



Visit Estes Park  
The Destination  
Marketing Organization  
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## Visit Estes Park Fact Sheet

### About Estes Park

Estes Park is a small mountain village that offers seemingly endless activities for outdoor lovers, nature enthusiasts, active couples and families of all sizes. Estes Park is surrounded on all four sides by nationally protected land, including Rocky Mountain National Park and the Roosevelt National Forest. Celebrating its centennial in 2017, the village is a year-round destination with more than 100 hotels, motels, lodges, bed and breakfasts, guest ranches, cabins and cottages, condominiums and campgrounds.

### Population

6,362 people (2016); approx. 3,000 elk “residents”

### Location

Estes Park is located at the base of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, just 90 minutes northwest of Denver. Denver International Airport is the closest airport to Estes; transportation options include rental cars and shuttle service.

### Weather

Estes Park is a [four-season destination](#), experiencing beautiful springs, summers, falls and winters. The town’s mountain setting provides cool, temperatures during the summer, averaging mid-70s from June through August. The winter sees snow, though most days are sunny. The most snowfall tends to occur in March and April.

### History

Estes Park has been a playground for lovers of the outdoors for thousands of years. The first people to visit the area were ancestors of today’s Native Americans, who hunted big game animals in the area. The Arapahoe and Ute tribes routinely visited Estes Park during the summer months to enjoy the ideal climate.

In October of 1859, Joel Estes made his first hunting trip to the Estes Valley. As a cattle rancher, Estes believed the valley held promise and moved to the town with his family. Others, intrigued by the possibilities of the valley, followed the Estes family and settled the land. In 1864 William Byers, then editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, named the area in honor of his hosts, Joel Estes and his family. The town of Estes Park then became incorporated in April 1917.

## Superlatives

Estes Park has some of the best of the best in the world including:

- **Trail Ridge Road** - Highest continuously paved road in the U.S., peaking at 12,183 feet.
- **YMCA of the Rockies Estes Park** – World’s largest YMCA facility
- **Rocky Mountain National Park** – Nation’s third most visited national park
- **Bald Pate Key Museum** – World’s largest collection of keys
- **Elk Population** – One of the highest concentrations of elk in the U.S.
- **Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival** – The largest of its kind west of the Mississippi.

## Top Activities

There are a myriad of activities to enjoy year-round in Estes Park including:

- **Active Pursuits:**
  - [Hiking](#), [Rock Climbing](#) & [ice climbing](#)
  - [Snowshoeing](#)
  - Cross-country & Backcountry [skiing](#)
  - Cycling & Mountain [Biking](#)
  - High altitude training & [trail running](#)
- **Water Adventures:**
  - [Fishing](#) & Fly Fishing
  - [Boating & Kayaking](#)
  - Standup Paddleboarding
- **Nature Excursions:**
  - [Photography Safaris](#) & nature classes
  - Birding, [wildlife viewing](#)
  - [Horseback riding](#)
- **Scenic Drives:**
  - [Trail Ridge Road](#)
  - [Peak to Peak Scenic Byway](#)
  - [Off-roading](#) & Jeep Tours
- **Leisure Activities:**
  - Golfing - Estes Park boasts two [golf courses](#), as well as multiple miniature courses for family fun
  - Shopping - More than 300 [shops](#)

## Key Attractions

- **[The Stanley Hotel](#)**: Recognized worldwide for its architecture, history, and stunning views, the hotel may be most well known for its paranormal activity. The original owners and eternal guests, F.O. and Flora Stanley, are known to appear as if they’re running The Stanley Hotel like they did when it opened in 1909. The establishment also played a large role in inspiring Stephen King’s “The Shining.”
- **[MacGregor Ranch](#)**: The MacGregor Ranch is the last remaining working cattle ranch in Estes Park. Built in 1873 the MacGregor

Ranch is one of few sites operating as both a working ranch and youth education center. It offers a window into the past for guests who can observe horses, ranch hands working the field and cattle grazing the meadow.

- [Baldpate Inn Key Museum](#): Named after the mystery novel, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, the Baldpate Inn opened in 1917. In keeping with the story line of the novel, the proprietors gave each guest to the Inn their very own key. The tradition ended during World War I, but loyal guests returned every year with their own keys from exotic locales around the world, thus creating the world's largest key collection, now boasting more than 20,000 keys including those from the Pentagon, Westminster Abby, Mozart's wine cellar, and even Frankenstein's castle.
- [Historic Park Theatre](#): Historic Park Theatre, the oldest operating movie theatre west of the Mississippi River, was built in 1913. The theatre has been renovated and still shows films today. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- [Estes Park Museum](#): The Estes Park Museum was founded by volunteers in 1962. The Museum's purpose is to collect, interpret and preserve local history, as well as to present exhibits, programs and events for the education and benefit of residents and guests of all ages. Admission is free.
- [Historic Fall River Hydroplant](#): The hydroplant was built by F.O. Stanley in 1909 to power the Stanley Hotel. The plant now serves as an interpretive center open to the public and features the original equipment installed by Stanley.
- [Estes Park Memorial Observatory](#): Opened in 2009, the observatory has a 16-foot dome which allows guests to enjoy Estes Park's clear, star filled skies and star gaze through a 12-inch computer controlled telescope.
- [Open Air Adventure Park](#): This family owned and operated aerial adventure park is a course fit for thrill seekers ages five and up. The 90-minute adventure consists of 32 different elements at 10 and 21 feet above ground.
- [Aerial Tramway](#): One of the few European-style cable cars operating in the U.S., the aerial tramway provides riders with a bird's-eye view of Estes Park from the end of May through early September.
- [Lake Estes Marina](#): Open from May through early October, the marina offers boat rentals from kayaks to pontoon boats, as well as pedal cart and cruise bike rentals to enjoy on a ride along the Lake Estes Trail.

### Key Natural Features

- [Rocky Mountain National Park](#): Encompassing 415 square miles with more than 350 miles of hiking trails, Rocky Mountain National Park boasts 114 peaks over 10,000 feet high, 700 species of wildflowers and 150 named lakes. Wildlife viewers will see elk, mule

deer, moose, bighorn sheep, eagles, hawks and other small animals in the park.

- **Roosevelt National Forest:** A variety of recreational activities are available here including camping, picnicking, scenic drives, wildlife viewing, hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, rafting, four-wheel driving, dirt biking, skiing, snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding.
- **[Bear Lake](#):** At 9,475 feet, Bear Lake is the most easily accessed alpine lake in Rocky Mountain National Park. Its .65 mile nature trail loop provides close-up views of two of the Park's signature peaks: Hallett and Longs. Hallett Peak is one of the most photographed peaks in all of Rocky Mountain National Park.
- **Longs Peak:** Longs Peak is a particularly distinctive mountain within Rocky Mountain National Park. Towering at more than 14,259 feet, Longs Peak is the tallest mountain, and only "14er", in the entire park.
- **Old Man Mountain:** Towering above Fall River and to the west of Estes Park, Old Man Mountain and its breathtaking granite peak now appears on America's list of important 'Sacred Sites'. It stands about 655 feet above the surrounding valleys.
- **[Hermit Park](#):** Located in the Estes Valley, Hermit Park encompasses 1,362 acres. It includes hiking trails, camping grounds and spots for special events.

## Meetings & Weddings

The village's mountain scenery provides the perfect backdrop for all types of [special events](#) ranging in attendance from five to 2,500. The Event Center at the Stanley Hotel, YMCA of the Rockies Estes Park, Della Terra Mountain Chateau and the Estes Park Conference Center are just a few of the many venue options offering tens of thousands of square feet of space.

## Dining

### Fine dining options

- [Cascades at the Stanley Hotel](#)
- [Chalet Room at Marys Lake Lodge](#)
- [Twin Owls Steakhouse](#)

### Casual dining options

- [Sweet Basilico](#)
- [The Other Side](#)
- [The Rock Inn Mountain Tavern](#)
- [Mama Rose's](#)
- [The Tavern Room at Marys Lake Lodge](#)
- [Baldpate Inn](#) (seasonal)

### Budget-friendly dining options

- [Smokin' Daves BBQ & Taphouse](#)
- [Poppy's Pizza & Grill](#)

- [Molly B Restaurant](#)
- [Nepal's Cafe](#)
- [Claire's on the Park](#)
- [Ed's Cantina](#)

#### **Craft beer, wine, and spirits**

- [Estes Park Brewery](#)
- [Lumpy Ridge Brewing Co.](#)
- [Rock Cut Brewing Company](#)
- [Dancing Pines Distillery](#)
- [Snowy Peaks Winery](#)
- [Elkins Whiskey](#)

#### **Signature Annual Events**

- [Winter Festival/Winter Trails \(January\)](#) – The Estes Park Winter Festival showcases everything that the snowy village offers in the winter with a wide range of activities including local wine and beer tastings, live music, a chili cook-off, an interactive ice castle and more. Winter Trails Day (held during Winter Festival) draws nearly 1,000 guests annually. Participants have the opportunity to learn all there is to know about snowshoeing and enjoy free snowshoe demonstrations to Ranger-led hikes into Rocky Mountain National Park.
- [Whiskey Warm Up \(March\)](#) – Keep warm from the inside out with an afternoon of whiskey tasting, live music, and food pairing seminars. Sample local Colorado whiskeys and learn more about the styles, tastes, and smells from distillery owners and educators.
- [JazzFest \(June\)](#) – Held the first weekend in June, JazzFest offers two days of free jazz concerts at the outdoor amphitheater at Performance Park accompanied by a self-guided Art Walk of Estes Park galleries.
- [Wool Market \(June\)](#) – Estes Park's Wool Market is one of the largest and longest running all-natural fiber markets in North America focusing on how wool is obtained, prepared, spun and weaved. This event includes sheepherding demonstrations, crafts, and more than 50 booths showcasing homespun wares.
- [Scandinavian Midsummer Festival \(June\)](#) – Celebrating the summer solstice, the Estes Park Scandinavian Midsummer Festival is a weekend full of European culture and traditions. Festivities include a Viking reenactment, Saab and Volvo auto show, craft and art fair, and dancing.
- [4<sup>th</sup> of July Weekend Celebration \(July\)](#) – The idyllic All-American destination, Estes Park sparks alive with one of the most spectacular firework displays in Colorado. Weekend celebrations also include the "Coolest Car Show," live bands, and Independence Day pancake breakfast and tons of activities for kids.
- [Rooftop Rodeo \(July\)](#) – One of Estes Park's most popular events, the Rooftop Rodeo includes bronco riding, steer wrestling, barrel racing, and bull riding. The event also features western food, libations, and live music – ideal for a western-themed getaway. The rodeo has been voted

the “Best Small Rodeo of the Year” five times, and won the PRCA Mountain States Circuit Medium Rodeo of the Year accolade in 2014, along with its Most Improved Rodeo of the Year award in 2015.

- [Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival \(September\)](#) – Held the weekend after Labor Day, the Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival celebrates Celtic heritage with a parade, pipe bands, Highland and Irish dance competitions, folk music, International Jousting Championships, nightly concerts and more. This Estes Park festival is the largest in the West.
- [Autumn Gold Festival \(September\)](#) – Gold aspen leaves, crisp fall air, and the sound of elk bugling combine to create the perfect setting for this festival of bands, brats, and beer. Free family activities and a \$5,000 grand prize raffle drawing are just a few of the event’s highlights.
- [Elk Fest \(Elktober\)](#) – Premiering the first weekend in October, ElkFest is a celebration of all things Wapiti, the nearly 2,400 American elk that call Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park their home. Seminars, a bugling contest, elk tours, a Mountain Man encampment, Native American music and dancing, and edible products from elk are all featured.
- [Fall Back Beer Festival \(October/November\)](#) – During this festival held each year during daylight saving time, guests can taste more than 100 different beers from breweries across Colorado, attend beer-centric seminars, and watch demonstrations from equipment fabricators.
- [Catch the Glow \(November\)](#) – Known for festive holiday décor, Estes Park invites guests to, “Catch the Glow” the day after Thanksgiving each year. The day’s big event is the Catch the Glow Christmas parade, drawing nearly 25,000 spectators from around the region to line Elkhorn Avenue, Estes Park’s main street, to watch the floats go by and ring in the holiday season!

## Top Accolades

“#1 Family Day Trip”

- Colorado Parent, 2017 Family Favorites Awards

“Destinations on the Rise – U.S. ”

- TripAdvisor, 2016 Travelers’ Choice Awards

“Top 10 Tourist Towns for Family Travel”

- *FamilyFun*, 2015 Travel Awards

“Best Small Towns”

- *The Huffington Post*, 2015

“20 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2015”

- *Smithsonian*, 2015

“America’s Coolest Small Towns”

- *Budget Travel*, 2014

“America’s Favorite Towns”

- *Travel + Leisure*, 2013

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