

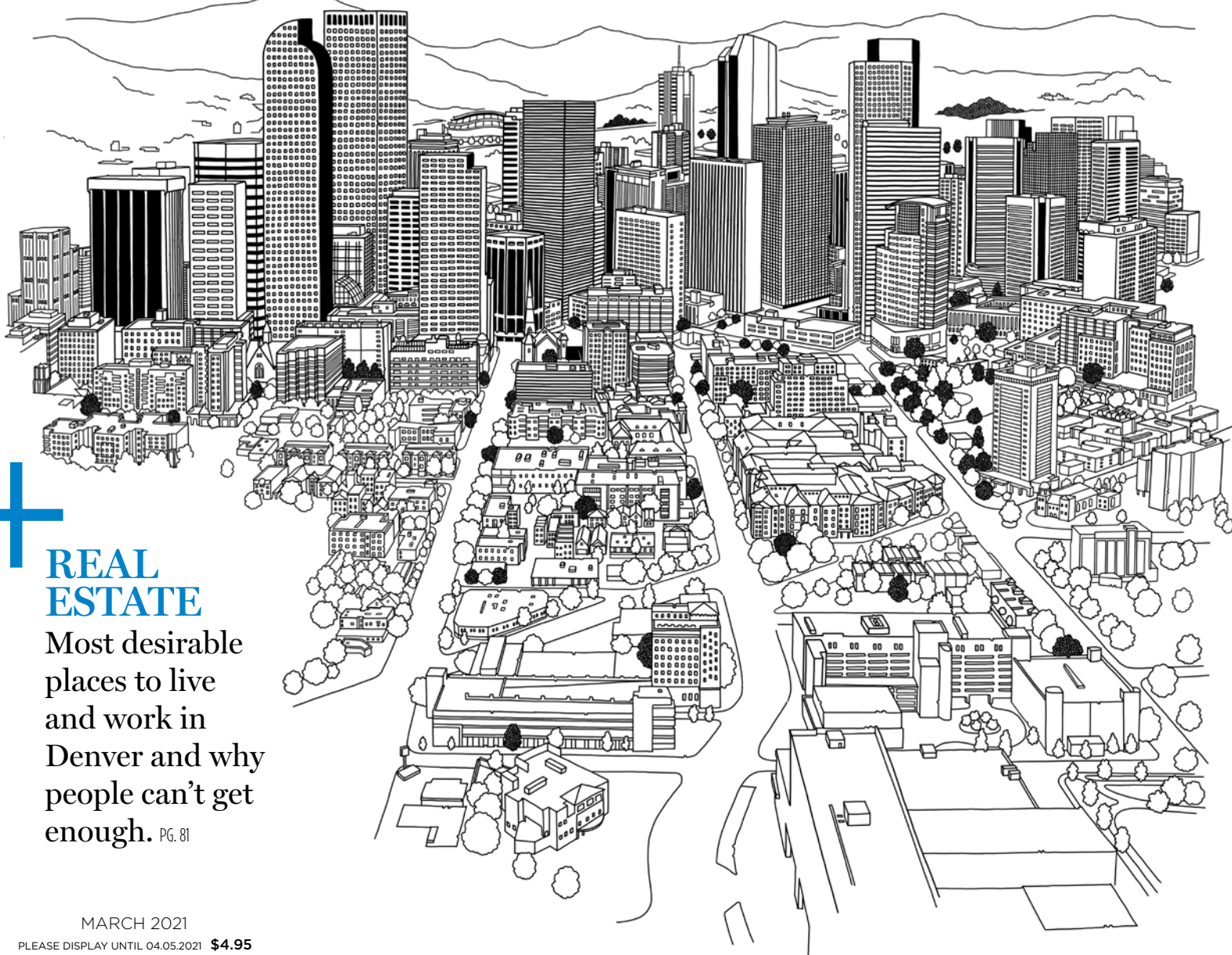
# denver life

14TH ANNUAL BEST PLACES TO LIVE...

Colorado's leading lifestyle magazine

## Our HAPPY PLACE

From arts & culture to dining & shopping—we cover all the bases when it comes to what's hot in the Mile High City.



### REAL ESTATE

Most desirable places to live and work in Denver and why people can't get enough. PG. 81

MARCH 2021

PLEASE DISPLAY UNTIL 04.05.2021 \$4.95



denverlifemagazine.com

### NO-FUSS FASHION

Global women's clothing brand MarlaWynne sets up shop in Denver, the owner's hometown.

### DESIGNER'S TOUCH

The boutique design firm River and Lime creates the right balance of comfort and luxury.

### ALTITUDE TRAINING

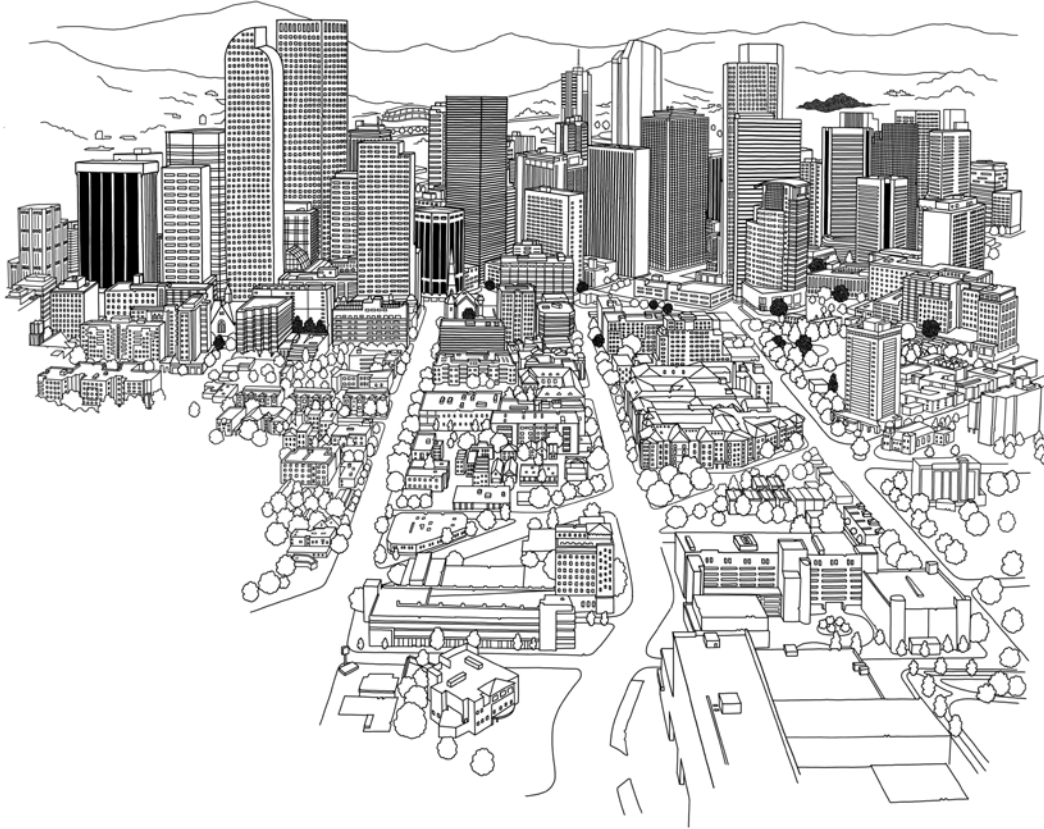
Denver's newest gym provides unique fitness programs for the outdoor adventure enthusiast.

### DOWNTOWN GETAWAY

Hotel Teatro's renovated, modern experience perfectly complements its historic setting.

# The Lifestyle We Live *and Love*

By Julie Dugdale



**If** there's one thing we've learned over the past year, it's to appreciate the place we live—because, well, we've all been spending *a lot* of time here. We found ourselves rediscovering what we love about the institutions, venues, businesses, restaurants, parks, and people that make up our (suddenly smaller) world. Sure, the way we go about crafting our lifestyle has been—and will continue to be—outside the norm these past months, and the places that infuse the personality of our neighborhoods may operate differently or more intermittently than they ever have, but their contribution to the character of our city remains.

It's the museums that capture our minds, the performances that rock our souls, and the hard-fought ballgames that lift our spirits. It's the learning that engages us, the food that entices us, and the fresh air that fills us with ease and joy. Drawing on the resources in our own communities and exploring the richness of what's right next door has never been more important. Here, we bring you the top reasons to love where we live.



# Culture Club

There's no doubt, the Mile High City and the arts go hand in hand. We scoured the city for the best places to visit when looking to satisfy your eclectic eye for all things cultured.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Denver Botanic Gardens

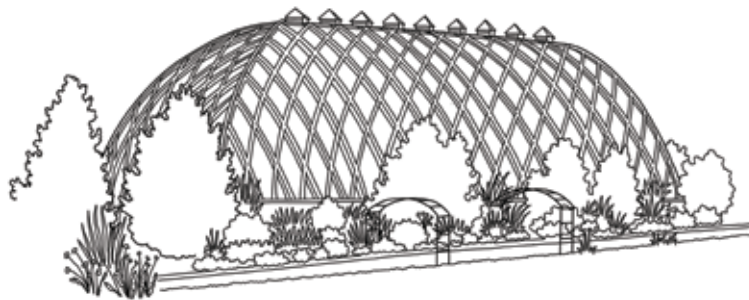
● In one of Denver's most central residential neighborhoods, situated amongst Cheesman and Congress parks, a lush oasis merges culture within its 24 acres of curated plants and flowers from across the globe.

The Denver Botanic Gardens hosts a rotating lineup of artistic installations as well as a hands-on children's garden for the youngest nature lovers. There's also a bevy of educational programs, a sleek new Copper Door Coffee Roasters, and an immensely popular summer concert series in partnership with Swallow Hill Music (during non-pandemic times).

But perhaps the biggest draw to the Gardens—as well as its sister outpost, Chatfield Farms, in Littleton—is the freedom to explore. “Spending time outside with plants has incredible therapeutic benefits,”



ERIN BIRD



says Erin Bird, Denver Botanic Gardens communications manager. “Every inch is meticulously planned, so you really have a global experience as you travel through the gardens. You're really able to disconnect and reconnect with nature and have a unique experience at your own pace. People bring picnics, or canvases to paint, or they read. It really is a great escape.”

720.865.3500, [botanicgardens.org](http://botanicgardens.org)



Counter Clockwise: Denver's Clifford Still Museum; performing *Sleeping Beauty* at the Colorado Ballet; Mission Ballroom and Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

## Get tickets for

### DENVER ART MUSEUM

● As the grande dame of Denver's Golden Triangle Creative District, the DAM attracts high-profile exhibitions showcasing the work of the world's most prolific artistic icons. 720.865.5000, [denverartmuseum.org](http://denverartmuseum.org)

### MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART DENVER

● Equal parts worldly prestige and tongue-in-cheek edginess, MCA Denver is a curated forum for the creative expression of all things avant-garde, from watercolor

tattooing to digital art-making to the birth of modern graffiti.

303.298.7554, [mcdenver.org](http://mcdenver.org)

### CLEO PARKER ROBINSON DANCE

● For half a century, modern dance under the dynamic leadership of founder and choreographer Cleo Parker Robinson has paid tribute to the African American experience, pushed the boundaries of dance convention, and transformed audience understanding of artistic expression.

303.295.1759, [cleoparkerdance.org](http://cleoparkerdance.org)



CLIFFORD STILL MUSEUM; COLORADO BALLET: DANA BENTON AND YOSVANI RAMOS IN *SLEEPING BEAUTY*; BY MIKE WATSON; MISSION BALLROOM, ON THE HIP PHOTO; DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

## DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE & SCIENCE

● Dinosaurs. Precious stones. Exotic creatures. Ancient civilizations. Space. Human bodies. Thrilling IMAX adventures. DMNS has it all, and more.  
303.370.6000, [dmns.org](http://dmns.org)

## CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM

● Immerse yourself in the mesmerizing legacy of the enigmatic artist Clyfford Still, whose abstract expressionism pioneered a whole new approach to painting.  
720.354.4880, [clyffordstillmuseum.org](http://clyffordstillmuseum.org)

## COLORADO SYMPHONY

● A pillar of Denver's performing arts scene based at downtown's Boettcher Concert Hall, the symphony comprises 80 musicians who lend their talents to more than 150 concerts a year and collaborate with celebrated artists and all manner of institutions to create engaging and innovative musical performances.  
303.623.7876, [coloradosymphony.org](http://coloradosymphony.org)

## COLORADO BALLET

● For 60 years, the nonprofit has entranced audiences at Denver's Ellie Caulkins Opera House with groundbreaking world premieres, contemporary and neoclassical performances, and seasonal classics like *The Nutcracker*.  
303.339.1623, [coloradoballet.org](http://coloradoballet.org)

## HISTORY COLORADO

● Rich storytelling and historical discovery imbue the museums and heritage centers of this nonprofit. The organization sits under Colorado's Department of Higher Education, helmed by the History Colorado Center in Denver's Golden Triangle Creative District.  
303.447.8679, [historycolorado.org](http://historycolorado.org)

## RED ROCKS PARK AND AMPHITHEATRE

● As one of the most iconic amphitheatres in the world, the concert venue is 30 minutes west of Denver in the foothills of Morrison. Its spectacular red rock formations jut into the sky, framing emerging and legendary performers, including the likes of The Beatles, Bruce Springsteen, U2,



*The MOVE/ment with Tyveze Littlejohn and the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble; Colorado Symphony musicians; and the iconic Denver Art Museum (DAM).*



John Denver, Jimi Hendrix, and the Grateful Dead—not to mention today's hippest bands, as well as cult-classic films on the big screen and countless iterations of group fitness events and yoga.  
720.865.2494, [redrockonline.com](http://redrockonline.com)

## DENVER ZOO

● For the young and young at heart, this 84-acre discovery zone takes visitors on a journey through global habitats that house more than 3,000 animals, providing education on worldwide conservation efforts and opportunities to connect with wildlife.  
720.337.1400, [denverzoo.org](http://denverzoo.org)

## FIDDLER'S GREEN AMPHITHEATRE

● Pull up a patch of rolling hillside (or opt for traditional seating) and take in a killer show against a dreamy backdrop of

peaks at this award-winning sculptural amphitheater; headliners over the years included Prince, Stevie Wonder, Bob Dylan, B.B. King, and the Eagles.  
303.220.7000, [fiddlersgreenamp.com](http://fiddlersgreenamp.com)

## MISSION BALLROOM

● Find the in-crowd on the dance floor at the sleek 60,000-square-foot River North (RiNo) music venue, Denver's newest AEG Presents investment. It's a standout theater thanks to its modern, minimalist aesthetic and state-of-the-art features that allow for adaptive event configurations.  
720.577.6884, [missionballroom.com](http://missionballroom.com)

## THE CLOCKTOWER CABARET

● Variety is the name of the game at this vintage venue, located at the bottom of the historic D&F Clocktower that presides over

16th Street Mall. The clocktower does it all—music, burlesque, circus, comedy, film, and drag, with cocktails and snacks to boot.  
303.293.0075, [clocktowercabaret.com](http://clocktowercabaret.com)

## THE BLUEBIRD THEATER

● The theater's iconic neon Bluebird sign is almost synonymous with Colfax nightlife; lines snaking down the block are a regular sight at the historic venue, which was built in 1913.  
303.377.1666, [bluebirdtheater.net](http://bluebirdtheater.net)

## FILLMORE AUDITORIUM

● This longstanding Capitol Hill concert and entertainment staple, lit with glamorous oversized chandeliers, first opened its doors in 1907 and is owned today by Live Nation Entertainment.  
303.837.0360, [fillmoreauditorium.org](http://fillmoreauditorium.org)



# Team Spirit

Sports are synonymous with success—and boy, do we have some teams to cheer for! If you're not a fan already, you're sure to be after you get acquainted with all that we have to offer.



*Clockwise: Coors Field with devoted Rockies' fans; the Colorado Mammoth during a game; and Denver Barbarian player Alex Schultz rushes the opposition.*

## Cheer for

### COLORADO MAMMOTH

● The National Lacrosse League (NLL) is targeting its return of play for April, which means more action and excitement at the Ball Arena when the Mammoth are home. The team has notched playoff runs in 16 of their 17 seasons.  
[coloradomammoth.com](http://coloradomammoth.com)

### DENVER BRONCOS

● They don't call it Broncos country for nothing. With eight AFC championships and three Superbowls under its belt—plus

John Elway's legacy enshrined in Denver beyond just his glory days as QB—the franchise keeps its fans hungry (dare we say starving, given the current playoff drought) and coming back for more at Empower Field at Mile High.  
[denverbroncos.com](http://denverbroncos.com)

### COLORADO AVALANCHE

● The Avs are nothing but fun to watch when they light up Ball Arena (yes, we still call it the Pepsi Center, too). With three consecutive seasons of playoff appear-

ances behind them, this year (despite the strange scheduling and logistics hurdles) could be a nail-biter for the Western powerhouse team as well.  
[nhl.com/avalanche](http://nhl.com/avalanche)

### DENVER NUGGETS

● Sharing the Ball Arena with the Avs and the Mammoth, the Nuggets just might have the skills these days to take it all the way, bolstered by some high-test postseason action in recent years; but whether superstars Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray can lead the

team to a legitimate run at the title remains to be seen.

[nba.com/nuggets](http://nba.com/nuggets)

### COLORADO RAPIDS

● There's nothing like watching the pulse-pounding action of a Major League Soccer match under the lights at Dick's Sporting Goods Park about 10 minutes north of downtown. The Rapids—after breaking into the playoffs last season for the first time in a decade—are likely good for an edge-of-your-seat season again this year.

[coloradorapids.com](http://coloradorapids.com)

### DENVER BARBARIANS

● Calling all rugby fans: Head to Infinity Park in Glendale to catch the Barbos when they return after a pandemic hiatus. The club, which was founded in 1967 and hosts three teams across different leagues, holds the 2018 USA Rugby (Division II) men's national championship title.  
[denverbarbariansrugby.com](http://denverbarbariansrugby.com)

### COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY RAMS, BASKETBALL (Women's and Men's)

● Both the women's and men's basketball

COORS FIELD, MATT DIRKEN; COLORADO ROCKIES; COLORADO MAMMOTH, JACK DEMPSEY; DENVER BARBARIANS, TRAVIS PRIOR

## SPOTLIGHT: Colorado Rockies

● As the smallest U.S. city to host all five major professional league sports teams, the Mile High City is the ultimate mecca for jersey-wearing, tailgating, smack-talking fans.

A hefty part of the city's storied lore as a sports town is the proximity to the excitement. Three of the four major arenas are located downtown adjacent to high-density residential neighborhoods, or within a couple of miles, providing walkability and accessibility to a smorgasbord of competitive league sporting events.

Perhaps most ensconced in the character of its surrounding neighborhood is the namesake of one of Colorado's most enduring homegrown brands: Coors Field—home of the Colorado Rockies and a massive 76-acre landmark at least partially responsible for revitalizing the adjacent neighborhoods of LoDo and the aptly named Ballpark District. Love or hate (perhaps both) the Rockies, there's no denying the giddy feel of strolling through a buzzing, post-work downtown on



DICK MONFORT



your way to a ballgame or that tinge of adrenaline as a sea of purple and black surges toward the stadium.

Despite the challenges COVID-19 has posed to all major league sports, Rockies owner Dick Monfort remains hopeful that the team will draw its fans back to the field when the time is right. "We are good stewards of the stadium, and we're doing a good job of keeping up with the times," Monfort says. "And we're good at being sensitive to prices. We want people there. It's nice, on a summer night, to hear the yells and sounds coming from a ballpark."

303.292.0200, [mlb.com/rockies](http://mlb.com/rockies)



programs at CSU are dominating the NCAA Division I Mountain West standings this season, currently sitting at No. 1 and No. 3, respectively. When Moby Arena is welcoming fans again, get your hoops fix with a quick jaunt up to Fort Collins. 800.491.7267, [csurams.com](http://csurams.com)

### UNIVERSITY OF DENVER PIONEERS, GYMNASTICS

● DU's women's gymnastics team landed in the nation's top 10 rankings for an impressive 26 weeks in a row, from this season's opening stretch back to the start of the 2019-2020 season. With national top-five standings in both beam and bars,

the Pioneers know how to command an audience at Magness Arena and beyond. 303.871.4625, [denverpioneers.com](http://denverpioneers.com)

### UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BUFFALOES, FOOTBALL

● When head coach Karl Dorrell was brought on to helm the NCAA Division I Pac-12 Buffs in early 2020, there was no predicting what the upcoming season would bring. Despite the trying circumstances and disrupted schedule, the Buffs played to a standard that earned Dorrell the 2020 Pac-12 Coach of the Year award. Let's hope fans can return to Folsom Field this season. 303.492.8337, [cubuffs.com](http://cubuffs.com)



Clockwise: Alexis Vasquez of the University of Denver women's gymnastics team; The Colorado Rapids scramble for a goal; Phillip Lindsay celebrates with a stadium full of Denver Broncos fans.



# Learning Curve

Our world-class education institutions attract many people to Denver. If you've never roamed their beautiful campuses, you might want to put them first on your list of places to visit.

## Campuses

### UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

● With campuses in Denver, Boulder, Aurora, and Colorado Springs, CU's academic influence and reach is extensive, from the stunningly beautiful Boulder campus (founded in 1876) to the newest cutting-edge health, science, and research facilities at the Anschutz Medical

Campus (established in 2006).  
303.860.5600, [cu.edu](http://cu.edu)

### COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

● Though not technically in the Denver-metro area, Fort Collins is commutable, and the resources that CSU offers are extensive. Includes nearly 300 academic

programs across eight colleges, a vibrant campus and college town adjacent to some of Colorado's greatest natural environs, award-winning sustainability measures, groundbreaking research opportunities, and high student satisfaction among a university population 30,000 strong.  
970.491.6444, [colostate.edu](http://colostate.edu)

### REGIS UNIVERSITY

● Denver's Jesuit Catholic university in the northwest corner of Denver offers its approximately 8,000 enrolled students a values-based education across three colleges (business and computing; liberal arts and science; and health professions).  
800.388.2366, [regis.edu](http://regis.edu)

### METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

● Sharing downtown's Auraria Campus with CU Denver and the Community College of Denver, MSU Denver has the highest transfer population among Colorado institutions. It attracts the most diverse student body in the state, with nearly 50 percent of its 17,000-plus undergraduates being students of color; and it was recently named the fifth most innovative school in the West by U.S. News & World Report.  
303.556.5740, [msudenver.edu](http://msudenver.edu)

### UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

● Just over an hour northeast of Denver in Greeley, UNC's doctoral research programs and student body of 10,000 form a significant resource pool for the metro Denver area. More than a third of its students are the first in their family to attend college.  
970.351.1890, [unco.edu](http://unco.edu)

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE OF ART + DESIGN

● Creative types flock to RMCAD, just off West Colfax, which offers robust BFA programs in fine art, photography, graphic design, game art, animation, illustration, fashion design, interior design, and more.  
303.753.6046, [rmcad.edu](http://rmcad.edu)

### COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES

● As a hub of all things earth, energy, and environment at the base of the Rocky Mountain foothills, Golden's token institution of higher learning is a trailblazer in the fields of science and engineering, having built a stellar reputation through ambitious initiatives such as the first-of-its-kind



*Clockwise: Professor and student in a drawing class at Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design; field day at Colorado School of Mines; Anatomage Table at Metropolitan State University of Denver.*



## SPOTLIGHT: University of Denver

● Up and down the Front Range, colleges and universities define the character of the towns in which they are located. Take the University of Denver (DU) for instance, just a few minutes south of downtown. Founded in 1864, DU is the oldest independent institution of higher education in the Rocky Mountain West. Its evolution to a private research university reflects the growth, change, and pioneering spirit of the region itself. The university is deeply committed to examining its role in the country's frontier era. "Like many institutions in the West, we are sitting on lands that were shepherded by indigenous peoples: the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Ute tribes," says Chancellor Jeremy Haefner. "We honor that deeply, and carry that historical piece with us. There's a

lot of work being done at DU—some of which is painful—to commemorate those communities and help our students understand and appreciate the complex history of our place."

With a student body of more than 12,000, the school attracts thinkers and doers from across the globe and serves as an incubator for the kinds of local collaborations and innovative programs that strengthen the social and cultural fabric of the



community. In fact, 70% of undergraduates stay in Colorado following graduation. "Our students go out and work in Denver, adding economic value to the community," Haefner says. "Our university's faculty is deeply intertwined in our [various] neighborhoods—we've got experts in water rights, psychologists in the local mental health space, engineers and business faculty helping startups get a foothold in the neighborhoods. The public good is embedded in everything we do."

**303.871.4095, [du.edu](http://du.edu)**

Space Resources graduate program.  
**303.273.3000, [mines.edu](http://mines.edu)**

### NAROPA UNIVERSITY

● Boulder's "other" college marries Buddhist-inspired philosophy and Eastern wisdom with traditional Western studies—the perfect academic recipe for scholars who view mindfulness as the driver of day-to-day living.

**303.546.3572, [naropa.edu](http://naropa.edu)**

### UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

● The Academy prepares the next generation of U.S. Air Force officers to serve our country to their highest ability through rigorous leadership training and demanding academics—and it all happens on a stunning campus just north of Colorado Springs in the shadow of Pikes Peak.

**719.333.3970, [usafa.edu](http://usafa.edu)**

### COLORADO COLLEGE

● With a broad liberal arts slant and a unique approach to the four-year degree (students take one class at a time in three-week blocks), this small Colorado Springs college is an ideal institution for innovative, out-of-the-box thinkers and leaders.

**719.389.6000, [coloradocollege.edu](http://coloradocollege.edu)**

*Cadets of the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs toss their caps. This class celebrated their graduation on April 18, 2020. Nearly 1,000 of the graduates commissioned into the United States Air and Space Forces.*





# Play It Out

When it comes to recreation, there are a multitude of open spaces to enjoy. From picnicking and rollerblading to hiking and immersing in nature, we urge you to discover what makes Denver an outdoor enthusiast's playground.

## SPOTLIGHT: Riverfront Park

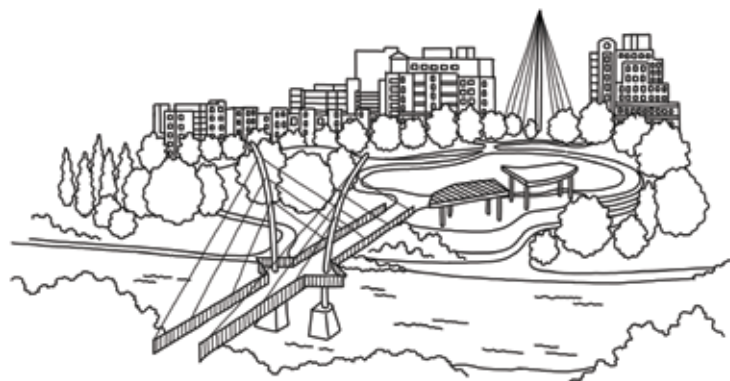
● As far as pandemic silver linings go, our rediscovered love of playing outside is a big one in this region. "COVID has given us the opportunity to step back and reimagine the significance of our parks in the public realm, and how we use our public right-of-way's differently," says Mark Bernstein of Denver Parks and Recreation, pointing to ongoing vehicle-traffic closures within city parks. "As a city, we're becoming a lot more sensitive to the importance of places for people versus cars."



MARK BERNSTEIN

Indeed, pedestrians and cyclists are the lifeblood of Denver's Riverfront Park neighborhood, the redevelopment jewel of the Central Platte Valley at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek.

Riverfront's high-end, mid-rise complexes along the Little Raven promenade house more than 4,000 residents, attracted to the area for its acres of green space across Commons, City of Cuernavaca, and Confluence parks, plus the Denver Skate Park and several landmark pedestrian bridges that connect this bustling recreation zone to trendy Lower Highland (LoHi) and the revitalized Union Station neighborhoods.



"The South Platte River is the greatest natural resource we have in this city," Bernstein says, noting its prominent role in the livability of this area, whether it's popping in the white water of Confluence Park, picnicking on the nearby banks and tossing a frisbee, or pedaling along a winding regional trail along the water en route to a favorite cocktail destination across the bridge. "It's the sociability piece that feeds the desire to live downtown," says Bernstein, reiterating that especially now, this vitality hinges on outdoor public spaces like the Riverfront Park greenways. "Outdoor recreation, to some degree, is part of our DNA."

[riverfrontdenver.com/riverfront-park](http://riverfrontdenver.com/riverfront-park), 720.477.6424

## Explore here

### SLOAN'S LAKE

● As the largest body of water in Denver and the centerpiece of a 290-acre park with incredible city skyline views, Sloan's Lake is the crown jewel of one of the city's most popular neighborhoods. Weekends are filled with outdoor enthusiasts boating, waterskiing, paddle boarding, running, and cycling the nearly three-mile loop before hopping over to grab a brew at nearby Tap & Burger or indulging at Little Man Ice Cream Factory.

[denver.org/blog/post/sloan-lake](http://denver.org/blog/post/sloan-lake)

### EVERGREEN LAKE

● About 40 minutes west of Denver, this idyllic foothill lake is a hotbed of SUPing, paddleboating, kayaking, and fishing during the summer (the lake is stocked with rainbow trout) and ice skating and hockey during the winter. Watercraft and skates are available to rent through the picturesque log cabin-esque Evergreen Lake House.

[evergreenrecreation.com](http://evergreenrecreation.com)

### AURORA RESERVOIR

● As far as summer fun, the Aurora Res is a goldmine. Launch your own watercraft from the boat ramp or rent a kayak or paddleboard for your crew; stake out a spot on the sandy beach for swimming and picnicking; or unleash your adventurous side with archery or scuba diving. For land-lovers, more than eight miles of paved perimeter trail welcome all manner of runners and cyclists.

[auroragov.org](http://auroragov.org)

### BEAR CREEK LAKE PARK

Camping in Lakewood? Indeed, there are cabins, yurts, and 47 campsites, plus hiking, biking, horseback riding, beach-going, archery, boating (motorized on Bear Creek Reservoir, nonmotorized on Big Soda Lake), waterskiing, and more at this scenic oasis by the foothills.

[lakewood.org](http://lakewood.org)

### CHERRY CREEK STATE PARK

● Offering serene views of the Rockies on the horizon, the prairie-esque parklands



PHILIP S. MILLER PARK. SÉBASTION BARRÉ. FLICKR.COM

*The Challenge Hill at Philip S. Miller Park is always a great workout, with 200 timber steps that ascent 178 feet in elevation.*



surrounding the Cherry Creek Reservoir are a haven for runners, cyclists, and birders. Sandy beaches on both sides of the reservoir offer plenty of space to kick back with a beach chair and cooler, while secluded trails through the wetlands preserve wind through forested shade that blazes gold in the fall. Boaters can launch on their own or rent a day-slip or watercraft at Pelican Bay Marina. [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)

#### CHATFIELD STATE PARK

● Against the backdrop of the picturesque rolling foothills southwest of Denver, the Chatfield Reservoir and surrounding 26 miles of trails offer a respite from the day-to-day hustle; in addition to the usual suspects—boating, swimming, biking, horseback riding, camping—Chatfield boasts a modern airplane field for model plane flying, and draws both recreational

and commercial hot air balloonists (search the internet for outfitters that offer rides at Chatfield). [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)

#### PHILIP S. MILLER PARK

● Want to get your blood pumping and your adrenaline up? Head to Castle Rock's Miller Park for a day of adventure unlike anything else in the region; from a

*Clockwise: SUP at the beautiful Aurora Reservoir; horseback ride at 12 Mile Stables; or bike in Bear Creek State Park.*

single-track trail network that showcases a "Challenge Hill" with 200 timber steps (think: Manitou Incline) to the FitGround course featuring obstacles and cargo nets, there's no shortage of ways to break a sweat here. You can even scoot next door to Miller Park's partner facility, The Edge, for high-flying fun on a zip line, aerial trekking, or ninja warrior course. [crgov.com](http://crgov.com)

#### THE HUDSON GARDENS & EVENT CENTER

● Whether you want to lose yourself in a garden for an afternoon, explore a prairie trail and watch for wildlife, or (in non-pandemic times) catch a show during the Summer Concert Series (past performers include the likes of Sheryl Crow and Lynryd Skynrd), Littleton's Hudson Gardens offers a true escape in the form of a 30-acre set on the banks of the South Platte River. [hudsongardens.org](http://hudsongardens.org)



# Top Dining

Not only is our food scene vibrant, but it's known to satiate palates from those all over the world. Denver dining is one thing you certainly can't ignore while getting out to explore.



*Clockwise: Venison dish from a selection at Flagstaff House; beautifully prepared charcuterie boards at The Wolf's Tailor; Pineapple Mint Mojito at El Five; and the dining room at Frasca Food and Wine.*

## Dine at

### HOP ALLEY

● Housed in a former soy sauce factory and named after the Hop Alley that anchored Denver's short-lived Chinatown of the late 1800s, this swanky RiNo spot isn't your typical corner Chinese joint. Owner Tommy Lee (who also owns cult-favorite, ramen mecca Uncle) has pretty much perfected the art of Chinese fusion with indulgent spot-on flavors and combos (try the bone marrow fried rice, sweet and sour sunchokes, and plum sauce brussels sprouts).  
720.379.8340, [hopalleydenver.com](http://hopalleydenver.com)

### SAFTA

● Addictive. Exquisite. Sumptuous. There's no way to overstate the quality of the modern Israeli fare at this hip space inside RiNo's Source Hotel + Market Hall. Think decadent hummus a half-dozen ways, pomegranate-braised lamb shank, and enough gorgeous small plates to fill you up before the main event arrives.  
720.408.2444, [eatwithsafta.com](http://eatwithsafta.com)

### ACE EAT SERVE

● For nearly a decade, the space has

leaned into what could be skewed as a gimmicky element—10 tables of ping pong. Instead, it has proven to be a delightfully compelling companion to the bold and unexpected pan-Asian menu crafted by chef Thach Tran, which expanded Ace's reputation amongst foodies. Above all, Ace is a high-energy hot spot and ping-pong hall, which fosters social gatherings, playfulness, and healthy competition. Similar to Steuben's, it touches on people's nostalgia. Don't miss the soup dumplings and Peking duck—a tableside carving experience.  
303.800.7705, [aceeatserve.com](http://aceeatserve.com)

### DEN CORNER (SUSHI DEN, IZAKAYA DEN, OTOTO)

● While Denver's been blessed with a range of modern Japanese treasures (RiNo hotspot Uchi comes to mind), the fact remains that nobody in the city does sushi better than the Kizaki brothers. Yasu and Toshi's triumvirate

of restaurants on Platt Park's Old South Pearl Street serve packed houses more often than not. The brothers have earned repeated national acclaim for the impeccable quality of their fish, which is flown into Denver fresh daily from one of the largest fish markets in southern Japan, thanks to a third Kizaki brother who remained in their homeland and visits the market in the wee hours every morning.  
303.777.0826, [sushiden.net](http://sushiden.net); 303.777.0691, [izakayaden.net](http://izakayaden.net); 303.733.2503, [ototoden.com](http://ototoden.com)

### THE WOLF'S TAILOR

● What do you get when you cross Italian influence, Japanese technique, zero-waste aspirations, and the kind of mega-talent that earns two James Beard semifinalist nods in the same year? An inspired, daringly original concept in Sunnyside full of heirloom grains, backyard harvests, clay-pot cooking, charcoal-grilled skewers, and sinful desserts—all helmed by chef-owner Kelly Whitaker, who rose to local legend status with Boulder darling Basta and snagged himself a spot on *Bon Appétit's* "The Hot Ten: America's Best New Restaurants" list in 2019.  
720.456.6705, [thewolftailor.com](http://thewolftailor.com)

## SPOTLIGHT: Fruition Restuarant

● Gone are the days when Denver was an “emerging” star in the culinary scene. Mile-high dining has fully arrived. In 2020, Colorado snagged 18 semifinalist spots in the industry’s most prestigious accolade lineup, the James Beard Awards (which ground to a halt when the pandemic, and other problems with the awards process, upended the hospitality industry; winners in chef and restaurant categories were never named). Nevertheless, Denver area chefs and restaurateurs continue to shine, maybe none more so than 2018 James Beard Award-winner Alex Seidel, whose flagship eatery, Fruition Restaurant, has been a neighborhood star on East Sixth Avenue in Central Denver for 14 years. “Fruition is a special place to me because of the people inside it,” Seidel says. “Since the first day we opened the restaurant, my one interest was to make people happy through food and provide a connection to the food.”

Indeed, “farm-to-table” is much more than a buzzword for Seidel (also of Mercantile Dining & Provision, Chook Charcoal Chicken, and Füdmill fame), who is known locally as a pioneer of the movement, though he’d never call himself such.



In 2009, he actually started a farm and artisanal creamery in Larkspur to produce sheep’s-milk cheese, herbs, and vegetables for his tables. “Being inquisitive and curious led me down that road,” he says. “We’re trying to educate through food and share information through food.” Fruition’s elegant, constantly changing dishes, from the mains (duck leg cassoulet) to the bites (citrus marinated olives with garlic confit and Fruition Farms feta) are a testament to Seidel’s mission. “Hopefully we’ve inspired others to want to make Denver a great community that’s much more understanding of ‘local’ and what is produced here.”

303.831.1962, [fruitionrestaurant.com](http://fruitionrestaurant.com)



ALEX SEIDEL



Left: A mouthwatering Spicy Pork Ramen Bowl is ready to be served at Ace Eat Serve; Right: Cozy up to the muted tones and intimate setting of Ultréa which showcases Latin libations and a tapas-style menu.

### SPUNTINO FOOD & WINE

● This cozy LoHi spot has grown into itself over 10 years, becoming one of the most revered Italian eateries in the city, propelling Chef Cindhura Reddy and Chef di Cuisine Austin Nickel to James Beard semifinalist status in spring 2020. They dish up lovingly crafted plates of hand-cranked pastas with the most nuanced infusion of southern Indian flavors. 303.433.0949, [spuntinodenver.com](http://spuntinodenver.com)

### EL FIVE

● Go for the swanky, in-the-know LoHi ambience. Go for the paella and matzo

ball soup dumplings. Go for the pineapple Mint Collins. Go for the killer fifth-floor panoramic skyline views. And go because Edible Beats—the restaurant group that brought us Linger, Root Down, Vital Root, and El Five—earned its place among Colorado culinary royalty. 303.524.9193, [elfivedenver.com](http://elfivedenver.com)

### FLAGSTAFF HOUSE

● Tradition and excellence are the backbone of this family-owned Boulder classic, situated at 6,000 feet on Flagstaff Mountain; patrons have been dining at the landmark restaurant since 1954.

Enjoying the rich flavors of pheasant roulade and Cervena venison loin from a terrace surrounded by breathtaking views is practically a rite of passage. 303.442.4640, [flagstaffhouse.com](http://flagstaffhouse.com)

### ULTRÉA

● With a tapas-style menu showcasing the foods and flavors of the Iberian Peninsula (try the Chef’s Feast for a house-curated selection), this sleekly intimate space in Union Station, courtesy of celebrated industry leader Jennifer Jasinski and the team behind Crafted Concepts Restaurant Group, which

oversees Rioja, Bistro Vendôme, Stoic & Genuine, is all the things you want from a trendy night out in Denver. 303.534.1970, [ultréadenver.com](http://ultréadenver.com)

### FRASCA FOOD AND WINE

● With almost too many accolades to name (which include James Beard Awards recognition in 10 of the last 15 years), Boulder’s tribute to the harvest-fresh cuisine of northern Italy’s idyllic Friuli region is celebrated as much for its above-and-beyond service and hospitality as for its near flawless food and wine. 303.442.6966, [frascafoodandwine.com](http://frascafoodandwine.com)



# Shop Talk

What's a desirable city without shopping? Here's an overview of the most sought-after areas to browse, window shop, or spend a little money. There are many boutiques that will keep you coming back for more.

## SPOTLIGHT: Larimer Square

● Few shopping corridors in the metro area reflect Colorado's rich, multifaceted life-style moreso than downtown Denver's Larimer Square. Designated the city's first historic district in 1971, the block between 14th and 15th streets adjacent to Lower Downtown (LoDo) is lined with buildings from the 1880s and strung with twinkling overhead lights that evoke an enchanted vibe when the sun dips low. The block was

purchased from longtime owner Jeff Hermanson in December 2020

by real estate investment firm Asana Partners, which is committed to evolving and providing new experiences at Larimer Square, while also "maintaining its irreplaceable historic character."

Indeed, says Grace Buttorff, owner of Hailee Grace boutique, "It feels like the city started here, and it's very much a neighborhood atmosphere. They curated it all so we have our own niches and we're complementing each other instead of competing." And, Larimer Square encapsulates what makes our Colorado lifestyle so

appealing: You can gear up for your next adventure (think Mammut and Pendleton), or pop into a locally owned shop where you'll likely interact with the people designing and curating the inventory. Buttorff herself is often on

hand to dispense style advice to her customers, many of whom are walking over from neighborhoods like Union Station or Riverfront. Despite a challenging year for small businesses, Buttorff says, Larimer Square officials stepped up to support its shops and restaurants by closing the block to traffic so pedestrians can stroll, shop, dine, drink, and enjoy the neighborhood with more outdoor space. "It's almost a one-stop shop," she says—a place to spend an afternoon. That's all the excuses we need to make this neighborhood our go-to for some serious retail therapy.

720.805.1973, [larimersquare.com/shopping](http://larimersquare.com/shopping)



GRACE BUTTORFF

## Spend here

### CHERRY CREEK NORTH

● Sixteen strollable blocks lined with upscale boutiques, luxury clothing brands, high-end home-décor havens, outdoor apparel outposts, restaurants, event centers, upscale marketplaces, and darling gift nooks (all adjacent to the Cherry Creek Shopping Center) make this part of town a true shopper's paradise.

303.394.2904, [cherrycreeknorth.com](http://cherrycreeknorth.com)

### HIGHLANDS SQUARE

● Pervasive friendliness and a tightknit vibe make the retail stretch at 32nd and Lowell a welcoming experience for any shopper in need of a thoughtful gift (The Perfect Petal, Wordshop), a cute new bohemian top (Rustic Thread, Dragonfly) or a new pair of kicks (Strut).

[visitdenverhighlands.com](http://visitdenverhighlands.com)

### HISTORIC SOUTH GAYLORD STREET

● From gourmet pet treats and artisanal jewelry to unique stationery and men's

sportswear, this quaint block of locally owned shops in Washington Park East is a favorite for browsing among neighborhood residents and visitors alike.

[oldsouthgaylord.com](http://oldsouthgaylord.com)

### SOUTH PEARL STREET

● Some of Denver's most charming gift shops and one-of-a-kind boutiques occupy this cheerful stretch on South Pearl between Buchtel and Jewell avenues; it's almost impossible to stroll down the street without popping into one of the 5 Green Boxes locations (the "big store" for home treasures, the "little store" for jewelry and accessories); and style-savvy browsers have been known to disappear for hours in the likes of Common Threads and Melrose & Madison.

[southpearlstreet.com](http://southpearlstreet.com)

### PEARL STREET MALL

● Visiting Boulder's treasured pedestrian mall is less a pointed shopping



A woman shops for clothing and accessories at one of the popular retailers at Stanley Marketplace, Goose And The Goat.

mission and more a day-long expedition that will likely include a leisurely lunch stop; a wacky street performer encounter; several artisanal gifts you can stockpile for special occasions; that quirky piece of local art you doubled

back for when you couldn't stop thinking about it; all the high-end outdoor gear you never knew you needed; and an al fresco cocktail paid for by the last \$10 in your wallet.

303.449.3774, [boulderdowntown.com](http://boulderdowntown.com)

GOOSE AND THE GOAT/STANLEY MARKETPLACE

## STANLEY MARKETPLACE

● Interspersed with the standout culinary vendors at this aviation factory-turned-marketplace in Aurora are enough tempting retail nooks and crannies—from trendy Euro-inspired clothes, adorable baby gifts, and games and toys, to gourmet foodstuffs, and more—which will distract even the hungriest of diners. 720.990.6743, stanleymarketplace.com

## OLDE TOWN ARVADA

● In the past half a dozen or so years, Olde Town's retail scene has exploded, bringing with it a growing buzzy vibe that makes popping into the likes of Lovely Boutique, Olde Town Pickin' Parlor, and Balefire Goods a must when visiting the historic district.

303.420.4769, oldetownarvada.org

## DOWNTOWN LITTLETON

● Paddleboards? Consignment? Wedding dresses? Halloween costumes? Essential oils? Spring wardrobe update? Whatever you need, Historic Downtown Littleton has you covered all year long.

downtownlittleton.com

## CHERRY CREEK SHOPPING CENTER

● Touted by many as "Denver's Fashion Destination," the iconic Cherry Creek Shopping Center boasts a plethora of the area's best collection of luxury brands all in one beautiful location. A must visit.

303.388.3900, shopcherrycreek.com

## DENVER PAVILIONS

● The midway anchor point of Denver's multi-tiered open-air 16th Street Mall features the typical mall offerings (Sephora, Banana Republic, and Sunglass Hut etc.) in addition to a handful of local treasures like the Colorado Artisan Center, which stocks sustainably sourced, handcrafted inventory from more than 100 local designers and talented artisans.

303.260.6001, denverpavilions.com

## ASPEN GROVE

● Littleton's signature open-air shopping mall is conveniently tucked between South Santa Fe Drive and the



*Clockwise: Peruse the interiors of The Perfect Petal at Highlands Square; the luxe streets of Cherry Creek North; and the grandeur of Park Meadows Shopping Center.*



South Platte River, affording access to dozens of big-name retailers (Apple, Pottery Barn) and local gems (one of four legendary Tattered Cover Bookstores resides here) as well as more than 28 miles of biking and walking trails along the river—in case you need some nature therapy to counteract your retail therapy. Bonus: Visiting with your four-legged friend is encouraged.

303.794.0640, aspengrovecenter.com

## PARK MEADOWS SHOPPING CENTER

● Perhaps nowhere is the term "retail resort" more apt than Lonetree's expansive collection of stores and eateries designed to evoke the feel of a posh mountain lodge while you browse and dine. An airy, cavernous layout, exposed timbers, indoor and outdoor water features with cascading boulder formations, and a towering stone fireplace that rises to the ceiling make Park Meadows Shopping Center a destination that goes beyond retail.

303.792.2999, parkmeadows.com

## SOUTHLANDS

● Fresh off of a significant renovation that debuted a shiny new guest services center at the clock tower (complimentary strollers! Free gift-wrapping!) and an upgraded



town square with sleek new landscaping, shaded seating and a fire pit, and a pop jet fountain to keep it fun, this open-air retail hub has everything covered in Aurora.

303.627.5000, shopsouthlands.com

## THE SHOPS AT NORTHFIELD

● Just across I-70 from Stapleton sits more than a million-square-feet of open-air retail and entertainment space that is home to 80-plus shops and restaurants featuring plenty of go-to mall favorites (Macy's, H&M, and Bas Pro Shops etc.), plus quirky leisure concepts such as Whimsy Studios, a family owned sip-and-paint studio and shop—the only one in Denver with a full bar.

303.375.5475, shopsatnorthfield.com

## TENNYSON STREET

● Northwest Denver's Berkeley neighborhood has been upping its game for

years, and the quirky shops (OK, and a preponderance of craft beer places) that dot Berkeley's Tennyson Street corridor (from Real Baby and BookBar to Feral Mountain Co. and Berkeley Park Running Company) play a big part in fostering a sustainable, vibrant community.

shoptennyson.com

## DOWNTOWN GOLDEN

● As with all small-town main streets lined with independent shops, boutiques, and galleries, Golden's retailers are working hard to weather the pandemic. That's why we love the curated gift guides at GoodToBeGoldenCo.com. Each guide offers a list of handpicked items you'll find in various Golden shops for different people on your list: outdoorsy folks, travel lovers, kids and teens, food and drink aficionados, and so-forth. Brilliant.

303.279.2282, visitgolden.com