



# Rocky Mountain National Park & Northern Colorado

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## Best Places to Eat

- Backcountry Deli (p160)
- Big Horn Restaurant (p140)
- Tasty Harmony (p146)
- Bistro CV (p161)

## Best Places to Stay

- YMCA of the Rockies (p137)
- Armstrong Hotel (p144)
- Longs Peak Campground (p134)
- Stanley Hotel (p139)

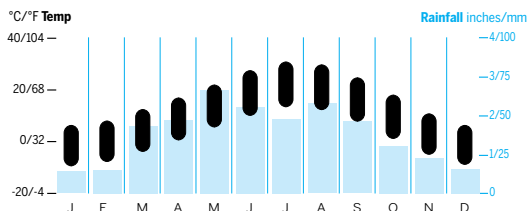
## Why Go?

With one foot on either side of the Continental Divide and granite behemoths in every direction, Colorado's northern mountains provide a glimpse of the top of the world. Here, the northern Rockies make an irresistible call to mountain-lovers, regardless of whether the season calls for climbing them in hiking boots or shushing down them on skis. Steamboat is a world-class ski resort without the hype of other Colorado areas, and Rocky Mountain National Park and its surrounding wilderness areas and patchwork state parks is a sanctuary for wildlife and wildlife lovers alike.

In spring, summer and autumn, hiking and biking in state and national parks and forests continue to draw visitors. Many ski resorts transform into groomed mountain-biking areas, and campers make for high-altitude lakes. The region also boasts top-notch fishing, rafting and kayaking, weathered ghost towns, horseback riding, camping and mountain touring until well after autumn turns the aspens gold.

## When to Go

### Estes Park



### Jun-Sep

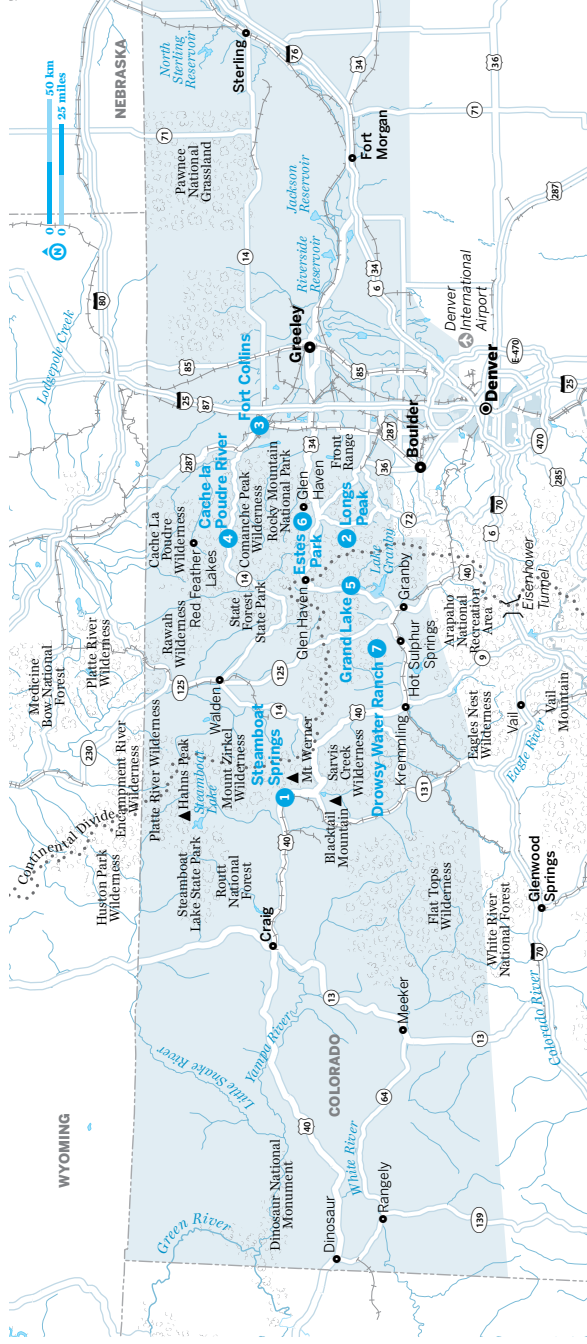
Sunshine, perfect hiking and monstrous thunderheads attract visitors.

### Sep-Oct

Temperatures drop and the tourists vacate. The aspens turn golden.

### Nov-Apr

Crisp air and tons of snowfall bring skiers to low-key resort areas.



## Rocky Mountain National Park & Northern Colorado Highlights

- 1 Watch a thunderhead roll over the lyrical peaks surrounding **Steamboat Springs** (p155).
- 2 Scramble to the top of

**Longs Peak** (p131), one of Colorado's proud 14ers.

- 3 Ride a cruiser to **New Belgium Brewery** (p143) in Fort Collins for a tour and tasting of Colorado microbrew.

- 4 Cast a fly for wild trout in the rushing waters of the

**Cache la Poudre River** (p150).  
 5 Hike all day before curling up by the fire at Grand Lake's

**Shadowcliff Lodge & Retreat Center** (p152).

- 6 Visit Estes Park to climb the Rockies after some classes from **Colorado Mountain School** (p136), or creep

yourself out at **Stanley Hotel** (p139), inspiration for Stephen King's thriller *The Shining*.  
 7 Live out the cowboy fantasy riding the range at **Drowsy Water Ranch** (p153).