

48 Hours in Boulder

Two days, in the order that actually works, with the parking and reservation traps already handled.

Day one: the Flatirons and downtown

Morning: get on the mountain early. Start at Chautauqua. It's free to park on weekdays and \$2.50 an hour on summer weekends, and it's the trailhead everyone else is also heading for, so early matters more here than anywhere in Boulder. The Chautauqua Trail climbs 459 feet and reads as easy to medium. If you want the payoff hike instead, Royal Arch is 1,153 feet of gain and reached on foot up Bluebell Road from the same lot.

Midday: the Pearl Street Mall. Four car-free blocks, 11th to 15th, closed to cars since 1977. It's legally governed by its own city ordinances, so it has its own rulebook: no bikes, no dogs, no skateboards, and no selling without a permit. Acoustic street performing needs no permit; amplified sound needs a separate amplified sound permit, which is why what you hear is unplugged. The bronze and marble sculptures have been there since 1977 and children still climb them.

Afternoon: pick one museum. The CU Art Museum is free with no ticket. The Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA) is pay-what-you-want, with a \$1 minimum only if you use a card. The Museum of Boulder is \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors, college students and youth, free under 5, and free with a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) card.

Evening. Boulder has a food hall on Pearl and a farmers market that has run since 1987, both in the food guide. For dinner itself, Taste Boulder goes restaurant by restaurant, including the MICHELIN Guide entries.

Day two: canyon, science, water

Morning: Eldorado Canyon, if you booked it. \$10 to \$15 for a daily vehicle pass, \$4 if you walk or bike in, timed entry for vehicles on weekends and summer holidays from May 1 to October 1, and dogs on leash everywhere in the park with no exceptions. The Fowler Trail is 0.9 miles one way, unpaved, and ADA accessible for its full length. Critically: there's no public parking in the town of Eldorado Springs, so don't plan to leave the car there.

Midday: NCAR. Free admission, free parking, and a free guided tour at noon on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Open 363 days a year. There's no public transit up the mesa, so you need the car. The NCAR Trail is 293 feet of gain, and dogs are hand-held leash only on the federally owned stretch. Part of the same named trail sits on city Open Space, where Voice and Sight applies, so the rule changes underfoot without a sign telling you. Keep the leash on.

Afternoon: water or dome. Boulder Reservoir charges a daily entry fee from April 1 through October 31 and nothing from November 1 to March 31, and bans dogs from the gates and south shoreline from May 15 through Labor Day. Prefer indoors? Fiske Planetarium has a 65-foot dome, the largest between Chicago and Los Angeles, at \$12 adults and \$8 concessions plus a \$1.50 fee, closed during Folsom Field concerts and CU home football games.

Evening: the Dushanbe Teahouse. A hand-built teahouse that arrived as a gift from Boulder's sister city in Tajikistan. It takes no reservations for lunch or brunch, walk-ins only, but it does take dinner reservations.

Addresses

Chautauqua Park (Chautauqua and Royal Arch trails). 900 Baseline Road, Boulder, CO 80302

Pearl Street Mall. Pearl Street, 11th to 15th, Boulder, CO 80302

Trident Booksellers and Cafe. 940 Pearl Street, Boulder, CO 80302

CU Art Museum. 1085 18th Street, Boulder, CO 80309

BMoCA. 1750 13th Street, Boulder, CO 80302

Museum of Boulder. 2205 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302

Eldorado Canyon State Park (Fowler Trail). 9 Kneale Road, Eldorado Springs, CO 80025

Boulder Reservoir. 5275 Reservoir Road, Boulder, CO 80301

Fiske Planetarium. 2414 Regent Drive, Boulder, CO 80309

Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse. 1770 13th Street, Boulder, CO 80302