



EXPLORE

THE

ROCKIES

IN LESS THAN

48 HOURS

A PHOTOGRAPHIC GUIDE TO THE HIGHEST PAVED ROAD IN AMERICA

6:00 pm EST
4:00 pm (MDT - Colorado Time)

FLYING FRIDAY
Book your flight and pack your bags...you're going to Colorado!

9:00 pm
7:00 pm

ESTES PARK
Drive from the Denver airport to Estes Park, where you'll be staying for the night.

7:00 am
5:00 am

THE JOURNEY UP
You'll be on the road before sunrise, but feeling surprisingly fresh thanks to the time change. Driving up to the peak of Trail Ridge Road at 12,000ft...don't forget to breathe!

12:00 pm
10:00 am

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE
There's plenty to do on the way down: just remember to scope out a campground before the stars come out!

7:00 am
5:00 am

LAST DAY
The earlier you get up, the more time you'll have to explore before you head back to the Denver airport.

3:00 pm
1:00 pm

SAYING GOODBYE
You made it (with just minutes to spare). Grab some dinner and reflect back on your wild weekend.

6:00 pm
4:00 pm

TIME FOR BED
Leave the airport and heading home for a good night's rest.

ADVENTURE DOESN'T HAVE TO BREAK YOUR BANK.

You're busy and have NO budget to travel the world, but guess what; there's still plenty of wallet-conscious places to explore right in the Great American backyard. Colorado offers a wide variety of landscapes, plants, animal life, and (best of all) a TON of "fall out of your car" adventures. You can enjoy a scenic tour of the rockies, then be back home in time for work on Monday morning.



"Looking at Rocky Mountain National Park, it's hard to believe that humans have managed to conquer the wild and rugged terrain. It took awhile, but roads were built through the park's backcountry. Trail Ridge Road wasn't the first, but it's pretty old; it was constructed in 1932, and has been connecting the east side of the park with the west side ever since. It's a twisting, winding route right through the heart of the Rockies, so you're guaranteed views of the wilderness as you climb and dip through the mountains and cross the Continental Divide. Take advantage of pull-offs to admire the sweeping beauty here, and enjoy all of the fun to be had along the way." - GRAND COUNTY ON ROADTRIPPERS.COM

FLYING friday

6:00pm (3:00pm) - Book a flight as early as your work schedule will allow on Friday. We did a 6:00pm flight which lands around 7:30pm Denver time thanks to the 3-hour time difference. (You will learn to love the time difference if you're coming from the Southeast;hello 5am start to the day!) Now book your return flight for something in the afternoon if you can, as the time change won't be

doing you any favors there and you'll need to catch up on a little sleep before Monday comes around. We booked a 3:00pm flight (EST time) that would put us in Atlanta at 6:00pm and in our beds by 9pm if you include a very long, luxurious shower to scrub off two days worth of car-grunge.

Also, don't forget to reserve a rental car OR at least have a plan for which rental company you want to go with and what you want to drive while in Colorado. These are things you don't want to be figuring out in the Denver Airport.

9:00pm (6:00pm) - Congrats! You made it; and the best part is, it's only 6pm in Colorado

so there's plenty of time left for a better dinner than you got on the plane (Denver has some great restaurants). You're probably already feeling wrecked, but trust me, you'll perk right up after you breathe in the freshness that is the Rockies. All that's left today is driving up to Estes Park, finding a spot to park your vehicle, and stretching out for a good night's rest.

Before you leave Denver, fill your gas tank and stop to get three gallons of water to keep in the car JUST in case you get stuck on the mountain. Now would also be a great time to stock up on some non-refrigerated snacks/meals if you didn't pack anything. If you want to get super fancy, you could buy a foam cooler, get some ice, and really go all out with sub sandwiches/hummus/etc, but we recommend peanut butter, trail mixes, bread, honey, and maybe some fruits or veggies

that won't go bad sitting in the car for a day. There will be some places to eat during your trip, but if you want to save some serious money, keep food in the car. (Just make sure you have it stored in a glove box or airtight bag in case the bears come sniffing!)

12:00am (9:00pm) - It is getting dark and you've arrived at the park! There are a number of camping sites to stop at, but feel free to ask locals where the cheapest place would be the park your car. Some companies will let you use their parking lot for free, but you want to be a good neighbor and ask about it first. PLUS, if you snag a campsite, the

Estes PARK

accommodations will be a little nicer and put you more at ease. If you got the SUV air mattress, pump that sucker up, make your bed, and relax! You're on vacation now. There's something about a campfire that really gets my wild heart pumping for adventure...even if it's someone else's campfire. Hit the hay as soon as possible and set your alarm for 5:00am (Colorado time) so you can have the roads and views to yourself!



WILDLIFE WATCH:
If you've got a sharp eye, you may see chipmunks darting between piles of rocks!



the JOURNEY up

8:00am (5:00am) - Good morning sunshine! I bet you feel pretty rested for 5:00am? That's because it's 8:00 your time, so eat some breakfast and let's get on the road to chase that sunrise. The first landmark for today is reaching the highest point of Trail Ridge Road (12,000 feet) at the Alpine Visitor's Center. It's easy to get to; just stay on Trail Ridge Road for a little under an hour and follow signs for the Alpine Visitor's Center. Along the way you'll pass Rainbow Curve Overlook and a few other pull offs, so feel free to stop as often as you like. This is a quick trip, but you still want to take it easy and drink in the landscape. After reaching the Visitor's Center, Take your time getting out and looking around! If you feel extremely light headed and out of breath; that's just the thin air! Don't push yourself too hard, twelve-thousand feet will be quite different from what you're used to. Also, remember to stay hydrated and grab some snacks before you go on any walks or hikes.

After exploring the peak, the only other major checkpoint is to be in Floral Park Campground (or another campground of your choosing) by around 12am (9:00pm Colorado time) or earlier so you can get some good sleep for the flight home tomorrow. Floral Park is only a two hour drive from the Alpine Visitor's Center, so take a look at the activities on the next few pages and see what you'd like to plan for the rest of your day. Don't like the sound of that? Then screw making plans, and just keep meandering down the mountains, stopping when you feel like it and hiking wherever you want - but stay on marked trails and pay close attention to posted signs...you want to live to tell the tales of this weekend adventure.



WILDLIFE WATCH:

Elk will often make their way across Trail Ridge Road; especially the higher you go!

choose your own ADVENTURE

ALPINE VISITOR'S CENTER

Here you will find extraordinary views, tundra displays, a bookstore, an adjacent gift shop and snack bar (the only restaurant in the Park).

TIMBER LAKE

A well-cut trail leads through diverse forests and long meadows frequented by moose and elk. Visitors will enjoy excellent fishing and room to explore.

COYOTE VALLEY TRAILHEAD

The Coyote Valley Trail offers hikers of all abilities the opportunity to

explore the beautiful Kawuneeche Valley, as well as the chance for spotting a variety of wildlife. This trail is also one of two trails in Rocky Mountain National Park that are wheelchair accessible.

GREEN MTN. TRAILHEAD

Green Mountain Loop is a six-mile lightly trafficked loop trail located near Boulder, Colorado that features beautiful wild flowers and is rated as difficult. The trail is primarily used for hiking and trail running and is best used from March until November. Dogs are also able to use this trail.

ALPINE VISITOR'S CENTER

TIMBER LAKE

COYOTE VALLEY TRAILHEAD

GREEN MOUNTAIN TRAILHEAD

GRAND LAKE

GRANBY

FRASER

WINTER PARK

FLORAL PARK CAMPGROUND

ESTES PARK

GRAND LAKE

Located at the headwaters of the Colorado River and situated on the shores of Grand Lake, Colorado's largest natural body of water, the Town of Grand Lake is the western gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. Also adjacent to Arapaho National Recreation Area, Grand Lake has been dubbed the 'Snowmobile Capital of Colorado' due to its access from Town to Colorado's largest network of groomed snowmobile trails. A year-round vacationer's paradise for over one hundred years, Grand Lake welcomes you.

GRANBY

In the heart of the Rocky Mountains, the small town of Granby allows local residents and visitors to enjoy downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, gold-medal river and lake fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, biking, golfing, rafting, horseback riding and an array of other exciting outdoor activities.

FRASER

From the Fraser launch site, you will enjoy an amazing ride in a colorful hot air balloon and be able to take in how the landscape and scenery transforms from season to season.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: The mountains have survived their share of cataclysmic events, but the ecosystems that form around this beautiful tundra can be extremely fragile to the human wake. Please stay on the marked trails as crushed growth can take many decades to heal. As always, be sure to also keep all trash with you and placed into the appropriate bins for both your safety, AND that of the nearby plants and animals.

Low-level contour flying allows for spotting wildlife and picking pine cones from treetops. At higher altitudes, spectacular peaks in the Colorado Rockies can be seen. Learn the area's history from a knowledgeable tour guide during the flight. Flights are celebrated with a traditional champagne toast.

WINTER PARK

Aside from a reknown resort for winter sports like skiing and snowboard, Winter Park is also a spectacular summer vacation destination. You can ride a ski lift up a mountain and hike down a wildflower-strewn trail, and mountain

bikers find plenty of places to ride here, where 600 miles of marked and mapped trails and the Trestle Bike Park make it one of the state's top biking destinations. An alpine slide, a summer tubing hill at Snow Mountain Ranch and less than an hour's drive to Rocky Mountain National Park keep families busy. And summer events like the Winter Park Jazz Festival, Winter Park Music Festival, Winter Park Beer Festival and many more ensure the air is always festive.

FLORAL PARK CAMPGROUND

Stop here for the night and get some rest in preparation for your flight home tomorrow!

last DAY

8:00am (5:00am) - Time to get up! I know, I know; you need a shower. You need a hot meal. You need to get home and sleep in your comfy bed; but MOST importantly, you need to make it back to the Denver Airport in time to make your flight home! If you stopped to camp in Grand Lake, you're still a good 2.5 hours from the airport. If you camped at Floral Park Campground, you're about one hour closer. While it's your last day and we want to make the most of it, keep a careful eye on the time or set an alarm to remind you that it's time to hop on the road.

If you're ahead of schedule, there are plenty of stops between Grand Lake, Winter Park, and Denver that will help you leave Colorado knowing you made the most out of your weekend. If you're running behind and feel like you've gotten your money's worth out of the weekend, go ahead and travel onto the airport for a nice, hot meal.



saying GOODBYE

We hope you had a great trip and feel confident using future weekends to do some traveling across the country. You really can have some beautiful experiences without quitting your day job or taking time off of work! Who knows, maybe a few years from now you land a cool job that will bring some international travel your way. For now, there's a big, beautiful, American backyard to explore.

If you ever plan to head back to the Rockies and explore what you missed, see the next page for some seasonal closures in this area, wildlife tracking, and a hiking index.

BEST
TIMES
OF YEAR
FOR

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

	ELK	BIGHORN SHEEP	MOOSE	MULE DEER
JANUARY				
FEBRUARY				
MARCH				
APRIL				
MAY	✓	✓	✓	✓
JUNE				
JULY				
AUGUST				
SEPTEMBER	✓			
OCTOBER	✓			✓
NOVEMBER		✓		✓
DECEMBER		✓		

SEASONAL CLOSURES:

Trail Ridge Road is open to vehicle traffic roughly from Memorial Day weekend in May through Columbus Day in October. Temporary closings may occur in early June or late fall because of snow. Occasionally it opens earlier in May. Average close date is October 23 (latest close date Dec. 2, 1933) when the Park Service gives up fighting the snow and turns the road back to Mother Nature for the winter. During winter it is closed between Many Parks Curve and the Colorado River Trailhead.

Call (970) 586-1222 anytime for the latest Park recording of the status of the road.

Trail Ridge Road BRAGGING RIGHTS

- Highest, continuous paved road in the United States (12,183 ft)
- 200 species of tiny alpine plants
- 48 miles long



Part of the
“Taking Back Your Weekend”
Guidebook Series

“Explore the Rockies in less than 48 Hours” is a proud part of an adventure collection of photographic guide books. Created by designer and photographer, Abigail Ducote; the “Taking Back Your Weekend” series exists to encourage post-college, pre-career individuals to use weekends to explore their surroundings without breaking their banks. “There’s a small window of time in the life of a college graduate where they are desperately searching for a calling on which they can dedicate their entire life. I believe immersing yourself in something as raw and pure as this beautiful earth will not only help you discover yourself, but better articulate your dreams and goals for your life.”



ABIGAIL DUCOTE DESIGN