

A WEEKEND IN LARIMER COUNTY

A weekend trip is a great way to decide if Larimer County is the right fit for you. Depending on your main interests—whether they include outdoor activities, arts & culture or eats & treats—you will be able to plan a perfectly themed weekend that suits you best.

Plan your overnight stays in the community that fits your style. If you want a more fast-paced weekend with plenty of opportunities, stay in Fort Collins. If you want a small town feel, choose Loveland; and if you yearn for an outdoorsy mountain adventure, opt for Estes Park. If you'd like a little of everything try this itinerary, which gives you a stop in all three places.

WEEKEND ITINERARY FOR FUN



See CSU

Take a self-guided tour of Colorado State University. Download a map at ramtrax.colostate.edu.



FRIDAY - FORT COLLINS

Check in at the iconic Armstrong Hotel (thearmstronghotel.com) or the contemporary Elizabeth Hotel (theelizabethcolorado.com) right downtown for easy access to restaurants, shops and breweries. If you don't mind driving rather than walking and want a more traditional yet remodeled hotel, try the Hilton Fort Collins.

AFTERNOON BREWERY TOUR

After checking in, walk the few blocks from downtown to New Belgium Brewing and catch a late afternoon brewery tour. Tours run on the half hour on most days from 11:30 am to 4:30 pm. Arriving early? You can also catch Odell Brewing tours, which are offered daily at 12, 1, 2 and 3 pm.

DINNER OPTIONS

If you arrive on the first Friday of the month, take advantage of the Art Walk before deciding on your downtown dinner destination. For seafood lovers, try Jax

Fish House or Fish. If you want a hearty steak, go to The Still Whiskey Steaks, Sonny Lubick Steakhouse or Rodizio Grill. For Mexican, there's the Rio Grande, a Fort Collins classic, or Blue Agave. For those who venture south of town, try La Buena Vida for Mexican or the longstanding Young's Café for good Vietnamese.

EVENING OF MUSIC

Fort Collins is known as a hub for music. Before arriving, check music schedules at scenenoco.com and consider buying tickets for a show at Washington's, a recently renovated venue in a historic 1903 building. Or, try The Aggie, an old movie theatre turned music venue. If you just want to pop in and hear tunes, try the Downtown Artery, Hodi's Half Note or the Magic Rat at The Elizabeth Hotel.



SATURDAY - FORT COLLINS

MUSEUMS AND TROLLEY RIDE

After a tasty breakfast—try the popular Snooze or Lucille’s—get ready for some fun. If museums are your thing, check out the downtown Fort Collins Museum of Discovery and Museum of Art. You might take a trolley ride on the Municipal Railway, which runs from its downtown location at Howes Street and Mountain Avenue to City Park from noon to 5 pm on Saturdays and Sundays from May to September.

ALTERNATE ADVENTURES

If getting active is more your style, drive the 20 minutes to Horsetooth Reservoir, west of town, and paddleboard in Santanka Cove (mountainup.com) or hike a trail in Horsetooth Mountain Park or next door at Lory State Park. If thrill is what you are seeking, plan a rafting trip on the Wild & Scenic Cache la Poudre River.

EXPLORING ESTES PARK

In the afternoon, drive the twists and turns up Highway 34 along the Big Thompson River to Estes Park and plan to spend the night. Check in at the famous Stanley Hotel built in 1909 (think The Shining TV series in 1997) and see if you can spot a ghost in the billiard room. If The Stanley isn’t your scene, you have plenty of lodges and hotels to choose from in and around town.

You’re here, of course, for Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). Drive the scenic Trail Ridge Road through the park, or get here early enough for a hike. Bear Lake tops the list for hikes but often demands a morning arrival. Try Emerald Lake, Gem Lake or Ouzel Falls if you are a moderate hiker, or Alberta Falls if you want an easier hike. If you come in the fall, watch the elk rut and hear the bull elk bugle in the evening. They often congregate near the main entrance, among other places.

Estes Park offers a pleasant Riverwalk and several annual events, including art markets and festivals, for you to check out in the morning. For dining options, consider Seasoned for gourmet or Smokin’ Dave’s BBQ for casual dining for dinner, and the Mountain Home Café or Stanley Hotel for breakfast or brunch.



While sightings are rare, mountain lions do live in RMNP. When hiking with kids, stay in a group and don’t let kids run ahead or in between groups. If you meet an aggressive lion, don’t run. Look big and back away.



SUNDAY - LOVELAND

Head back down Highway 34 to Loveland for a final afternoon of fun. Loveland is known for its sculpture gardens with pleasant walking paths. Don’t miss the large Benson Sculpture Garden that offers 144 pieces for viewing, or the Chapungu Sculpture Park with 82 African stone sculptures. Plan to pop in the Loveland Museum on Lincoln Avenue, or go on self-guided history tour around charming downtown by downloading a Walk Historic Loveland map at cityofloveland.org.



Loveland, Colorado is known as the **“SWEETHEART CITY”** for its Valentine Re-mailing Program and large 3-D heart sculptures found all around town.

Before heading out of town, grab lunch at Door 222, Henry’s Pub or Nordy’s Bar-B-Que. If you are in the mood for shopping, stop at The Promenade Shops at Centerra on your way out of town at I-25 and Hwy. 34, where you’ll find many of your favorites.

If you have just a weekend to spend in Larimer County, you’ll be hard pressed to fit in even the top adventures the area has to offer, but this guide should get you started.