

Denver Departures

With 118 regularly scheduled departures each day, SkyWest Airlines carries approximately 150,000 Denver passengers each month. Many of these travelers find adventure, respite and repose just beyond the state's capital. To make the most of your Colorado experience, consider these delightful Denver departures.

FORT COLLINS

Summer Fun Central

by Kerrie Flanagan



above: Fort Collins, Colorado, is a watercolor by Barbara Moore. For more info visit moorewatercolors.com, email moore@peakpeak.com or call 800-808-0795.

FROM THE HEART of the city to the foothills beyond town, true Colorado adventure inhabits Fort Collins. Hugging the base of the Rocky Mountains just one hour north of Denver International Airport, this place mixes outdoor adventure and urban culture. Here are our top picks for summer fun — Fort Collins style.

1. HORSETOOTH MOUNTAIN PARK offers some of the best bouldering (climbing large boulders without the use of ropes) on the Front Range. This scenic 2,700-acre park offers 29 miles of hiking trails with elevations ranging from 5,340 feet to 7,255 feet.

The park is located next to the 6.5-mile Horsetooth Reservoir — a great place to stay cool in summer with swimming, fishing, boating, water skiing and camping. For those who don't feel like pitching a tent, there are shoreline cabins available to rent. Each one is complete with electricity, heat and air conditioning.

From Fort Collins' Harmony and Taft Hill Roads turn west onto County Road 38E and continue approximately four miles to the entrance at the south end of the reservoir.

2. THE CACHE LA POUDE RIVER begins high in the Rocky Mountains and eventually meanders through Fort Collins. It is Colorado's only nationally designated "wild and scenic" river and lures world-class fishermen and rafters to its magnificent waters.

3. FORT COLLINS MICROBREWERIES offer refreshment and respite after a day in the sun. New Belgium Brewery, home of the renowned Fat Tire beer, is also celebrated for its commitment to the environment — the operation is powered exclusively

by the wind. Daily tours explain other innovative ways the brewery implements its three "Rs" — reduce, reuse and recycle.

Beer connoisseurs will also want to sample ales from other great local institutions: Fort Collins Brewery, Odells, Cooper-smith's Pub and Grill. Even Anheuser-Busch is on tap here.

4. THE GALLERY WALK, DOWNTOWN, the first Friday of every month from 6 to 9 p.m. displays the artistic soul of the community. Sixteen galleries, all within walking distance of each other, stay open late, offer free refreshments and a sampling of Fort Collins' friendliness. Save the date for the second weekend in September when more than 60 artists invite guests to the annual Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Studio Tour.

5. IN OLD TOWN, nineteenth-century buildings hark back to a slower time and a relaxed pace prevails. Unique stores and galleries, excellent restaurants and weekly summer concerts by the town square fountain are all part of the draw.

right: Bouldering at Horsetooth Reservoir in Horsetooth Mountain Park



HOW'S THE WEATHER?

In a word: delightful. Fort Collins offers a moderate, four-season climate with a typical 300 days of sunshine and 14.5 inches of precipitation each year. The average high temperature during the summer months is 85 degrees. In the winter months, it is 42 degrees.

HORSETOOTH RESERVOIR: CRAIG LUBBEN