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### ***Explore Estes Park With a Day Trip Into the Mountains***

Estes Park, CO — Visitors to the Front Range in Colorado have an attractive recreational option just a few minutes away. Whatever the route, a breathtaking geological masterpiece awaits those who choose a day trip to Estes Park.

On the road from Loveland up the Big Thompson Canyon (U.S. Highway 34), “The Narrows” is a winding steep-sided gorge created by the river’s long erosion. Towering on either side of the road are rock formations which, over time, have been tip-tilted nearly 90 degrees by the movement of the earth. Twenty miles from Loveland, you emerge from the canyon into an expansive high mountain valley, 7,522 feet above sea level, surrounded by snowcapped peaks ranging from 8,500 to more than 14,000 feet high. This is Estes Park and the jumping off spot for visits to Rocky Mountain National Park.

From Lyons (accessible either from Longmont or Boulder), U.S. Highway 36 takes you up into the mountains and, in half an hour, you crest the hill above Estes Park and look down into a charming mountain village.

Once you arrive in Estes Park, there is a wide variety of recreational choices for visitors of all ages: camping, horseback riding, festivals, shopping, cultural events, dining, water sports, hiking, wildlife watching, golfing, bicycling and numerous winter sports.

For example, every Sunday afternoon (November through April) at 2 p.m. there’s a concert at the historic Stanley Hotel. In the summer, the Estes Park Music Festival presents a series of concerts with world-class conductors and guest artists. From May through the Christmas holidays, there are art and museum shows and events every weekend.

Between Memorial Day and mid-October (depending on the weather), Trail Ridge Road takes visitors across the Continental Divide on the world's highest continuous paved highway to Grand Lake, a recreated Western town. Plan enough time to stop and enjoy the many breathtaking vistas along the way.

It’s possible to see wildlife at nearly any point once you start up the canyon. The elusive big horn sheep can be sighted in The Narrows; elk and deer are plentiful right in Estes Park, especially in cooler months; marmots, Abert squirrels, coyote and birds of many kinds are common; black bears and mountain lions have been spotted here, though rarely.

If you can pull yourself away from the beauty of the area, a different route home presents yet another aspect of the Rocky Mountains. Leave Estes Park via Devils Gulch Road, down the canyon through Glen Haven and rejoin U. S. Highway 34 at Drake to Loveland. An alternate loop takes visitors south on Colorado Highway 7, through Allenspark to Lyons, where Colorado Highway 66 returns you to Interstate 25 or you may rejoin U. S. Highway 36 to Boulder.