

Rush to the Gold

at Colorado State Parks...



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Recommended

Fall Trips in Colorado State Parks



Colorado State Parks

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Whether it's a spectacular walk under an umbrella of aspen trees along the Colorado River, or viewing brilliant shrubs and scrub oak at Roxborough, Colorado State Parks offer you the best way to experience fall in Colorado.

Many of our parks are located along some of the most scenic drives to enjoy Colorado's fall splendor, providing the perfect landscape for a weekend getaway.

We invite you to *Rush to the Gold* this fall and enjoy the spectacular colors that paint the landscape at Colorado State Parks. Please check our Web site (www.parks.state.co.us/fall) for updated information on fall colors.

Autumn in the Canyons

Located near the Denver metro area, Golden Gate Canyon State Park and Eldorado Canyon State Park each provide a spectacular display of the annual fall gold rush. The two parks are about 30 miles apart, allowing fall color fans to visit both parks in the same day.

Recommended trip: In the morning explore Golden Gate Canyon and hike, bike or ride on more than 35 miles of inter-connected trails through golden, aspen-filled meadows. Drive along Crawford Gulch Road for a canopy of colors. Later that day, drive out to Eldorado Canyon and enjoy a picnic lunch at one of 35 picnic sites dotting the banks of South Boulder Creek. Take an autumn stroll through the canyon and along the creek and witness a blushing spectrum of color. Amid the fall splendor you can catch a glimpse of climbers tackling the world-class rock walls . . . and maybe even decide to give it a try yourself.

Directions to Golden Gate Canyon State Park:

Take Highway 93 north from Golden for about 1 mile. Turn left on Golden Gate Canyon Road and drive 13 miles to the park entrance.

Directions to Eldorado Canyon State Park:

From Denver take the Boulder Turnpike (U.S. 36), exit at Louisville/Superior onto southbound McCaslin Blvd. Turn right onto Colorado Highway 170 and go west approximately 9 miles through the town of Eldorado Springs to the park entrance.



Eldorado Canyon State Park,
Photo Courtesy of Jerry Bangor.

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The Forests of Northern Colorado

Experience the beauty of Colorado's timberland beginning just 75 miles west of Fort Collins. State Forest, Steamboat Lake and Pearl Lake beckon visitors to taste a weekend away from the city. Find fall in the forest amid quiet paths covered in pine needles.

Recommended trip: Drive up to the Colorado State Forest via Highway 14 west of Fort Collins, and enjoy a winding drive through the scenic Poudre Canyon and over Cameron Pass. This drive will take you along Colorado's only wild and scenic river where fall colors abound. Plan ahead and reserve a cabin on the shores of North Michigan Reservoir at State Forest State Park. Spend a day at the park relaxing in peace, quiet and fall beauty among more than 70,000 pristine acres. From State Forest, continue the spectacular drive on Highway 14 west through Walden until you reach U.S. 40. Turn right and travel over Rabbit Ears Pass to the resort town of Steamboat Springs. Both Steamboat Lake and Pearl Lake are 40 minutes north of town up the Elk River Road. Steamboat Lake lies in a beautiful mountain valley between Hahn's Peak and Sand Mountain. That night, enjoy an unconventional camping method by reserving one of the yurts located at nearby Pearl Lake.

Directions to State Forest State Park: Take Colorado 14 west from Fort Collins for 75 miles across Cameron Pass.

Directions to Steamboat Lake/Pearl Lake State Park: From Steamboat Springs go west two miles on U.S. 40 to County Road 129. Turn north and drive 26 miles. Follow signs to Steamboat Lake or Pearl Lake.



Steamboat Lake State Park

Up the I-70 Corridor

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During the fall months, the drive up the I-70 corridor from Denver to Glenwood Springs is an unparalleled trip through the heart of the Rockies. Golden aspens paint the landscape and quaint mountain towns point the way on this three-hour trip through Colorado.

Recommended trip: From Denver, head west on I-70, enjoying the spectacular views along the way, until you reach Eagle, where the high-mountain hideaway of Sylvan Lake is located.

Stay a night in one of nine cabins overlooking the never-crowded waters, while mountains brushed in gold, orange and red greet you on all sides. Rise early the next morning and after taking in the sunrise, drive west to Glenwood Springs and Rifle, two more small mountain towns waiting to be explored. You will find three state parks to choose from: Rifle Falls, Rifle Gap and Harvey Gap. No camping is available at Harvey Gap, but both Rifle parks provide a chance to experience the fall gold rush first hand from the comfort of a campsite.

Directions to Sylvan Lake State Park: Exit I-70 at Eagle and head south. Turn left on Broadway (second left). Turn left on 5th Street and right on Capitol. At the next stop sign, turn left. Travel south on Brush Creek Road (County Road 307) for 10 miles. Veer right at the fork in the road and travel an additional five miles on West Brush Creek Road to the lake.

Directions to Rifle Falls/Rifle Gap State Park: Take I-70 to the Rifle exit, then go north on Colorado Highway 13 for three miles. Turn right onto Colorado 325 and drive 9.8 miles.

Directions to Harvey Gap State Park: Take I-70 to the Silt interchange west of Glenwood Springs. Turn north on County Road 237 and follow the signs for a few miles to the park entrance.



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Pikes Peak to River Country

Come see nature's canvas in the Pikes Peak region of Colorado. Golds, reds and oranges guide your tour from Colorado Springs to Buena Vista. Along the way, stop to enjoy the incredible views at Mueller State Park, Eleven Mile State Park and Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area. Spend the afternoon meandering along the twists and turns of the mighty Arkansas River, as you discover Colorado's river country.

Recommended trip: Begin your tour by heading west out of Colorado Springs on U.S. Highway 24 for 25 miles to Divide. Mueller State Park is just around the bend and contains the perfect venue to take in the fall colors and perhaps catch a glimpse of the abundant wildlife at the park. Make sure to bring your camera as you explore the landscape on one of more than 50 miles of trails. Around midday, hop back in the car and continue to travel west on U.S. 24 for the short drive to Eleven Mile Reservoir and eat a picnic lunch while enjoying the peaceful background of the water lapping on the shore. That afternoon, continue on to Buena Vista or Salida to explore the canyons and river scenery while enjoying the unparalleled hospitality of the unique Western towns along the way.

Directions to Mueller State Park: Take U.S. 24 west from Colorado Springs for 25 miles to Divide. Turn left onto South Highway 67 for 3.5 miles.

Directions to Eleven Mile State Park: Drive 38 miles west of Colorado Springs on U.S. 24 to one mile west of the town of Lake George, then turn left (south) on County Road 90 and drive for six miles to County Road 92. Continue south on County Road 92 for five miles to the park.

Directions to the Arkansas Headwaters

Recreation Area: From Eleven Mile State Park, take Highway 24 to Buena Vista and continue north to Leadville or turn south on Highway 285 to Salida and continue east on Highway 50 to Canon City for a complete round-trip.



The Western Slope via the Vineyards

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Pack up the car and spend a week on the road. Visit the Western Slope wine country this fall. Rush to the gold along the Colorado River through Grand Junction and then journey south to Ridgway State Park. Experience the grandeur and ruggedness of the San Juan range while you explore the mountain hideaways of Ouray and Montrose along the way.

Recommended trip: Follow I-70 west and wind through the Rocky Mountain fall with the Colorado River. Stop in at one or all of five state park access points along the river to do everything from photography to mountain biking in the heart of Colorado's golden season. Visit the vineyards of the Western Slope on your way into Grand Junction and then turn south to Ridgway State Park. Reserve ahead and enjoy a few nights camping in a yurt beneath the towering mountain peaks of the San Juan's. Use the park as a base camp to take fall day trips to the hot springs of Ouray, the shopping of Telluride, or the quaint hospitality of Montrose.



Directions to sections of James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park:

Section 1) Island Acres Section: I-70 to Exit 47, turn right (east) on Frontage Road, 1/8 mile.

Section 2) Fruita Section: I-70 to Exit 19, south on Highway 340 for 4/10 mile.

Section 3) Connected Lakes Section: I-70 to Horizon Drive exit, go south to 7th Street, west on Grand Avenue (becomes Broadway/Highway 340), right on Dike Road, 1.5 miles.

Section 4) Corn Lake Section: I-70 to Exit 37, turn south onto Hwy. 141/32 Road and go two miles.

Section 5) Wildlife Area Section: Just west of Corn Lake, on D Road between 31 Road and 30 1/4 Road.

Directions to Ridgway State Park: Take U.S. 550 south of Montrose for 22 miles to the park entrance.

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Fall in the Four Corners

Southwest Colorado brings a new and different flavor to fall color viewing. Desert mountains, buttes and vistas are highlighted by pockets of colorful brilliance. Two reservoirs, Navajo and Mancos, offer a multitude of opportunities for you to take a week and experience the other side of Colorado. Escape the crowded cities and rejuvenate in historic southern Colorado.

Recommended trip: From Durango, drive down to Mancos early in the morning to capitalize on the variety of wildlife and bird viewing available. Spend the day wandering the trails around the park or canoeing on the open water. Both are a great way to take in the splashes of fall that abound in southern Colorado. Stay the night in a yurt and see the stars in a new light. Next, take the short trip to Navajo State Park, Colorado's answer to Lake Powell. With great campgrounds and a marina, this is the perfect place to unwind and relax during a warm Colorado fall.

Directions to Mancos State Park: Take U.S. 160 west from Durango 27 miles to Mancos. Turn north on Highway 184 for 1/4-mile, take County Road 42 east approximately four miles to County Road "N", and then take County Road "N" west 1/2-mile to the park entrance.

Directions to Navajo State Park: Take U.S. 160 west from Pagosa Springs for 17 miles, then turn southwest onto Colorado 151 for 18 miles to Arboles. Turn left again onto County Road 982 and drive two miles to the lake.



Legendary Colors

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Wind your way through the extreme southern portion of Colorado on the Highway of Legends. This asphalt ribbon ties together Trinidad Lake State Park and Lathrop State Park, with the Purgatoire Valley, the Culebra Range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and Cuchara Valley in between. Several 14,000-foot peaks and dozens of aspen groves are speckled throughout the drive. Make a weekend seeing crisp fall colors and historic attractions in southern Colorado.

Recommended trip: Camp out at Trinidad Lake. Wake up early and head out on Highway 12, the scenic Highway of Legends. The 82-mile, two hour drive leads you west and then to the north, ending three miles west of Walsenburg. The tour is anchored on one end by Trinidad Lake and on the other end by Lathrop. It's simple – one road, no turn-offs, and miles of color. At the end of the trip stop in at Lathrop for another night of camping or some great fishing.

Directions to Trinidad Lake State Park: Trinidad Lake is located three miles west of Trinidad on Colorado Highway 12.

Directions to Lathrop State Park: Lathrop is located three miles west of Walsenburg on U.S. Highway 160.



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Grand Mesa Trip



Fall brings crimson splashes and splatters of saffron to the valleys and mountains of Grand Mesa. The mild climate encourages a variety of wildlife to wander in the dense forests of the area. Come explore Vega, Paonia and Crawford state parks while touring the fall colors of the Western Slope.

Recommended trip: From Grand Junction take I-70 to Highway 65 as it climbs through the picturesque Plateau Creek Canyon. From there, take Highway 65 to Highway 330. Go through Collbran, which offers views of the world's largest flat-top mountain, and continue on to Vega State Park. Vega State Park encompasses a beautiful, high-mountain lake that sits in an alpine meadow on the western edge of Grand Mesa National Forest. While you're there, you can enjoy a two-mile hike through aspen forest and mountain shrubs, or try fishing for some rainbow trout. This tour continues from Vega to Paonia and Crawford State

Parks. Paonia State Park is in the shadow of the majestic Ragged Mountains and is a popular place for camping, picnicking and outdoor photography. It is along the West Elk Scenic Byway and is surrounded by the Gunnison National Forest. Crawford State Park, also on the West Elk Scenic Byway, offers camping, fishing, and water sports, with hunting and numerous other leisure time activities in the near vicinity. Close by is the awe-inspiring Black Canyon of the Gunnison - a must see.

Directions to Vega State Park: Drive 16 miles east of Grand Junction and turn south off I-70 onto Colorado Highway 65. Drive 10 miles to Colorado 330 east through Collbran and drive the final 12 miles to the park entrance.

Directions to Paonia and Crawford State Parks: Loop around Vega State Park back to eastbound Highway 330 to Forest Service Road 265. Travel southeast on FSR 265/Buzzard Ditch Road to Highway 133; go southwest on Highway 133 past scenic Paonia State Park to Highway 92 at Hotchkiss; then travel south past the town of Crawford to Crawford State Park.

For updates on fall colors visit www.parks.state.co.us/fall

Miles From Denver	
Arkansas Headwaters	110
Crawford	246
Golden Gate Canyon	30
Eldorado Canyon	30
Eleven Mile	119
Harvey Gap	200
James M. Robb - Colorado River-Connected	256
James M. Robb - Colorado River-Corn Lake	240
James M. Robb - Colorado River-Fruita	256
James M. Robb - Colorado River-Island Acres	230
James M. Robb - Colorado River-Wildlife Area	260
Lathrop	164
Mancos	362
Mueller	100
Navajo	310
Paonia	214
Ridgway	325
Rifle Falls/Rifle Gap	210
State Forest	143
Steamboat Lake/Pearl Lake	180
Sylvan Lake	150
Trinidad Lake	200
Vega	245

