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tzk333

# A Food Lover's Guide to Denver

## Denver, 7 Days

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** When I take a vacation the very first thing I research is; THE FOOD. I want to hit all the spots that have a little BUZZ. Restaurants that are chi chi are fantastic, but that being said- I'm no Tom Colicchio and I'd like to be able to understand the menu too!

This list is a nice meld between fantastically made, creative food and perfectly crafted ambiance. Denver, is becoming a hot bed for budding chefs and incredible dining. Whether you're here for a week, or you're a local there are plenty of restaurants for you to seek out!

So find yourself a date, or book a table for one and let the indulgence BEGIN!

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Denver



### **Julia Blackbird's New Mexican Cafe**

The taste of New Mexico

## Day 2 - Denver



### **Trattoria Stella**

Funky decor and tasty food

## Day 3 - Denver



### **Lola - Denver**

Sumptuous seafood, plus tequila

## Day 4 - Denver



### **Mizuna**

An eclectic assortment of international wines

## Day 5 - Denver



### **Brasserie Felix**

# Day 1 - Denver



## QUICK NOTE

**contact:**  
tel: +1 303 433 2688

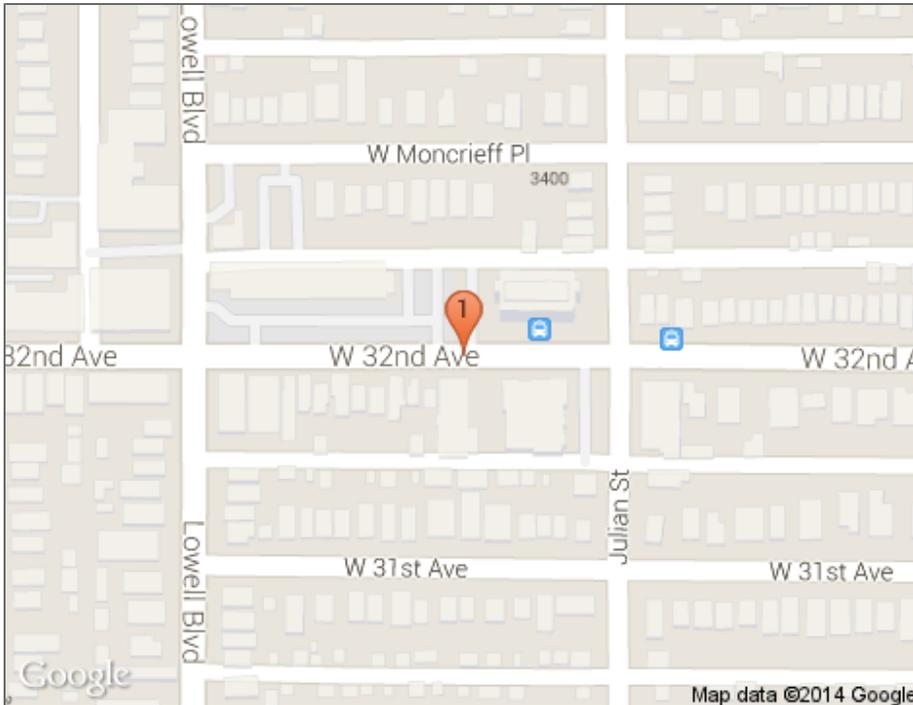
**location:**  
3434 W. 32nd Avenue  
Denver CO 80211

**hours:**  
M-Th 11a-2p, 5p-9p; F  
11a-2p, 5p-10p; Sa 11a-10p;  
Su 9a-2p

## **1** Julia Blackbird's New Mexican Cafe

**DESCRIPTION:** With Blue Corn Griddle Cakes, Shrimp Burritos and fresh made guacamole, North Denver was blessed with the arrival of Julia Blackbird's New Mexican Café. It began with only a few tables and Julia cooking with the wisdom of her Spanish, Mexican and Native American roots to create a delicious fusion of tastes, but North Denver loved it so much that before too long she had to move down the street to a new and stylishly decorated location with outside seating to cool you off after her homemade salsa. Julia offers vivid New Mexican art, spicy flavors and daring recipes for an adventurous culinary experience. © wcities.com

# Day 2 - Denver



QUICK NOTE

**contact:**

tel: +1 303 458 1128  
[http://denver.citysearch.com/profile/external/1837231/denver\\_co/trattoria\\_stella.html](http://denver.citysearch.com/profile/external/1837231/denver_co/trattoria_stella.html)

**location:**

3470 West 32nd Avenue  
Denver CO 80211

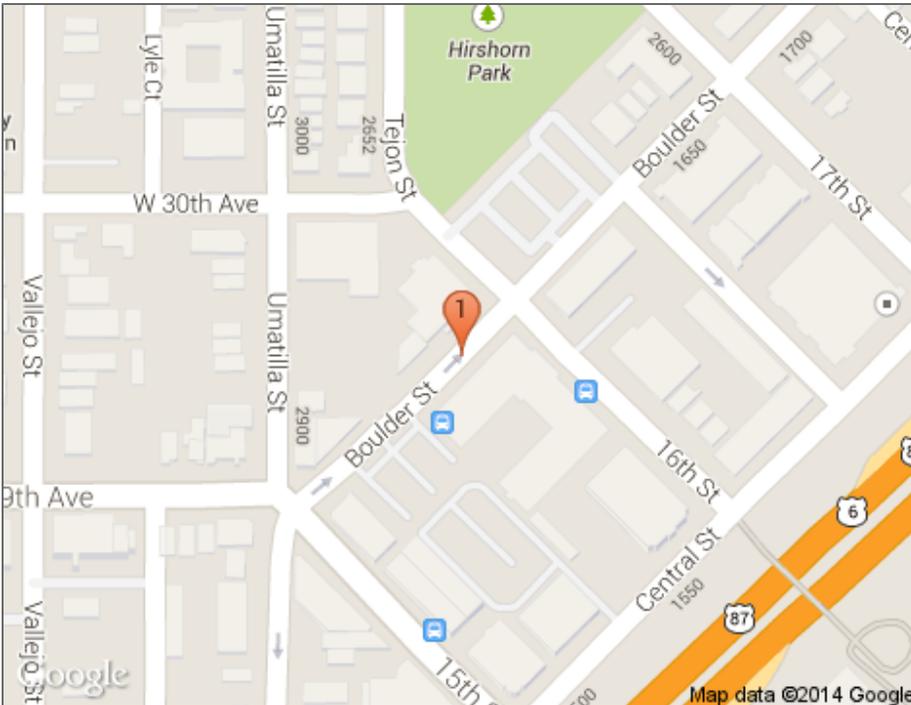
**hours:**

Lunch: 11a-2p M, W-F,  
10a-2p Su Dinner : 5p-10p M,  
W-Sa, 5p-9p Su

**1 Trattoria Stella**

**DESCRIPTION:** Visit this place for classic dishes with a sophisticated twist. This funky, modern-furniture-filled eatery is relatively new, but has already earned a steady following of fans hungry for fresh mixed green salads, pastas and sandwiches. The mustard and brie pasta with chicken especially enjoys huge popularity. Grab a table on the tiny patio, or in the stylish lime-green dining room. Reservations are not accepted, so plan on waiting for a table if visiting for dinner on a weekend night. © wcities.com

# Day 3 - Denver



QUICK NOTE

**contact:**

tel: +1 720 570-8686  
www.loladenver.com

**location:**

1575 Boulder St.  
Denver CO 80211

**hours:**

Mon-Thurs 4-10pm; Fri  
4-11pm; Sat 10am-11pm; Sun  
10am-9pm

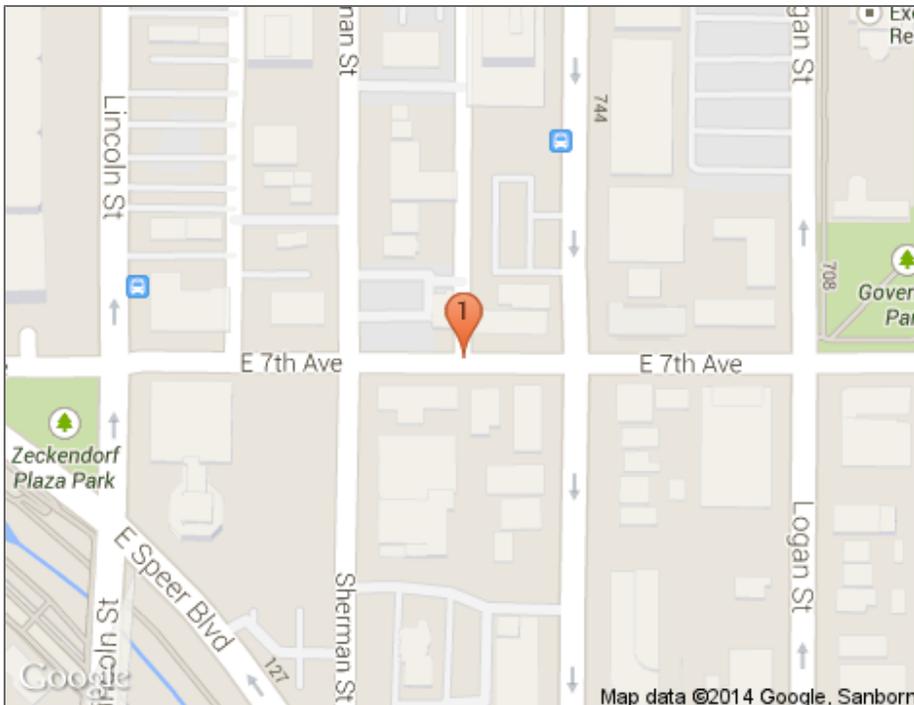
**1 Lola - Denver**

**DESCRIPTION:** Lola is a unique and inviting dining experience that will make you feel like you're on vacation. Lola's indoor/outdoor bar overlooking the city is home to over 125 different tequilas and cocktails that are reminiscent of those you'd find at a beach side cafe in Mexico. The food speaks for itself with Chef Jamey Fader preparing dishes that you'll find nowhere else in Denver. The freshest ingredients and the unique flavors will keep you coming back for more.



citysearch

# Day 4 - Denver



QUICK NOTE

**contact:**

tel: +1 303 832-4778  
fax: +1 303 832 3532  
www.mizunadenver.com

**location:**

225 East Seventh Avenue  
Denver CO 80203

**hours:**

Tu to Sa from 05:00 PM to  
10:00 PM

## 1 Mizuna

**DESCRIPTION:** Mizuna resonates with quiet conversation. The linen-draped tables and soft yellow dining room perfectly highlight the cuisine, also simple, elegant, and understated. Chef/owner Frank Bonanno has created a special spot for food lovers here, what executive chef Alex Seidel likes to call "The biggest food laboratory in Colorado." At Mizuna, cooks are given free creative reign over a menu that changes monthly to emphasize pure, seasonal ingredients with clean flavors that make even the most exotic fare seem familiar. Ultimately, this is an American-style restaurant heavy on French technique, influence, and philosophy with flawless service and an eclectic assortment of international wines.



citysearch

# Day 5 - Denver

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**contact:**

tel: 3039532401

[www.brassieriefelix.net](http://www.brassieriefelix.net)

**location:**

3901 Tennyson St

Denver CO 80212

## Brasserie Felix

**DESCRIPTION:** Brasserie Felix is modeled after the authentic Parisienne Brasseries of France, offering delicious French fare at reasonable prices. The atmosphere is that of the classic brasseries, with warm burgundy and wood banquettes, cozy tables, warm colors, smoky mirrors and terra cotta floors. We have a large zinc bar with a varied assortment of wines and top shelf liquors. It is our mission to bring wonderful fresh food in a beautiful setting that will carry your senses to the sidewalk cafes of Paris.



Photo courtesy of Brasserie Felix

# Denver Snapshot

## Local Info

Welcome to the Mile High City, where the Wild West meets the urban frontier, where towering peaks collide with the desert plains. From its humble beginnings as a jumping off point for the Colorado Gold Rush, Denver has grown into a vibrant city that proudly touts its 300 annual days of sunshine and close proximity to world-class skiing, hiking, mountain biking, and climbing.

Denver is a geographically isolated city sitting exactly one mile above sea level and over 600 barren miles from the next closest major city. Concealed from the west by bold foothills and towering 14,000-foot peaks, and protected to the east by an expansive and unforgiving high desert terrain, it is a place where everybody seems to be from somewhere else – at times, California and Texas license plates seem to outnumber the Colorado ones.

Although the outdoors are what made Denver famous, there's plenty to do for those city slickers who prefer a good metropolis to getting in touch with Mother Nature. For sports fans, there's top flight hockey, baseball, football, and soccer. If you'd rather not shell out the money for professional sports, the University of Denver's hockey team is always nationally ranked and competitive. And for those who'd rather play than watch, there are pickup games in soccer, baseball, and kickball (usually with alcohol involved) in the city's numerous parks, especially in Denver's favorite: Washington Park.

As for culinary delights, Denver is rightfully famous as one of the centers of Colorado's microbrew boom. Even former mayor (and now governor) John Hickenlooper ran a successful brewery in town. For foodies, downtown Denver hosts a bevy of fusion, Italian, American, and practically any type of cuisine one could wish for. Large Mexican, east African, and Korean populations also mean that spectacular ethnic cuisine is never far away.

However, to really understand what has caused so many people to transplant themselves all the way out here, you really have to get out into the mountains. During the winter, world-famous ski resorts like Breckenridge, Vail, and Keystone are within a short drive, not to mention

even more local favorites like Arapahoe Basin, Winter Park, Loveland, and Eldora.

During the warmer months, Denverites turn to rafting and kayaking on the Colorado River and Clear Creek, climbing in Boulder Canyon and Devil's Head, and working their way towards scaling all of Colorado's 53 peaks over 14,000 feet. If all of that sounds a little out of your league, there's enough short and beautiful day hikes in Rocky Mountain National Park or one of the myriad local wilderness areas to keep you occupied.

The Mile High City has a little bit of something for everyone, and the only danger is that you may like it so much you may be the next inevitable transplant. That, or someone might talk you into trying the notorious Rocky Mountain Oysters.

© NileGuide

## History

Denver's history as a boom and bust town began with the desire for a simple precious metal: gold. In 1858, a group of prospectors were exploring the Kansas Territory, which then encompassed what is now Colorado, and discovered piles of the almighty metal at the confluence of the Platte River and Cherry Creek. One of the prospectors, William Larimer, established Denver City in an area then populated by the Arapaho tribe, who camped along the banks of Cherry Creek while hunting and gathering. Over the next two years, a new gold fever penetrated the pulse of the eastern states. One-hundred-thousand hopefuls pioneered across the harsh landscape to the territory, seeking instant prosperity. The influx uprooted the Native Americans and forced them to move on, while the settler population soared, causing the federal government to create the Colorado Territory. So began Denver's first boom, inspiring its mythical image as a Wild West town ruled by material obsession.

In 1859, at the peak of the rush, Denver's first notable figure strolled into town with a vision well beyond the price of gold. William N. Byers moved to Denver from Ohio, via Omaha, and founded the Rocky Mountain News. Through the newspaper, he tried to calm the hysteria and instability associated with the gold rush, by promoting

settlement on the high desert frontier. Byers proceeded to create an illusion of Denver, proclaiming the city to be the "Queen City of the Plains" and the new steamboat capitol of the West, ready for a river full of industry. Unfortunately, the small, shallow Platte River could not live up to Byers' grand words. The ports of wealth never materialized, and the even smaller Cherry Creek soon declined into a cesspool of mining pollution. Despite this failure, Byers, who also founded the city's Chamber of Commerce, was streamlining himself for a great career in politics. His chances dissipated, however, during an adulterous scandal which culminated in a typical Wild West shootout scene in the middle of a downtown street.

In 1865, Denver City was deemed capital of the new Territory. In 1881, five years after Colorado gained statehood, it was chosen over Golden, Colorado Springs, and Boulder as the official state capital. During this period, Denver blossomed rapidly. Railroad-borne business transformed this one-dimensional mining Mecca into a more balanced industrial and agricultural "cow town." Even so, the city experienced its first bust in 1893, after the Silver Crash crippled Colorado's silver-producing economy. A tough 10-year depression followed. Despite the hardships of the times, city leaders managed to construct the beautiful neo-classical Colorado State Capitol Building and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. From 1904 until 1918, when the entire nation was in the process of revitalizing itself, energetic civic leader Robert Speer took Denver's mayoral reigns and vowed to create an "American Paris." During this era, known nationally as the City Beautiful period, Denver curbed its unchecked growth with a solid urban plan. Some of the city's most recognizable landmarks date from this time, including the City and County Building and Washington and City Parks. Speer conjured a four-part plan for city improvements, beginning with Civic Center Park. He wanted Denver to boast a beautiful city center with lush walkways and focal points of extravagant architecture. Thus, Civic Center Park, between the Colorado State Capitol Building and the entrance to downtown, is embellished with impressive gardens, a serene thoroughfare, and a Greek-style outdoor amphitheater. Speer also sought

## Denver Snapshot continued

to bring shade to the desert. He initiated the planting of over 100,000 trees, creating numerous boulevards lined with oaks and elms. Through a prolonged effort, even the polluted Cherry Creek was transformed into a verdant greenway, and new mountain and city parks further enhanced the beauty of the area.

Speer faced harsh criticism for some of these projects, especially for the boulevard that bore his name and meandered from downtown to the country club district. But it was nothing compared to the wrath his successor, Benjamin F. Stapleton, faced for building Denver's first airport. Stapleton, notorious for his membership in the Ku Klux Klan, was captivated by flight. He strove to end the city's isolation on the plains by laying the foundation for Denver Municipal Airport in 1929. Critics went wild, calling the plan downright stupid, and saying the location was so far out east of the city that it might as well be in Kansas. Ultimately, the airport was a success. After the Great Depression of the 1930s, the city and Stapleton focused on the mountain parks, calling for the creation of a "rock garden" in the nearby hills. Years of diligent planning and painstaking construction carved the jagged red rocks into an intimate, natural stadium known as Red Rocks Amphitheatre which even today is still universally recognized as one of the greatest outdoor concert venues in the world.

The 1930s and 1940s also brought a military and federal government presence to Denver, with the opening of Lowry Air Force Base and the Denver Federal Center. This initiated a trend continuing over the next 40 years as Denver and the Front Range became home to Fitzsimmon's Army Hospital, the Air Force Academy, and Buckley Air Field. Now, Denver supports the largest Federal employee population outside of Washington DC. As the Cold War progressed, Denver gained a high-tech military installation in the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, as well as the infamous plutonium-producing Rocky Mountain Flats. Although these sites boosted Denver's economy and population, they also caused an enormous amount of controversy. Since the end of the Cold War, the majority of Colorado's major military sites have closed down due to subsequent defense cuts.

During the 1950s, "black gold" struck the hearts of Denverites, sending the economy

into another boom, and creating millionaires overnight. Oil companies from around the globe set up shop in Denver, inspiring Mayor Quigg Newton to reevaluate the city's "cow town" persona. The city rode the oil boom long enough to use the steady flow of tax revenue to revitalize schools, institute cultural amenities, and reinvent the central business district. In 1969, the revitalization campaign led to the controversial decision to bulldoze Auraria, Denver's oldest and poorest neighborhood. Originally a separate township, Auraria was a rival to Denver City back in the gold rush days. The two entities eventually settled differences and merged into one, under the name of Denver. From the dust of the wrecking crews, a beautiful urban educational center arose, known as the Auraria Campus. The area now holds three city colleges along with a collection of original neighborhood landmarks, including the Tivoli Brewing Company, St. Elizabeth's Church and St. Cajetan's Church.

The city then turned toward cleaning up rundown areas of downtown. This time, however, the money ran short. Consequently dismantled lots sat vacant and overgrown until the early 1980s.

Another boom followed, this time bringing the towering icons of corporate wealth: skyscrapers. The new oil boom at last transformed the city into a modern metropolis, with immense highrises sprawling along the Front Range and a mobile population almost completely dependent upon the automobile. Unfortunately, like everything else associated with the Mile High City's bipolar history, this boom was also bound to bust.

In the mid-1980s, the price of oil plummeted from USD39 a barrel to USD9, sending the city into a devastating recession. The downtown skyscrapers stood empty, and the central streets of the city soon resembled a ghost town. Much of the populace fled to better opportunities elsewhere.

Federico Pena, Denver's first Hispanic leader, fought tooth and nail to change the city's identity in the late 1980s. Pena reinstated the Chamber of Commerce and directed new funding into Denver's cultural institutions, including the Denver Zoo and the Denver Art Museum. Tourists were already passing through Denver in route to the world-class skiing in the mountains,

so Pena decided to initiate a plan to give out-of-towners a reason to stop. Thus, the Mile High City began the slow process of washing away an unsightly industrial past in favor of the glitz associated with a tourist and service oriented town.

Perhaps Pena's greatest feat was paving the way for the construction of Denver International Airport. Pena's successor, Wellington Webb, Denver's first African American mayor, faced intense scrutiny over the airport site. Located in what is often termed "the middle of nowhere" by locals and tourists alike, the airport is one of the world's largest and is consistently one of the busiest.

Denver's shiny new look fueled yet another economic boom that ignited an urban renaissance under Mayor Webb's watchful eye. The spark that flamed this boom came when the city was awarded a major league baseball franchise in the early 1990s. Planners opted to build a new stadium in the heart of an old warehouse district, by banking on the "If you build it, they will come" philosophy. New businesses, restaurants and shops recognized the brilliance of this theory and quickly moved into the area's surrounding historical structures that had somehow survived the wrecking balls and years of vacancy. The end result: an upscale entertainment district called LoDo, jammed with old, revitalized brick buildings and anchored by Coors Field, a beautifully designed, old-fashioned ballpark. The people, of course, came too. So many, in fact, that developers infiltrated the area and transformed the old buildings into elegant lofts. The success of LoDo spilled into downtown and the surrounding areas, creating an infusion of inner growth. The promotion of luxurious urban living served as an antidote to some of the area's aggressive suburban sprawl. Denver's population now soared at a rate comparable to that of its suburban rivals.

Denver quickly emerged as a lively sports town and entertainment-filled metropolis, attracting gaggles of tourists who instead of leaving, fell in love with the city's energy and mountain setting, and became permanent residents. In 1993, over 30,000 inhabitants of California flooded the Front Range, rocketing the population to over two-million and creating major growth issues as rapid development gobbled up former open spaces to house the new arrivals. New high-tech computer and

## Denver Snapshot continued

telecommunication businesses also sought refuge in Denver's endless sunshine.

As the 1990s pushed on, the city continued to focus inward, moving the beloved historical amusement park, Elitch Gardens, to the central Platte Valley just south of LoDo. In 1999, Colorado's Ocean Journey, an interactive aquarium, opened in the central Platte Valley. The same year saw the opening of the Pepsi Center, a new brick and glass structure that plays home to the Denver Nuggets and the Colorado Avalanche.

Denver's boom and bust cycle has allowed the city to continually reinvent itself, fluctuating from a gold town to a cow town, from an oil town to a tourist town. With each change the city history becomes more complex and vibrant. No one can predict when the next bust will come, but Denver will most likely continue to find new and unique ways to propel itself forward.

©

### Hotel Insights

A historian once termed Denver the "turnstile city." Travelers come in, travelers go out. Some come for the skiing, others show up to call the city home. Over the past few years the business crowd has been enticed by the region's bustling economy, culture and recreational attractions. An addition to the convention center is in the works. New hotels preparing to open, or in the planning stages, will add to the 17,000 rooms already available. Many hotels occupy three prime areas: downtown, the Denver Tech Center (DTC) and the area around Denver International Airport (DIA). Comfortable lodging can easily be found in every nook and cranny of the city. Accommodations range from the glorious to the unassuming as do the prices, but most provide a good night's sleep at a fair price. If you prefer the provincial charm of a bed-and-breakfast, Denver has some of the best in the western region. Usually located in elegant Victorian mansions, they provide many of the modern conveniences of a hotel with a dash of history.

**Downtown/Auraria** The majority of business travelers heading to the city usually wind up staying in one of downtown's array of notable and contemporary hotels. The convention

center is propped in the heart of the district and many of the region's corporate movers and shakers headquarter in the towers populating the skyline. In other areas, especially on the fringes of the metroplex, one might feel isolated without a vehicle, but downtown offers easy access to shopping, dining and the city's popular attractions. Almost every hotel in downtown underwent extensive renovation in 1997, prior to the G7 Summit, so expect the latest in luxurious lodging.

The Brown Palace is the pride of downtown. Built in 1892, this Victorian brown brick building is a classic interpretation of Italian Renaissance design. Every president since Teddy Roosevelt, with the exception of Jimmy Carter, has enjoyed pampering in these posh rooms. Even The Beatles and Elvis Presley slept here. The Adam's Mark, located at the entrance to the 16th Street Mall, is the city's largest hotel, comprising two blocks and 2,500 rooms. Hotel Monaco is the new kid in town but has quickly carved a niche with the businesses class with impeccable service and homey rooms; it has also developed a reputation as the place for romantic weekend getaways. The Holtze Executive Place, in the restored American Bank Building, offers extended stay visits in one- and two-bedroom suites along spirited 17th Avenue (a.k.a. "Wall Street of the Rockies"). If you are searching for Denver's past, check out the Hyatt Regency's gold rush and Wild West motifs, or enjoy a long jog around its rooftop track. The Westin Tabor Center is Denver's stop for all-out extravagance. The towering Marriott City Center offers affordable luxury and easy access to area attractions. For an even cheaper sleep, head over to the Capitol Hill neighborhood or try the downtown Holiday Inn.

**Historic Lower Downtown** Tucked among the restaurants, bars and clubs of this nightlife haven are a couple of secluded lodging gems. The landmark Oxford Hotel. Once on the outskirts of a seedy red light district, it has served some of Denver's most interesting and notorious characters. The hotel offers easy access to the Pepsi Center, Coors Field, and is home to the stellar McCormick's Fish House.

**Uptown/City Park** Denver's most popular bed-and-breakfasts are scattered about this predominantly residential neighborhood. The fashionable Merritt House, in the

historic Swallow Hill district, shares the same architect as the lavish Brown Palace and features rooms with antiquarian furnishings and 19th century charm. A less expensive getaway is the Franklin House, a restored 1896 mansion. Although not as fancy as some of the other inns around town, the owner has taken great care in reviving the home's original Victorian luxury. A visual masterpiece, Castle Marne, resides at the east end of uptown. The place actually looks like a small castle, and features a unique window of circular stained glass ascending a grand staircase, known as the Peacock Window. Another local favorite is the Haus Berlin.

**Capitol Hill** The East Mansion district is in the heart of Capitol Hill. Throughout the century many of the stately homes have retained their grandeur through conversion into multiple room apartments and museums. A few have been transformed into lively bed-and-breakfasts and provide visitors a chance to experience Denver's Victorian legacy. The Capitol Hill Mansion, erected when the district bore the kindly term "snob knob," is an aristocratic ruby sandstone structure complete with turrets and balconies, and is on the National Historic Register. Other area delights include the cozy Adagio Bed and Breakfast and the inexpensive Holiday Chalet. The area also offers the business class some excellent choices. The Burnsley Hotel towers high above the area and provides business travelers comfortable extended stay facilities and views of the Rocky Mountains.

**Cherry Creek** This neighborhood is known as Denver's upscale section. Despite its reputation it is still easy to find inexpensive lodging at the Best Western Landmark. But if it is luxury you want the Loews Giorgio, a stunning black glass tower just south of Cherry Creek Mall, is a magnificent feat of Italian design and ultimate comfort. Intricate murals and frescoes embellish the Tuscan motif and the service often rates as the best in town. The Four Points Cherry Creek resides next to the Cherry Creek Bike Path and offers easy access to most of the city's attractions.

**DTC/South Denver** A variety of accommodations, specifically designed for business travelers, reside in and around the DTC area. The Inverness Resort offers an elegant escape from the city and boasts one of the finest golf courses in

## Denver Snapshot continued

town. Choose from the Marriott, Hyatt, Embassy Suites, or any number of the area's extended stay or all-suite facilities.

**Golden/Foothills** The western edge of the city is a great destination for vacationers to experience Colorado's old-fashioned allure in a picturesque mountain setting. Whether you are staying in a lodge, bed-and-breakfast, or roadside motel, you cannot go wrong with the location. Wherever you stay, the best in biking, hiking, skiing, rafting, fishing and all other manner of mountain fun are only moments away. One of the more popular area lodges is the Table Mountain Inn. Nestled at the south end of Golden's historic downtown, this is a wonderful weekend hideaway and is just minutes from Apex Park, Dinosaur Ridge, Red Rocks Amphitheatre, and Heritage Square.

©

### Restaurants Insights

Blend a deep Hispanic tradition with an Asian migration, mix it up with a big dash of sports frenzy and the Wild West, and Denver's dining scene begins to take shape. And do not forget the beer. The Mile High City has always been famous for good grub, but recently arrived culinary masters, attracted by the panoramic mountain setting, have vaulted Denver to the fine dining forefront.

**Downtown/Auraria** Downtown has satisfied the appetites of Denver's business class for decades with an array of casual establishments providing comfortable atmospheres for relaxation and work. Still, if formal dining is on the agenda, there are plenty of options. The Palm takes care of the surf and turf crowd, while the staff at Bravo! Ristorante sings moving arias as they deliver Italian creations with a twist. Marlowe's huge neon martini sign overlooks the 16th Street Mall and attracts visitors for its continental cuisine. Bring a hearty hunger to the Rocky Mountain Diner for huge helpings of comfort food and some famous rainbow trout. Relax at Domo's authentic country house for a remarkable Japanese dining experience, or head down the street to the Buckhorn Exchange, Denver's first restaurant and a true meat-lover's paradise. Under the watchful eyes of big game trophies you can try all sorts of wild game including alligator, elk and rattlesnake. Dine with Denver's elite in the

Napoleonic setting of Palace Arms, located in the historic Brown Palace.

**Historic Lower Downtown** More restaurants, bars, bakeries, and coffeehouses inhabit these 20 blocks than any other district in Denver. There are so many, in fact, it is hard to choose just one. LoDo plays host to a multitude of brewpubs pouring homemade concoctions and cooking creative alternatives to traditional bar food. The Wynkoop, named after Denver's first sheriff, holds the honor as the city's oldest brewery, and fries a mean fish and chips. Its Railyard Ale is one of the area's tastiest brews. Or, for the closest thing to fine dining that a brewpub can get, see if you can get a table at the Denver Chophouse, which features steaks galore. Steak and potatoes are the thing at both Morton's and Ruth's Chris Steakhouse. McCormick's Fish House, located in the Oxford Hotel headlines a good group of seafood stops, including the Del Mar Crab House and Jax Fish House. Lim's Chinese Kitchen and P.F. Chang's are the places for a Chinese fix. The hip crowd hangs at Andrews' Pub, and the Purple Martini provides candlelight ambiance for romance, pizza and cocktails. After major sporting events, the streets of LoDo flood with hungry fans, and the restaurants fill at an alarming rate. Reservations are necessary everywhere.

**Uptown/City Park** Restaurant Row is a sanctuary for culinary artists. Chefs display their magic nightly at such exquisite haunts as Strings, and the Avenue Grill, a favorite destination for couples, that features a varied menu with western favorites. For a quiet getaway, stop in at Dario's Restaurant, a quaint, family owned bistro full of knickknacks and heirlooms just west of City Park. Here you will experience Old World decadence as it serves heaps of Swiss-Italian fare. Or, head next door to the tiny Café Berlin for tasty wurst and strong German stouts. If pizza and crowds are on the menu, Pasquini's, located in an old house on 17th Avenue, is the place to be. As the night begins to wind down relax at St. Mark's for a late night cup of coffee and a fresh baked muffin.

**Capitol Hill** Cozy, family owned restaurants, friendly local pubs, and coffeehouses populate the streets of Capitol Hill. Most have been around forever and have developed a faithful following. Stop by Benny's Cantina for a fiesta of sloppy

Mexican grub. Le Central is the place to stop for fine French delights. Dazzle, a newcomer to the scene, specializes in unique American cuisine. Sing bygone favorites at Charlie Brown's piano bar while deciphering the neighborhood's most complex menu, or head over to Watson's Pharmacy for some tasty ice cream. Gabor's keeps the locals happy by pouring beer and frying burgers into the wee hours.

**Chessman Park/Congress Park** From quaint street-side cafes to elegant food extravaganzas, this district is sure to please. The Barolo Grill treats the palate to expensive but superb Italian cuisine and boasts the most extensive wine selection in Denver. For cheaper eats, Chef Zorba's and Pete's Kitchen clog arteries with comfort food and down-home greasy favorites. The Satire Lounge serves a dash of dark ambiance with big dishes of Mexican standards, and the Grand China is the stop for authentic Chinese fare.

**Cherry Creek** This is the Mile High City's dining central, where food designs are the norm and a simple ceramic plate becomes a canvas beckoning art. Dramatic? Maybe, but many of Cherry Creek's fine restaurants can make a dining experience into a thing a beauty. Expect to pay a hefty price, though. Delectable Indian delights are at the Bombay Clay Oven, and Little Ollie's sculpts healthy (nothing deep-fried here) Chinese food. If you are searching for the obscure, check out the underground RooBar for inventive martinis along with classic bar grub. The Cherry Cricket, a ruffian original in the upscale district, spices things up with burning batches of homemade green chili.

**Washington Park** Old South Gaylord Street feeds the neighborhood with a myriad of timeless standards. Visit the Washington Park Grille, a crowded bistro with a flair for Italian, or wander next door for some literary seafood at Hemingway's Key West Grille. Sushi lovers will delight at Japon's flavorful variety, while bike lovers enjoy the burgers at the HandleBar and Grill.

**University Park** University Park is full of popular dives and down home joints serving burgers and pizza. Fagan's Restaurant and Bar is the place to get authentic Shepherd's Pie and a flavor of Old World Ireland. The Jerusalem Restaurant delves into exotic textures and fine Middle Eastern

## Denver Snapshot continued

cuisine. Treehouse Café takes care of the heath food crowd, and Mustard's Last Stand specializes in hot dogs and Polish sausage. The Pearl Street Grill is a local favorite; the restaurant's back patio is one of Denver's most relaxing and intimate dining destinations.

**Northwest Denver/Highland** An emerging hotspot for Denver diners, the Highland neighborhood in Northwest Denver offers a great selection of Mexican restaurants and an array of inventive, family-owned bistros. Pagliacci's serves old-fashioned Italian food in a homey, Tuscan ambiance. Bang! offers a small, 10-item menu in a lively atmosphere and is home to the area's best burger, as well as some spicy Cajun cooking. Common Grounds serves the art crowd with weekly poetry readings by local bards, acoustic jams for music lovers, and top-notch mochas.

**Golden/West Denver** For a real treat, head to the foothills and check out the historic Fort. Built atop a high slope, with picturesque views, this establishment is the ultimate in romantic mountain dining. The menu is extremely meat oriented and the chefs prepare venison and elk in wonderfully creative ways.

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### Nightlife Insights

If you want to enjoy a wide variety of ales, the Falling Rock Tap House has 69 beers on tap, including a wide selection from local breweries. For a Colorado microbrew and a game of pool in an environment straight out of the 1970s head to the Rhino Room.

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### Things to Do Insights

Denverites love the outdoors. The sun shines over 300 days a year, and the dry climate and unpredictable weather patterns allow for intense mountain biking one day and perfect powder skiing the next. A good portion of the city heads to the mountains come the weekend, leaving the rest of the populace to enjoy Denver's immense assortment of cultural delights. Even though much of the city's entertainment involves sweat, residents easily maneuver from an exhilarating day on the slopes to an afternoon hockey game or a night at the symphony. Most places, whether restaurants, nightclubs or theaters, are

brimming with activity every night of the week.

**Sports** When it comes right down to it, Denver is widely regarded as a sports and recreational haven. The Broncos, Rockies, Avalanche and Nuggets draw all sorts of admirers throughout the region, and tourists come from all over to see baseball at Coors Field. Skiers and snowboarders jam the slopes from November to early July, and people from all corners converge on Colorado during summer for its wealth of camping, fishing and backpacking options in the serene Rocky Mountains. Warm weather evenings are packed with mountain bikers and hikers when the after-work crowd escapes to the Front Range trails. Weekends lure thousands to the area's greenbelts for relaxation and exercise.

**Museums** Denver Museum of Nature and Science, located in City Park, is the city's largest cultural attraction drawing almost 2-million visitors annually. Built in 1900, it is the home to the IMAX Theater and Prehistoric Journey, an interactive time warp into the dinosaur age. The museum has also played host to such famous exhibits as The Aztecs and The Imperial Tombs of China. The Denver Art Museum displays two floors of Native American artifacts, and also offers a smart mixture of Asian art and contemporary design. The building itself, a modern interpretation of a fortified castle, is a stunning piece of architecture. Recent renovations added a restaurant and viewing space for larger installations. History buffs will enjoy the Colorado History Museum, as it recounts the lost days when cowboys and indians ruled the plains and the gold rush inspired a nation to dream of riches.

Denver also contains a wealth of fascinating special interest museums. The Molly Brown House chronicles the legendary exploits of the "unsinkable Molly Brown," a RMS Titanic survivor and prominent Denver citizen. In the Five Points neighborhood, stop by the Black American West Museum for an intriguing account of the African-American effort on the frontier. Appropriately, the museum is located in the old home of Colorado's first African-American female physician. Golden offers the Colorado Rail Museum, a 12-acre outdoor venue with over 50 antique locomotives on display, and the Buffalo Bill Museum, atop Lookout Mountain, honors

the riotous life and legend of William Cody while offering astonishing views of the city.

**Film** The Denver International Film Festival comes to town each October with a fresh bunch of shorts, documentaries and feature length flicks. A variety of quaint art houses along with sprawling mega-movie complexes are scattered across the metro area. For the latest in obscure, avant-garde releases, stop by the Mayan Theater on Broadway, or the Esquire which spins the more popular independent features on a wide screen. If you are in the mood for the latest commercial movies, the United Artists Theaters at the Denver Pavilions are comfortable and include stadium seating.

**Music** Denver's homegrown music has produced a creative blend of commercial acts ranging from the roots rockers Big Head Todd and the Monsters, to the fevered 16 Horsepower and the Apples in Stereo. A multitude of intimate venues attract the hippest national and independent bands. Established acts fill the exquisitely renovated Fillmore Auditorium and blast away on the best sound system in Denver. Or drop into the Ogden Theatre on Colfax. In summer, fans congregate at Red Rocks Amphitheater for live music in an awesome mountain setting. The Bluebird Theatre, a restored movie hall and former porn house, hosts the hottest emerging acts. Local bands take the stage at Herman's Hideaway and Brendan's Pub. The Soiled Dove in LoDo is the perfect place to hear Hazel Miller sing the blues or Sally Taylor conjure the ghosts of folk legends. The Mile High City also steams with salsa; after a few free lessons hit the dance floor at La Rumba. If a more refined musical structure appeals to you, attend a performance by the Colorado Symphony. Under the direction of Maestra Marin Alsop, the classical virtuosos have attained national acclaim and consistently perform with such notable figures as Yo Yo Ma and the Anonymous 4.

**Dance** The Colorado Ballet has been gracing Denver stages since 1961 with quality international dance and classic ballet. The Colorado Academy of Ballet trains aspiring dancers in advanced Russian techniques. The David Taylor Theater brings a distinguished contemporary ballet to Denver and produces the ever-popular Nutcracker during the holiday season. If you prefer modern dance, check out the celebrated

## Denver Snapshot continued

Cleo Parker Robinson Dance troupe for beautifully choreographed interpretive pieces. If you would rather do the dancing, head over to The Church, the city's most popular nightclub, for a night of crazed techno madness. Bash is the "see and be seen" place to dance in Lodo. Vinyl packs in the ladies on Tuesday nights for the city's hottest Ladies Night. Lucky Star keeps the bobbing 80s alive and Polly Esther's boogies to the 70s disco thing. If big band sounds rattle your feet, saunter into the Mercury Café for rip roaring old style swing dancing.

**Theater** The Denver Performing Arts Complex is the second largest theatrical venue in the nation behind the Kennedy Center in New York, and stages the latest Broadway musicals and plays. Resting beneath an inventive arched glass ceiling, the complex holds eight distinctive spaces, including the 2,800-seat Temple Buell Theater. Recent crowd favorites such as *Rent*, *Chicago* and *Phantom of the Opera* have drawn huge crowds. The Auditorium Theater, adorned in neo-classical design, presents the latest contemporary off-Broadway dramas and comedies and just finished a remarkable run of performances that featured the critically hailed *Last Night At Ballyhoo*. The Denver Center Theater Group, housed at the complex, recently brought home a Tony Award for the best regional theater.

For local offerings, check out the Avenue Theater for the hottest comedies and the long-running audience participation favorite, *Murder Most Fowl*. The Theater on Broadway presents black box thinking theater that often focuses on gay themes, and performance art and the spoken word rule the Bug Theater. Opera Colorado, feeding the artistic spirit since 1983, performs three booming epics a year at Boettcher Concert Hall and the Buell Theater.

### Other Cultural Odds and Ends

Colorado's Ocean Journey is the city's underwater take on the cultural scene. It previously earned rave reviews and offers visitors a chance to explore exotic tropical environments and discover what lies beneath the rivers running through Colorado. The Denver Zoo is the city's most beloved attraction, drawing well over a million visitors each year with such popular exhibits as the Primate Panorama and Tropical Discovery. In beautiful Cheesman

Park, the Denver Botanic Gardens display a scenic expanse of varying foliage from around the world and a special new exhibit on water plants. Finally, if you want to see the workings of a brewery first hand, Coors Brewing Company gives daily tours and best of all, free samples.

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## Travel Tips

### Getting There:

#### By Air:

Sprawling 53 square miles across the eastern outskirts of the city, Denver International Airport(DIA)(+1 303 342 2000<http://www.flydenver.com>) is one of the largest(and 10th busiest) airports in the world housing 89 gates and 21 airlines. It is situated about 25 miles from downtown, depending on where you are going or coming from. It contains the Jeppesen Terminal and three concourses(A, B, C). All concourses access the main terminal via an underground train, which runs approximately every two minutes on a good day. A walking bridge also accesses Concourse A. Restaurants, shops and ATMs abound throughout the airport, and Colorado's second largest display of public art is on exhibit. A business center is located in Concourse B.

The Jeppesen Terminal is comprised of six levels and an east side and west side. Ticketing and check in is on level six. Baggage claim is on level five. Parking is available on both the west and east sides on multiple levels.

PCA Parking(Park'N Fly)(+1 800 763 6895/<http://www.pnfnetwork.com>)

The majority of ground transportation(+1 303 342 4059) is currently located on the east side level five due to construction on the west side. Here you will find the usual array of hotel shuttles, rental car shuttle buses(all major companies are represented), taxis, limos and commuter vans, along with the mountain carriers that skip the city and head straight for the high country resorts. A taxi ride to downtown takes about 35-45 minutes. Commuter vans like SuperShuttle(+1 800 525 3177/+1 303 370 1300;<http://www.supershuttledenver.com>), and BlueSky(+1 303 300 2626<http://www.blueskysuttle.net>) are usually a bit cheaper but may take longer to reach the

destination depending on your number in the drop off queue.

The Regional Transportation District(RTD)(+1 800 366-7433/+1 303 299 6000;<http://www.rtd-denver.com>) provides public transportation in the form of the "luxury" SkyRide, which stops at 29 transfer points across the metro area. The bus leaves about every 15 minutes and can be accessed on level six through door 613 on the east side of the main terminal.

Complete ground transportation information is available at booths in baggage claim on Level 5.

#### By Train:

Amtrak(+1 800 872 7245<http://www.amtrak.com>) has daily service to and from Denver via the California Zephyr to points west(San Francisco/Reno/Salt Lake City) and points east(Omaha/Chicago). The train docks at historic Union Station in the bustling LoDo(lower downtown) district, which is within walking distance to major hotels, restaurants and Coors Field. Union Station has access to numerous bus routes and links with the C Line on RTD's light rail.

#### By Bus:

Greyhound(+1 303 293 6555<http://www.greyhound.com>) arrives and departs to and from various locations across the US and Canada at the central bus station located at 1055 19th Street in downtown.

#### By Car:

Interstate 25 running north/south and Interstate-70 running east/west intersect just north of downtown and are the major traveling arteries through the city. Although the city's grid street set up is easy to pilot, like many major cities traffic congestion can be a problem. During the peak summer months the roads fill with campers and RVs heading to the hills and in the winter the highways bog with ski traffic. If you are planning on driving south of the city to the DTC vicinity utilizing I-25 beware of the massive highway and light rail expansion aptly known as T-REX(+1 303 786 8739<http://www.trexproject.com/>). The project is going to drag out until sometime in 2006. Until then lane and road closures, detours, and slow-downs are routine.

**Getting Around:** RTD(a.k.a. The Ride) is Denver's public transit service and offers a variety of options for hobnobbing around town including regular bus service, light rail

## Denver Snapshot continued

and shuttles. City bus service varies widely by route and schedules but is generally available from the wee hours of morning until around midnight. Route 0, which runs north/south on Broadway and Route 15 moving east west on Colfax are the only 24-hour lines. Bus fare is USD1.15; USD.55 for seniors. Regional buses offer service to various mountain towns and Boulder for an extra fee.

If you are simply trying to get from one end of downtown to the other you can hop aboard the free 16th Street Mall Shuttle. It slogs a mile from the edge of Civic Center Park to LoDo passing outdoor cafes, theaters and shopping malls, stopping at every intersection(16 in all) along the way. It is not the fastest ride, but it beats walking for many people.

Light rail features two lines. The 13-mile C line(orange) snakes from Union Station in LoDo to the southern suburbs with 12 station stops including Elitch Gardens and the Pepsi Center. The 14-mile D line(green), with 20 stopping stations, wanders through the heart of downtown before following the C line into the depths of the south burbs. Light rail fares are USD1.15 one-way and USD2.30 roundtrip.

Gray Line's Cultural Connection Trolley(+1 800 348-6877/+1 303 289 2841;http://www.coloradograyline.com) runs daily 8:30am-5:30pm(Memorial Day to Labor Day) and stops at Denver's numerous attractions, including the zoo, Ocean Journey, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Cherry Creek Mall and the Botanic Gardens. A boarding fee is good for 24 hours and allows you to hop on and off at any location along the route. Passes are

available on-line and at various hotels and attractions along the route.

Although it is possible to explore the Denver using many forms of transport, like most western cities the car is king(or the SUV in this case). With a good map it is easy to navigate the city and mountain roads, but parking in the downtown vicinity and especially LoDo is difficult and expensive, so if you are headed that direction you might consider public transit or a taxi.

One of the better ways to get around town is by bicycle. Denver is one of the friendliest pedal power environments on the globe, and it has a network of urban and designated street trails that is the envy of many a town. The main segments are the east/west Cherry Creek Trail and north/south Platte River Trail. Both trails meander by popular attractions, and are paved, well lighted, safe and easy enough for the entire family. All of the city buses have bike racks if you plan to venture further a field.

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### Fun Facts

1. Interesting fact: Denver is one of the few cities in history that was not built on a road, railroad, lake, navigable river or body of water when it was founded. It just happened to be where the first few flakes of gold were found in 1858.

2. Fun fact: The first permanent structure in Denver was a saloon.

3. Weird fact: The 13th step of the state capital building in Denver is exactly 1 mile high above sea level.

4. Random fact: Colfax Avenue in Denver is the longest continuous street in America.

5. Denver has the largest city park system in the nation with 205 parks within city limits and 20,000 acres of parks in the nearby mountains.

6. Led Zeppelin played their first ever American show at the Denver Auditorium Arena on December 26, 1968.

7. Bob Dylan lived for a while at 1736 East 17th Avenue in Denver while he was doing a regular series of gigs at the Satire Lounge just down the street.

8. Both Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull have dined at Denver's Buckhorn Exchange, a restaurant that's still one of the most popular in the city. Buffalo Bill's grave is just outside Denver.

9. Every year, Denver host the world's largest rodeo, the Western Stock Show.

10. Local boosters named the frontier mining camp on the South Platte River "Denver" after Kansas Territorial Governor James Denver in hopes of gaining political favor. Unfortunately, Denver had retired by the time they named the town.

11. There were originally three separate towns, with three separate names, where Denver now stands. In 1859, the other names were dropped in return for a barrel of whiskey to be shared by all.

12. Colorado is the only state in history to turn down the Olympics. In 1976 the Winter Olympics were planned to be held in Denver, but 62% of voters decided they did not want Denver to host the Olympics because of the cost, pollution, and population boom.

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