

DENVER

VISITOR'S GUIDE

**ANSI INNOVATION
SUMMIT 2026**

JULY 28-31, 2026



Denver sits at exactly 5,280 feet above sea level—you can stand on the precise spot at the 13th step of the **Colorado State Capitol** downtown. Long before the state was founded, the land was home to the Arapaho and Cheyenne peoples; the **History Colorado Center**, a short walk from the Hyatt, tells the fuller story.

The modern city was born from the Pikes Peak Gold Rush of 1858. When the transcontinental railroad bypassed Colorado, Denverites raised \$300,000 and built their own line to connect to Cheyenne, Wyoming—an early act of the can-do spirit that still defines the place. Today it's the country's sunniest major city (300+ days a year), a booming tech and aerospace hub, and a gateway to the Rockies.

And speaking of gateways: when you land at **Denver International Airport**, keep your eyes peeled for Blucifer—a 32-foot, electric-blue mustang sculpture with glowing red LED eyes. Love him or fear him, he's Denver's most famous greeter.



1 mile

WHAT'S NEARBY

The **Grand Hyatt** is in the heart of downtown Denver. Here are a few highlights, from steps outside the door to a short drive away:

LESS THAN A MILE

16th Street Mall (starts at the hotel's doorstep) — Denver's pedestrian-friendly spine, lined with shops, restaurants, and street performers. A **free shuttle** runs the full length.

Denver U.S. Mint (~0.6 mi) — Free tours (about 1.5 hours) of one of the nation's active coin-producing facilities, could be a nerdy delight for standards folks. Monday–Thursday only; same-day tickets from the window at 7 am, first-come first-served.

Colorado State Capitol (~0.7 mi) — Free guided tours of this beautiful gold-domed building include a 99-step climb to the observation deck with 360° views of downtown and the Rockies. Look for the “One Mile Above Sea Level” step on the west entrance. Tours Mon–Fri, 10 am–3 pm.

Larimer Square (~0.7 mi) — Denver's oldest commercial block. Boutiques, restaurants, and string lights. Great for an evening stroll or morning coffee.

Denver Art Museum (~0.9 mi) — Daniel Libeskind's Hamilton Building is worth the visit for the architecture alone. In late July, look for “Space Is the Place: Art & Design in the Atomic Age” and “Knife Fork Spoon: Everyday Tools, Extraordinary Design.” Open Tue–Sun, 10 am–5 pm.

History Colorado Center (~0.9 mi) — Engaging, interactive museum of Colorado's history, from Indigenous peoples to the Gold Rush to the space age. The U.S. 250th exhibit, “Moments That Made US,” is on view through your visit. Open daily 10 am–5 pm.

Denver Union Station (~0.9 mi) — A beautifully restored 1914 Beaux-Arts train station, now a buzzing hub of restaurants, bars, and shops. Worth the walk for a drink at the **Terminal Bar** or a meal at one of several excellent spots.

WORTH A SHORT TRIP

Meow Wolf Denver: Convergence Station (~2 mi) — An immersive, wildly creative art experience that defies easy description. Think: walking through a portal into an alien world made of art.

Denver Botanic Gardens (~2.5–3 mi) — A 24-acre urban oasis in peak bloom in late July. Features gardens inspired by landscapes from Japan to South Africa to the Colorado tundra. Sunrise yoga classes on select mornings.

Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre (~16 mi west) — One of the most famous concert venues in the world, set among 300-million-year-old red sandstone formations. Even without a show, the park is free to visit during the day and the hiking is spectacular.



WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

The Best Restaurants in Denver, Colorado | Eater Denver

Denver's food scene has exploded in recent years. Here are some standouts within easy reach of the Grand Hyatt:

LESS THAN A MILE

Courier (at the hotel) — The Grand Hyatt's own newsroom-inspired spot serving New American classics. The lobby's Fireside | The Bar has craft cocktails and occasional live music.

Guard and Grace (~0.2 mi) — Chef Troy Guard's modern steakhouse. One of downtown's most popular upscale spots. Great raw bar, gorgeous patio.

The Brown Palace: Afternoon Tea (~0.2 mi) — A Denver institution since 1892. Traditional English tea service in the ornate Atrium Lobby with live piano. A lovely treat if you have a free afternoon.

Appaloosa Grill (~0.2 mi) — Casual, wallet-friendly, right on 16th Street. Solid burgers, Southwestern flavors, and a large beer list.

Panzano (~0.3 mi) — Northern Italian with a devoted local following. Standout pastas and an excellent happy hour.

Corinne (~0.4 mi) — Neighborhood-feel bistro with honest food and excellent cocktails. Reliable for any meal of the day.

Marco's Coal Fired (~0.8 mi, Ballpark) — Colorado's first **AVPN-certified** Neapolitan pizzeria.

Le Do Thai (~0.8 mi, LoDo) — New in 2026 and quickly building a following. Modern Thai street food in a sleek, mural-lined space; the curries and Thai Volcano soup get especially strong reviews.

WORTH A SHORT TRIP

Denver Central Market (~1.3 mi, RiNo) — A food hall with excellent vendors: tacos, pizza, charcuterie, coffee, ice cream. Great for a casual group outing.

Casa Bonita (~8 mi, Lakewood) — Iconic Mexican restaurant famous for its indoor grotto, cliff divers, and family-friendly atmosphere. Reservations are released in batches and disappear fast—book the moment you're sure of your date.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Denver is renowned for its access to unparalleled natural beauty—the city and its surrounding areas offer something for everyone:

Confluence Park (1.3 mile walk from the hotel) — Come to the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek to see kayakers and swimmers, right in the heart of downtown. Enjoy a walk down the trail and park system along the South Platte River.

Sloan Lake Park (15-minute drive from the hotel) — Although swimming is not permitted, this lake features a 2.3-mile walking trail around its circumference, and nearby outfitters offer kayak, canoe, and SUP rentals.

City Park (15-minute drive from the hotel) — Incorporating the Denver Zoo, Denver’s “Central Park” also includes a **Museum of Nature and Science Park**, with excellent play areas for children.

Wildlife Drive at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal (30-minute drive from the hotel) — Drive through a grassland nature preserve and see herds of wild buffalo.

Barr Lake State Park (30-minute drive from the hotel) — With over 350 species of birds that call this lake home or pass through on migration, this park is a birder’s paradise. On-demand kayak rentals are also available.

Golden Gate Canyon State Park (45-minute drive from the hotel) — For those who want a mountain scenery hiking experience without going too far out of the city, the park contains an extensive trail system with everything from moderate to highly strenuous hikes.

Garden of the Gods (90-minute drive from the hotel) — For a longer day trip, check out the world-renowned red-rock sandstone features and hiking trails at this National Landmark.

SAFETY

Hiking at high elevations when not acclimated can be dangerous. If you are from a low-elevation area, give yourself at least two days and avoid alcohol before attempting even easy or moderate high-altitude (10,000ft+) hiking. If you feel headache, dizziness, nausea, shortness of breath, or fatigue, descend to a lower elevation immediately.

Weather conditions in the Rockies during the summer are extremely changeable. Always plan for a storm and have an exit plan if the weather becomes dangerous. If you are caught in a storm, get below the tree line as quickly as possible.

UV rays are more intense at higher altitudes—wear plenty of sunscreen and drink lots of water. You will dehydrate faster than at lower elevations.



THE SUMMIT WEEK IN DENVER

A few interesting things happening around the city that week:

Monday, July 27 — Evenings al Fresco at the **Denver Botanic Gardens**, 5:30–8:30pm. Local musicians perform across the gardens; tickets must be purchased in advance, doors open at 5, picnic-friendly

Tuesday, July 28 — AC/DC, Power Up Tour at **Empower Field at Mile High**, 7 pm.

Tuesday, July 28 — Sarah McLachlan at **Red Rocks**, 7:30 pm, with Allison Russell.

Thursday, July 30 — Killer Queen: A Tribute to Queen at **Red Rocks**, 8 pm.

Thursday, July 30 — The Sound of Music at the **Buell Theatre**, 7:30 pm.

Friday, July 31 — Rockies vs. Royals at **Coors Field**.

Friday, July 31 — Tedeschi Trucks Band at **Red Rocks**, 7 pm, with Lukas Nelson.

Friday, July 31 — Lionel Richie + Earth, Wind & Fire at **Ball Arena**, evening.

Friday, July 31 — Civic Center NIGHT MARKET: Homegrown Colorado at **Civic Center Park**. Free, open-air event celebrating Colorado's 150th and America's 250th with local food, drink, and crafts.



PRACTICAL TIPS

GETTING AROUND

Downtown Denver is very walkable, and the [FreeRide shuttle](#) on 16th Street makes it even easier. For anything farther out, Uber and Lyft work well. The [RTD light rail](#) connects the airport to Union Station (A Line, ~40 min).

Denver has recently consolidated its bike, e-bike, and scooter share program under one company: [Veo](#). You can rent bikes and scooters anywhere in the city to get around.

ALTITUDE ADVISORY

At 5,280 feet, Denver's air has about 17% less oxygen than at sea level. You may feel more winded than usual, tire more quickly, or find that alcohol hits harder. The fix is simple: drink plenty of water (more than you normally would), take it easy on Day 1, and don't skip meals. Most people adjust within a day or two.

WEATHER IN LATE JULY

Expect warm, sunny days (highs in the mid-80s to low 90s°F / ~30–33°C) with low humidity. Afternoons often bring brief, dramatic thunderstorms that pass quickly. Bring sunscreen, sunglasses, and a light layer for air-conditioned interiors. Mornings and evenings cool off nicely.



DENVER FUN FACTS

The 13th Step. The State Capitol has three different markers for “one mile above sea level,” placed decades apart as measuring techniques improved. The most accurate is on the 13th step—not the 15th, where the original 1909 engraving still misleads tourists.

Blucifer’s Dark Origin Story. That glowing-eyed blue mustang at the airport? Its official name is “Mustang,” and artist Luis Jiménez was tragically killed in his studio in 2006 when a section of the 9,000-pound sculpture fell on him. His family completed the work, and it was unveiled in 2008—16 years behind schedule. The red eyes are an homage to his father’s neon sign shop in El Paso. Locals have called it “Satan’s Stallion,” and the airport’s CEO has said it will stay “as long as I do. I don’t want to be cursed.”

Beer Capital. Denver has more breweries per capita than almost any U.S. city. Colorado’s craft beer scene is nationally renowned—try a local IPA or a session ale at any downtown spot.

300 Days of Sunshine. Denver averages over 300 sunny days per year—more than Miami or San Diego. The UV is also stronger at altitude, so sunscreen is critical.

Taxing Themselves for Art. The Denver Public Library, Denver Art Museum, and Denver Botanic Gardens are all funded in part by the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a voter-approved sales tax. Denverites literally tax themselves to support the arts.

The Big Blue Bear. If you see a 40-foot blue bear peeking into the Colorado Convention Center—that’s “I See What You Mean” by Lawrence Argent. It’s one of the city’s most beloved (and photographed) landmarks. Denver clearly has a thing for oversized blue sculptures.

Colorado Turns 150. Colorado became a state on August 1, 1876, earning its nickname “The Centennial State.” The 150th anniversary falls just days after the Summit—keep an eye out for sesquicentennial celebrations around town.