



## CITIES AND TOWNS

From the urban excitement of Denver to historic towns like Leadville and Durango, Colorado's cities and towns offer one-of-a-kind experiences. Enjoy a night out in Fort Collins, a romantic dinner in Grand Junction, or a day on the slopes of Aspen or Vail. From local artisans to world-renowned collections, major shopping districts to exclusive boutiques, you can find it all in Colorado. Learn about the local history, sample the cuisine, or just sit back, relax and take in the natural beauty. Whether you're looking for a cosmopolitan experience or a more rustic one, you'll find our many cities and towns are the perfect places for your next holiday.

### Denver

Denver, known as “the mile high city” is the capital of Colorado. Its climate is a marvel with 300 days of sun each year — beating San Diego and Miami. Visitors can enjoy a round of golf in the morning and spend the afternoon on the slopes a little more than an hour's drive from Denver, which is packed with attractions. The city's hub is Lower Downtown — LoDo — which has the country's largest concentration of Victorian-era buildings, now housing shops, 100 microbrewery pubs, cafés, restaurants and nightclubs. From here, free shuttle buses cruise the mile-long, pedestrian-only 16th Street Mall with its shops, restaurants, open-air bars and historic buildings with skyscraper backdrops, terminating at the impressive gold-domed capitol building. Denver offers numerous art galleries and museums, sporting and cultural events, as well as many other attractions and renowned restaurants.

### Aspen

A super-hip mountain town, with a stunning mountain backdrop and sensational skiing. Aspen itself is home to Aspen Mountain, with steep, narrow and challenging runs that take you down to the streets below, stopping just in time for the outdoor bars. Yet Aspen is actually composed of four resorts. Just outside town is Aspen Highlands, a truly exciting mix of extreme skiing and fall line cruising (at the top, hop aboard the snowcat shuttle, then join the queue for the 40-minute ridge hike to the top of Highlands Bowl). Almost across the road is Buttermilk, a rolling beginner's area that's excellent for boarding, and which lures in-the-know locals on powder days. It's also home to the extreme Winter X Games. A few miles away is Snowmass (see separate listing), which is also served by the free bus network.



## Beaver Creek

Some places boast five-star hotels, but Beaver Creek is a five-star resort. Heated walkways and outdoor escalators convey you to the slopes and to one stylish hotel after another. Boutiques and top-notch restaurants abound, and there are glorious, long, perfectly groomed cruising runs from one end of the resort to another — and that's a long way. The runs take you through Bachelor Gulch — where the fairytale log-and-stone Ritz-Carlton looms over the slopes — to Arrowhead Village, a satellite community at the end of an exhilarating downhill rush. But this isn't just a place for moneyed, taking-it-easy holidaymakers. Try the Birds of Prey downhill course. The resort is a big cruise all the way over to Arrowhead Village — and it's expanding. By night, there's a wealth of fine dining in mountaintop cabin restaurants — take a horse-drawn sleigh to Beano's Cabin for an on-mountain dining experience. The new Riverfront Express gondola runs from the town of Avon (just off the Interstate 70 highway), making it possible to access the slopes without driving up to the resort itself.

## Boulder

Boulder is a thriving city, home to the University of Colorado, nestling in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Pearl Street Mall cuts through the middle of downtown, a heady mix of individual shops, eclectic restaurants, street performers and entertainment, where everyone seems to have spilled onto the street. Stylish hotels such as the Boulderado, dating from 1909, with Italian Renaissance architecture, make this a fine place to stay. Boulder is surrounded by 43,000 acres of protected open space and mountain parks, full of hiking and biking trails, which take you to the base of the jutting Flatirons.

## Breckenridge

Over the past few seasons, Breckenridge the town and Breckenridge the ski area have come together. The Skyway Skiway allows you to ski right down to the main street, and the Breck Connect gondola speeds you back up. There are four of them — Peaks 7, 8, 9 and 10 — with a wealth of high-altitude slopes, not least of which is the expert-class terrain accessed by the Imperial Express, the world's highest chairlift, reaching 12,840 ft (3,913 m). There are five terrain parks and half-pipes for skiers and boarders, with Freeway rated one of the best in the United States. The Victorian-era mining town sits at 9,600 ft (2,926 m). If you want great après skiing in bars, clubs and restaurants, this is the place to come. The long main street is packed with action, as well as endless quirky boutiques, galleries and stores. Breckenridge is also on the same lift pass as Keystone and Arapahoe Basin (free bus) and Vail and Beaver Creek (small charge).

## Colorado Springs

Colorado's second-biggest city, yet a place which has kept the small-town feel of the 1880s when it was a leading resort known as Little London, catering to its international clientele. It is intimate and sophisticated, with the ornate Broadmoor the ultimate in historic elegance, and 14,110 ft (4,300 m) Pikes Peak looming over everything. Smart restaurants and stylish cafés abound. Nearby Manitou Springs, a spa and artists' colony, with its galleries and shops, is also a delight, and the place where you board the nation's highest cog railway that ratchets up Pikes Peak. Visit the 18,000-acre campus of the US Air Force Academy (and its Cadet Chapel with 17 sharp spires) north of Colorado Springs and head farther downtown to the US Olympic Complex (where the likes of swimmers and fencers train) — both are free. And discover wilder places: Cheyenne Mountain State Park, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, the jagged red rocks of the Garden of the Gods and the huge Cave of the Winds.

## Copper Mountain

Fantastic skiing for all the family in an attractive, traffic-free stone and wood purpose-built resort, which stretches along the bottom of the slopes. The village has lodging and restaurants all within walking distance, or a short shuttle ride, of the slopes. Excellent beginners' areas are located right by the village, with loads of good expert terrain in a selection of bowls higher up. The resort is known for its naturally divided terrain for all abilities — it gets harder as you work your way along the mountain face — in addition to fantastic bowl skiing. Add to this three terrain parks and friendly off-piste nightlife. Frisco, a little town a few miles away, is good for nightlife and restaurants too, while the town of Silverthorne is famed for its huge outlet shopping malls.

## Crested Butte

Some of the best powder anywhere and some seriously steep, challenging runs make this a skier's dream destination. More than \$200 million USD has been invested in the past few years. That means new lifts, new terrain and, this season, a new base village rebuilt to reflect the 1800s mining town a few miles away. There are great ski-in/ski-out options by the slopes, where you'll find a fine selection of bars and restaurants. A shuttle gets you to the historic, wooden storefront town itself — which is usually under a fresh blanket of snow during the winter — for atmospheric steakhouses, bars and B&Bs.

## Durango

Spirit of the artistic Southwest, its long, wide historic main street lined with galleries and neat stores. A river, the fast-flowing Animas, runs through town, bringing the excitement of rafting to the very doorstep of quaint hotels and B&Bs. Stroll along the river path or enjoy a host of exciting activities — rock climbing, mountain biking, horseback riding and hiking. Take a stagecoach ride, visit the rodeo and enjoy the nightlife in the many bars, not least the ornate Victorian-era Strater Hotel.

## Grand Junction

Delightful town with historic main street in the far west of the state, a great place to stay for visiting Colorado National Monument, a massive sandstone rock landscape. Sitting in fertile Grand Valley, Grand Junction is surrounded by 17 wineries, all offering tastings, as well as farms and orchards growing peaches, cherries and apples. The Grand Mesa is “an island in the sky,” with forests, lakes and slopes providing a contrast to the otherwise arid surrounding scenery. The Museum of Western Colorado features everything from dinosaur relics to historic fruit farms.

## Keystone

Three mountains, distinct peaks that run from the resort, give Keystone some great slopes. You really do feel like you're moving fast as you ride up one then scoot down to the next. The skiing and boarding are excellent for all levels. Learners are well served on the nearest slopes on Dercum Mountain — there's plenty of fast cruising for intermediates while experts can have a ball. The Outback, the resort's farthest point, is a mass of wild, tree-lined plunges. River Run, a growing new traffic-free village in rustic wood and rock, is the new face of Keystone, which has a couple of other modern villages and various areas of homes and apartments connected by a free bus. Good, easy stuff on the front, hidden pockets of gullies and a fine terrain park. At the end of the day, put the skis away and skate on the town's frozen lake.



## **Snowmass**

A big, modern ski-in/ski-out resort of the sort more usually associated with Europe. Part of the Aspen family but an all-round resort in its own right. Known as a family place, but the skiing is good for all levels — experts can have fun if they get away from the big, rolling pistes. Its vertical of 4,400 ft (1,341 m) is the biggest in the United States, and it has more than half the area covered by the four-resort Aspen pass.

## **Steamboat Springs**

Steamboat Ski Resort is a ski area that is as modern as they come, just outside a wonderful Western town — Steamboat Springs — surrounded by ranches. So confident of good conditions that it trademarks its Champagne Powder® and offers excellent tree skiing, fabulous off-piste and a good beginners' area near the base. Stay at a slope-side resort or small places in downtown Steamboat Springs with its wide streets and wonderful Victorian-era brick buildings. The resort ranks high with families and has good skiing for all levels — experts head for the glades on a powder day — with views over the wide Yampa Valley. Great nightlife in the town, especially if you like steak.

## **Telluride**

One of Colorado's loveliest Victorian-era mining towns, tucked away at the end of a box canyon. The impressive Mountain Village at the base of the slopes holds plush hotels and short-term rental properties. Lifts take you up and over, on fast pistes and with some steep off-piste if you want. Prospect Bowl is great for the intermediate skier and there are good beginners' areas below Mountain Village as well as some real double black diamonds (or a path if you prefer) down to town. The Old West town has great hotels, many fine restaurants and bars, as well as great shopping. Town and Mountain Village are connected by gondola until late, so you can stay in one and sample the other.

## **Vail**

America's biggest ski resort, big in nature and big in scope. Not just lots of slopes, but slopes split into different areas. There are the tree-lined pistes and valley views of the front face, the sweeping intermediate powder fun of the Back Bowls over the ridge and then, farther on, the mostly ungroomed, wooded excitement of Blue Sky Basin. The latter is designed to give the thrills of backcountry skiing, while never being far from a restaurant — and it manages that. You can quickly go from skiing alone through steep, tree-lined chutes to lunching in the vast, rustic Two Elk Lodge, but at the farthest point you're seven miles from the village. The resort meanders along the bottom of the slopes, from the original (1960s) faux-Austrian luxury of Vail Village to Lionshead, nearing the end of massive redevelopment.

## **Winter Park**

Finally getting the recognition it deserves, this is a great ski area, including a stylish new base. Another bonus is that it's the nearest major resort to Denver — a little more than an hour by car or via the seasonal Ski Train (which picks you up at downtown Denver's Union Station and drops you at the slopes). Glorious array of pistes, the bump fields of Mary Jane and the steps of Vazquez Cirque make it ideal for all skiing levels. At 12,060 ft (3,676 m), the wide-open Parsenn Bowl gets North America's highest six-man chair this season. There are also various parks for boarders, including the serious terrain of Dark Territory. The village has its own nightlife alongside that of fun-loving towns Winter Park and Fraser, which are served by shuttle bus.