

FunColoradoHikes.com



10 Fantastic Rocky Mountain **Hikes** Near Denver

A quick pocket guide to hiking trails near Denver

Intro

If you are looking for a hike that is close to Denver that also offers mountain views and great scenery, this book has the trails you are looking for.

It was written to help those who often email us asking questions like this one: “My relatives are coming for a visit for a week this summer and I am looking for a place to take them hiking. I would like to ‘wow’ them with Colorado’s great views of the mountains but the trail can’t be too difficult because we will have several little kids and grandparents in our group. What hikes would you recommend that aren’t too far from Denver?”

The ten trails in this eBook are close to Denver, have nice views, and range from easy to difficult.

Notes:

All the trails listed in this guide are well-maintained and easily accessible by vehicle. Trail length is roundtrip mileage. **Easy** (little or no elevation gain, short length). **Moderate** (inclined trail and increased trail mileage). **Difficult** (strenuous; steep trail; increased trail mileage). All drive times are approximated from the west side of the Denver Metro area. It’s best to hike in the morning. Finishing before noon will ensure that you don’t get caught in a storm. Colorado is notorious for afternoon, summer storms that roll in quickly and even bring snow occasionally. The best time of year to hike these trails is typically June – October. (Check local weather for latest snowfall amounts before heading out to the trail in spring or fall).

For more information and many more trails, visit FunColoradoHikes.com

Chief Mountain Trail

Features: Views, shady, quick summit

Drive length: 45 minutes

Hike length: 2 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: limited

Restrooms: no



Difficulty: **Moderate**; elevation gain approx. 900 ft. **From the parking lot:**

Cross to the south side of the road. There is a white post marker on the bank at the trailhead. About a half mile from the trailhead, the trail intersects a fire road. Cross over it and proceed on the footpath into the trees along the trail to the summit.



Trail Description: From base to summit, this hike offers a shady trail that rises up above tree line and eventually summits in an open area of trees and rock formations that yield to views that are 360° around. Views of the western Rocky Mountains, Mt. Evans and the eastern plains won't leave any hiker in want of more. The summit is a great place to climb the rocks, take photos of the old, twisted pinyon pine or to enjoy a leisurely picnic. Take



your camera!

To Get There: From Denver take I-70 west. Exit Evergreen Pkwy (exit #252). Go about 3.4 miles to Squaw Pass Rd (Co Rd 66/Hwy. 103). Go right on Squaw Pass Rd for 12 miles to Echo Mountain Ski Resort. Just past the ski area, look for a dirt parking area on right side of the road near mile marker 18. The trailhead is on the opposite side of the road (south side).

Devil's Head National Recreation Trail

Features: Views, shady, fire tower open to public in summer, picnic tables, seasonal autumn colors

Drive length: 50 minutes

Hike length: 3 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: limited on weekends and busy times

Restrooms: yes, at parking lot and summit

Difficulty: **Moderate**; elevation gain approx. 940 ft. and 143 stairs to climb to the tower

From the Parking lot: The trailhead is south of the parking lot and restrooms. This is the only trail in the area. Follow it to the tower.

Trail Description: This trail is one of the more unique hikes in the foothills along Rampart Range. The trail winds its way through aspen groves and pine forest on a constant, gradual incline. Both the eastern plains and the western mountains are visible through the trees at various areas of the trail. After climbing the 143 stairs to the fire tower, the biggest payoff of the hike is the 360° views stretching 25 miles. The tower is open to hikers all year and manned during the summer months by a US Forest Service ranger.

To get there: From Littleton take U.S. Highway 85 to Sedalia. Turn right (west) on Manhart St. (Co Hwy. 67). Go 10 miles to Rampart Range Rd. Turn left (south) onto Rampart Range Road (dirt road) and drive 10 miles. Follow the signs indicating Devil's Head National Rec. Trail and Devil's Head Campground. Trailhead is at end of dirt road.

Eagle's View Trail (Reynolds Park Open Space)

Features: Views, shady, wildflowers, creek, picnic tables, grill pits

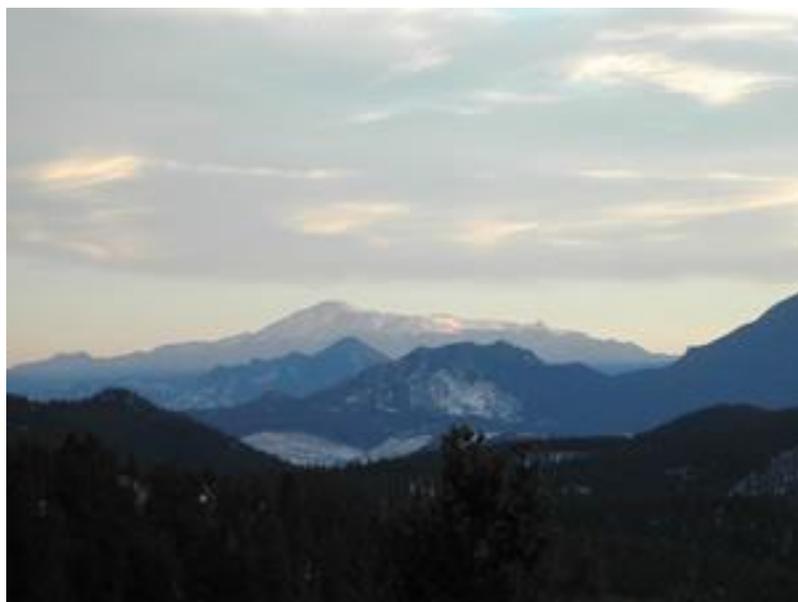
Drive length: 40 minutes

Hike length: 4 miles (more trail options at trailhead)

Dogs: on leash

Parking: plenty of parking

Restrooms: yes, at parking lot



Difficulty: [Moderate](#); elevation gain approx. 1100 ft.

From the parking lot: Cross over the creek and follow Oxen Draw Trail to the Eagle View Trail. Grab a trail map at parking area to take with you.



Trail Description: This trail is a well-kept secret. Nestled in the foothills southwest of Conifer, Reynolds Park sits in an area where you can hike from valley-to-summit in about an hour. The trail begins in the cool valley by the creek where there is an abundance of wildflowers. It wanders up the mountain at a gradual incline through aspen and pine trees making it shady for the majority of the hike. The lookout at the summit faces south – the fantastic views reach from the nearby foothills all the way to Pikes Peak. The summit area has a flat terrain and



plenty of area to sit and eat while taking-in the scenery.

How to get There: From Denver, take Hwy. 285 south (14.5 miles) past Aspen Park and Conifer. Exit right onto Kennedy Gulch Rd and then make a sharp left turn south onto Foxton Road (Co Rd 97). Drive south 5.5 miles. The park is on the right side of the road.

St. Mary's Glacier Trail ***Best short hike with best views**

Features: Views, glacial lake, quick summit, snow, sledding

Drive length: 50 minutes

Hike length: 1.5 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: yes, it's \$5 (bring exact cash or a check)

Restrooms: yes, at parking lot

Difficulty: **Easy** / **Moderate**; elevation gain approx. 350 ft. (rocky terrain)



From the Parking Lot: The trailhead is marked by a sign on the west side of the road. Look for the clearing and the rocks.



Trail Description: This trail is well-loved by locals and visitors mainly because of the relative ease of hiking to a beautiful glacial lake and snow field. The trail is wide and leads gently over a rocky path. The incline of the trail is slight and the views at the lake are breathtaking. The trail doesn't go around the entire lake, but paths have been cut all over the area so hikers wander around a portion of the lake and snow. This area is a beautiful place to have a picnic while taking-in the scenery. The snow field is present throughout the summer so many bring their



skis or sleds while others bring their fishing rods. Be sure to take your camera!

How to get there: From Denver take I-70 west about 20.7 miles. Just past Idaho Springs take Exit #238 Fall River Rd (Co Rd 275). Stay on Fall River Rd. for approximately 8.5 miles until you see the trail to St. Mary's Glacier on your left. The \$5 paid parking area is located at the trailhead.

Old Ski Run Trail (Meyer Ranch Open Space Park)

Features: Views, shady, meadows, wildflowers, picnic tables, seasonal autumn colors

Drive length: 20 minutes

Hike length: 4.8 miles (more trail options at park)

Dogs: on leash

Parking: yes

Restrooms: yes

Difficulty: **Moderate**; elevation gain approx. 1050 ft.



From the parking lot: Take the trail up the hill toward the rest station and map pavilion. Grab a map and follow Owl's Perch Trail; go left on Lodgepole Loop Trail; go left on Sunny Aspen; then go left onto Old Ski Run Trail.



Trail Description: The trail starts in old ranch land meadows and then up into the forested hillside. It is a lush forest with aspen and pine trees, trickling streams, and many, many wildflowers. As you move up the trail there are many areas where you will catch views of the ranch land below. Though the highway is close to the park, the noise of the traffic is a low din as you move further up the trail toward the summit. The incline of the trail is constant as it makes its way up through the saddle and to the top of Meyer Ranch Park. The summit of Old Ski Run Trail levels out around large granite rocks. Stop and rest a while. The views toward the Rockies are fantastic as are the views of the old ranch below near the trailhead!



How to get there: From Denver, take Hwy. 285 south for approximately 11 miles. Turn right toward Co Rd 122 (S Turkey Creek Rd) then go left under bridge to the parking lot.

Upper Maxwell Falls Cliff Loop Trail

Features: Views, shady, cascade water falls in spring/early summer, dog lovers' park, seasonal autumn colors

Drive length: 40 minutes

Hike length: 3 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: yes

Restrooms: no

Difficulty: **Moderate**; elevation gain approx. 600 ft.



From the parking lot: This is the upper falls parking lot. Start down the trail toward the falls. Follow the signs for Cliff Loop trail. The trail will fork two times; take the left trail both times and you will be moving up a slight incline.



Trail Description: This trail is a favorite for locals and visitors alike for its quaint microclimate where there are cascades tucked away in a deep gully in the forest. The landscape the trail follows is made up of pine and aspen forest, gentle flowing water falls, and rocky cliffs overlooking the water. The trail goes over gentle hills with views of nearby mountains. The area is also dotted with many yellow wildflowers and young aspen trees. There is plenty of shade and lush greenery by the falls; a beautiful area to hike. This trail is also a favorite hike for dog owners to bring their pets for a swim in the creek.



Getting There: From Denver, take Hwy. 285 south 12.3 miles to Aspen Park. Just past King Soopers shopping center, go right toward Barkley Rd. and then a quick left on Barkley Rd. Go ½ mile to Co Rd 73. Turn right on Co Rd 73 for .2 miles. Turn left onto Shadow Mountain Rd (Co Rd 78). Follow Co Rd 78 for approximately 5.2 miles (which turns into Black Mountain Rd). Dirt lot for parking at trailhead is on right side of the road.

Colorado Trail (Segment 6 Kenosha Pass toward Goldhill)

Features: Views, shady, wildflowers, seasonal autumn colors

Drive length: 60 minutes

Hike length: 4 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: yes

Restrooms: no

Difficulty: [Easy](#)/[Moderate](#)



From the parking lot: The trail is located to the west just past the campground – follow the signs for the Colorado Trail.



Trail description: This section of the Colorado Trail, Kenosha Pass toward Goldhill, has absolutely beautiful views of the mountains in the Mosquito Range as well as the enormous valley in South Park. The entire Colorado Trail winds 468 miles across Colorado yet this 2-mile section makes for a great day hike. The trail leads through pine and aspen forest for about 2 miles until it emerges at the edge of an enormous valley overlooking South Park and Fairplay. The surrounding peaks to the south and west are part of the Mosquito Range. There are many wildflowers and butterflies in the area and the open trail along the side of the hill allows you great views. Hike down the side of this south-facing hill and into the woods to a large clearing on the right side of the trail (it looks like a good place to camp and could have been a lake at one time; now all dried up). It's a good area to take-in the scenery, have a bite to eat and then head back for the parking lot making it a 4-mile round trip hike.

(The entire segment ending at Goldhill is 32 miles)!

Getting There: From Denver take Hwy. 285 south for approximately 45 miles until you reach Kenosha Pass. This trailhead is easily accessible by car with parking along the west side of Hwy. 285 at Kenosha campground.

Burning Bear Trail #601

Features: Views, shady, snow, running creek, beaver dams, level trail

Drive length: 70 minutes

Hike length: 4.8 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: yes

Restrooms: yes, but not at the trail. Restrooms are either at the top of Guanella Pass or at either end of Guanella.

Difficulty: **Easy/Moderate**; elevation gain approx. <900 ft. (fairly level terrain)



From the parking lot: The trail is on west side of road behind the cattle gate – look for the wooden footbridge to start the hike.



Trail Description: The area offers verdant meadows, beaver ponds, tumbling cascades and lush forest. Day hikers will love this one for its mountain scenery and easy/moderate terrain. It wanders along the side of an open meadow along the tree line giving you a shaded hike beside the creek and into the woods. Turning around when you get to the old cabin makes it a 4.8 mile roundtrip hike. If you go further, you will head up steeper terrain into the forest and over the saddle to the opposite end of the trail.



Getting There: From Denver, take Hwy. 285 south for approximately 38 miles. At the tiny town of Grant, turn right (west) onto CR-62 (Guanella Pass Rd). Follow CR-62 approximately 5 miles. Look for the trailhead as soon as you come to the top of the steep hill with the hairpin turns. Small dirt lot is on the right side of the road and the trail is on the opposite side of the road behind the cattle gate.

Three Mile Creek Trail #635

Features: Views, shady, running creek with multiple bridge crossings, seasonal autumn colors

Drive length: 60 minutes

Hike length: 3 miles (portion)

Dogs: on leash

Parking: very limited on weekends

Restrooms: 1 mile from parking area

Difficulty: **Easy/Moderate**; elevation gain. approx. 900 ft.



From the Parking lot: Trailhead is marked with a sign on west side of parking area.

Trail Description: This trail heads northwest into the Arapaho National Forest and Mt. Evans Wilderness area through beautiful shady forest and over the Three Mile Creek. You will enjoy crossing over the creek more than



fifteen times! Small wooden footbridges allow you to enjoy the creek and the surroundings from both sides of the water. The trail eventually emerges from the pine forests into a green meadow filled with a variety of wildflowers, wild strawberries, and mature aspen tree stands. This small valley is surrounded on all sides by towering mountains. This is an in-and-out trail so you can turn around anywhere you like. If you choose to complete the entire hike, you will hike 6 miles up to meet the junction with Rosalie Trail. (The entire trail 12-mile roundtrip gains 2,780ft. After steeply ascending switchbacks at tree line, there are beautiful views of the



surrounding mountains: Mt. Evans, Mt. Kataka and Mt. Bierstadt. Serious day hikers will love this scenic hike).

Getting There: From Denver take Hwy. 285 south for approximately 37 miles. At the tiny town of Grant, turn right (west) onto CR-62 (Guanella Pass Rd.). Follow CR-62 approximately 2.8 miles. Look for the trailhead on the right. It has a very small dirt parking area.

[Click for map](#)

Mt. Bierstadt Trail *Fourteener Special

Features: Views, tundra, wildflowers, creek crossing, wildlife, (nice scenic drive and at the top of the pass is a perfect place to wander and enjoy the scenery even if you are not going to hike)

Drive length: 90 minutes

Hike length: 7 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: yes (along the road if you don't get there early)

Restrooms: near trailhead

Difficulty: **Difficult**; elevation gain 2,850 ft.

From the parking lot: From the parking lots on Guanella Pass Road the trail begins toward the east and Mt.



Bierstadt.

Trail Description: This fourteener is one of Colorado's most accessible, popular and well-maintained hikes. The direct route up the mountain can be for experienced mountain climbers as well as casual day hikers. The trail leads down into the valley toward the base of the mountain and moves through willow thicket and over Gomer Creek via wooden bridge and rock foot holds. This is an easy meandering part of the trail and if you're not ambitious enough to climb the entire fourteener, a casual hike through this area has breathtaking scenery too.



The ascent begins after hiking through the willow thickets (about 1/2 mile). The upward climb follows a few switchbacks through the tundra-like surroundings. The grasses are short and the wildflowers are low to the ground. As you follow the trail, look for wildlife like Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep, mountain goats and moose.

The trail continues to lead up! At times, it is straight up and you'll definitely have to exert yourself. The trail becomes more rugged the higher up the mountain you get. Be sure to bring a lot of water for this hike. For recreational hikers in fairly good physical condition, it will take about 5 hours up and back including a long rest at the summit.



As you approach the summit you will notice the trail is covered in rock/boulders and possibly snow. Follow the trail toward the summit (toward the northeast). Scramble over the rock field to the summit where there is an official summit and elevation marker.

Stay awhile on top. Eat lunch. Take some photos or video. It's one of Colorado's best hikes.

Hike this trail early in the morning to avoid afternoon storms. Lightening and snow storms are not uncommon even in summer. The best time of year to hike this trail is mid-summer after the snow has melted. If you are an experienced mountaineer, you'll know what gear to bring for snowier months.

Getting There: From Denver, take I-70 West about 33 miles to Georgetown (exit 228). Take exit 228 toward Georgetown for 0.2 mi. Then turn left onto 15th St 0.1 mi. Take the 1st right onto Argentine St 0.3 mi. Take the 1st left onto 11th St. Take the 1st right onto Rose St 0.5 mi. Turn left onto 2nd St/Co Rd 381 (Guanella Pass Rd). Go 12 miles to the top of Guanella Pass!

Bonus Trail!: Continental Divide Trail

Features: Rocky Mountain views, elevation, wildflowers, tundra, quick summit, cool air

Drive length: 55 minutes

Hike length: 2 miles

Dogs: on leash

Parking: yes (along the road if you don't get there early)

Restrooms: at trailhead

Difficulty: **Moderate**; elevation gain approx. 900 ft.



From the parking lot: Trail is located to the right side of the restrooms.



Trail Description: This trail is what anyone would expect from a Colorado hike – views, elevation, cool air, a well-defined path and wildflowers! The Continental Divide Trail at Berthoud Pass is a hike that will take you from the trailhead to above tree line offering spectacular views of the surrounding Rocky Mountains. The first section of trail follows the dirt fire road uphill through shady, cool woods. There are a few switchbacks which eventually bring you to the middle of the old ski hill and the trail mileage sign. Pick your destination. The trail is in-and-out (not a loop). Enjoy a picnic on the side of the hill and the scenery overlooking the pass, Winter Park



and Fraser.

To Get There: Take I-70 west from Denver to exit #232 US Hwy. 40 toward Empire/Granby. Go approx. 15 miles to the top of Berthoud Pass. Parking lot is on the right. Trailhead is at the sign by the restrooms.

About The Author

Mary Norton grew up in Colorado and her family took her hiking to the many different trails all around the front range. She developed an appreciation of nature and the gorgeous views offered to a hiker in this amazing part of the state of Colorado.

Now, with a family, Mary and Tim take the kids hiking to some of the same spots, trying to find the ones that offer a good payoff somewhere along the trail. Payoff can come in the form of a beautiful view, a great picnic spot, or maybe the payoff is just knowing and feeling you are in the high country. There is something magical about it, and Mary wants to make sure everyone can take advantage of it. So with Tim's help, she created <http://FunColoradoHikes.com>, a website dedicated to just that purpose.



About this Series of Ebooks

This ebook is the first in what will be a series of ebooks aimed at putting helpful hiking guides in your hands, perhaps on your cellphone. It should be easy for you to find hikes, and it is, but even better if you have the information you need at your fingertips. Since cellphone coverage is not always available, and you might not be able to reach our website, we wanted you to always have hikes ready for your last-minute planning days. Hey, nobody's perfect :)