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## GET OUT *Colorado*



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BY KARA WILLIAMS

# GET OUT *Colorado*

Winter isn't the only season to experience Colorado





PHOTO OF CRESTED BUTTE BY XAVIER FANE, COURTESY OF GUNNISON-CRESTED BUTTE TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Colorado's mountain towns are popular winter playgrounds for visitors from all over the world, but Denverites know just how fabulous our state's alpine areas are in the summer too. No matter your objective, you'll find plenty to explore: a variety of accommodations, dining, outdoor adventures and upbeat festivals. Here's our list of favorite Colorado towns and events to experience this summer!

## VAIL/BEAVER CREEK

While it may face I-70, Vail Valley offers plenty of opportunities to explore off the beaten path. Hike to a waterfall, such as Booth Falls with its 60-foot cascade. For an easier trek with amazing mountain views, take Vail's Eagle Bahn Gondola up the ski hill; dine at The 10<sup>th</sup>, Vail's new fine dining restaurant overlooking the Gore Range; and walk (or bike) down the mountain. Horseback riding and kayaking are also popular summertime activities in Vail Valley.

**STAY:** Consider overnighting at upscale [The Arrabelle at Vail Square](#), supremely classy [Four Seasons Resort Vail](#) or [Vail Cascade Resort and Spa](#). Try the [Sonnenalp Resort of Vail](#), with its European vibe and delicious brunch at their on-site restaurant, Ludwig's. Not to be overlooked, [Vail Mountain Lodge & Spa](#) has The Vitality Center, a spa with medically based guidance, body work and expert programming. For more on accommodations in Vail, see Mountain Escapes on page 46. If you prefer Beaver Creek, try [The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch](#), a classic favorite with a partnership with Red Sky Golf Club and nightly marshmallow roasting at their fire pit. Another option is [The Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa at Beaver Creek Mountain](#). They offer on-site bike rentals so you can explore Beaver Creek Village and nearby cities like Avon and Edwards.

**EAT:** In Vail, "Top Chef" Kelly Liken focuses on farm-fresh produce at her whimsically



designed bistro aptly titled restaurant [Kelly Liken](#). (Try the potato-crust trout.) Bowl a frame and dine at [bōl](#) with its modern design and menu featuring shared plates and gourmet pizzas. Other summer-friendly restaurants include [Terra Bistro](#) at Vail Mountain Lodge & Spa and [Up the Creek](#) on the banks of Gore Creek. In Beaver Creek, do not miss [Spago](#) by Wolfgang Puck.

**DON'T MISS:** If you're visiting Vail on a Sunday, take time for the bountiful farmers' market. Vail Valley also embraces the arts with ongoing performances. Check out the offerings from [Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival](#) (June 25 to August 4), [Vail International Dance Festival](#) (July 29 to August 11) or the [Vail Jazz Festival](#) (June 24 to September 3). Tuesday nights at the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater feature the [Bud Light Hot Summer Nights](#) free concert series (June 12 to August 21). [The Beaver Creek Rodeo](#) takes place every Thursday (June 18th to August 20th).

## ASPEN

This historic mining town may be filled with shops such as Prada, Ralph Lauren and Gucci, but if you'd like to learn more about its early years, peruse the vintage photos at the 120-year-old Hotel Jerome or walk through the abandoned Ashcroft ghost town. For outdoor pursuits, consider joining the legions of locals hiking up the steep Ute Trail or more leisurely Smuggler Trail. Golf at the Aspen Golf Course, hot air balloon through the Rockies or whitewater raft down the Roaring Fork River.

**STAY:** Located at the base of Aspen Mountain, [St. Regis Aspen Resort](#) recently underwent a \$40 million renovation, so you can experience the best rooms and facilities. Other *DLM* favorites include [The Gant](#), with gorgeous luxury condos, full kitchens and summery balconies, and [Sky Hotel](#), with contemporary décor and a stunning pool deck. [The Little Nell](#) does not exclude pets. If you're traveling with your pup, The Little Nell will pamper him or her with food and water bowls, dog beds, dog walkers and sitters, gourmet dog biscuits and a personalized brass ID tag.

**EAT:** At [Justice Snow's Restaurant & Bar](#), a new gastro-pub in the historic Wheeler Opera House, you can find one of the best all-natural burgers in town. Their Devilish Eggs are delish too. Evenings bring a clever mixologist to the

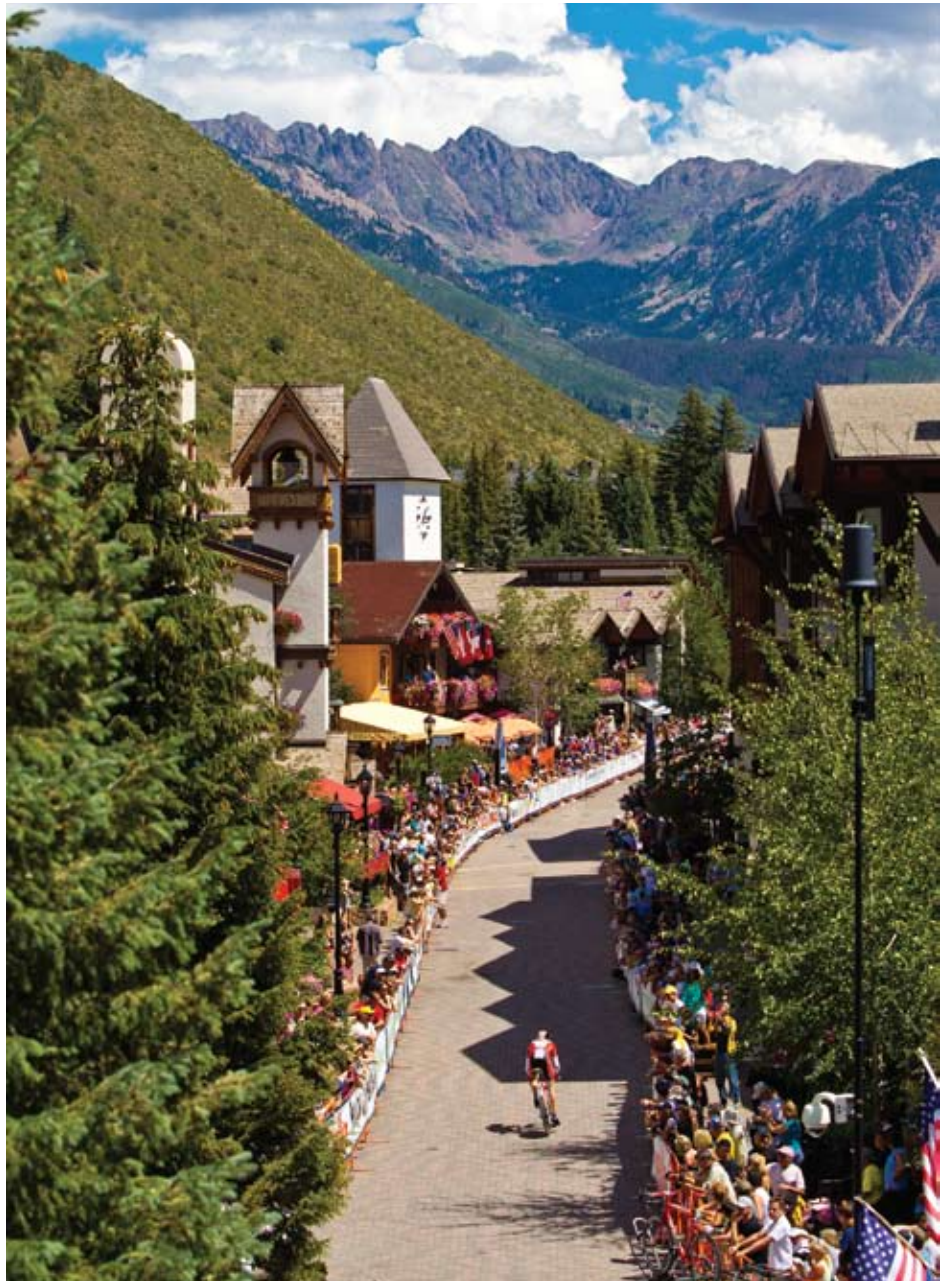


PHOTO OF VAIL BY JACK AFFLECK



PHOTO OF ASPEN BY JEREMY SWANSON





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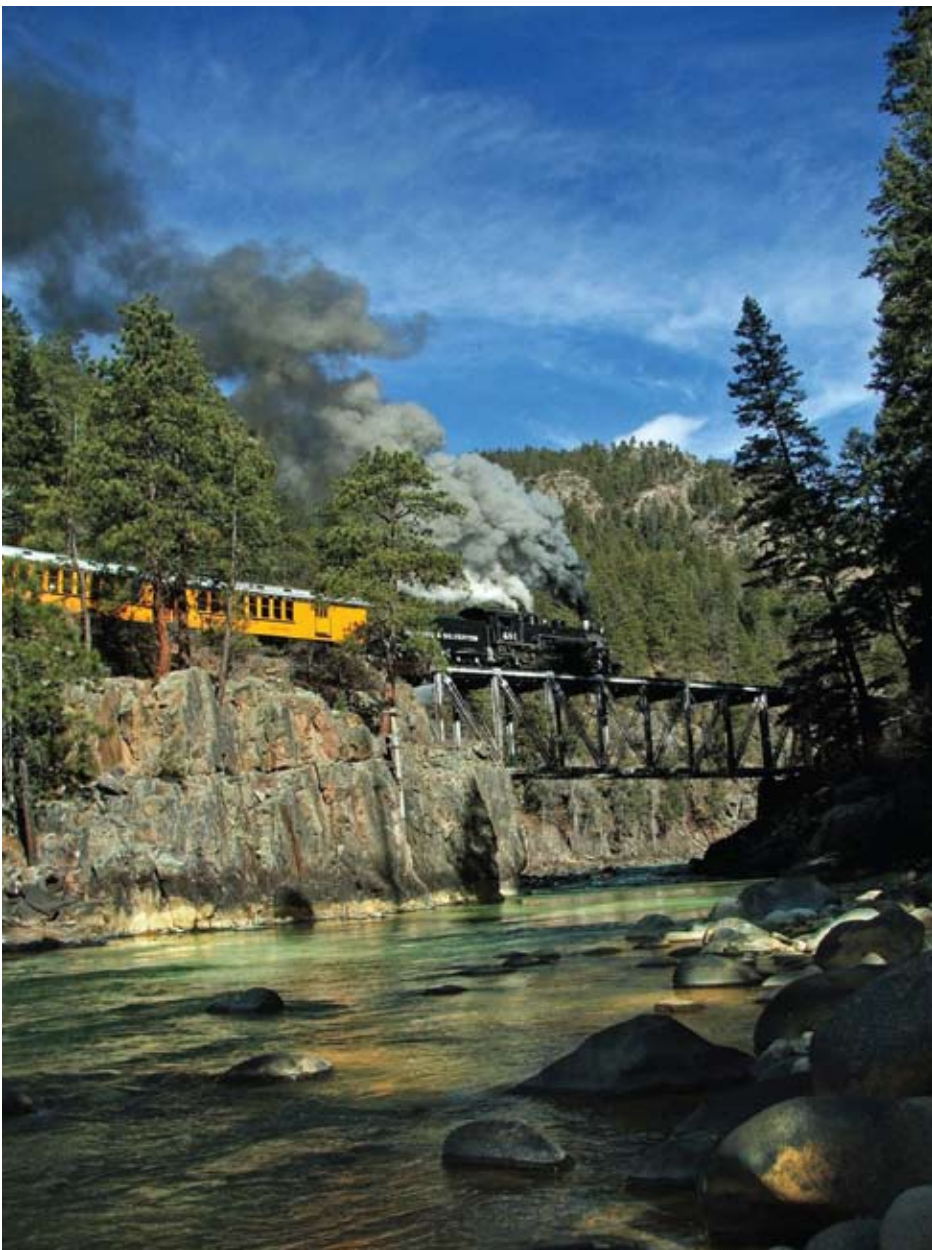


PHOTO COURTESY OF DURANGO AREA TOURISM OFFICE

bar. Other restaurant favorites: [Il Mulino](#) and [Gisella](#) for upscale Italian; [Su Casa](#) for Mexican; and [Takah Sushi](#), [Matsuhisa](#) and [Kenichi](#) for Japanese delights.

**DON'T MISS:** Tickets for the coveted [Aspen Musical Festival & School](#) performances are well worth it (June 28 to August 19). Concertgoers also flock to the [Jazz Aspen Snowmass Labor Day Festival](#) (August 31 to September 2), where heavy-hitters like the Zac Brown Band, Black Eyed Peas and Harry Connick Jr. have been known to perform. [The Food & Wine Classic](#) (June 15-17) draws people from all over the globe for tastings under festive white tents. Seasonal events at neighboring Snowmass include the weekly [Snowmass Rodeo](#) (June 13 to August 15), [Chili Pepper & Brew Fest](#) (June 8-9) and the much-anticipated [Snowmass Balloon Festival](#) (September 14-16).

## DURANGO

This southwest Colorado town retains its railway roots with its scenic train ride to Silverton. The narrow-gauge train carries passengers behind its steam locomotive for a true Old West experience. Durango is also a great home base for exploring nearby Mesa Verde National Park's cliff dwellings. Mountain bikers flock to Durango for its hundreds of miles of trails in and around the San Juan National Forest.

**STAY:** Downtown's [Strater Hotel](#) celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year with special celebratory rates; it's certainly filled with history and charm, not to mention dozens of authentic antiques. [General Palmer Hotel](#) is a Victorian-style hotel, in downtown historic Durango, with complimentary WiFi, turn-down service and continental breakfast.

**EAT:** For a casual meal, check out [Steamworks Brewing Company](#), with its filling pub food and great craft beer. [The Ore House](#), just a block from the train depot, features hand-cut steaks, sustainable seafood, organic poultry and homemade desserts.

**DON'T MISS:** [True West Railfest](#) (August 16-19) attracts international train enthusiasts. [Fiesta Days](#) (July 21-29) celebrates the region's Spanish history and cowboy heritage with rodeos and a parade. [Music in the Mountains](#) (July 8-29) brings classical music concerts to Durango.



## STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Steamboat Springs bills itself as “Ski Town USA,” but in the summer months “Bike Town USA” is equally appropriate. They have paved paths, lift-served terrain and even a BMX course, all accessible from downtown. Soak sore muscles in Old Town Hot Springs or the more remote Strawberry Park Hot Springs. Downtown’s false-front buildings and the F.M. Light & Sons western wear store, which dates back to 1905, also recall the Old West.

**STAY:** The full service [Sheraton Steamboat Resort](#) is a stone’s throw from the gondola for scenic rides up Mt. Werner. The downtown [Hotel Bristol](#), established in 1948, has a great Western feel with genuine hospitality to match. Sweet [Mariposa Lodge Bed and Breakfast](#) has four cozy rooms; get a group of friends or family together and rent out the entire house.

**EAT:** Esteemed ski jumper Carl Howelsen was the inspiration for [Carl’s Tavern](#), with Colorado beers on tap and a made-from-scratch menu. For breakfast, hit the new [Milk Run Donut Café](#), with such eclectic offerings as maple bacon and Lucky Charms donuts. Bloody Marys at the [Paramount Café](#)—with farm-fresh breakfast and lunch menus—is also highly recommended.

**DON’T MISS:** The most colorful weekend in Steamboat Springs is July 7-8, when the [Hot Air Balloon Rodeo](#) comes to town and dozens of pilots rise in the air for a spectacular photo opportunity. It’s also [Art in the Park](#), with more than 140 artists, live entertainment and food booths.

## TELLURIDE

Telluride’s downtown is filled with Victorian-era homes, cute boutiques and art galleries. Mountain Village sits at 9,500 feet and provides easy access to the outdoor playground that is Uncompahgre National Forest. The two areas are linked by a free, scenic 13-minute gondola ride. Powered by the wind, the gondola is just one example of Telluride’s green initiatives; look for local growers on menus, green building practices; and recycling receptacles aplenty.

**STAY:** For a luxury experience, consider the expansive [Peaks Resort](#), with the largest spa in the state. [Lumière Telluride](#) has only 29 rooms and offers the personalized service you’d expect from an upscale, intimate boutique property.



PHOTO OF TELLURIDE BY RYAN BONNEAU PHOTOGRAPHY





PHOTO OF STEAMBOAT SPRINGS BY PAUL D. DEBERJEOIS, COURTESY OF STEAMBOAT SPRINGS CHAMBER



PHOTO OF CRESTED BUTTE BY TOM STILLIO, COURTESY OF CRESTED BUTTE MOUNTAIN RESORT

**The New Sheridan Hotel** has a marvelous history dating back to 1895. Even if you don't stay at the New Sheridan, drop in for a drink and check out the restored dark wood bar.

**EAT:** **La Cocina de Luz** serves up locally grown Mexican and Southwestern dishes with great patio dining. New restaurants include **Flavor Telluride**, which focuses on seasonally inspired comfort foods, and **The Butcher and Baker Café**, with an ever-changing menu of fresh baked goods, sandwiches and salads.

**DON'T MISS:** Telluride is the quintessential festival mountain town with many annual celebrations that draw huge crowds. **MountainFilm** (May 25-28) and **Telluride Film Festival** (August 31 to September 3) are the festivals where movie lovers rub elbows with celebrities and cinematographers. **Telluride Bluegrass Festival** (June 21-24) is four days of open-air concerts, and there's also **Telluride Blues & Brews** (September 14-16). Up for more fests? Consider the **Telluride Balloon Festival** (June 1-3), **Wild West Festival** (June 4-9), **Telluride Wine Festival** (June 27 to July 1), **Telluride Yoga Festival** (July 12-15) and **Telluride Mushroom Festival** (August 16-19).

## CRESTED BUTTE

Crested Butte is the Wildflower Capital of Colorado; especially in July, meadows host a kaleidoscope of colorful petals. The town of Crested Butte is also a designated National Historic District, which has helped maintain the charm of Colorado's "last great ski town." With Crested Butte as your home base, Gunnison County provides endless opportunities to mountain bike, fly fish, kayak and river raft.

**STAY:** Crested Butte's **The Grand Lodge Hotel** is the perfect getaway for families, with the best indoor/outdoor pool in the area. **The Ruby of Crested Butte**, a luxury bed and breakfast, loans cherry-colored cruisers so visitors can cycle around town.

**EAT:** For upscale French cuisine, book one of two seatings nightly at **Soupon**, considered the best restaurant in Crested Butte. **Secret Stash** serves excellent gourmet pizza. **Brick Oven** has a great deck and outdoor bar that's an excellent place to people-watch.

**DON'T MISS:** **The Crested Butte Wildflower Festival** (July 9-15) features dozens of hikes to see fields in bloom, plus yoga classes in alpine meadows and photography classes. No need





PHOTO OF BRECKENRIDGE BY CARL SCHOFIELD, COURTESY OF BRECKENRIDGE SKI RESORT



PHOTO OF LAKE DILLON BY CARL SCHOFIELD, COURTESY OF BRECKENRIDGE SKI RESORT

to book a hotel room for [Bluegrass in Paradise](#) music festival (July 14-15), as campers can pitch a tent just five minutes from the concert venue, with free transportation back and forth.

## BRECKENRIDGE

The largest gold nugget ever found in Colorado was uncovered in Breckenridge, weighing in at 13.5 lbs! Learn more at the Breckenridge Welcome Center, where exhibits trace the town's history from gold-mining to the world-class ski resort it is today. Mountain biking is the sport of choice in Breck, but boating on Lake Dillon, golfing on the world's only Jack Nicklaus-designed 27-hole municipal golf course and fly-fishing on the Blue River are other popular pursuits.

**STAY:** [One Ski Hill Place](#) is great for families because of its multi-bedroom condos and Peak 8 Summer Fun Park, with an alpine slide, mini golf and bungee. Or you can eat, shop and play on downtown's Main Street, then walk home to a quiet bed and breakfast, such as [Abbett Placer Inn](#).

**EAT:** [Relish](#) is renowned for its innovative twists on Colorado favorites. [Giampietro Pasta & Pizzeria](#) is teeny tiny—and no reservations are taken—but if you can stand the wait, you'll be rewarded with some of the best Italian dishes in town. [Warming Hut](#) is housed in a historic cottage on Main Street. It's totally renovated for welcoming guests with its "heart and soul food" sourced from Colorado meats, produce and dairy.

**DON'T MISS:** [Breck Bike Week](#) (July 5-8) introduces visitors to the trails. Celebrate all things cycling with group rides, bike-in movie nights, trail building, kids' races and festive daily Tour de France viewing parties. Labor Day Weekend (September 1-3) hosts the [Great Divide Art Festival](#), [Breckenridge Wine Festival](#) and huge downtown sidewalk sales. [@ry](#)