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BY GWEN GRAY

EXTRAORDINARY EXHIBITS AT
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Rise & Dine: Ways to Enhance
Your Rocky Mountain Mornings



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RISE & DINE

Ways to Enhance Your Rocky Mountain Mornings
BY ASHLEY HUGHES

Wake up on a crisp Colorado morning and you'll be eager to get a jump on any number of activities — skiing, biking, museum exploration, boutique browsing, you name it. But don't be in such a hurry that you forget to fuel up first. Whether you grab and go or linger over steaming cups of fresh coffee and a fluffy short stack, your morning nosh options have never been better.

JAVA JOINTS

Being a morning person isn't for everyone, which is where an eye-opening cup of joe comes in handy. "Get locomotivated," as the menu encourages, at **Nederland's The Train Cars Coffee and Yogurt Company**, housed inside a trio of repurposed train cars. For a classic combo, you can't go wrong with the locally roasted selection and half a dozen mini donuts.

Look for the permanently parked trailer on Main Street in downtown **Telluride** and you'll be rewarded with a satisfying spot to get your buzz on. At **The Coffee Cowboy**, ordering a heavenly cinnabliss latte is also an opportunity for a good deed. The "Pay it Forward" program lets customers pay for a cup credit for someone in need to use via sticky notes on the window.

There are plenty of places in **Denver** for a caffeine fix, but **Black Eye Coffee** draws attention for its extensive bean-roasting program and rotation of single-origin liquid elixirs. While there are two locations, only the Capitol Hill outpost transforms into an evening-time alter ego: cocktail bar White Lies.

If your idea of a morning well spent involves taking time to indulge in written musings, then **Inkwell & Brew** in **Estes Park** is the place for you. Part coffee bar, part stationary shop (the lovely wares include greeting cards, journals, writing pens and art supplies), this haven for creative types even hosts poetry readings and live music — all the better to enjoy with a cortado or cafe au lait.



THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY

There's a reason parents tell their kids not to skip breakfast: Not only is it delicious, it will power you through the day ahead. Join the local crowd at **Village Smithy** in **Carbondale** — a longtime Roaring Fork Valley favorite — for a smattering of skillet, scrambles, sweets and other dishes served up in an old blacksmith building.

In **Fort Collins**, the a.m. fare at **Silver Grill Cafe** tempts diners daily, but it's the giant home-made cinnamon rolls that really steal the show. Oozing with sugary goodness, this signature item at the oldest restaurant in northern Colorado is worth waking up for and can even be tried as French toast (yes, please).

A focus on local ingredients? Check. Fresh bread baked in house paired with made-from-scratch jams and jellies? Double check. The emphasis on quality must be why the hungry denizens of **Steamboat Springs** flock to the homey **Creekside Cafe & Grill** year-round. Don't miss the Wafflelaughagus, a hearty malted waffle loaded up with sausage gravy, cheese, a choice of meat and two eggs.

Despite its name, **Salida's Patio Pancake Place** has no actual outdoor patio — in fact, it originally opened as a drive-in restaurant. These days, headlines range from prized pancakes (think: banana split and coconut varieties) to a green-chili recipe that hasn't changed in decades. Because why mess with success?

BAKERY BITES

It doesn't matter if you crave sweet or savory treats before noon, that's what bakeries are here for. **Palisade's Slice O'Life Bakery** has been turning out the owner's personal recipes since 1978, frequently using the bounty of locally grown fruit for peach challah bread, cherry-hazelnut espresso bars and various pies.

When you've had your fill of soaking in **Pagosa Springs'** geothermal waters, make a stop at **Pagosa Baking Company** for all things flour-filled. There's always an artisan bread of the day, not to mention tasty muffins, scones, cinnamon rolls, cookies and other delights.

Experience an authentic taste of France by way of the Denver suburb **Parker** at **La Baguette de Normandy**, where a certified master baker, chef and chocolatier oversees the creation of swoon-worthy pastries, buttery croissants, airy quiche and ham-laden sandwiches.

Being gluten free doesn't mean having to skip out on baked goods entirely, a point proven by **Aime's Love** in **Longmont**. In fact, everything on the menu is sans gluten, including egg sandwiches, crepes, bagels and an assortment of specialty desserts.



Ashley Hughes is a dining enthusiast and avid home cook who loves to explore the world through food. She lives in Denver, where she keeps up with the city's ever-growing restaurant scene.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SLICE O' LIFE BAKERY; SILVER GRILL CAFE; PAGOSA BAKING COMPANY.