

THINGS TO DO

If you want naturally powered activities to be the centerpiece of your next vacation, you'll find Estes Park particularly appealing. In fact, the human-powered fun found here can consume more days of rejuvenating vacation time than most people imagine possible.

Extremely easy to extremely difficult hikes are everywhere you look. Trails offer unbelievable grandeur or solitude, depending on the route you choose.

Those who enjoy fly fishing can hook one of several species of trout: brown, rainbow, brook and cutthroat, although the greenback cutthroat trout is limited to catch-and-release areas. Your best bet for expert advice: area sports shops, including those offering guided fishing tours.

Experts in climbing and mountaineering consider this one of the most prestigious areas in the nation. The Lumpy Ridge cliffs are a rock climber's paradise. However, check with National Park officials about the timing of your climb. The craggy walls that climbers find appealing also provide perfect nesting areas for birds of prey.

For other fun, check out our list of Favorite Things To Do beginning on page 16.

Long's Peak, the area's 14,259 ft. peak, is seen throughout the Estes Valley. This is a favored view from Devils Gulch Road.





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Looking for man-made fun? There are mini-amusement parks with bumper boats and cars, miniature golf and go karts. A ride on the Aerial Tramway to the top of 9,000 ft. Prospect Mountain is a thrill. The Lake Estes Marina rents boats, bikes, paddle boats, kayaks and more for experiences the whole family can enjoy. Other ideas? Take a jeep tour. Catch a trout in a guaranteed catch pond. Go rafting. Be mesmerized by a ghost story. Enjoy a horse drawn wagon or carriage ride. Cool off with a swim. There's definitely more to do here than a couple of days' time allows. Consider staying a full week.

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*RMNP = Rocky Mountain National Park • All locations are in Estes Park, 80517 unless otherwise noted.



FAVORITE THINGS TO DO

1. Visit Rocky Mountain National Park

Visitors rank visiting the National Park as their top rated activity. In fact, in 2010 Trip Advisor named Rocky Mountain National Park the #1 Outdoor and Adventure Destination in the U.S. With its expansive views, snowcapped peaks and forested land, it is one of the primary reasons for visiting the Estes Park area. This is a National Park that is a wild preserve where people - in their own special ways - experience nature in all its splendor.

2. Sightseeing

Our beautiful mountain area begs to be investigated. Explore Hermit Park, 1,362 acres of pristine open space property. In Hermit Park you'll find trails and camping spots, all in an area where you can bring the family pet. Or take Old Fall River Road (open July through fall) to the Alpine Visitors Center where it converges with Trail Ridge Road. Another special trip is to Bear Lake, where some say they find the most magnificent scenery in the National Park. Glen Haven is an unincorporated town seven miles northeast of Estes Park via Devils

Gulch Road. Allenspark is about 15 miles south of the village, reached by driving the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway. On your way to Allenspark be sure to stop at Wild Basin, a unique valley with three of the National Park's most accessible waterfalls: Copeland Falls, Calypso Cascades and Ouzel Falls. Bear Lake Road and the route to Wild Basin are open all year.

3. Wildlife Watching

Contributing to the wonderment of Estes Park are the many wildlife inhabitants. The time of year you visit contributes to the types of animals you'll see, but nearly everyone gets to view a special species while here.

The area is best known for big game species. Elk, bighorn sheep and mule deer are the most widely viewed. The elk live in forest and forest-edge habitat, and feed on grasses, plants, leaves and tree bark. All year, but especially from autumn through spring, they roam streets and yards throughout the village. In Estes Park a traffic jam is sitting in your car in the morning with a cup of coffee in hand, waiting for an elk to cross the road.

*RMNP = Rocky Mountain National Park • All locations are in Estes Park, 80517 unless otherwise noted.

THINGS TO DO

FISH THE ROCKIES



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FAVORITE THINGS TO DO

Noticing a newborn elk calf still sporting spots in May is a marvel yet the prime elk-viewing period comes from early September through October when amorous bulls vie for female attention during the annual rut (mating season).

Bighorn sheep are found climbing the steep rock and canyon walls and many times deer can be seen with them, grazing side-by-side.

Birders find the area enticing, particularly in spring and summer months when migratory birds such as thrushes, finches, warblers, bluebirds and hummingbirds visit. Rocky Mountain National Park is designated a global Important Bird Area where over 280 bird species have been counted.

Other creatures like marmots, beaver and chipmunks scamper in and out of rocks while bears, mountain lions and coyotes are much more elusive.

4. Hikes and Walks for All Ages and Abilities

Rocky Mountain National Park has over 350 miles of hiking trails ranging from paved paths for beginners to strenuous trails for experts and

everything in between. The accessible glacier lakes in the National Park are most popular and family friendly.

Some visitors set their sights on reaching the 14,259 foot summit of Longs Peak. If that's your goal, make certain you're prepared for a 16-mile round trip non-technical hike (generally mid-July through early-September). Bring extra clothing, food and water; begin your trip early, way before dawn, so you can be back in the car in case afternoon rain and thunderstorms strike.

Other National Park hikes include easy routes around Bear Lake, Sprague Lake and Lily Lake. Or take the short trek to Cub Lake, a hike that's short and especially delightful for families.

Within the village of Estes Park there are nearly eight miles of paved, generally level pathways allowing everything from strollers to canes to power walking.

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THINGS TO DO

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FAVORITE THINGS TO DO

5. Adventures

Fly fishing is always a top pick. Learn the best spots to cast your line by scouting on your own, or hire a guide. Or, drop your line at a commercial trout pond where you can snag a guaranteed catch. Biking is a perennial favorite. Whether out for a leisure ride or more active downhill and off

road tours, there's a two-wheeler waiting for you to rent. For many, a vacation would be incomplete without swinging a club. Two of the most scenic golf courses in Colorado are perfect for your round. Another top favorite is seeing the area while horseback riding. Choose from short rides to half-day excursions or evening steak ride.

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Traveling with children? Estes Park is ideal. There's no need to curb the enthusiasm of a boisterous 12-year-old taking a rock climbing lesson, especially when the entire family participates. Horseback rides allow a unique adventure all can enjoy. Seasonally there are surrey bikes (bicycles built for two with side-by-side pedals) for trips around Lake Estes, bike tours, an aerial tramway ride, miniature golf, easy hikes, rafting, family concerts, picnics and cowboy sing-a-longs. For the smaller ones there are playgrounds, library story hours and a sandy beach at Lake Estes just perfect for shovels and pails.

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THINGS TO DO

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