

Colorado Springs & Pikes Peak Country: A 3-Day Itinerary

Colorado Springs is one of the state's most popular tourist destinations, thanks to its proximity to the mountains, amazing natural sights and its historic national.

Day 1

Use your first day in [Colorado Springs](#) to explore all that the city has to offer. Downtown is a great place to start, with plenty of options for breakfast or a cup of coffee.

Spend a few hours at one of the area's exceptional museums, including the [Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center](#), with rotating and permanent exhibits that include a collection of Dale Chihuly glass, the [Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum](#) or the [McAlister House Museum](#). Or, simply take a walk along Tejon Street to explore the excellent shopping and dining available.

Stop for lunch at the [The Warehouse Restaurant and Gallery](#), which offers excellent food, an award-winning wine list and walls decorated with the works of local and regional artists. Families won't want to miss a chance to cool off at [Uncle Wilber's Fountain](#), which plays music and sprays water to everyone's delight every half hour during the summer.

After lunch, visit the U.S. Air Force Academy or the U.S. Olympic Training Center. The [Air Force Academy](#) is open daily and offers an informative exhibit about cadet life in the visitor's center. Be sure to take the short nature hike to the famous and beautiful Cadet Chapel. At the [Olympic Training Center](#), take a free 45-minute guided tour of the facilities. The center is also home to the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame, a cafe and the U.S. Olympic Spirit Store.

For dinner, Colorado Springs offers a wide variety of fine dining options, including Colorado's only five-star restaurant, The Penrose Room, located at the world-famous [Broadmoor Hotel](#). Or, you might choose to take in a show at the [Pikes](#)

[Peak Center](#) performing arts complex. The center has received international acclaim for its design and acoustics and hosts more than 200 fascinating music and theater shows every year.

Day 2

Start your day with a visit to [Garden of the Gods](#). This National Natural Landmark offers free admission to some of the most astonishing and memorable scenery in Colorado, featuring unusual sandstone rock formations up to 300 feet high silhouetted against the backdrop of Pikes Peak and the deep blue Colorado sky. You can explore the entire park by car via a paved loop, but many of the hiking and walking trails are also paved and offer excellent access for visitors with mobility limitations.

From here, take your visit to new heights and explore Pikes Peak itself. The summit can be reached via the Pikes Peak Highway by car, on foot via the strenuous Barr Trail, or — perhaps most uniquely — via the [Pikes Peak Cog Railway](#), the highest cog railroad in the world. Via train, the trip takes about three hours, offering majestic views and possibly even a glimpse of the elusive Colorado bighorn sheep.

For dinner, explore historic [Manitou Springs](#), named one of the 10 Coolest Small Towns in the country by *Budget Travel* magazine. This cozy mountain town is home to several historic restaurants, as well as many favorite neighborhood eateries. If you have time, wander the charming streets and check out the artisan galleries that call Manitou home.

Day 3

Start your morning with a visit to [Cheyenne Mountain Zoo](#), the only mountain zoo in the U.S. Here, you can ride the tram that circles the park, check out native species in the Rocky Mountain Wild section and even hand-feed more than 30 giraffes!

Have a little snack yourself and then head out to the [Cave of the Winds](#) and [Seven Falls](#). At Seven Falls, a 224-step staircase will take you to the top of the 181-foot waterfall, or you can choose to take the 14-story mountain express elevator through solid rock to reach the top. At the Cave of the Winds, explore the magnificent geological formations and hear tales of the cave's historical significance on a discovery tour — or take your adventure to a thrilling new level with a flashlight tour after 5pm.

Another option is to visit Royal Gorge. A few miles west of Colorado Springs in [Cañon City](#), Royal Gorge is home to America's highest suspension bridge, towering more than 1,000 feet above the rushing Arkansas River. In the [Royal Gorge Bridge & Park](#), you can ride the world's highest roller coaster, the Skycoaster, America's steepest incline railway and America's longest aerial tram.

Take advantage of the incredible scenery and book a three-course lunch or dinner ride on one of the glass-topped Vista Dome cars of the [Royal Gorge Route Railroad](#). Or have the adventure of a lifetime with a whitewater raft trip on the Arkansas right through the gorge.

- See more at: <http://www.colorado.com/articles/colorado-springs-pikes-peak-country-3-day-itinerary#sthash.oil5Cya1.dpuf>