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# 9 Amazing Outdoor Activities To Experience In Boulder, Colorado

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The Flatirons in Boulder  
PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER YAKEY-AULT / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

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Year round, adventure seekers head to Boulder, Colorado, a college town nestled at the base of the iconic Flatirons, slanted sandstone formations, to engage in a variety of outdoor activities. The name *Flatirons* dates to an earlier era when pioneer women compared these rocks to the metal irons they used to iron their clothing. Today, few are aware of this trivia. Instead, climbers arrive with a wide range of abilities to tackle this focal point of the Boulder County trail system.

Once you've visited, it's hard not to return for a second helping. In the 1970s, I came as an incoming college freshman. Even though I relocated to a different state and graduated from another university, I

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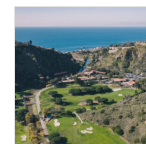
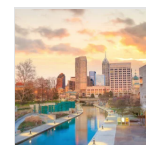
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longed to return to this city, less than an hour's drive from Denver International Airport. Not only did I visit numerous times, but I eventually relocated to a town between Boulder and [Denver](#). After living in suburban Chicago, how could I resist 300+ days of sunshine and a climate that made it possible to enjoy the outdoors every season of the year?

Like many other American cities, [Boulder](#) has matured and responded to the needs of its residents. None of these changes have altered the immense beauty of Boulder's ideal setting or the adjacent foothills. Today, visitors are drawn to Boulder's natural resources along with the perks of a sophisticated college town. While old-school foot power is used by most, more adventurous folk seek alternative ways to discover Boulder's gems.



Spring hike on Bobolink Trail bordering the South Boulder Creek  
PHOTO CREDIT: SANDY BORNSTEIN

## 1. Hiking

Novice and accomplished hikers will rejoice with the number of Boulder hikes appealing to both audiences.

### Meandering On Easier Hikes

Individuals who prefer to meander on flat trails or grandparents traveling with young children have numerous options. It is easy to push a stroller along the 10-mile, mostly flat, paved path that runs adjacent to Boulder Creek. My favorite easy hikes include

- the [Bobolink Trailhead](#), which connects with the south end of the Boulder Creek Trail
- a visit to [Chautauqua Park](#), where you can hike on the Chautauqua and Bluebell Trail Loop
- a drive to the Flagstaff Summit for a visit to the [Sunrise Amphitheater](#) and two trails, the 0.8-mile Boy Scout Trail and the Sensory Trail



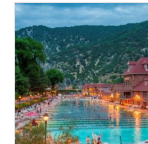
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- a drive to NCAR (the National Center for Atmospheric Research) for the 1.2-mile [Walter Orr Roberts Trail](#)
- a walk around [Wonderland Lake](#) in North Boulder
- the lengthier trek along the majestic [Flatirons Vista Trail](#), a 3.5-mile loop trail south of Boulder

**Pro Tip:** Please note that the 10-minute drive from Chautauqua Park to the Flagstaff Nature Center is filled with hairpin turns and switchbacks as you climb up a steep incline.

## Boulder Falls

For an *ooh and ah* moment, drive west on Boulder Canyon Drive for approximately 20 minutes. The 0.3-mile walk from the parking lot to [Boulder Falls](#), a 70-foot waterfall, is worth the trip. I've visited this site many times and have always been inspired by the rush of the water against the narrow cliffs lined with ponderosa pines. This short excursion can be combined with hiking trails in nearby Nederland or Sunshine Canyon.

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## Tackling Challenging Terrain

Experienced hikers seeking longer hikes with moderate and expert terrain can explore the second and third Flatirons by taking the Flatirons Loop trail accessed in the Chautauqua Meadow. Other challenging routes include

- Bear Peak near NCAR
- the Royal Arch Trail in Chautauqua Park
- the Mount Sanitas Trail in Sunshine Canyon
- the Green Mountain West Trail at the base of Gregory Canyon on the perimeter of Chautauqua Park
- the Walker Ranch Loop in Walker Ranch Park

**Pro Tip:** On all these more challenging hikes, rock scrambles and steep inclines should be anticipated.

If you want more details about Boulder's trails, check out the [Open Space & Mountain Parks](#) site for more information, and visit [Boulder Open Space & Mountain Parks](#) for weather and seasonal closures. Also, consider downloading their app for easy reference. Bring plenty of water to combat the arid environment and carry a day pack filled with essentials. Early starts are recommended since some parking lots fill quickly and trails become crowded.



Pearl Street in downtown Boulder  
PHOTO CREDIT: KIT LEONG / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## 2. Neighborhood Walking Tours

Self-guided tours of Boulder's historic neighborhoods will identify structures built at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. While cabins from the gold rush era were destroyed a long time ago, these casual walks take you back to when neighborhoods had diverse architectural styles.



The University of Colorado-Boulder campus  
PHOTO CREDIT: KYPHUA / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## 3. Discovering The University Of Colorado-Boulder Campus



The history of the University of Colorado-Boulder can be experienced while strolling through the campus. By starting with the oldest building, Old Main, it is possible to learn about the history of the university by stepping inside the [Heritage Center](#) for a brief visit.

Other notable campus sites include the Mary Rippon Outdoor Theater, home of the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Macky Auditorium, Folsom Field, the Museum of Natural History, Fiske Planetarium, and the CU Art Museum.



Entrance to Chautauqua Park  
PHOTO CREDIT: SANDY BORNSTEIN

## 4. Segway Tour

[Segway tours](#) enable individuals (between 100 and 260 pounds) to take an effortless 90-minute tour of many of the key areas around the city — the historic Whittier neighborhood, Chautauqua Park, and the Pearl Street Mall. Friendly and informative guides offer tidbits of information that will enhance your understanding of Boulder's unique culture.

**Pro Tip:** Note that these tours have been suspended until the spring of 2023. Check back before your visit.



Cycling in Boulder  
PHOTO CREDIT: VISIT BOULDER

## 5. Boulder Bike Rides

Bicycles and e-bicycles can be rented at shops throughout the city so that cyclists can take advantage of the 300 miles of bike lanes and paths. Some of these paths are paved and relatively easy to navigate. Many other routes are designed for the more experienced rider who enjoys bumpier and more unpredictable rides. Guided bicycle tours attract individuals who have previously ridden a bicycle and cater to both e-bicycle and standard bicycle users.

**Pro Tip:** Boulder's hilly, higher-altitude terrain may be challenging for people who are accustomed to riding on flat surfaces at or closer to sea level. If you are planning to explore on your own, select a bicycle shop near your intended destination.



Sunny day at The Rez in North Boulder  
PHOTO CREDIT: VISIT BOULDER



## 6. Water Activities

Inland locations are considered fortunate when they have water resources. Boulder has two — Boulder Creek and the [Boulder Reservoir](#) or “The Rez.” With a path running adjacent to Boulder Creek, it is possible to find multiple places to begin a tubing, kayaking, rafting, or riverboarding adventure. Local stores sell and rent equipment.

**Pro Tip:** To visit The Rez, a 700-acre lake, you will need to drive to the less populated northeast section of Boulder. This is a popular spot for boating, swimming, fishing, pontoon boating, and paddle boarding. Be prepared for an admission fee during the summer season.



Walden Pond Wildlife Habitat and Nature Preserve is located just 15 minutes from Boulder.  
PHOTO CREDIT: REDROCK PHOTOGRAPHY / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## 7. Fishing

Anglers come to Boulder to take advantage of year-round fishing opportunities. [Front Range Anglers](#) and [Rocky Mountain Anglers](#) sell equipment, offer advice, and book trips. Many come to fish for brown trout, an indigenous species found in Boulder Creek.



A paraglider from Boulder Free Flight soaring above the Flatirons  
PHOTO CREDIT: JOHANNES RATH / BOULDER FREE FLIGHT

## 8. Paragliding, Ballooning, And More

If you suffer from acrophobia, an intense fear of heights, I recommend avoiding any activities that take you high above the ground — paragliding, gliding in a motorless plane, or taking a scenic air balloon adventure. That said, newbies, as well as experienced thrill seekers, are welcome to enjoy these exhilarating and memorable Boulder experiences.

[Boulder Free Flight](#) uses a GoPro to record novice and experienced paragliders. [Lifecycle Balloon Adventures](#), [Aero-Cruise Balloon Adventures](#), and [Fair Winds Hot Air Balloon Flights](#) take young and old aboard their hot air balloons. Daredevils who want to experience a plane without an engine can take a 35-mile-high flight that offers an incredible view of the surrounding area.

**Pro Tip:** Paragliding and hot air ballooning are offered from spring to fall, while heated cockpits keep [Mile High Gliding](#) a year-round endeavor. Advanced reservations are required during the peak summer season.





Bluebird day on the slopes at Copper Mountain  
PHOTO CREDIT: SANDY BORNSTEIN

## 9. Skiing

Locals and visitors who want to avoid the crowds at the larger ski resorts will drive 20 minutes to [Eldora Mountain](#), where they can discover Eldora's 350 skiable acres, a small fraction of Vail's amazing 5,317 skiable acres.

Day trips are a must for avid skiers and boarders. Barring an unforeseeable traffic issue, it is possible to drive to [Winter Park](#), [Loveland Ski Area](#), [Keystone Resort](#), [Breckenridge Resort](#), [Copper Mountain Ski Resort](#), [Arapahoe Basin](#), or [Vail](#) in less than 2 hours. First-timers can make reservations online for ski lessons and pick up rental equipment in Boulder or at the ski resort. Food options and amenities will vary from place to place. If time allows, stop at [Genesee Park](#) to see the grazing bison or check out the town of [Golden](#).

Always pack sufficient water to combat the ill effects of high-altitude environments. High altitude sickness can become serious, especially when you travel to mountain communities in Summit County. Be aware of the symptoms, which include headaches, nausea, vomiting, loss of energy, dizziness, and shortness of breath.

**Pro Tip:** Early starts are recommended on peak ski days. Crowds are inevitable. Since the Eldora Parking lot can reach capacity, consider taking the RTD bus or shuttle from Boulder. Access to the major ski areas via the I-70 corridor can be a nightmare if your drive coincides with inclement weather or holiday/weekend traffic. Plan accordingly.

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**SANDY BORNSTEIN**

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Sandy Bornstein is a Colorado-based, award-winning travel and lifestyle writer who focuses on active adventure, food and beverages, history and culture, cruises, luxury boomer travel, family travel, health and wellness, worldwide Jewish culture, and the importance of embracing life when faced with an... [Interview with an author](#). After working as an international teacher in Bangalore, India, Sandy wrote [May This Be the Best Year of Your Life: A Memoir](#) as a resource for people

# Why I Absolutely Love My New Facial Cleanser: A FOREO LUNA 4 Review



**LAURA RAY**

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The Luna 4 feels like giving yourself a facial at home.  
PHOTO CREDIT: FOREO

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Still cleaning your face with your hands, or have you graduated to the world of skin-cleansing brushes? I thought my Clarisonic Mia was the end-all-be-all of skincare brushes, but recently I discovered something even better. [FOREO](#), a Swedish beauty-tech company, introduced the world's first soft