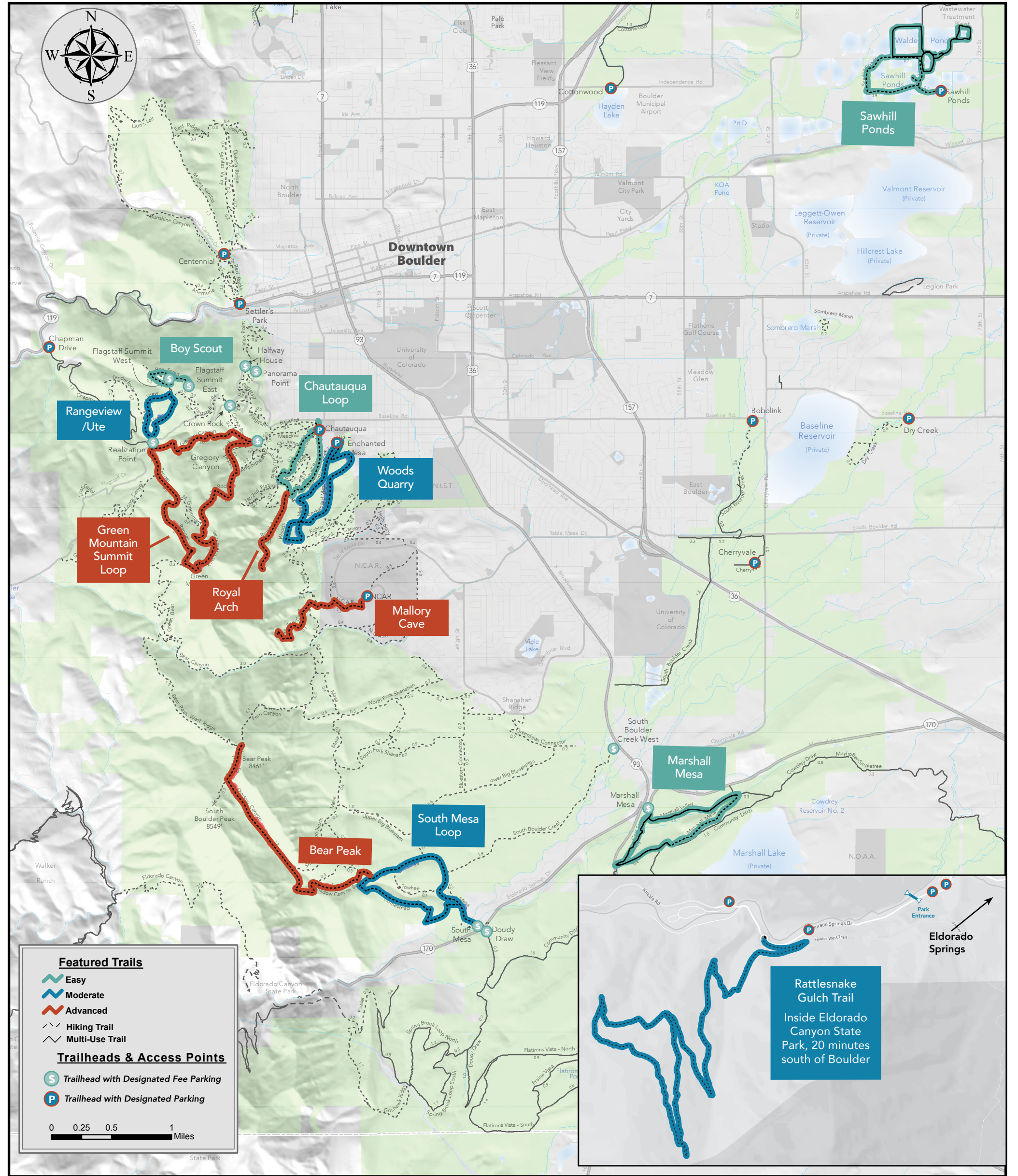
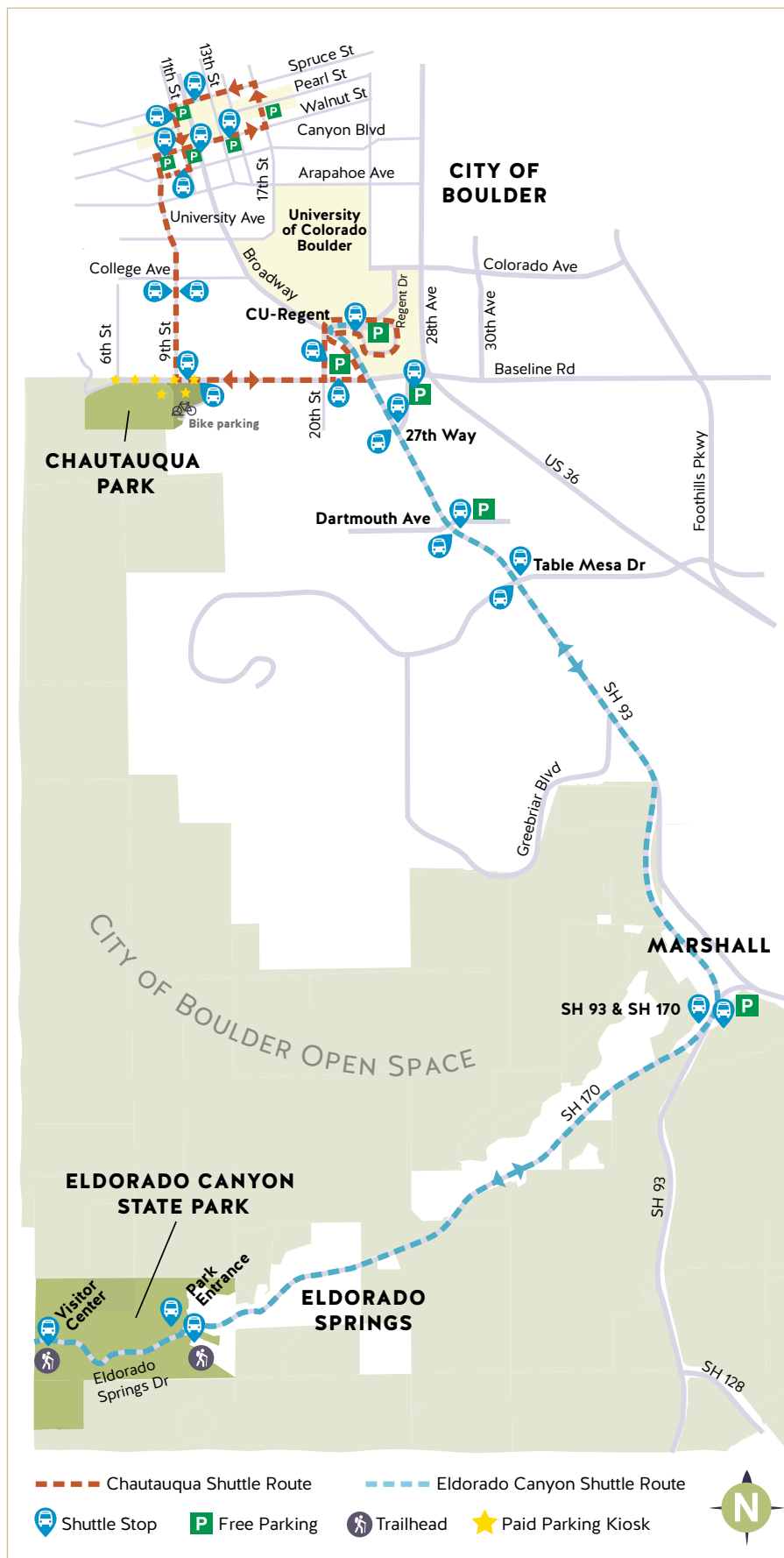
Gear is welcome aboard:

- 2 or 3 bikes per shuttle
- Crash pads, climbing gear
- Leashed, well-behaved dogs
- Strollers

Eldorado Canyon State Park Entrance Fee

- An individual daily pass or an annual Colorado State Parks pass is required* for all passengers 16 and older to ride the shuttle into Eldorado Canyon State Park. Individual daily passes must be purchased online prior to boarding. ***Special Introductory Period:** For a limited time, until Colorado Parks and Wildlife's individual daily passes are available for purchase online, Boulder County is covering the state park entrance fee for shuttle passengers. Questions? Email visitor@bouldercvb.com or call 303-442-2911.

- National Parks Passes (America the Beautiful) are not valid for entry into Colorado State Parks.
- There is no State Park entrance fee for children ages 15 and under.
- There is no fee to ride the shuttle to the Marshall Mesa trailhead.



Coronavirus Information

Face Coverings Required

Face coverings are required anytime visitors cannot maintain six feet of distance at Boulder trailheads and when passing others on trails. If visitors are at least 6 feet away from others, they do not need to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth. However, if visitors reach 6 feet distance to someone else on the trail, they should put the covering back over their nose and mouth.

Ranger Cottage Closure

The Ranger Cottage at the Chautauqua Trailhead is closed due to COVID-19. There are rangers outside the cottage who can help provide trail recommendations. The restroom remains open.

Cover photos (clockwise from top): Dave Sutherland, Kerry Hargrove/Shutterstock.com, Abbie Youngs, Thomas Mangan, NOAA ESRI, Denise Chambers, Stephen Collector, Cathy Keiler/Shutterstock.com, Denise Chambers, GoTie, Boulder Open Space Mountain Parks, Right: Stephen Collector, Left: Laura Hobbs/Boulder CVB



BOULDER

HIKING GUIDE

KEY

Dogs allowed (on leash)



Wheelchair Friendly and Handicap Accessible



Parking Fee



Biking Trail, Too



Restroom



Fishing†



Great for Winter Hiking



Served by Park-to-Park Bus



Served by Eldo Shuttle



The Chautauqua Trailhead and Eldorado Canyon State Park are very popular and parking is scarce. You can avoid the congestion by taking a free shuttle to these locations on weekends Memorial Day–Labor Day. See more information on reverse.

† Must have a valid Colorado fishing license. Learn more at cpw.state.co.us.



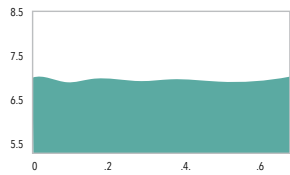
Boulder's Outdoor-Loving Legacy

From its earliest days, Boulder has been a city that's appreciated its beautiful natural surroundings. In 1896, the Boulder-Colorado Sanitarium, considered something of a health sanctuary and spa, opened at the base of Boulder's mountains with trails outside its back door. It drew guests who retreated into the piney hills for exercise, fresh air and sunshine. In 1898, the Colorado Chautauqua was built at the foot of the red rock formations known as the Flatirons. It was a family retreat created in the tradition of national Chautauquas of the time, focusing on culture, music and nature. In 1967, Boulder became the first city in the U.S. to tax itself to acquire funds to be used specifically for the acquisition, management and maintenance of open space.

Boulder continues to passionately protect some 45,000 acres of unspoiled open space, which visitors can access via 300 miles of hiking and biking trails. We welcome you to this outdoor playground.

EASY

Boy Scout Trail



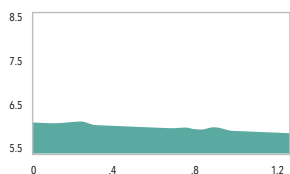
This family-friendly hike has forest-framed views and boulder-strewn terrain ending in a breathtaking lookout at May's Point. It becomes a fantastic kingdom of rock castles and trees for kids to scramble over, climb on and hide behind. Take a brief detour on the Sensory Trail, where signage will instruct you to smell the bark of a ponderosa pine, listen for birds of prey or take a seat to "rest and remember family and friends." The trail entrance is located across from the Flagstaff Nature Center, great for children and open May-Sept., Fri-Sun, 10:30am-4pm.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Flagstaff Nature Center." The trail starts directly across the street from here.

Cars not registered in Boulder County must pay a \$5 parking fee at the parking lot.



Sawhill Ponds

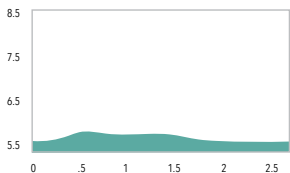


Sometimes you need a bit of distance from the mountains to fully take in their grandeur. This peaceful spot east of town is perfect for that purpose, with unfettered vistas of the Flatirons and the massive peaks beyond – all reflected in a collection of 18 ponds. This area was a gravel mine in the 1960s and 70s. The ponds are now protected wetlands and a bird-watching hot spot (especially in March when waterfowl migrate through). The trails are flat, easy, wheelchair accessible and replete with wildlife in every season.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Sawhill Ponds Trailhead."



Marshall Mesa Loop



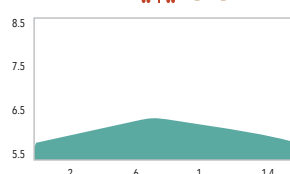
Traverse a wide-open landscape south of town that's as rich in coal mining history (explained by excellent interpretive signs) as it is with Flatirons views. The land preserves a rare remnant of dry tall-grass prairie where wildflowers bloom through spring, summer and fall. The geology of this area is particularly special, with rippled rocks showing evidence of ancient seas and visible fractures resulting from the upthrust of the Rocky Mountains. Download a brochure at bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/elearning.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Marshall Mesa Trailhead."

Cars not registered in Boulder County must pay a \$5 parking fee at the parking lot.



Chautauqua Loop



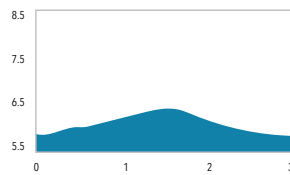
It's easy to see why this is Boulder's signature hiking area: Snap a photo in front of the iconic Flatirons and then hike right up to these spectacular, slanting slabs of sandstone (say that five times fast!). As you start out on the Chautauqua Trail, you'll find that the hike is steeper than it appears, so take your time. The trails wind in and out of pine forests and grassy meadows. Stop to smell a fragrant ponderosa pine trunk, have a seat on a sun-warmed boulder and admire the city views below.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Chautauqua Trailhead." See reverse for information on the Park-to-Park shuttle, available Memorial Day–Labor Day.



MODERATE

South Mesa Loop



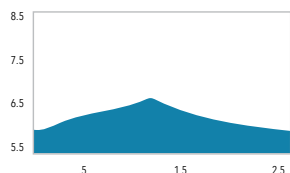
This hiking area is known for its historic homestead vestiges and a landscape that's a pleasing mix of rolling meadows and hilly pine forests, loaded with wildflowers and birds. The adventure starts right away, as you cross two bridges over the clear, babbling South Boulder Creek. In the springtime, keep your eyes peeled for domestic irises, planted by homesteaders over 100 years ago.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "South Mesa Trailhead."

Cars not registered in Boulder County must pay a \$5 parking fee at the parking lot.



Woods Quarry Trail

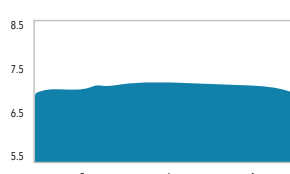


Discover an old stone quarry where large sandstone slabs have been rearranged into an outdoor living room by a few creative folks. Bring a picnic to fully enjoy this unique spot. Start on Bluebell Road, then take the Mesa Trail to a fork, then go right on Woods Quarry. After enjoying the scenic viewpoint, head back down on the loop to pass by a mysterious, old stone cabin.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Chautauqua Trailhead." See reverse for information on the Park-to-Park shuttle, available Memorial Day–Labor Day.



Range View/Ute Trails



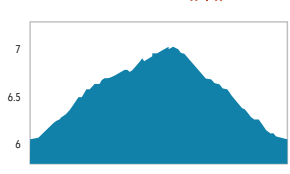
On the hunt for a cool and shady hike? Range View Trail is just the ticket, looping through quiet stands of Douglas fir, ponderosa pines and junipers. The moderate terrain and incredible views westward to the snowcapped Indian Peaks Wilderness, and some of the tallest peaks in Colorado, make this a lovely hike for all seasons. You can return the way you came, or make it a loop on the Ute Trail.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Realization Point."

Cars not registered in Boulder County must pay a \$5 parking fee at the parking lot.



Rattlesnake Gulch Trail



The dramatic, striated walls of Eldorado Canyon State Park are just 20 minutes south of Boulder. Rattlesnake Gulch is one of the park's signature trails that will take you past spectacular views of the canyon and Colorado's eastern plains in the distance. You'll also pass the remnants of historic Craggs Hotel, which was built in 1908 but burned down in 1913. Continue on to the Continental Divide Overlook, and have your camera ready. This is a lollipop trail with unique features to capture your imagination.

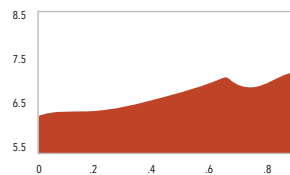
Please note, state park entry fees are required.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to "Fowler Trailhead." Eldorado Canyon State Park is very busy and has limited parking on weekends. See reverse for information on the Eldo Shuttle, available on weekends through Labor Day.



ADVANCED

Royal Arch Trail

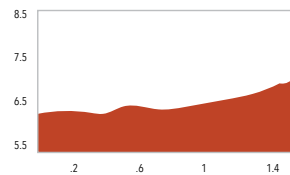


This thigh-burner is well worth it for the reward at the end: a massive, sandstone arch that frames views of Boulder and beyond. It is the most popular trail in Boulder for a reason. You'll start at the Chautauqua Trailhead, take Bluebell Road to the Bluebell Shelter, then follow signs for the Royal Arch Trail. The terrain is often stair-stepper-like, so be prepared to have some "are we there yet?" moments.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Chautauqua Trailhead." See reverse for information on the Park-to-Park shuttle, available Memorial Day–Labor Day.



Mallory Cave Trail

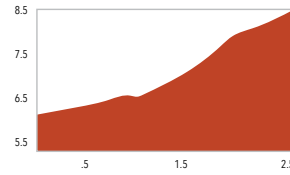


For a few years, this entire trail was closed to protect a rare colony of bats from white-nose fungus infection. These days the trail is open, while the cave at the end is guarded from human entry with a rather artfully designed iron gate. The terrain of this trail is steep, heading up the mountainside for spectacular views, and the last section is a bit of a scramble to reach the cave. Mallory Cave Trail is one of several in a network that leaves from the parking lot of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR).

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "NCAR."



Bear Peak

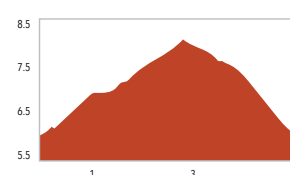


With a 8,461-foot summit and views of Longs Peak from its summit, Bear Peak is a legitimate mountain climb (so prepare accordingly), yet it is conveniently accessed right within Boulder's city limits. There are several access options. This shorter (yet steeper) South Mesa Trailhead option starts off on Mesa Trail and connects with Shadow Canyon South, which is cool, shady and tucked down in a canyon. The final stretch is a scramble to the exposed summit at 8,461 feet. Peak baggers can pop over to the adjacent South Boulder Peak (at 8,549 feet) to get a two-for-one.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "South Mesa Trailhead."



Green Mountain Summit Loop



At 8,144 feet, Green Mountain is third-tallest peak in Boulder's mountain backdrop. You will leave from the Gregory Canyon Trailhead and take your loop in the direction of either Gregory Canyon or Saddle Rock. Both are strenuous climbs up the cool and shady north side of the mountain through lush forests and beside seasonal trickling streams. After the final lung-busting stretch, you'll be rewarded by 360-degree views and, in summer, swarms of butterflies. This mountain climb is a serious endeavor, so prepare accordingly.

Directions: Use Google Maps for navigation to parking at "Gregory Canyon Trailhead."

Cars not registered in Boulder County must pay a \$5 parking fee at the parking lot.



Photos, left to right: Rich Grant, Wendy Marie Stuart, NOAA ESRL, Nina B/Shutterstock.com, Jonathan B. Auerbach, Emiliano Lake-Herrera, Dave Sutherland, Philip Yates, Ann G. Duncan, Ann G. Duncan, Dave Sutherland, Gwen Gray, Emma Zilber (emmazphotography.com), Erin Byrne, Tracy Schaeffer, Andrew Magill-Flickr Creative Commons, Rich Grant