



## Denver, Colorado



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### Gateway to the Colorado Rocky Mountains

Denver's skyline is silhouetted against the majesty of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, which inspired singer-songwriter John Denver to compose the nationally known song "Rocky Mountain High."

Denver attracts skiers from around the world who can easily visit a number of ski areas within 100 kilometers of the city. It is also the first stop for travelers to world-renowned resorts in Vail, Aspen and Telluride.

#### Then and Now

Denver was founded as a mining town in 1858, when a small

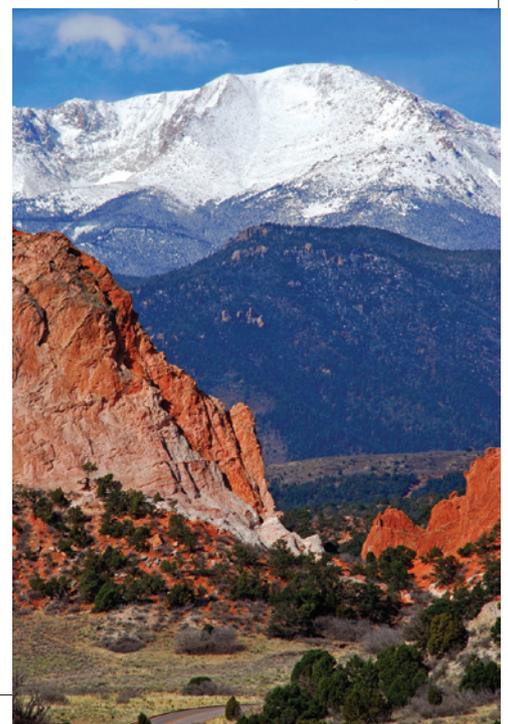
group of prospectors found gold. Many more soon flooded in with the hope of finding riches. The amount of gold uncovered wasn't enough to keep the town alive, and it was nearly abandoned the next year. But Denver's ideal location between large cities in the Midwest and on the West Coast of the United States helped the city grow as a trade center. Today it is the 18th-largest metro economy in the United States.

Other milestones in city history include:

- 1863 — The U.S. government establishes a mint to make coins and currency in Denver.

Snow-capped Pikes Peak as seen from the Garden of the Gods park.

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Miners from nearby areas in the region brought in gold dust and nuggets to be melted, assayed and cast into bars. By 1895, the mint is taking in more than \$5.6 million in gold and silver deposits annually.

- 1876 — Colorado enters the Union as the 38th state on August 1, just a month after the United States' 100th anniversary, under the presidency of Civil War general Ulysses S. Grant.

- 1908 — Denver hosts the Democratic National Convention at no cost in an effort to attract business to a newly built convention center. Denver again hosted the Democratic National Convention in 2008. This time, the convention generated an estimated \$266 million in economic benefits to the city and surrounding metro area.

### The People

Just over 600,000 people live in the city of Denver. Racially and ethnically diverse, nearly a third of Denver's population claim Hispanic heritage. Denver is the largest city in Colorado and the state's capital.

### The Land

Located approximately 19 kilometers east of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, the city has an area of about 400 square kilometers. Denver is located on a plain elevated 1 mile (about 1,610 meters) above sea level, which gave rise to its nickname "The Mile-High City."

### The Weather

Denver's climate is semi-arid, and the city enjoys an average of 300 days of sunshine each year. Winters are mild, but Denver gets between 1.3 meters and 1.6 meters of snow between October and April.



Panning for gold is still a popular pastime. ©Shutterstock

- 1914 — Denver brings wild bison originally from Yellowstone National Park to Genesee Park, Denver's first mountain park, acquired in 1912. The goal was to attract more tourists to the park while helping preserve the animals from extinction. Today, there are about 60 American bison living within approximately 300 hectares; it is the only city-owned, free-roaming bison herd in the world.

- 1972 — Denver becomes the only city ever to decline to host the Olympics. Selected in 1970 to host the 1976 Winter Olympics, city and state residents voted against hosting the games based on the financial burden and environmental concerns.

Man-made and natural attractions abound in Denver. These include:

- The Denver Museum of Science and Nature, founded in 1900, features fossils from a mammoth and other Ice Age creatures discovered in Colorado.

- The History Colorado Center lets visitors descend into a silver mine, take a virtual ski jump, and learn

about the resilience of Colorado's Native American tribes.

- The Molly Brown Museum offers insights into the "unsinkable" lady who survived the Titanic tragedy. This child of Irish immigrants married a man who struck it rich in Colorado's mining operations. She used her wealth to champion social reforms, including workers' rights and women's suffrage.

- Denver boasts more than 200 parks within the city limits. The city has also acquired approximately 57 square kilometers of mountain parks, many within easy driving distance of the city. Nearby attractions include the magical Garden of the Gods Park. This registered National Natural Landmark boasts red sandstone rock formations towering 90 meters high. Also nearby is Pikes Peak. Composed of pink granite, Pikes Peak is one of Colorado's 54 mountains that rise more than 4,300 meters above sea level.

For the most spectacular scenery this side of heaven, consider a trip to Denver!