



joiseyshowaa

# Day Hike in Boulder: Bear Peak and South Boulder Peak

## **Boulder, 1 Day**

### Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

Itinerary Overview 3

Daily Itineraries 4

My List 5

Boulder Snapshot 6

# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Bear Peak offers the best 360 degree open views of Boulder and the surrounding Rocky Mountains while South Boulder Peak is the highest mountain in the Boulder Parks network. Both can be hiked in a single outing on good trails. If you're in town for just a day and want an epic adventure within the people's Republic, this is your hike!

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1

**DAY NOTE:** If you can manage it, this is a great hike to leave a car (or bike) at one trailhead so you don't have to loop back. The distance between trailheads isn't that far, so it's worth considering. Start the day from NCAR (the National Center for Atmospheric Research) where you will get on the Mesa Trail and head south. The well-signed matrix of trails can be a bit confusing until you reach the broad road that temporarily contains the Mesa Trail. Follow the Mesa Trail South to the Fern Canyon Trail on your right (west). From here, enjoy incredible rock formations, great views, and shady forests on the 3.1 mile trek up to the summit of Bear Peak. Bear's amazing 360 views (and easy summit scramble) make it feel like the highest peak around at 8,400 ft. + but the tree-covered summit of nearby South Boulder Peak is slightly higher. From the summit of Bear Peak, drop down to the South Boulder Peak trail on the west side of the slopes of Bear Peak. This is about a 20 minute jaunt between summits on well-marked trails. Once you have reached South Boulder's summit, you can either return the way you came OR if you have two cars, take the Shadow Canyon Trail (at the saddle between Bear and South Boulder) all the way down to the Shadow Canyon Trailhead in Eldorado Springs. This descent is a little rocky but offers great views of some more of the unique rock formations surrounding the flatirons.

# Day 1

**DAY NOTE:** If you can manage it, this is a great hike to leave a car (or bike) at one trailhead so you don't have to loop back. The distance between trailheads isn't that far, so it's worth considering. Start the day from NCAR (the National Center for Atmospheric Research) where you will get on the Mesa Trail and head south. The well-signed matrix of trails can be a bit confusing until you reach the broad road that temporarily contains the Mesa Trail. Follow the Mesa Trail South to the Fern Canyon Trail on your right (west). From here, enjoy incredible rock formations, great views, and shady forests on the 3.1 mile trek up to the summit of Bear Peak. Bear's amazing 360 views (and easy summit scramble) make it feel like the highest peak around at 8,400 ft. + but the tree-covered summit of nearby South Boulder Peak is slightly higher. From the summit of Bear Peak, drop down to the South Boulder Peak trail on the west side of the slopes of Bear Peak. This is about a 20 minute jaunt between summits on well-marked trails. Once you have reached South Boulder's summit, you can either return the way you came OR if you have two cars, take the Shadow Canyon Trail (at the saddle between Bear and South Boulder) all the way down to the Shadow Canyon Trailhead in Eldorado Springs. This descent is a little rocky but offers great views of some more of the unique rock formations surrounding the flatirons.

**contact:**

tel: +1 303 494 3943  
fax: +1 303 499 2729  
<http://parks.state.co.us/>

**location:**

9 Kneale Road  
Eldorado Springs CO 80025

**hours:**

Dawn to dusk

## 1 Eldorado Canyon State Park

**DESCRIPTION:** This technical rock climbing and bouldering haven is also popular among mountain bikers and hikers. Many visitors make the 8-mile trip from Boulder to rejuvenate among the dramatic rock faces, forested hills and clear mountain streams. Others come to watch the climbers or enjoy a sunny picnic. Several short hikes suitable for people of most physical abilities produce even greater panoramic views. Check with the gatehouse for current trail information. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Eldorado Canyon State Park

**contact:**

tel: 303-444-6600  
fax: 303-541-2515  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf/about/organization/brd/index.shtml>

**location:**

2140 Yarmouth Ave.  
Boulder CO 80301

## 2 Boulder Ranger District

**DESCRIPTION:** The Boulder Ranger District of the Roosevelt National Forest contains the Indian Peaks Wilderness. Area attractions include the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway, the Eldora Ski Resort and the Brainard Lake/St. Vrain Recreation Area. This area offers plenty of recreational activities from mountain biking, climbing (both rock and ice), hiking, fishing and sightseeing along the Peak to Peak Highway. Winter activities include skiing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The Boulder Ranger District is located just west of Boulder in the Rocky Mountains. The main route of travel through this area is the Peak to Peak Highway. This consists of Colorado State Road 119 from U.S. Highway 70 to Boulder and Colorado State Road 72 from Nederland to Estes Park.

**contact:**

tel: +1 303 497 1371  
fax: +1 303 497 1298  
<http://www.ncar.ucar.edu/>

**location:**

1850 Table Mesa Dr  
Boulder CO 80307

**hours:**

Self-guided tours weekdays  
8am-5pm; weekends and  
holidays 9am-4pm. 1-hr.  
guided tours daily at noon;  
there is also a self-guided  
audio tour

## 3 National Center for Atmospheric Research

**DESCRIPTION:** Inspired by the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park, I. M. Pei designed this striking pink-sandstone building, which overlooks Boulder from high atop Table Mesa in the southwestern foothills. (You might recognize the center from Woody Allen's *Sleeper*; scenes were shot here.) Scientists study such phenomena as the greenhouse effect, wind shear, and ozone depletion to gain a better understanding of the earth's atmosphere. Among the technological tools on display are satellites, weather balloons, interactive computer monitors, robots, and supercomputers that can simulate the world's climate. There are also hands-on, weather-oriented exhibits and a theater. The **Walter Orr Roberts Weather Trail** outside the building's west doors takes visitors on a .4-mile, wheelchair-accessible loop along a path with interpretive signs describing various aspects of weather and climate plus the plants and animals of the area. The center also houses a changing art exhibit and a science-oriented gift shop. Allow 1 to 2 hours. © Frommer's



wcities

# Boulder Snapshot

## Local Info

Boulder's natural beauty is second to none, shadowed by the towering Flatirons and surrounded by more than 31,000 acres of recreational open space and nature preserves. Often described as "the little town nestled between the mountains and reality," Boulder is a small town of 28 square miles and only 100,000 people that has the quality of restaurants and variety of activities of a big city.

### Downtown

The Pearl Street Mall, Boulder's "downtown," is a four-block pedestrian mall brimming with tourists and locals alike. This tree-lined promenade, long ago a refuge for the wildest of the wild westerners, is alive with cafés, galleries, brewpubs, restaurants, musicians, street performers, and every type of shopping imaginable. In the summer, the Pearl Street Mall is host to popular events such as Bands on the Brick and the Downtown Boulder Art Fair. The Boulder County Farmers Market is a short walk from the Pearl Street Mall, and is one of the most happening summer events in Boulder, offering organic fruits and veggies, local wines, artisanal cheeses, and beautiful flowers. The popular Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art is just next to the Farmers Market, as is the Boulder Creek Path, which runs along the Farmers Market and meanders downtown. The Boulder Creek Path, which is often busy with bikers, joggers, and meanders through town, also heads up the Canyon, which leads to Boulder Falls.

### University Hill

The University of Colorado at Boulder—referred to as "CU" not "UC"—is spread across more than 600 acres of landscape, dotted with gorgeous stone buildings with red Spanish-tiled rooftops. Catch a CU football game at Folsom Field, or during the summer, see a performance from the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. The Boulder History Museum is also on the CU Campus, as is Fiske Planetarium—a superb place to catch up on your stargazing. Macky Auditorium Concert Hall is a magnificent venue on campus that hosts a variety of music throughout the year.

Known as "The Hill" by locals, this neighborhood is right next to the CU

Boulder campus and is a popular hangout spot for college students. Literally parked on a hilltop above downtown, this district provides pizza, subs, burritos, coffee, beer in a bucket, and head shops to CU's 30,000 students. Fox Theater is located at the center of The Hill, and is a popular spot for students to go hear their favorite bands play live. The residential neighborhood on The Hill is an odd mix of fraternity and sorority houses, apartment complexes, student rental houses, and huge, beautiful old houses. Chautauqua Park rests at the base of Flagstaff Mountain on the southwest side of The Hill. The park, one of three remaining from the early 1900s cultural movement, features a dining hall and an auditorium that hosts an excellent summer concert series in a unique venue. Flagstaff Mountain is an great place to go hiking or to just drive up and get a spectacular aerial view of the city.

### Surrounding Areas

Celestial Seasonings is just a short drive from downtown and offers a tour and plenty of samples. Eldorado Canyon State Park—where the world comes to rock climb—is a 25 minute drive from downtown Boulder, as is the small mountain town of Nederland, home to Eldora Mountain Resort.

© NileGuide

## Things to Do Insights

### Outdoor Activities

If there is one thing you must not miss during your time in Boulder, it is a chance to view and explore the iconic Flatirons. Try hiking or climbing on Flagstaff Mountain, or simply picnic in the gorgeous Chautauqua Park. The Boulder Creek Path is also a great place to go for a walk or bike ride, as it meanders through town before heading up the Canyon to Boulder Falls. The Falls are beautiful, but the incredible drive there through the mountains makes it all the more worthwhile. Another great place slightly outside town is Red Rocks Park, which is a spectacular drive as well and has some beautiful, relatively easy hikes. This park is in the same location as Red Rocks Amphitheater, which is arguably one of the best venues in the country to see live music.

Boulder is infamous for its winter sports because of its proximity to multiple ski resorts, the closest of which—and the cheapest and least crowded of which—is Eldora Mountain Resort, so keep that in mind when you're deciding which winter clothes to pack.

### Sightseeing

Spending an afternoon just wandering around the campus of the University of Colorado at Boulder is worth it simply because of the beautiful buildings and the weather, which is almost always beautiful as well. While you're there, stop in and check out the CU museum to learn some history about the school and the town.

Boulder has several unusual tours available, including Banjo Billy's bus tour and the tour of Celestial Seasonings, which will also allow you to sample a wide variety of teas. Speaking of tea, the Dushanbe Teahouse is a beautiful piece of architecture with hand-carved and hand-painted ceilings, columns, and ceramic panels that warrants a visit even if you aren't a tea fanatic (but do try the tea—it's delicious). If you're interested in finding more experiences to engage a variety of senses, check out the Boulder Creek Winery, Redstone Meadery, and the Belvedere Belgian Chocolate Shop.

### Shopping

The Pearl Street Mall, a 4-block pedestrian mall in downtown Boulder, has the best shopping in town. With an eclectic combination of art galleries, outdoor gear shops, and clothing stores, Pearl Street is the place to go for one-stop shopping. Be sure to check out the stores just off the walking mall, too, as they are equally as good but often get missed; among these is Willow, which has lovely, affordable, local art.

### Events

Popular summertime events in Boulder include the Farmers' Market, Downtown Boulder Art Fair, Boulder Creek Hometown Fair, and Folks Festival. Another incredibly popular event in Boulder happens in early

## Boulder Snapshot continued

April—theConference on World Affairs—which brings in speakers and panelists from around the world to talk about and debate nearly everything imaginable. Held annually on President's Day Weekend, theBoulder International Film Festival draws crowds from around the country. Every year in early October,Open Studios provides people an opportunity to bike around town visiting the homes and studios of local artists.

© NileGuide

### Fun Facts

1. Interesting fact: Baseline Road is a significant east-west route to both Boulderites& cartographers, for it marks the 40th parallel on world maps.

2. Weird fact: Boulder's Third Flatiron, which towers 1,400 feet high-- a few hundred feet

higher than the Empire State Building-- has been climbed by people without using their hands, on roller skates, naked, and in 8 minutes(by separate climbers).

3. Fun fact: Robert Redford was a janitor atThe Sink, before moving on to become famous!

4. Random fact: Boulder has more used bookstores per capita than any other city in the country.

5. TheFlatiron Mountains got their name by pioneer women who said they looked like flat, metal irons used to iron their clothes.

6. TheUniversity of Colorado at Boulder's buildings are built with red sandstone, quarried in nearby Lyons.

7. With Coors, Anheuser-Busch, and local microbreweries such asBoulder Beer andAvery Brewing, this area has become the largest beer-producing triangle in the world.

8. In 1967, Boulder became the first city in the United States to tax itself for funds to be used specifically for the acquisition, management, and maintenance of Open Space.

9. One of Boulder's sister cities is Dushanbe, Tajikistan, which gifted us theBoulder Dushanbe Teahouse.

10. Boulder is surrounded by more than 31,000 acres of recreational open space and nature preserves.

11. Boulder has been referred to as the"Boulder Bubble" and"28 square miles surrounded by reality."

12. Boulder has received myriad accolades over the years, ranging from Foodiest to Brainiest City, from Best Biking City to Best City for Teleworking, from Best City for Young People to Best City to Retire in Style.

© NileGuide