Overview of Colorado

Colorado is an outdoor paradise with a truly diverse landscape, from arid deserts strewn with sand dunes to alpine forests on the Rocky Mountains topped with snow, and the deep canyons created by the Colorado River. It is these wild, untamed vistas that draw visitors to the state of *Rio Colorado*, as the Spanish travellers first called it.

The Rocky Mountains are a year-round destination that boasts forests, canyons, lakes, rivers, and peaks that provide ample opportunity for hiking, mountain biking, fishing, and horseback riding. Winter resorts nestled in the mountains offer unrivalled skiing and snowboarding amid the panoramic alpine scenery. The resort of Vail is one of the most popular ski destinations in America, a family friendly destination, while Aspen is well known for its exclusivity and glamorous apres-ski scene.

The state capital of Denver is the obvious starting point for a vacation and is the gateway to the mountains, ski resorts, and spectacular Rocky Mountain National Park to the north. Home to many museums, parks, gardens, and a lively downtown area, the city offers the comfort and culture of a bigger city at relaxed pace. To the south, Pikes Peak looms over the city of Colorado Springs, famous for its breathtaking views that were the inspiration for the lyrics of "America the Beautiful" by Katherine Lee Bates. Those travelling from Denver to Colorado Springs should stop at the Gardens of Gods Park to marvel at the fantastic red sandstone formations. The western part of the state comprises of archaeological remnants of the cliff cities left by an ancient civilisation at Mesa Verde National Park.

While the scenery may be varied, visitors' experiences will be consistently enjoyable as they journey through the striking landscape of Colorado.

Key Facts

Language:

English is the most common language spoken but Spanish is often heard in the south-western states. **Passport/Visa:**

It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from them travel destination. A visa is required for short visits unless travellers qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA, a valid passport is required by immigration authorities. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Currency:

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 120 volts, 60Hz. Plugs are mainly the type with two flat pins, though three-pin plugs (two flat parallel pins and a rounded pin) are also widely used. European appliances without dual-voltage capabilities will require an adapter.

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By its very nature much of the information in this travel guide is subject to change at short notice and travellers are urged to verify information on which they're relying with the relevant authorities. Travmarket cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above. Event details can change. Please check with the organizers that an event is happening before making travel arrangements. We cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above.

Travel to Colorado

Climate for Colorado

Most of Colorado has a mountain climate with hot summer days and cold, snowy winters. But like the landscape, the weather can be extremely changeable, particularly during spring when large amounts of hail and windy conditions can flare up unexpectedly. Humidity is pleasantly low throughout the year. The snowy and cold winter in Colorado is the peak resort season, as the slopes come alive with skiers and snowboarders, but the pleasant summers attract hikers, horse-riders, and climbers. The stormy spring is the least popular time to travel to Colorado. Thunderstorms occur in spring and summer with the most rainfall during July and August; but rain can fall at any time of year up in the mountains.

Health Notes when travelling to United States of America

There are no specific health risks associated with travel within the USA. Medical facilities are excellent, but expensive. Only emergencies are treated without prior payment and treatment can be refused without evidence of insurance or proof of funds. Good medical insurance is essential. Visitors must be fully vaccinated with the primary series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine to travel to the United States by plane if they are non-U.S. citizens.

Safety Notes when travelling to United States of America

Travel within the United States is generally trouble-free, though travellers should be aware that the US shares with the rest of the world, an increased threat from terrorist incidents. Security has been heightened, particularly at airports. Restrictions on hand luggage apply and travellers are advised to check on the latest situation with airlines in advance. Travellers should also be alert to the dangers of car and street crime in cities and should use common sense and take basic precautions. Hurricanes are common between June and November, putting the southern USA, including the Gulf Coast and the eastern US at risk. There is a risk of wildfires in many dry areas in the US, particularly on the West Coast from March to November.

Customs in United States of America

Laws vary from state to state, including speed limit, fines and punishment. The age at which alcohol may be legally bought and consumed is 21 years.

Duty Free in United States of America

Travellers to the United States who are returning residents of the country do not have to pay duty on articles purchased abroad to the value of \$800 provided their stay was longer than 48 hours and their duty-free allowance was not used in the 30-day period prior. For passengers arriving from Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, a duty-free allowance of \$1,600 is allowed. The following items are included in this: 50 cigarettes and 10 cigars and 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages or 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of perfume containing alcohol. Restrictions may apply to goods from Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Burma (Myanmar), Angola, Liberia and Sudan. It is prohibited to import Cuban cigars from any country.

Travellers to the United States who are non-residents do not have to pay duty on the following items: 50 cigars or 200 cigarettes and gifts to the value of \$100 provided their stay in the USA is not less than 72 hours and that the allowance has not been used in the preceding six-month period.

Prohibited items for residents and non-residents include meat or meat products, poultry, narcotics, absinthe, plants, seeds, vegetables, fruits, soil, live insects and other living plants or animal pests. Fish is prohibited unless it carries disease-free certification. Wildlife and animals or their by-products carry restrictions. Dairy products and eggs from specified countries are not allowed. Firearms and ammunition are not allowed without the necessary license and permit.

Doing Business in United States of America

In such a large country, filled with so many diverse groups, business practices may differ according to each state, however rarely to any large degree. The East Coast is traditionally more formal than the West Coast, though in states such as California, dress code and conservative appearance are as common as they would be in New York. Punctuality is important throughout the country and it is considered rude to be late for a meeting. Gift-giving is uncommon as it may be construed as bribery. Appropriate titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms) are used upon introduction and until otherwise stated. Americans favour politeness and greetings of 'Hello' and 'How are you?' are often expressed with sincerity. Business hours may vary in each state, but an 8am start and 5pm finish Monday to Friday is the most common with an hour over lunch.

Status and age are not necessarily indicative of seniority, nor do they carry much weight in themselves. Those doing business in the States should be mindful of this fact; foreigners should never make assumptions about someone's position or rank. Best practice is to be respectful to all parties. That said, the US upholds a hierarchal business structure, in which 'the boss' is the ultimate decision-maker. Senior leaders have the power of the last word, and can go against the grain just as easily as they can follow popular opinion. Foreigners should concentrate on winning over this individual, even if the greater group seems unsupportive. Americans value a direct style of communication. In this fast-paced, consumer culture 'time is money', and small-talk is viewed as unnecessary and wasteful. It's best for foreigners to get to the point quickly, speak about issues in a frank and open manner, and to avoid taking offence if someone questions or challenges them outright.

Communication in United States of America

The international country dialling code for the United States is +1. Mobile networks cover most of the country, especially all urban areas, and WiFi is widely available.

Tipping in United States of America

A 15 percent tip is expected by taxi drivers, bartenders, hairdressers and waiters, but travellers shouldn't tip in fast-food or self-service restaurants. In expensive restaurants or for large parties, the tip should be 20 percent of the bill. It is normal to tip staff such as valets and porters in hotels; this is discretionary, although a minimum of \$5 is expected. Most services are customarily tipped if the service is good.

Passport/Visa Note

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The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP.

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Airports in Colorado

Denver International Airport (DEN)

Denver International Airport

www.flydenver.com

Location: Denver The airport is situated 26 miles (42km) east of Denver and is the gateway to the Rocky Mountains.

Time: GMT -7 (GMT -6 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: +1 303 342 2000.

Transfer between terminals: The underground rail links the Jeppesen Terminal with concourses A, B, and C.

Getting to the city: The RTD bus services connect the airport to the city centre. Tickets cost \$10.50 for a one day pass. The bus stop is located at the DEN Transit centre, which may be accessed from the south end of the Jeppeson Terminal. Limousines and taxis are also available for hire. Airport shuttles provide door-to-door services to central locations. Travellers may also obtain ground transportation information at the Ground Transportation Information Counter located on Level 5 of Jeppesen Terminal. Car rental companies are also available.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Hertz, National, and Thrifty.

Airport Taxis: Taxis are available from Jeppesen Terminal Level 5, Island 1, outside doors 507 and 511 (east side), and 506 and 510 (west side). The rate to the city centre starts from \$56. Taxi operators include Denver Yellow Cab and Trans Voyage Taxi.

Facilities: Foreign exchange bureaux and ATMs are available throughout the airport. Other facilities include bars, restaurants, duty-free shops, a post office, a massage centre, and tourist information. Travellers can enjoy one of the best collections of public art of any airport. Facilities for the disabled are fully functional, but those with special needs should contact their airline or travel agent in advance.

Parking: There is plenty of parking attached to the terminal. Fees start at \$5 per hour for economy parking. Reduced rates are available in the off-site Pike Peak Lot, where the rates are \$2 per hour and \$8 per day. Shuttles run 24 hours a day, every 10 minutes. There is also parking next to the terminal for picking up and dropping off.

Colorado Springs Airport (COS)

Colorado Springs Municipal Airport

www.coloradosprings.gov/flycos

Location: Colorado Springs The airport is located nine miles (16km) southeast of Colorado Springs.

Time: GMT -7 (GMT -6 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Getting to the city: There are buses to Colorado Springs and the surrounding region from the airport. Taxis, limousines, rental cars, and airport shuttles are all available at the airport, and some hotels in Colorado Springs offer pick-up services for their guests.

Car rental: Car hire companies at the airport include Avis, Budget, Hertz, Alamo/National, and Enterprise.

Airport Taxis: Springs Cab, Pikes Peak Cab, Rocky Mountain Taxi, and Yellow Cab offer taxis from Colorado Springs Airport. Taxis are metered.

Facilities: Facilities at the airport include ATMs, a visitor information centre, and multiple restaurants and shops.

Parking: Short-term parking costs \$1 per 30 minutes up to \$9 per day, and long-term parking costs \$1 per hour up to \$7 per day. There is a free, 24/7 shuttle service to the terminal.

Denver

Although it is literally a 'Mile High City', situated one mile (1.6km) above sea level, Denver is flat and sprawling, overwhelmed by the backdrop of the majestic peaks of the Rocky Mountains. It was founded as a gold-mining camp in 1858 and, situated at the centre of the Old West, was filled with cowboys, gamblers, saloons, gunslingers, Native Americans, and crooked characters such as the infamous con artist, Jefferson 'Soapy' Smith. Although very little gold was actually discovered in the area, the city still grew from the gold rush.

Having since shed its cow-town image and most evidence of its cowboy past, Denver has developed into a modern city with wonderful museums, historic architecture, cultural attractions, shopping venues and a world-class airport. It has more than 200 parks, tree-lined boulevards and a completely refurbished lower downtown area (LoDo to the locals), where blocks of old Victorian buildings and warehouses have been carefully restored to house restaurants, galleries, antique shops and jazz clubs. Historic Larimer Square is the heart of the dining and nightlife scene. Besides Chicago and San Diego, Denver brews more beer than any other city in America and most of it can be sampled in LoDo, where the city's brewpubs proliferate.

Most residents are active nature lovers who take advantage of the city's beautiful setting, the pleasant climate and unlimited outdoor adventures just minutes from the centre, including skiing, hiking, mountain biking and fishing. Tourism focuses on its natural setting and the outdoors, and as such it is a major destination for travellers heading into the mountains. Visitors to Denver will be pleasantly surprised by its welcoming and friendly nature and by how good-looking the city is.

Getting around in Denver

The public transport system in Denver is excellent, with an outstanding, comprehensive bus network that is supplemented by a light-rail line operating throughout the metropolitan area and outlying towns. Along the 16th Street Mall, the Regional Transportation District provides a free service called MallRide. Taxis can be hailed on the streets, but it is better to find them at taxi ranks or to order them by phone. Cars are not necessary for downtown and parking is expensive. Lyft and Uber are also options.

Climate in Denver

Denver experiences a semi-arid climate with dry, cold winters, warm summers, rainy springs, and pleasant, mild autumns. Winter temperatures average between 17F (-8C) and 46F (8C). The weather in Denver is influenced by the nearby Rocky Mountains, which block the winter storms somewhat. In summer, the humidity from the Gulf of Mexico causes afternoon thunderstorms. Summer temperatures average between 50F (10C) and 89°F (32C). Denver's weather can also be unpredictable, with unseasonable snowstorms occurring. The average annual rainfall is low, and sunny skies are the norm.

The weather in Denver is notoriously unpredictable, but the best time to travel to Denver, especially for lovers of the outdoors, is during late spring or early autumn, when there are plenty of sunny days and a number of outdoor events. Winter sports enthusiasts travel to Denver for the ski resorts during winter.

Sightseeing in Denver

Denver, Middle America's hub, where the Great Plains melt into an urban sprawl at the edge of the Rocky Mountains, is a popular city with tourists. A holiday in Denver offers all the modern tourist amenities and attractions to fill travellers' time, with the bonus of plenty of outdoor recreation opportunities just beyond the city limits. People of most ages and diverse interests will find something to enjoy during a Denver holiday. The city is well-geared towards families, with several educational attractions in the downtown area. Culture vultures will thrive on a full programme of musical and arts events.

Within the Mile High City, major sightseeing attractions include the Denver Art Museum, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, the State Capitol Building, the Denver Botanic Gardens, the Elitch Gardens Theme Park, Washington Park, the History Colorado Center, and the Denver Mint. Sports fanatics will enjoy taking in a game at the Coors Field Baseball Stadium, and shopaholics will relish a stroll through Denver's 16th Street Mall, an outdoor shopping and dining centre packed full of restaurants and boutiques.

And yet, the city's many attractions pale in comparison to the beauty on its doorstep. Most travellers that end up in Denver are embarking on holidays set to be full of outdoor adventures in the Rocky Mountains.

Denver Attractions

History Colorado Center

Documenting the colourful history of Colorado and the stories of those who have lived here over the centuries, the History Colorado Center brings to life the world of cowboys and gunfighters, Native Americans, miners and gold panners, explorers, buffalo hunters, wagon trains and railroads. The museum is hugely innovative, blending technology with fascinating artefacts. Visitors can explore an enormous map of the state with a storytelling time machine, grab a headlamp and enter a hard-rock mine, traverse the plains in a Model T, then soar off the world's first ski jump. Exhibits include portrayals of life in 19th-century Denver, Buffalo Soldiers and the Mesa Verde cliff.

Website: www.historycolorado.org

Denver Art Museum

Housing one of the largest Native American art collections in the country, the Denver Art Museum is a huge, seven-storey structure that also features the works of American Western artists, and art from Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific. The growing Native American collection displays work from about 150 tribes throughout the country, arranged geographically and spanning almost 2,000 years. Discovery Libraries contain shelves of art objects and prints, a costume closet that allows visitors to try on olden-day clothing, as well as reading corners. The museum is interesting for people of all ages.

Website: www.denverartmuseum.org

Rocky Mountain National Park

The most popular attraction in Colorado is the spectacular Rocky Mountain National Park, with its snow-covered peaks, flower-flecked meadows, alpine lakes, thundering waterfalls and wildlife. These images of beauty have graced countless calendars and coffee-table books and are instantly recognisable as belonging to Colorado. Because of the high elevation of the park, a third of which is at an altitude of more than 11,500 feet (3,505m), there are large areas above the tree line of alpine tundra, meaning constant snow and flora seldom found outside the Arctic. Although usually considered the realm of hikers, climbers, fishermen and horse riders, it is possible to enjoy the park without breaking a sweat thanks to one of America's most scenic drives, the Trail Ridge Road. Crossing the Continental Divide at over two miles (3km) above sea level, the 48-mile (77km) highway linking Estes Park to Grand Lake is one of the highest continuous highways in the country, affording dizzying views in all directions. The sweeping vistas of snowy peaks and glaciers, forests, streams and meadows where elk, mule deer and bighorn sheep can be seen, are exceptional. The road also provides access to several walking trails. In winter the road is closed, but activities such as cross-country skiing, ice fishing and snow-shoeing are popular. Most visitors come during the summer months, but the park can get quite crowded and the roads congested; the best time to enjoy the park is early autumn, after the crowds and before the winter snows. The resort village of Estes Park is the eastern gateway to the park and very popular with visitors, while the western resort of Grand Lake is quieter with an idyllic setting on the shores of a large lake.

Website: www.nps.gov/romo

Denver Mint

More US money is made in Denver than anywhere else in the country, and visitors can take a tour of the Denver Mint to see exactly what's behind that tiny 'D' on most US coins. The Denver Mint opened in 1863, and originally melted gold dust and nuggets into bars for the Federal Reserve. Today it churns out billions of coins each year. Self-guided tours through the visitors' gallery provide a birds-eye view of the coin-minting process, with signs and displays explaining how it works. The whole tour takes about an hour, and reservations are required. There is a gift shop selling historic coins and replicas, which make great souvenirs for travellers (it is also possible to purchase coins online via the official website).

Website: www.usmint.gov

Ski resorts

Boasting some of the world's top ski resorts, such as Vail and Aspen (to name two of the best), the main attraction of the Rocky Mountains has to be its plethora of ski resorts. Travellers looking for the ultimate winter ski holiday are spoilt for choice when they visit Colorado's Rockies, as there are at least 20 resorts to choose from. From amateurs and intermediates to those looking to carve their way down pristine black runs, there's a skiing or snowboarding opportunity for everyone. Some of the resorts are glamorous and upmarket and others are more family-friendly.

Mount Evans

Mount Evans, with an altitude of over 14,000 feet, offers visitors truly spectacular views from its summit, as well as the opportunity to see various forms of Rocky Mountain wildlife (American Elk, mountain goats, marmots, big horn sheep) in their natural habitats. Just 65 miles (about 100km) from Denver (including an exhilarating 15 miles on 'America's highest paved road', the Mount Evans Scenic Byway), Mount Evans is perhaps the easiest way for visitors to Colorado to get an authentic 'Rocky Mountain experience'. Mount Evans also offers fishing opportunities, and hiking and bicycle trails; although it is most commonly visited as a day-trip from Denver, and is easily accessible by car for the less fit. Visitors should remember to pack a lunch for the summit, as the views will keep them up there for hours.

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Admission: \$18.95 adult, \$13.95 children

The Denver Museum of Nature and Science is one of those rare attractions that is as entertaining as it is educational, and as suitable for kids as it is fascinating for grown-ups. The museum draws thousands of teachers and students each year, and countless more tourists, all of who value the unique, hands-on presentation style of the exhibitions. Boasting an IMAX theatre, Planetarium, and an assortment of high-tech, interactive 'discovery areas' (most famously, the 'Space Odyssey' and 'Prehistoric Journey' sections), visitors of all ages are sure to come away from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science enriched, and more enthusiastic about the world's natural treasures. The museum also houses a popular gift shop and cafe.

Website: www.dmns.org

Elitch Gardens Theme Park

This popular amusement park is conveniently located in downtown Denver, offering about 50 rides and attractions for families in Denver. Rides range from the thrilling ten-storey Twister II roller coaster, to the pretty hand-carved carousel that dates back to 1925. The connected Island Kingdom Water Park offers relief on hot summer days, with around a dozen waterslides, raft rides, and family play areas. Entrance to the theme park includes entrance to the water park at no extra cost. Elitch Gardens Theme Park is seasonal, open between April and October and closed the rest of the year. Visitors should note that the park is open daily in the peak summer months but only sporadically in April, May, September and October; it is essential to check the calendar on the official website listed below before visiting to avoid disappointment. The E and C light rail lines stop near the entrance to the theme park.

Website: www.elitchgardens.com

Boulder

A laid-back university town, located roughly 25 minutes northwest of Denver, Boulder is a sophisticated and artistic city. The large population of students from Colorado University gives Boulder a lively nightlife, a sense of fun, and a liberal attitude. Taking full advantage of its close proximity to the Rocky Mountains, Boulder is a city fanatical about outdoor activities such as hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking, camping, and skiing, and has positioned itself as a tourist hub for travellers on their way to the nearby Rocky Mountain National Park. Boulder is stunningly situated and has enough impressive views to satisfy anybody in search of Colorado's beauty.

Website: www.bouldercolorado.gov

Mesa Verde National Park

Mesa Verde National Park provides a glimpse into the Ancestral Pueblo culture (also called the Anasazi), a tribe which inhabited the area for over 700 years from the year 600 to 1300. The park contains thousands of archaeological sites, including hundreds of cliff dwellings. Travellers can start at the Far View Visitors' Center, located 15 miles (24km) from the entrance, and join a ranger-guided tour of popular sites such as Cliff Palace, Balcony house, Spruce Tree House, and Long House. Many sites are only accessible on the tours, and may be difficult for those who aren't physically fit. The ruins are incredibly impressive and very well preserved; some of the greatest archaeological treasures in the Americas.

Website: www.nps.gov/meve

Dinosaur National Monument

One of the best places to see prehistoric dinosaur fossils in the US, Dinosaur National Monument is home to the Carnegie Dinosaur Quarry, a famous archaeological site that still displays thousands of fossils for the public to see, along with exhibits on life during the late Jurassic period. The park was also home to outlaws and homesteaders in the 1800s, and there are a few historic sites relating to their presence, including the Rial Chew Ranch Complex and Denis Julien Inscription to explore. The area is scenically splendid and offers many fun outdoor activities: there are great hiking trails and the extra adventurous can go river rafting down the rapids of the canyons.

Website: www.nps.gov/dino

Events in Denver

The Great American Beer Festival Friday September 24, 2021 to Sunday September 26, 2021 (TBC)

Where: Colorado Convention Center

Every September in the city of Denver, beer brewers and tasters gather together for America's largest collection of beer served under one roof. More than 330 breweries are represented and there are close to 1,500 brands of beer on offer on the festival floor. The accompanying brewers' competition draws around 2,000 entries for the coveted award of the best beer of the festival. The beer swilling is accompanied by wholesome American food paired with certain beers for a full culinary experience. Tickets are limited and the event tends to sell out quickly, so book early if you are planning to attend.

http://www.greatamericanbeerfestival.com

Greeley Stampede Wednesday June 24, 2020 to Sunday July 05, 2020 (24 June - 5 July 2020)

Where: Greeley

The Greeley Stampede in Colorado is a truly American celebration. The festivities include a fantastic fireworks display, live concerts, art shows, a large carnival, a demolition derby, and of course, some crazy rodeo that attracts hundreds of thousands to share in the Independence Day celebrations. The festival is a great fun for children too, who can enjoy their own rodeo and special kids' concerts. Check out the official website listed below for details on who is performing and what exactly the celebrations will include each year. Don't miss out on an immersive American experience.

http://www.greeleystampede.org

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Denver International Airport http://www.flydenver.com

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Parking: There is plenty of parking attached to the terminal. Fees start at \$5 per hour for economy parking. Reduced rates are available in the off-site Pike Peak Lot, where the rates are \$2 per hour and \$8 per day. Shuttles run 24 hours a day, every 10 minutes. There is also parking next to the terminal for picking up and dropping off.

Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs is a growing city that was originally developed as a vacation destination in 1871, as part of the 'health centre' boom of Colorado, being blessed with the nearby mineral waters of Manitou Springs, its high mountain ranges, and fresh mountain air. Today it is a popular tourist destination (tourism is the main source of income in Colorado Springs), attracting visitors to the magnificent scenery of Pikes Peak Country and the pleasant climate. It is a good base from which to explore the beauty of the surrounding area and most tourists come to marvel at the landscapes of Garden of the Gods and Pikes Peak, as well as to see the US Air Force Academy.

Most of Colorado Springs' residents are retired or active military personnel and this lends a conservative mood to the city. Colorado Springs sits at the foot of its most famous landmark, the 14,115-foot (4,302m) Pikes Peak, and a breath-taking journey on the Pikes Peak Cog Railway takes passengers to the summit, from where incredible views over the Rocky Mountain Range, Denver and the endless Great Plains can be enjoyed. The marvellous red sandstone formations of the nearby Garden of the Gods have been sculpted into pinnacles and weirdly eroded shapes by the wind and rain over millions of years, and the park has numerous walking trails that allow visitors to explore the landscapes away from the tourist-travelled roads.

Getting around in Colorado Springs

Tourists often choose to hire cars in Colorado Springs, especially as most travellers explore widely in the region surrounding the city, rather than just in Colorado Springs itself. However, despite car hire being the most convenient transport option, visitors should note that traffic congestion, narrow roads, and scarce parking could make driving around Colorado Springs itself a bit stressful. For those who prefer not to drive, there are taxis available, but they should be ordered at least an hour in advance by phone. Public transport consists of a bus system managed by Mountain Metropolitan Transport, which operates comprehensive routes in town between 5am and 10pm on weekdays. Lyft and Uber are also available.

Climate in Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs has a semi-arid climate and the city's proximity to the mountains makes the weather unpredictable and changeable. The city gets plenty of sun in the warm summers and in the cold, snowy winters. In December, the coldest month of winter, the average temperatures range between 17F (-8C) and 42F (6C), and in July, the hottest month of summer, the average temperatures range between 56F (13C) and 84F (29C). Snow falls between November and April, with March being the snowiest month. Colorado Springs is not a rainy city, but some rain does fall in the summer months.

Airports in Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs Airport (COS)

Colorado Springs Municipal Airport

http://www.coloradosprings.gov/flycos

Location: Colorado Springs The airport is located nine miles (16km) southeast of Colorado Springs.

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Getting to the city: There are buses to Colorado Springs and the surrounding region from the airport. Taxis, limousines, rental cars, and airport shuttles are all available at the airport, and some hotels in Colorado Springs offer pick-up services for their quests.

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Parking: Short-term parking costs \$1 per 30 minutes up to \$9 per day, and long-term parking costs \$1 per hour up to \$7 per day. There is a free, 24/7 shuttle service to the terminal.

Rocky Mountains

Colorado's beautiful landscape, and its lifestyle, is dominated by mountains, and much of northwest Colorado is covered by the world-renowned Rocky Mountains that are famous for their scenery, as well as for their skiing, snowboarding and hiking opportunities. The Rocky Mountains feature many popular ski resorts such as Vail, Aspen and Breckenridge, where winter and summer activities abound.

The magnificent scenery of Pikes Peak Country and the Garden of the Gods can be explored from Colorado Springs, while the alpine meadows and rugged cliffs around the peaks known as Maroon Bells, near Aspen, contribute to make the area one of the most photographed spots in Colorado, and indeed the US. One of the state's most popular attractions is the spectacular Rocky Mountain National Park with its alpine lakes, snow encrusted peaks, meadows and waterfalls that are the some of the most recognisable images of Colorado's natural beauty. Fossils can be sought out at Dinosaur National Monument, in an area that also lures travellers with white water rafting and hiking trails. For a taste of the fascinating ancient culture of the region, the Mesa Verde National Park offers visitors the chance to explore some of the most remarkable archaeological sites in the country.

Copper Mountain Rocky Mountains

Copper Mountain is the largest holiday resort, in terms of area, in the whole of Summit County Colorado. The resort, owned by Powdr Corporation, is an incredibly popular holiday destination and noted especially for its varying terrain and diverse runs. Copper Mountain boasts three villages filled with shops, restaurants, bars and a variety of accommodation. The village of Copper is the centre of the holiday resort and most of the action takes place around here. The East Village and Union Creek (on the west side of Copper Mountain) have fewer restaurants and shops. Former owner, Intrawest, put a lot of money into the upgrading of the villages, with massive amounts of construction aiding to bring up the standard and reputation to where it stands today. Copper Mountain is now one of the most popular holiday resorts in the whole of Colorado and continues to attract visitors from within the United States and worldwide.

Steamboat Rocky Mountains

Steamboat is a hugely popular holiday resort boasting a wide variety of options for families of all skiing levels, and topped off with rustic cowboy charm. Its reputation and quality has earned it the nickname 'Ski Town USA'. The resort is located in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, on Mount Werner in the Park range. With almost 3,000 acres of varied terrain, reaching a height of 3,668 feet (1,118m), and encompassing 165 trails including mogul fields and tree runs, there is bound to be enough for everyone. The Steamboat resort is incredibly popular for holidays due to its rich Olympic heritage and friendly atmosphere. It is also perfect for families, accommodating beginner skiers and snowboarders quite comfortably with experienced instructors at the ski school.

Keystone Rocky Mountains

Keystone attracts all types from all over the world on holiday. From first-time families to rogue snowboarders, all manage to delight themselves with the many options available at this all-encompassing holiday resort. Keystone is situated only one and a half hours from Denver, and just over two hours from Denver International Airport. It is part of the Vail Resorts group, and lift tickets can be purchased to include the other resorts in that group: Breckenridge, Beaver Creek, Arapahoe Basin, Vail and Heavenly (California). An efficient bus system in Summit Country connects all of these resorts (excluding Heavenly), to allow for an incredible variety of skiing in the area. Keystone itself has three separate villages with bars, restaurants, shops, rental equipment facilities and a wide range of accommodation for visitors to enjoy on holiday. What really separates Keystone from all the other holiday resorts in Colorado is the night skiing, which is exciting and fun.

Beaver Creek Rocky Mountains

A major resort in Colorado, this upmarket ski haven is a great holiday destination for families, couples and even a few celebrities, as it offers good skiing, fine dining, world-class shopping and fantastic accommodation. Beaver Creek has a very European feel to it, styled similarly to Switzerland's St Moritz, Italy's Cortina and Spain's Val d'Aran, and exudes the sense of luxury that complements the resort's maxim: *Not Exactly Roughing It*.

The resort includes three villages with mountain access from all. The Beaver Creek Village is the heart of the resort and has plenty of shops and restaurants in its surrounds, whereas Bachelor Gulch and Arrowhead are more secluded but with great access to the slopes. Beaver Creek is part of Vail Resorts and ski packages can include access to Keystone, Vail, Breckenridge, and Heavenly (California), all of which (excluding Heavenly) can be accessed via an efficient transport system in the Summit County Area.

Vail Rocky Mountains

Time and time again the holiday hub of Vail is ranked one of the top ski destinations on the continent, one of the most visited ski resorts in America, and one of the world's premier winter holiday destinations. Claiming the largest single mountain ski area in North America, Vail offers miles of ski terrain and the opportunity to choose a different descent every time.

The Austrian-styled village of Vail is a neat concentration of trendy shops, restaurants and nightlife, all within easy reach of the hotels, inns and lodges, and never more than a five-minute walk from the slopes. There is a lift system that provides access to a backcountry experience with trees and peaceful ungroomed terrain. The ski season lasts from November to early May, but the resort remains open for summer holiday activities such as hiking, mountain biking and fishing.

Aspen Rocky Mountains

Aspen's reputation as a holiday destination precedes it; the name is synonymous with glitz, glamour, unparalleled skiing, and spectacular mountain scenery. Most reviews would have one believe that Aspen is a holiday resort exclusively for the rich and famous. Although this elite resort does host super stars such as Gigi Hadid, Kim Kardashian, Jack Nicholson and Cher, anyone with a lot of cash can experience the powder snow, superb skiing and sophisticated accommodation, as well as good dining and high-society shopping, with an unrivalled range of winter and summer activities. An Aspen holiday in summer is more affordable as prices are lower at this time; there are numerous trails for hiking, biking and horse riding, as well as renowned cultural festivals of dance and music to keep visitors occupied when there is no snow. The resort attracts thousands of Americans, as well as European visitors every year. Aspen began as a silver mining town with the discovery of the world's largest silver nugget in the 1870s. After the crash of the silver market, its economy dwindled until it was recognised as a prime ski location. The ostentatious apres-ski is one of the major draw cards of Aspen, as it's a chance for the rich and famous to mingle.

Breckenridge Rocky Mountains

The beautiful Colorado high mountain valley and holiday destination of Breckenridge first attracted settlers back in 1859, when the glitter of gold drew hundreds of hopeful prospectors to the banks of the Blue River. The gold wore out in the 1940s, but, like Aspen, Breckenridge soon boomed again, this time as a world-class ski resort where visitors came seeking thrills and spills on the white powdery slopes. When it comes to snow-sports, Breckenridge is acknowledged as one of the finest places in the USA to experience them all, and it has a reputation for being the best place to learn to ski in the US, with more than 600 professional instructors and plenty of gentle beginner slopes available. Breckenridge is also a haven for snowboarders, having been one of the first resorts in the country to cater for this now booming sport. The quaint mining town with its charming Victorian buildings forms the nucleus of the Breckenridge resort, and has become a year-round popular holiday destination with a host of activities on offer during the summer months as well as exceptional skiing in winter. The resort's popularity is enhanced by its easy accessibility from Denver via the Eisenhower Tunnel, the drive taking about an hour and a half.

Telluride Rocky Mountains

At the southern tip of the Rocky Mountains, tucked into a canyon ringed by the soaring peaks of the San Juan Mountains, lies the tiny historic mining town and holiday destination of Telluride, which, twinned with its modern purpose-built 'alter-ego', Mountain Village, perched 9,500 feet (2,895m) up the mountain-side, forms one of America's most spectacular ski resorts.

Telluride sports a dozen or so blocks of quaint Victorian homes and clapboard storefronts, around a pedestrianised core. A unique feature of the twinned towns is the three-stage gondola system, which provides the only access to high altitude Mountain Village. Visitors take the swift, scenic and free ride to the elegant, contemporary resort town, marvelling at the panoramic views of some of Colorado's most magnificent mountain peaks. While Telluride provides the picturesque historic atmosphere, Mountain Village, founded in 1987, provides modern recreational and accommodation options for discerning guests, with luxury hotels and condominiums, sophisticated boutiques, eclectic restaurants, a championship golf course, conference centre and world-class spas. The attractive, upmarket modern facilities and stunning setting have ensured that Telluride/Mountain Village is not just a winter sports destination with eminently attractive ski slopes, but popular all year round as a mountain holiday destination. It is easy to see why the Ute Indians in days of yore cherished this valley and its guardian peaks as sacred territory.

Crested Butte Rocky Mountains

The popular holiday destination of Crested Butte is located in Gunnison County, considered the wildflower capital of Colorado. Regardless, when the resort is covered in white each winter, the flowers are forgotten and skiers from all over the world descend on this resort town, often touted as one of the best extreme skiing locations in the world. Both the US Extreme Skiing Championships and X-Games have been hosted here and the extensive terrain has something to offer everyone. The resort town is famous and well-loved within the skiing community as a laidback, unpretentious, fun-loving place to visit; 'Worth Getting To', as the Crested Butte saying goes.

Colorado Attractions

Overview

World-renowned among the adventurous, the alpine world of Colorado promises justifiably famous skiing, snowboarding, hiking and white water rafting opportunities. Unsurprisingly, the state is also a great favourite with photographers. In addition to the scenic appeal, Colorado is home to some quaint towns still steeped in gold rush history, and to some of the most remarkable ancient archaeological sites in the USA.

Colorado's top tourist attraction, broadly speaking, is mountains. The best places to soak up the dramatic scenery include the Rocky Mountain National Park, the Gunnison National Park, and the celebrated resort of Vail. Pikes Peak, located in Pike National Forest, is another wildly beautiful Colorado landmark.

Mountainous delights aside, Colorado offers travellers the surreal beauty of the Garden of the Gods, just outside Colorado Springs; the undulating, endless sands of the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, in the south of the state; and the seemingly fantastical ancient cliff settlements of Mesa Verde National Park.

History Colorado Center

Documenting the colourful history of Colorado and the stories of those who have lived here over the centuries, the History Colorado Center brings to life the world of cowboys and gunfighters, Native Americans, miners and gold panners, explorers, buffalo hunters, wagon trains and railroads. The museum is hugely innovative, blending technology with fascinating artefacts. Visitors can explore an enormous map of the state with a storytelling time machine, grab a headlamp and enter a hard-rock mine, traverse the plains in a Model T, then soar off the world's first ski jump. Exhibits include portrayals of life in 19th-century Denver, Buffalo Soldiers and the Mesa Verde cliff.

Website: www.historycolorado.org

Denver Art Museum

Housing one of the largest Native American art collections in the country, the Denver Art Museum is a huge, seven-storey structure that also features the works of American Western artists, and art from Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific. The growing Native American collection displays work from about 150 tribes throughout the country, arranged geographically and spanning almost 2,000 years. Discovery Libraries contain shelves of art objects and prints, a costume closet that allows visitors to try on olden-day clothing, as well as reading corners. The museum is interesting for people of all ages.

Website: www.denverartmuseum.org

Rocky Mountain National Park

The most popular attraction in Colorado is the spectacular Rocky Mountain National Park, with its snow-covered peaks, flower-flecked meadows, alpine lakes, thundering waterfalls and wildlife. These images of beauty have graced countless calendars and coffee-table books and are instantly recognisable as belonging to Colorado. Because of the high elevation of the park, a third of which is at an altitude of more than 11,500 feet (3,505m), there are large areas above the tree line of alpine tundra, meaning constant snow and flora seldom found outside the Arctic. Although usually considered the realm of hikers, climbers, fishermen and horse riders, it is possible to enjoy the park without breaking a sweat thanks to one of America's most scenic drives, the Trail Ridge Road. Crossing the Continental Divide at over two miles (3km) above sea level, the 48-mile (77km) highway linking Estes Park to Grand Lake is one of the highest continuous highways in the country, affording dizzying views in all directions. The sweeping vistas of snowy peaks and glaciers, forests, streams and meadows where elk, mule deer and bighorn sheep can be seen, are exceptional. The road also provides access to several walking trails. In winter the road is closed, but activities such as cross-country skiing, ice fishing and snow-shoeing are popular. Most visitors come during the summer months, but the park can get quite crowded and the roads congested; the best time to enjoy the park is early autumn, after the crowds and before the winter snows. The resort village of Estes Park is the eastern gateway to the park and very popular with visitors, while the western resort of Grand Lake is quieter with an idyllic setting on the shores of a large lake.

Website: www.nps.gov/romo

Denver Mint

More US money is made in Denver than anywhere else in the country, and visitors can take a tour of the Denver Mint to see exactly what's behind that tiny 'D' on most US coins. The Denver Mint opened in 1863, and originally melted gold dust and nuggets into bars for the Federal Reserve. Today it churns out billions of coins each year. Self-guided tours through the visitors' gallery provide a birds-eye view of the coin-minting process, with signs and displays explaining how it works. The whole tour takes about an hour, and reservations are required. There is a gift shop selling historic coins and replicas, which make great souvenirs for travellers (it is also possible to purchase coins online via the official website).

Website: www.usmint.gov

Ski resorts

Boasting some of the world's top ski resorts, such as Vail and Aspen (to name two of the best), the main attraction of the Rocky Mountains has to be its plethora of ski resorts. Travellers looking for the ultimate winter ski holiday are spoilt for choice when they visit Colorado's Rockies, as there are at least 20 resorts to choose from. From amateurs and intermediates to those looking to carve their way down pristine black runs, there's a skiing or snowboarding opportunity for everyone. Some of the resorts are glamorous and upmarket and others are more family-friendly.

Mount Evans

Mount Evans, with an altitude of over 14,000 feet, offers visitors truly spectacular views from its summit, as well as the opportunity to see various forms of Rocky Mountain wildlife (American Elk, mountain goats, marmots, big horn sheep) in their natural habitats. Just 65 miles (about 100km) from Denver (including an exhilarating 15 miles on 'America's highest paved road', the Mount Evans Scenic Byway), Mount Evans is perhaps the easiest way for visitors to Colorado to get an authentic 'Rocky Mountain experience'. Mount Evans also offers fishing opportunities, and hiking and bicycle trails; although it is most commonly visited as a day-trip from Denver, and is easily accessible by car for the less fit. Visitors should remember to pack a lunch for the summit, as the views will keep them up there for hours.

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Admission: \$18.95 adult, \$13.95 children

The Denver Museum of Nature and Science is one of those rare attractions that is as entertaining as it is educational, and as suitable for kids as it is fascinating for grown-ups. The museum draws thousands of teachers and students each year, and countless more tourists, all of who value the unique, hands-on presentation style of the exhibitions. Boasting an IMAX theatre, Planetarium, and an assortment of high-tech, interactive 'discovery areas' (most famously, the 'Space Odyssey' and 'Prehistoric Journey' sections), visitors of all ages are sure to come away from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science enriched, and more enthusiastic about the world's natural treasures. The museum also houses a popular gift shop and cafe.

Website: www.dmns.org

Elitch Gardens Theme Park

This popular amusement park is conveniently located in downtown Denver, offering about 50 rides and attractions for families in Denver. Rides range from the thrilling ten-storey Twister II roller coaster, to the pretty hand-carved carousel that dates back to 1925. The connected Island Kingdom Water Park offers relief on hot summer days, with around a dozen waterslides, raft rides, and family play areas. Entrance to the theme park includes entrance to the water park at no extra cost. Elitch Gardens Theme Park is seasonal, open between April and October and closed the rest of the year. Visitors should note that the park is open daily in the peak summer months but only sporadically in April, May, September and October; it is essential to check the calendar on the official website listed below before visiting to avoid disappointment. The E and C light rail lines stop near the entrance to the theme park.

Website: www.elitchgardens.com

Boulder

A laid-back university town, located roughly 25 minutes northwest of Denver, Boulder is a sophisticated and artistic city. The large population of students from Colorado University gives Boulder a lively nightlife, a sense of fun, and a liberal attitude. Taking full advantage of its close proximity to the Rocky Mountains, Boulder is a city fanatical about outdoor activities such as hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking, camping, and skiing, and has positioned itself as a tourist hub for travellers on their way to the nearby Rocky Mountain National Park. Boulder is stunningly situated and has enough impressive views to satisfy anybody in search of Colorado's beauty.

Website: www.bouldercolorado.gov

Mesa Verde National Park

Mesa Verde National Park provides a glimpse into the Ancestral Pueblo culture (also called the Anasazi), a tribe which inhabited the area for over 700 years from the year 600 to 1300. The park contains thousands of archaeological sites, including hundreds of cliff dwellings. Travellers can start at the Far View Visitors' Center, located 15 miles (24km) from the entrance, and join a ranger-guided tour of popular sites such as Cliff Palace, Balcony house, Spruce Tree House, and Long House. Many sites are only accessible on the tours, and may be difficult for those who aren't physically fit. The ruins are incredibly impressive and very well preserved; some of the greatest archaeological treasures in the Americas.

Website: www.nps.gov/meve

Dinosaur National Monument

One of the best places to see prehistoric dinosaur fossils in the US, Dinosaur National Monument is home to the Carnegie Dinosaur Quarry, a famous archaeological site that still displays thousands of fossils for the public to see, along with exhibits on life during the late Jurassic period. The park was also home to outlaws and homesteaders in the 1800s, and there are a few historic sites relating to their presence, including the Rial Chew Ranch Complex and Denis Julien Inscription to explore. The area is scenically splendid and offers many fun outdoor activities: there are great hiking trails and the extra adventurous can go river rafting down the rapids of the canyons.

Website: www.nps.gov/dino

CurrencyThe official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to

Exchange rate for 1 USD - U.S. Dollar

0.00 BMD	0.93 EUR	0.80 GBP	152.99 JPY	1.37 CAD	0.91 CHF
Bermudan Dollar	Euro	U.K. Pound Sterling	Japanese Yen	Canadian Dollar	Swiss Franc
1.52 AUD	39.40 UAH	443.91 KZT	93,075.00 LBP	4.86 LYD	6.86 BOB
Australian Dollar	Ukrainian Hryvnia	Kazakhstani Tenge	Lebanese Pound		Bolivian Boliviano
0.00 NPR	0.00 OMR	0.00 QAR	1.35 SGD	10.82 SEK	0.00 TTD
Nepalese Rupee	Omani Rial	Qatari Rial	Singapore Dollar	Swedish Krona	Trinidad Tobago Dollar
0.00 VEF	58.11 DOP	0.00 HRK	16.95 MXN	610.53 XOF	0.00 PGK
Venezuelan Bolivar	Dominican Peso	Croatian Kuna	Mexican Peso	West African CFA Franc	Papua New Guinean kina
0.00 BSD	0.00 FJD	0.00 HNL	133.87 DZD	0.00 MMK	0.00 BWP
Bahamian Dollar	Fiji Dollar	Honduran Lempira	Algerian Dinar	Myanma Kyat	Botswana Pula
3.72 PEN	938.44 CLP	386.84 AMD	23.29 CZK	17.63 MDL	139.89 ISK
Peruvian Nuevo Sol	Chilean Peso	Armenia Dram	Czech Koruna	Moldova Lei	Icelandic Krona
12,582.40 UZS	3.72 ILS	0.71 JOD	0.00 KWD	38.15 UYU	0.00 MUR
Uzbekistan Sum	Israeli New Sheqel	Jordanian Dinar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Uruguayan Peso	Mauritian Rupee
0.00 NIO	10.88 NOK	4.03 PLN	3.75 SAR	0.00 LKR	36.79 THB
Nicaraguan Córdoba	Norwegian Krone	Polish Zloty	Saudi Riyal	Sri Lanka Rupee	Thai Baht
3.66 AED	5.09 BRL	4.63 RON	7.81 HKD	610.53 XAF	25,405.70 VND
U.A.E Dirham	Brazilian Real	Romanian New Leu	Hong Kong Dollar	Central African CFA Franc	Vietnamese Dong
878.36 ARS	0.00 XCD	0.00 GTQ	10.06 MAD	0.00 BHD	1.00 PAB
Argentine Peso	East Caribbean Dollar	Guatemalan Quetzal	Moroccan Dirham	Bahrain Dinar	Panamanian Balboa
1.70 AZN	3,920.00 COP	88.42 KGS	362.00 HUF	10.89 TJS	16,073.70 IDR
Azerbaijan Manat	Colombian Peso	Kyrgyzstan Som	Hungarian Forint	Tajikistan Ruble	Indonesian Rupiah
47.95 EGP	1,358.84 KRW	7,456.52 PYG	4.74 MYR	508.31 CRC	1.67 NZD
Egyptian Pound	South Korean Won	Paraguayan Guaraní	Malaysian Ringgit	Costa Rican Colón	New Zealand Dollar
277.87 PKR	91.39 RUB	18.51 ZAR	3.13 TND	0.00 BBD	1.82 BGN
Pakistani Rupee	Russian Rouble	South African Rand	Tunisian Dinar	Barbadian Dollar	Bulgarian Lev
32.33 TRY	57.28 PHP	32.31 TWD	1,164.84 NGN	0.00 XPF	0.00 GHS
Turkish Lira	Philippine Peso	New Taiwan Dollar	Nigerian Naira	CFP Franc	Ghanaian Cedi
0.00 JMD	0.00 ANG	0.00 BND	108.90 RSD	7.24 CNY	6.94 DKK
Jamaican Dollar	Neth. Antillean Guilder	Brunei Dollar	Serbian Dinar	Chinese Yuan	Danish Krone
3.49 TMT	83.42 INR				
New Turkmenistan Manat	Indian Rupee				