DEN

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THE GREAT AMERICAN HEARTLAND

Greetings from DENVER

48 hours, solo, at your own pace

POCKET EDITION · 2027

48-HOUR GUIDE · SAFETY GUIDE · PLANNING CALENDAR
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Welcome to Denver

Denver is a bright, open, easy city to travel alone. It sits a mile above sea level where the Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains, with a skyline that frames a wall of snowy peaks on clear days. Downtown is flat, the sun shines most days of the year, and a train runs from the airport to the heart of the city.

Traveling solo here works because the city is built for outdoors and for eating well in small groups. Union Station, the food halls, the breweries, and the neighborhood parks all welcome a single guest, and the mountains are an easy day trip.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read through once before you go. Day One covers Union Station, Larimer Square, the Capitol and its Mile High steps, and the Denver Art Museum. Day Two visits Red Rocks and the RiNo arts district. Section 03 is the new-for-2027 feature on the Mile High steps. The altitude and sun are strong, so drink water, wear sunscreen, and take it slowly on the first day.

ESSENTIAL QUICK FACTS

CURRENCY
US dollar (cards accepted nearly everywhere)

TRANSIT
RTD buses and light rail · about $2.75 a ride

TIME ZONE
Mountain (UTC–7; UTC–6 in summer)

EMERGENCY
911 · non-emergency 720-913-2000

TIPPING
18–20% in restaurants

ALTITUDE
5,280 feet — drink water and use sunscreen

01 DAY ONE

Union Station · The Capitol · The Art Museum

The first day stays in the center: a grand station, a mile-high landmark, and some of the best museums in the Rockies.

MORNING · 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

8:30 AM

Union Station

The restored 1914 railway station is now a hotel, a food hall, and a gathering place with a grand hall. Order a coffee and take in the arches and the neon sign.

The A Line train from the airport arrives here, so it is a good first stop.

10:00 AM

Colorado State Capitol

A gold-domed capitol with a famous step: the 13th step on the west side marks "one mile above sea level." Free tours run on weekdays.

Check tour schedules and security rules before you go.

12:00 PM

Lunch — Denver Central Market

A food hall in RiNo with local bakers, butchers, and chefs, where you can graze at counters and seats made for one.

Browse the whole hall before you choose.

AFTERNOON · 1:30 PM – 5:30 PM

1:30 PM

Denver Art Museum

A striking museum with a strong Western and Native American art collection and architecture by Daniel Libeskind and Gio Ponti.

Check admission and hours; the first Friday of the month is often free for some visitors.

4:00 PM

Larimer Square

Denver's oldest block, lined with Victorian buildings, shops, and restaurants, and strung with lights at night.

It is most atmospheric at dusk, when the lights come on.

EVENING · 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

6:30 PM

Dinner — Mercantile Dining & Provision

A restaurant at Union Station with a simple, seasonal menu and a bar suited to a solo diner.

Sit at the bar and ask what is fresh from Colorado farms.

8:30 PM

Drinks at Wynkoop Brewing Company

Denver's first brewpub, opened in 1988, in a historic LoDo building.

Ask for a flight to sample local beers.

02 DAY TWO

Red Rocks · RiNo · Washington Park

The second day heads west to a natural amphitheater, then returns to the art, murals, and parks of the city.

MORNING · 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

8:00 AM

Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre

An open-air concert venue set between towering red sandstone formations, about 30 minutes from downtown. When there is no show, you can walk the rows and the trails.

Check the concert calendar; the park may close to visitors on show days.

10:30 AM

Breakfast — Snooze, an A.M. Eatery

A bright, busy breakfast spot famous for its pancakes and benedicts.

Go early, and sit at the counter if there is one.

12:00 PM

Clyfford Still Museum

A museum devoted to the work of abstract expressionist Clyfford Still, in a quiet building near the Art Museum.

It is small and calm, which makes it a good solo stop.

AFTERNOON · 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

2:00 PM

RiNo Art District

A creative neighborhood of murals, galleries, breweries, and food halls. Walk the alleys and look up.

The murals change, so ask a local for the best new walls.

4:30 PM

Washington Park

A big, leafy park with a lake, a flower garden, and paths for running and walking.

Join the locals for a stroll at the end of the day.

EVENING · 6:30 PM – LATE

6:30 PM

Dinner — Sam's No. 3

A classic Denver diner with a huge menu, a counter, and late hours.

The counter is perfect for one.

8:30 PM

Rooftop or Patio Drinks

Denver's warm evenings are best on a rooftop or patio, with the mountains in the distance.

Check the weather; temperatures drop quickly after sunset.

03 MILE HIGH

A Mile High, Three Times

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know the Colorado State Capitol has three different "mile high" markers on its steps?

Denver's elevation is exactly one mile, 5,280 feet, but surveyors disagreed on where. The 13th step on the Capitol's west side was the original marker, and later surveys placed new markers on the 15th step in 1969 and on the 18th step in 2003.

A SHORT HISTORY

The original marker was cut into the 13th step in the early 1900s. Later surveys, using more precise tools, found slightly different elevations, and each was marked on a new step. The Capitol itself is clad in Colorado granite and topped with a gold-leaf dome.

HOW TO VISIT

The steps are on the west side of the Capitol, facing Broadway. Look for the brass markers on the three steps. Free tours of the building run on weekdays, and the observation deck is open when staffing allows. Check hours and security rules before you go.

BEST TIME TO GO

Weekday mornings are the quietest. The light on the golden dome is best at midday on clear days, and the views from the steps stretch to the Rockies.

04 WHERE TO EAT

Food halls, breweries, and green chile

Denver's dining is casual and varied. Most places below suit a solo diner at a counter, bar, or hall.

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Snooze, an A.M. Eatery
SEVERAL · $12–20
A busy breakfast chain known for pancakes and benedicts.

Denver Central Market
RINO · $10–20
A food hall with bakers, butchers, and counters for one.

Biker Jim's Gourmet Dogs
DOWNTOWN · $8–14
Exotic sausages and hot dogs from a popular cart and shop.

Sam's No. 3
DOWNTOWN · $10–20
An old-school diner open for breakfast, lunch, and late dinner.

DINNER & LATE NIGHT

Mercantile Dining & Provision
UNION STATION · $25–45
A seasonal menu and a good bar for one.

Tamayo
LODO · $18–32
Modern Mexican food and a rooftop patio near Larimer Square.

Wynkoop Brewing Company
LODO · $14–26
Denver's first brewpub, with pub food and house beer.

Work & Class
RINO · $18–32
Latin-inspired shared plates in a lively, small room.

05 GETTING AROUND

Navigating Denver

Downtown is flat and compact, and light rail and buses reach most neighborhoods. A car helps for Red Rocks and the mountains.

RTD light rail and bus	about $2.75	Local fares cover most downtown routes; buy in the app or at a machine.
A Line to the airport	about $10	A 37-minute train from DEN to Union Station.
16th Street MallRide	Free	A free shuttle runs along the 16th Street Mall; check current service.
Rideshare	by trip	The easiest way to reach Red Rocks on show nights.
Bikes & scooters	by the minute	Rentals are widely available on downtown bike paths.
Walking	Free	LoDo, Larimer Square, and Civic Center are all close together.

Allow extra time for Red Rocks on concert nights, and check parking and shuttle options in advance.

06 BACKUP PLANS

Denver on a rainy afternoon

Denver gets more sun than rain, but afternoon storms and winter snow do happen. These are good alternatives.

CIVIC CENTER

Denver Art Museum

A strong Western and Native American collection.

CIVIC CENTER

Clyfford Still Museum

A quiet gallery devoted to one major painter.

DOWNTOWN

History Colorado Center

Exhibits on Colorado's history, with interactive displays.

DOWNTOWN

Tattered Cover Book Store

A well-known independent bookstore with a cafe.

CHEESMAN PARK

Denver Botanic Gardens

A big, glass-roofed conservatory and gardens.

CAPITOL HILL

Molly Brown House Museum

A Victorian mansion tied to the Titanic survivor.

07 NEIGHBORHOODS

Know your neighborhoods

TRAINS & DINING

Union Station

The station, a hotel, and a food hall.

HISTORIC BLOCKS

LoDo

Victorian buildings, Larimer Square, and Coors Field.

MURALS & BREWERIES

RiNo

Street art, galleries, and the Denver Central Market.

MUSEUMS & PARKS

Civic Center

The Art Museum, the Capitol, and the Clyfford Still Museum.

LEAFY & LOCAL

Washington Park

A big park with a lake and a garden.

SHOPS & BARS

Cherry Creek

Boutiques, restaurants, and a creekside path.

08 GOOD TO KNOW

What nobody tells you

- Plan around the altitude. Drink water, limit alcohol the first day, and use sunscreen.
- Colorado sun is strong, even in winter. Wear a hat and sunscreen.
- Check concert calendars at Red Rocks; the park may close to visitors on show days.
- Weather can change quickly. Carry a light jacket, especially in spring and fall.
- Tip 18–20% in restaurants. Sales tax is added at the register.
- Cannabis is legal for adults but not in public places or in cars.

WHEN TO GO

Mar–May	Spring	Variable weather, with sunny days and occasional snow.
Jun–Aug	Summer	Warm days, cool nights, and outdoor concerts at Red Rocks.
Sep–Nov	Best overall	Golden aspens, sunny days, and fewer crowds.
Dec–Feb	Winter	Cold but often sunny, with skiing within two hours.

09 SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY

Is Denver safe?

Generally safe for travelers, with standard city awareness. Union Station, LoDo, Cherry Creek, and the park areas are busy and well-lit. The 16th Street Mall and some blocks east of downtown can feel rough at night.

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AT A GLANCE

Union Station / LoDo	●●●●○
Washington Park	●●●●●
Cherry Creek	●●●●●
Civic Center (day)	●●●●○
RiNo	●●●●○
16th Street Mall at night	●●●○○
East Colfax at night	●●○○○

COMMON SCAMS

Panhandling and petty theft can occur near downtown transit stops. Decline politely and keep valuables out of sight. Never leave belongings in a parked car.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Denver Health Medical Center and UCHealth University of Colorado Hospital are the main hospitals. Altitude can cause headaches, so drink water and rest. Carry travel insurance.

SOLO TRAVELERS

Share your plan with someone back home and keep your phone charged. In the mountains, check weather and road conditions, and tell someone where you are going.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Police, fire, medical	911
Denver non-emergency	720-913-2000
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Nearest ER	Denver Health · 777 Bannock St.

10 PLANNING CALENDAR

Denver, month by month

Exact dates shift each year, so confirm before booking.

JAN NATIONAL WESTERN STOCK SHOW

- A big rodeo and livestock show brings cowboy culture to the city for two weeks in January.

MAY CINCO DE MAYO

- One of the largest celebrations in the country fills Civic Center.

JUN–SEP RED ROCKS SEASON

- Concerts fill the amphitheater most nights through the summer.

SEP GREAT AMERICAN BEER FESTIVAL

- Breweries from around the country gather at the convention center, usually in the fall.

OCT FALL COLOR

- Aspens turn gold in the nearby mountains.

DEC HOLIDAYS

- The City and County Building is covered in lights for the Parade of Lights and Christmas displays.

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Every Stop, Mapped

Scan the code to open the free interactive Denver map — every stop in this guide, filterable by day, food, and transport.



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