

COLORADO 150

The View from Here

Chase the horizon across a state celebrating its wild past, present, and future

BY FIONA TAPP

Colorado turns 150 in 2026, and the milestone arrives alongside another historic anniversary: the United States' 250th year. Across the Centennial State, communities are marking the moment with festivals, exhibits and outdoor adventures that celebrate the landscapes and cultures shaping Colorado since it joined the Union in 1876.

For travellers, the anniversary offers the perfect excuse to follow the open road and rediscover Colorado the way generations have—one horizon, one mountain pass, one unforgettable stop at a time.

Mile-High Beginnings

Begin your journey in Denver, where heritage and reinvention share the skyline. At the Molly Brown House Museum, the restored Victorian home of Titanic survivor Margaret Brown, personal artifacts recall the larger-than-life story of the "Unsinkable" Molly Brown. Nearby, the History Colorado Center frames the state's evolution through gold rush relics, cultural exhibits, and stories that stretch far beyond 1876.

But Colorado's story isn't just confined to museums. It lives outside. Head west, into the Rockies, where the air sharpens and the

sky expands. The state's 26 Scenic & Historic Byways pull you through terrain first travelled by Indigenous peoples, then miners, settlers, and modern-day adventurers. Each bend reveals something unexpected: a forgotten ghost town, a trailhead leading into wilderness, or a mountain town reinventing itself for a new century.

From Denver, the road heads south to Colorado Springs. The winding drive leads 4,302 metres high to the summit at Pikes Peak, known as "America's Mountain." Spanning plains and peaks in every direction, the sweeping view famously inspired Katharine Lee Bates to write the patriotic anthem *America the Beautiful*. Summer brings climbers determined to summit the state's legendary Fourteeners, those heavenly peaks above 14,000 feet (4,267 metres).

Into the Rockies

Turning west, the landscape rises dramatically as the Rocky Mountains take centre stage. In Breckenridge, a former mining town turned alpine playground, colourful Victorian buildings now house lively cafés, breweries and outdoor outfitters. Hiking trails climb into high alpine terrain where wildflowers bloom during the short mountain summer.

Further along the route, Glenwood Springs offers a different mountain experience. Slip into naturally heated mineral pools as steam rises against canyon walls along the Colorado River. For history lovers there's a short climb to Linwood Cemetery, perched high above town. It is the final resting place of frontier legend Doc Holliday—a fittingly dramatic setting for one of the Wild West's most storied figures.

Those wanting to experience the state's frontier spirit can head to one of Colorado's dude and guest ranches, where horseback rides across open valleys and evenings gathered around campfires offer a glimpse into Old West traditions that helped shape the region.

Mountain Heritage in the San Juans

Further south, the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad steams into the San Juan Mountains, tracing tracks laid in the 1880s. Forested slopes, narrow canyons, and the Animas River unfurl outside the window like in the olden days.




MICHELIN Stars Rise in the Rockies

Colorado's culinary scene has stepped onto the global stage with the MICHELIN Guide's statewide expansion. Already 9 restaurants have snagged a MICHELIN-star rating with a whopping 35 more that have earned MICHELIN distinction in Denver, Boulder, Aspen and Vail. Chefs celebrate the state's bounty with vibrant farm-to-table cuisine, craft breweries, distilleries, and wineries. From Denver's inventive kitchens to Aspen's alpine-inspired menus, every plate and pour highlights local ingredients, seasonal flavours, and the creative spirit of Colorado's culinary and liquid arts scene.

At Mesa Verde National Park, you can wander in wonder, passing ancient cliff dwellings, reminders that Colorado's story began long before statehood. Explore preserved cliff dwellings built by the Ancestral Pueblo people more than 700 years ago.

At night, settle into one of Colorado's historic hotels. Perhaps The Broadmoor, where elegance meets mountain grandeur, the Strater Hotel for its Gilded Age opulence, or The Stanley Hotel, the iconic inspiration for Stephen King's *The Shining*.

By the time your journey ends, you'll realize that Colorado's 150th anniversary isn't only about remembrance, it's about standing here, now, breathing mountain air, watching sunlight move across the peaks, and seeing the future waiting just beyond the horizon.

The view from here has never been better. 

TRAVEL PLANNER

For more travel information about Colorado, see [Colorado.com](https://colorado.com)



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