

Denver Round-Trip

Scenic Colorado – three weeks

Driving Distance: 1300 driving miles
Driving Time: 35 Hours Approx
Recommended Trip: 19 Days

- Day 1: Arrive in Denver, Colorado, check into a hotel, relax and adjust to the time change.
- Day 2: Set off on a leisurely drive along the scenic route to Estes Park on the edge of the Rocky Mountain National Park. There are spectacular views of heavily forested mountains, lakes, rivers and valleys. Elevations along this drive are between 8,000 and 14,000 feet. Once there, check into the Estes Park KOA, your host for the evening. While in Estes Park you could take a ride of the Prospect Mountain Aerial Tramway, take a horseback ride, and go fishing or maybe even boating on Lake Estes.
- Day 3: Today you can visit the Rocky Mountain National Park Visitor Center, which highlights more than 400 square miles of park attractions and recreational opportunities. Spend the rest of the day sampling some of those adventures. Drive along Trail Ridge Road/Beaver Meadow Road, a designated All-American Road by the US Department of Transportation and one of the few paved roads in North America that leads to a high, alpine glacier basin. This scenic byway crosses Rocky Mountain National Park from Estes Park to Grand Lake winding past cascading mountain streams and through Moraine Park to the green meadows of Glacier Basin. Your host once again is the Estes Park KOA.
- Day 4: Today you'll head towards Central City following Highway 40. As the route crosses the Continental Divide at 11,307-foot Berthoud Pass, there are great views into lower elevations and many splendid mountain vistas to photograph. Check into the Central City/Blackhawk KOA. Take the rest of the day to explore the historic Central City where Colorado's first gold rush kicked off in 1859. You might even try your hand at panning for gold.
- Day 5: Now its time to drive towards Moab. This drive offers the full spectrum of the grandeur of Colorado's Rocky Mountains. Along the way you'll see heavily forested, rugged peaks behind open range lands as well as canyons and sandstone mesas. You might want to stop in Georgetown and walk through the Georgetown-Silver Plume National Historic Landmark District, which features over 200 beautifully restored Victorian buildings. As you pass through the Glenwood Canyon be sure to stop at the Hanging Lake Falls and the Hot Springs Pool. Tonight you'll be staying at the Moab KOA.
- Day 6: Take all of today to explore the Moab area. Arches and Canyonlands National Parks are a must for every visitor. You might even want to go rafting

on the Colorado River. Your host again is the Moab KOA.

- Day 7: Today you'll take a drive to Delta. Don't take the direct way, but rather take the Grand Mesa Scenic and Historic Byway following Highway 65, one of only 14 officially designated National Scenic Byways. You'll be going through Grand Mesa National Forest with its semiarid environment and little vegetation. The road climbs through pine forests, passing high mountain lakes and allowing a great view from 11,000 feet above sea level. After you check into the Delta/Grand Mesa KOA you can set off to see the Grand Mesa to the north or Black Canyon to the southeast. Both are sites to behold.
- Day 8: The drive from Delta to Cortez will take you along the edge of the Uncompahgre Plateau, the Uncompahgre National Forest and the San Juan National Forest, always following San Juan Skyway, the second All-American Road on this tour. You'll drive through Old West towns like Telluride and later Durango, all in the shadow of impressive 14,000-foot peaks. Tonight you'll be staying at Cortez/Mesa Verde KOA. Spend the rest of the day exploring the Mesa Verde National Park where you can view the ruins of Anasazi villages and dwellings, which were built between 550 and 1270 AD.
- Day 9: Today you'll transfer to the Durango North KOA in Durango. You could take a ride on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. This 8 hour ride which is both a historical landmark and a national civil engineering landmark winds through the rugged San Juan region to the historic mining town of Silverton.
- Day 10: In case you didn't finish exploring Mesa Verde National Park, today would be the day to go back and finish up. You might take a drive into New Mexico and visit the Aztec Ruins National Park or Navajo Lake State Park. Otherwise you can also just spend the day relaxing or hiking in the San Juan National Forest. Your host once again is the Durango North KOA.
- Day 11: After leaving the plateau and canyon country around Durango you'll drive backup into the mountains following the so-called Million Dollar Highway, named because it is said that every mile of this road must have cost a million dollars. The route crosses rugged granite ranges of the San Juan Mountains, often cresting heights over 10,000 feet, for example at the Coal Bank Pass. Once in Ouray, you can check into the Ouray KOA, your host for the evening. Then you might want to visit the Ouray Hot Springs or the magnificent Box Canyon Water Falls.
- Day 12: Rent a jeep today at the Ouray KOA and take a trek up into the San Juan Mountains for a day of fun and adventure. Whether its viewing the breathtaking scenery, discovering mines, picking wild flowers or exploring ghost towns, this will be a day to remember. Your host again this evening is the Ouray KOA.
- Day 13: Today you'll go back into the lowlands to start your trip to Gunnison. As you draw nearer to Gunnison you'll drive into the canyons formed by the Black

Mesa Range. These red and black volcanic cliffs are a stark contrast to the Blue Mesa and Morrow Point reservoirs that are havens for ducks, geese, eagles and fish. Your host this evening is the Gunnison KOA.

- Day 14: You'll be moving on to the Royal Gorge / Canon City KOA today, where you'll be able to see the magnificent Royal Gorge and the world's highest suspension bridge – 1,053 feet above the river. Some people might even recognize these sheer cliffs of the canyons from various famous movies. The campground also offers many diversions, like the Fun Country Amusement Park with go-carts and giant slides.
- Day 15: Today you might want to take a river rafting trip through the Royal Gorge Canyon. If that's not your style, try some of the horse trail rides that are available adjacent to the campground. The area also offers an old west town called Buckskin Joe that is well-worth visiting. Stay another night at the Royal Gorge/Canon city KOA.
- Day 16: Enjoy the short trip to Cripple Creek, Colorado, where you'll stay at the Cripple Creek KOA. You could go visit the Florissant Fossil Beds or you could go hiking and horseback riding. Fun fact: you are at the highest KOA in the world at 10,000 feet above sea level.
- Day 17: Take a trip on the Cripple Creek-Victor Narrow Gauge Railroad for a lively tour of Wild West ghost towns and old gold mines. Or join a guided tour of the Mollie Kathleen mine, which descends 1000 feet into the mountain. Another trip might be to visit nearby Pikes Peak that tops out at an elevation of 14,110 feet. This famous peak inspired the song "America the Beautiful." Again you'll stay at the Cripple Creek KOA.
- Day 18: On your way to Castle Rock KOA you might want to stop near Manitou Springs and visit the Cave of the Winds and take a tour of these 21 well lit caverns. You could also visit the nearby Garden of the Gods Park, with some of its red and white sandstone monoliths being between 100 million and 300 million years old. It is a site to behold. Once you arrive at the Castle Rock/ Colorado Springs North KOA, you can either spend the rest of the day in the nearby Pikes National Forest or spend a little time exploring Denver, which is only 25 miles to the north.
- Day 19: Return your motorhome and have a safe journey home.