

THE VILLAGE

Take a deep breath and inhale the fragrance of pine, wildflowers and clean, crisp air. Listen to the whisper of aspen leaves rustling in harmony with water spilling over boulders in mountain streams. Hear the raspy scream of a Red-tailed Hawk soaring through the azure sky above. Those experiences inspire many people to look at the majestic, snowcapped peaks towering above Estes Park and proclaim, "This is paradise."

At 7,522 feet above sea level, the village is surrounded by nationally protected lands and by mountain peaks ranging in elevation from 8,500 feet to over 14,000 feet. We're known for Rocky Mountain National Park and for our unparalleled outdoor activities: gentle mountain walks, hikes to awe-inspiring splendor, nationally acclaimed mountain climbing, ice climbing and snowshoeing.

Estes Park is home to over 200 stores, galleries and restaurants. With its scenic Riverwalk and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, sculptures, and free summer entertainment, the town entices vacationers to linger. Here you'll find everything from cozy cabins and cottages to elegant rooms and suites, and a variety of camping choices.

Come. Experience the magic that is the Rocky Mountains. Your options are endless.





Exploring the many diverse and unique shops and galleries in Estes Park is satisfying and entertaining. If you're hoping to find something different from what is seen in national chain outlets, this is the place. Hand-crafted art, rustic furnishings, fine apparel and specialty giftware makes this an out-of-the "big box" experience. And don't worry about getting tired feet. Estes Park's primary shopping area and Riverwalk are lined with comfortable benches so you can soak up the atmosphere before continuing your quest for an extraordinary memento of your mountain vacation. If you're looking for even more relaxation, a trip to one of Estes Park's health spas should do quite nicely.

When it comes to entertainment in Estes Park, there truly is something for everyone. Summertime brings free, outdoor musical entertainment from folk singers in shopping plaza areas to rock-a-billy or concert jazz bands in the community's acclaimed Performance Park Amphitheater almost every day.

Do bring the children. Whether they are two, 12, or young adults, there are activities for everyone. Grassy park spaces can be found throughout the town. Learn how to climb a mountain on a safe,

instructor-led climbing wall. Under a watchful eye everyone in the family can learn to fly fish like a pro. Or, grab the camera and capture smiles while enjoying a miniature golf game or a race around a go-kart track.

When it's time to replenish the body, there are dining options for every palate. Italian, Mexican and Asian cuisine are just a few of the samplings found here. From that grab-it-quick bite, to a five-course luxurious dinner or just a bottle of wine under a starry sky, you'll find experiences to remember forever.

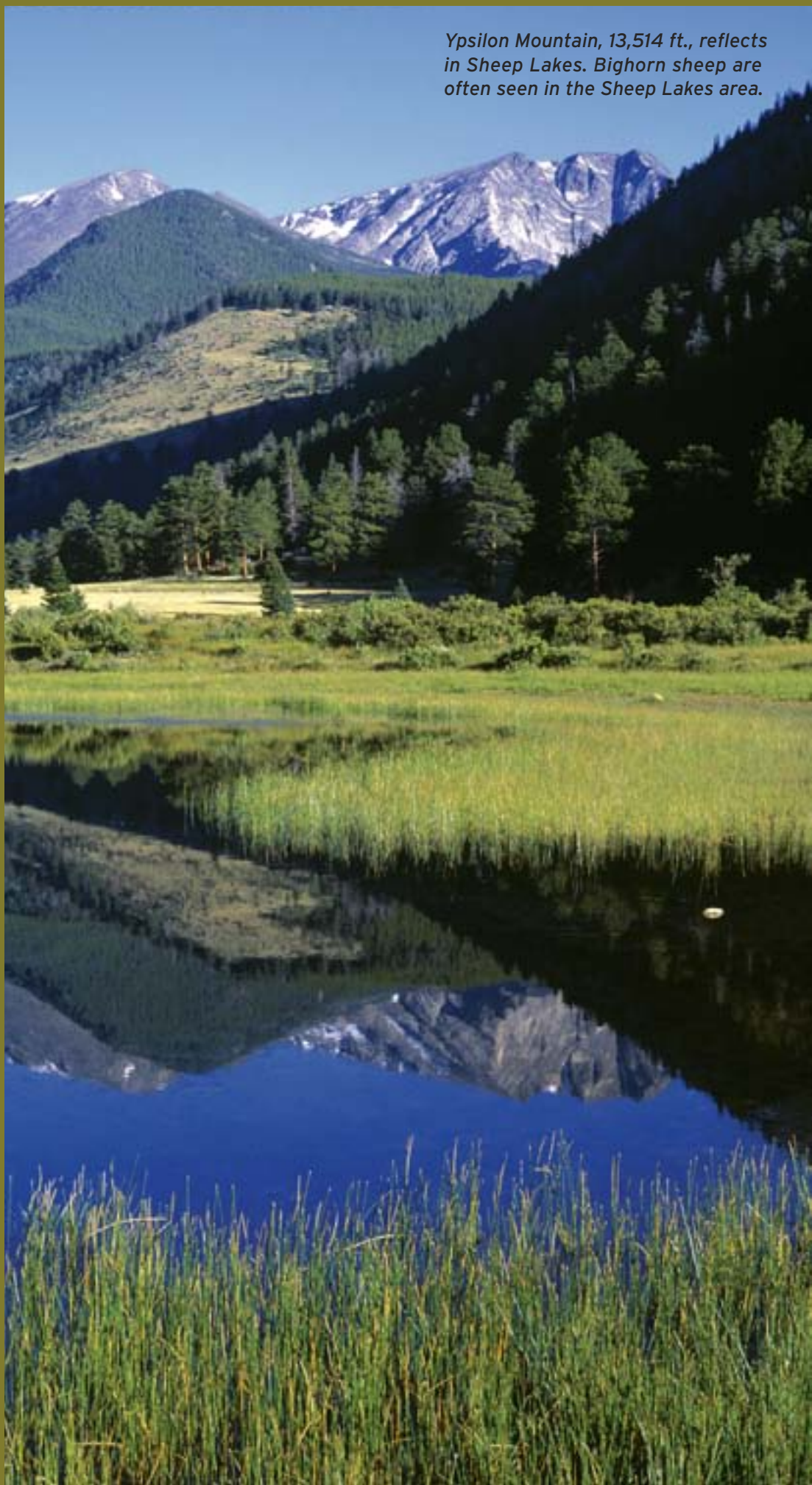
Rocky Mountain NATIONAL PARK

Just four miles west of Estes Park is one of this country's most accessible and impressive wilderness regions – Rocky Mountain National Park. In an area that spans 416 sq. miles with 75 peaks reaching elevations of 12,000 feet or more, there are more than 350 miles of hiking trails (some handicapped accessible) and miles of roads with pull-out areas so you can stop and really see the grandeur surrounding you. No matter what the month of the year, Rocky Mountain National Park is open for all to enjoy.

Experiencing the Park's magnificence can be as easy as sitting on a rock basking in the sun or as extreme as scaling rocky walls. Being outdoors is what this Park is all about. Fishing, hiking, snowshoeing, birding and back country experiences are among the most popular activities. Other choices include guided backpack, bicycle, snowshoe and cross-country ski tours.

Learning about this habitat is another favored activity and encompasses ranger-led walks and formal lectures, the Park's Junior Ranger program for youngsters, and exploration classes offered by groups such as the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

Ypsilon Mountain, 13,514 ft., reflects in Sheep Lakes. Bighorn sheep are often seen in the Sheep Lakes area.





Want to explore Rocky on foot? During peak season consider using transit provided by friendly passenger shuttles. You'll enjoy beautiful scenery without driving distractions and limited parking in the Bear Lake area. From mid-June through Oct. 1, the Park shuttle system operates from the Park & Ride shuttle bus parking area just across from Glacier Basin Campground. From the Park & Ride, there are shuttle routes to many trailheads. Check with the Park or the Estes Park Visitors Center for hours of operation.

Trying to decide where to go in Rocky Mountain National Park? **Trail Ridge Road**, the highest continuous paved highway in the United States, connects Estes Park with Grand Lake and is open from Memorial Day until heavy snowfalls make the route impractical to keep clear, usually sometime from late-September to sometime in late October. **Old Fall River Road**, open from early July through fall, is an uphill journey on gravel, past waterfalls, glacier deposits, icy pools and breathtaking views. Some consider **Bear Lake Road** to have the most magnificent scenery on the east side of the Park. The southern Park area is approached from Co. Hwy. 7, the Peak

to Peak Scenic Byway (Colorado's oldest scenic byway) 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, weather permitting.

Entrance fees to Rocky Mountain National Park, where commercial services are extremely limited, are \$20 per vehicle or \$10 per hiker, motorcyclist and bicyclist for a weekly pass. Annual passes also are available. For more information visit www.nps.gov/romo

SEASONS BEYOND SUMMER

There's no doubt that this area is a magical place. There's grandeur, mountains, blue skies, crystal streams and lakes, open space and wildlife. During autumn, add to the description the gold of leaves cascading down from the high slopes.

Nature's fall fling in the mountains begins with cooler nights and the gradual changing of colors from higher to lower elevations. Day-time temperatures can just as easily be warm and summer-like as brisk and refreshing.

Although it's a time of year when the pace in Estes Park is more relaxed, there still are choices for things to do and see. The season generates an alluring time for autumn hikes and walks. A walk can reveal the flurry of activity of wildlife readying for winter, from small squirrels cutting pine cones and storing seeds for winter to watching migrating birds on their trek to Southern climates. Rocky Mountain National Park offers a full range of guided walks and talks as well as evening programs that provide opportunities to learn about this vast ecosystem humans share with nature.

Stores, restaurants and lodging facilities throughout the village remain open and many find this special time perfect for mountain shopping and overnight get-a-ways.





The aspen's annual transformation to pure gold, a sight that makes you catch your breath with wonder year after year, usually begins in mid-September and can last as long as four weeks when there's no early snow or high wind. Everywhere you turn there are splashes of color. Some of the best viewing is south of Estes Park on Colorado Highway 7, along the Peak-to-Peak Scenic Byway. National Forest Service land just southeast of the village is known for its magnificent stands of aspen waiting for the viewing. In Rocky Mountain National Park, extraordinary stands of aspen can be found at Hidden Valley, Bear Lake and Wild Basin.

One sign of the change of seasons

unique to the mountains is witnessing the sights and sound of the elk rut (mating) season. Bugling is the name given to the call of the bull elk as part of the mating ritual. From about mid-September through October large antlered bulls, weighing up to 1,100 pounds show their prowess as they vie for attention from cows while they gather "harems" that can grow from a couple females to more than 50 overnight.

The bulls bugle (deep, resonant tones that rise rapidly to a high-pitched squeal before dropping

to a series of grunts) as they capture the attention of females as well as challenge rival males. The strength or range of the call most often matches the size and maturity of the bull.

The most popular viewing areas include the golf courses and nearby waterways. In the National Park, the best opportunities to see and hear this powerful natural show are typically in Moraine Park, Upper Beaver Meadows and Horseshoe Park. The best viewing times are at dawn and from late afternoon until dusk.

SEASONS BEYOND SUMMER

During winter, a hush settles over the snow-covered peaks set against clear, blue skies and forests of evergreen. The air is crisp and invigorating.

A winter's day may bring balmy breezes and temperatures in the 50s. While snow rarely stays on the ground for more than a day or two in the village, conditions at higher elevations are excellent for outdoor adventures.

Although Trail Ridge Road, the route over the Continental Divide through Rocky Mountain National Park, closes due to harsh weather conditions at 12,183 feet, it doesn't mean the National Park is closed. Estes Park and the National Park are open every day of the year. You can drive to magnificent viewing areas like Many Parks Curve and Bear Lake to enjoy other accessible areas inside the Park boundaries.

Families experience great outdoor fun at the Hidden Valley snow play area inside the National Park. There's an area for sleds, tubes and saucers and many enjoy using natural trails in the area for cross country skiing and snow-shoeing. Those with more adventurous souls take ropes and ice axes to areas where they revel in more vigorous outings. Estes Park's abundance of craggy rocks makes this one of the premier ice climbing areas in the nation.

Winter snow blankets the Bear Lake area. At an elevation of 9,475 ft., Bear Lake is the only subalpine lake in Rocky Mountain National Park accessible by car.





Photo © Colorado Mountain School

Photo © Tubbs

A vacation in the Rocky Mountains means experiences of all varieties.

And even though Estes Park has over 300 days of sunshine every year, there are occasional times when you'll want to be indoors. Take the opportunity to enjoy a glass of bubbly in front of the fireplace while reading. Most lodging facilities have games you can borrow, as well. More active fun includes bowling (the alleys are lined with gutter guards for children or first-timers), seeing a movie (there are four screens in Estes Park), swimming at the Estes Park Aquatic Center and roller skating at the Estes Park Center-YMCA of the Rockies.

From foot races to snowshoe events

to culturally-centered activities, winter in Estes Park is another season with activities for all.

The arts are prominent in Estes Park throughout the winter. Every Sunday afternoon a musical concert features stellar performers of primarily classical selections. Art galleries feature periodically changing exhibits, seminars and workshops. The Estes Park Museum displays permanent and temporary exhibits reflecting the history of the Estes Valley. In 2009 the Museum will present a History of Quilts exhibit and another on natural landscapes and how they are influenced by humans.

Hearty souls brave whatever weather conditions may exist to run either a 5-K or a 10-K race throughout the area in late January. Valentines Day weekend provides a wide variety of activities, including the nationally-sponsored Winter Trails day that features free snowshoe tryouts and seminars in Rocky Mountain National Park. That same weekend a model railroad show with exhibits, operating miniature scale models and more than 15,000 square feet of model railroad-ing pleases youngsters and adults alike. Another wintertime activity is an annual hands-on day of visual arts experiences that enthrall children and their parents.