The Wild Animal Sanctuary

303-536-0118

1946 County Road 53

Keenesburg, CO Keenesburg, C[www.wildanimalsanctuary.org](http://www.wildanimalsanctuary.org)

[www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wild-Animal-Sanctuary/44130834484](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wild-Animal-Sanctuary/44130834484)

<https://twitter.com/#!/animalsanctuary>

The Wild Animal Sanctuary is a labor of love. It rescues abused and abandoned animals throughout the U.S. and Mexico, providing them with 720 acres of grassland to recuperate and thrive. Unlike a zoo, where animals are more confined, visitors have the opportunity to see the animals ramble around in more natural habitats. Walk along elevated observation platforms to watch large cats, bears and exotic animals rest, run and play. A 7,000-square-foot round-house allows recent rescues to adjust before moving into the open-air habitat. The sanctuary is the oldest and largest nonprofit in the nation dedicated exclusively to rescuing captive exotic large carnivores. Parents love that, and kids just love seeing more than 290 tigers, lions, bears, leopards, mountain lions and wolves. You might see tigers swimming in a lake, African lions strutting through tall grasses or packs of wolves running free in one of their 5-acre regions.

Water World

88th & Pecos, Denver

80260

303-427-7873

[www.waterworldcolorado.com](http://www.waterworldcolorado.com)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Water-World-Denver/251658971520744](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Water-World-Denver/251658971520744)

Water World made a splash with the Travel Channel, and it’s 46 wet adventures will pump up your family too. It boasts the largest variety of attractions in the U.S. First of all, it has the most chill-out, family tube rides of all parks. But that doesn’t mean it skimps on thrills. Skyline Speed Slides launches bodies six stories straight down, while the Revolution uses its six-story drop to plunge people into the dark before spinning them around the giant blue-and-yellow bowl. A few people can fit into the Zoomerang rafts or families can travel through prehistoric times on the Voyage to the Center of the Earth. During break time, covered pavilions and grassy areas make perfect picnic areas. The Pharoah’s Feast allows kids to eat all day for $11.99 (adults, $13.99). Families can even rent cabanas with tables, lounge chairs, a cooler and meal delivery for a stress-free day.

History Colorado Center

1200 Broadway  Denver, CO

80203

303-866-3682

[www.historycolorado.org](http://www.historycolorado.org)

[www.facebook.com/HistoryColorado](http://www.facebook.com/HistoryColorado)

<https://twitter.com/#!/HistoryColorado>

Before History Colorado Center opened its doors on April 28, 2012, it asked locals what they wanted. What they didn’t want was some boring, chronological history museum. So History Colorado Center built an amazing LEED-certified, airy building filled with hands-on exhibits. On the main floor, H.G. Wells-inspired “time machines” slide around an exquisitely designed 40- by 60-foot terrazzo floor map of Colorado. The machines tell stories about regions when they land on hot spots. Keota brings 1920’s and ’30’s living to life with a model T you can “drive,” a store kids can ring up merchandise, cows that milk “light” into buckets, chickens that lay plastic eggs and more. Then head over to various Colorado communities. You can launch yourself off a virtual ski jump, learn about mining, hear about Lincoln Hills where African Americans thrived and feel compassion for the Sand Creek Massacre or the Amache-Granada Relocation Center victims.

Elich Gardens Theme Park

2000 Elitch Circle

Denver, CO

80204

303-629-0740

<http://elitchgardens.com>

[www.facebook.com/ElitchGardensDenver?v=wall](http://www.facebook.com/ElitchGardensDenver?v=wall)

<https://twitter.com/#!/ElitchGardens>

Elich Gardens has all the entertainment you could want, rolled into one park. Its historic carousel greets families with 67 hand-carved horses and chariots, while rides like its 100-foot Ferris wheel, sea dragon ship and spinning tea cups and tilt-a-whirl keep the amusement park tradition alive. Little ones will love the whirling airplanes, floating boats, mouse bumper cars and miniature studio tours. And thrills abound with coasters that blast riders through rollovers, dives and double corkscrew spins at 50 mph as peoples’ legs dangle. The Tower of Doom drops courageous souls over 200 feet into a free fall. And what would a theme park be without a half pipe? At Elich’s you can shred up to the rim without bothering with snow. Bring a swimsuit for multiple water rides, including a giant wave pool, speed slides, raft rides and a 65-foot free-fall slide. If you have time, catch the entertainment.

Georgetown Loop Railroad and Lebanon Mine Tour

Silver Plume Depot

Exit 226 off I-70

P.O. Box 249

Georgetown, CO 80444

[www.georgetownlooprr.com](http://www.georgetownlooprr.com)

[www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001955517889&sk=wall](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001955517889&sk=wall)

888-456-6777

All aboard for a steam engine tour back in time. The Georgetown Loop winds through mountainous forests, tracing the original 1884 narrow gauge railroad that connected two lucrative mining towns. Passengers choose an open-air cart, a fancy dining cart, or enclosed bench-seating boxes. Then it’s full steam ahead as the engine chugs over trestles, along curves, and over the famous 300-foot long High Bridge. The company offers all kinds of tours, including Family Backyard Barbeques, Lobster and Steak nights and Ribeye and Trout nights. But you really don’t want to miss the Lebanon Silver Mine tour package. The train drops passengers off at the mine, which opened in 1869. In the 1880s, it hit the motherlode — huge veins of silver. The tunnel reached 1,200 feet in 1886. Today, you walk through the mine (dress warm; it’s 44 degrees in there), learn about the brutal life of miners, and tour outbuildings.

Speed Raceway

8532 Concord Center Drive

Englewood, CO

80112

866-865-7223

[www.speedraceway.com](http://www.speedraceway.com)

[www.facebook.com/speedraceway](http://www.facebook.com/speedraceway)

<https://twitter.com/#!/speedraceway>

On your marks, get ready — go fast. These aren’t your grandpa’s go-karts. These babies go from 0 to 45 mph in 3 seconds. Speed Raceway is Denver’s newest indoor kart track. The electric cars mean no smelly fumes. The 21 curves along the quarter-mile track require quick maneuvering. You control your speed with a separate brake and gas pedal. If you hit the walls, no worries, you just bounce right off. But avoid colliding with another driver — you can get a mean case of whiplash. The 55,000-square-foot raceway is located in an unassuming industrial park, so don’t be fooled if it looks like you’re in the middle of nowhere as you’re driving to it. Once you’re there, you’ll find plenty of entertainment and arcade-type food. And you just might get addicted to the speed, clean air and printouts showing your rank compared to everyone who’s ever raced there.

Dinosaur Ridge

16831 West Alameda Parkway

Morrison, CO 80465

303-697-3466

[www.**dino**ridge.org](http://www.dinoridge.org)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Dinosaur-Ridge/104056422633](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Dinosaur-Ridge/104056422633)

Cars whizz past dinosaur tracks every second without knowing it — don’t be one of them. Just off I-70, check out the 1 ½-mile trail along Alameda Parkway, between Rooney Road North and County Road 93. There, you’ll discover about 300 fossilized dinosaur tracks and the place where the world’s first Stegosaurus bones were found (the bones are now at the Morrison Natural History Museum, but you’ll see fossilized bones at the Dinosaur Ridge Bone Quarry). Allow an hour or two to explore this National Natural Landmark. Fifteen signs point out fossils, rock formations, the Golden Fault and overlooks. Volunteers color the tracks with charcoal to make them stand out in the sandstone. Guided tours are $3 a person but should be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. You can walk the trail for free or buy field guides (printed or CDS) for nominal fees.

Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center

1805 N. 30th Street

Colorado Springs, CO

80904

719-634-6666

[www.gardenofgods.com](http://www.gardenofgods.com)

www.facebook.com/pages/Garden-of-the-Gods-Visitor-and-Nature-Center/118280154880787

When you see the stunning red rock formations, you’ll know why they call it Garden of the Gods. Sandstone rocks create balanced boulder formations, jagged 300-foot vertical rises and windows that open to the snow-capped Pikes Peak. The free park offers 15 miles of hiking trails, as well as a roadway that winds through the main sites. Stop by the Visitor & Nature Center and learn about the rock formations from the 14-minute, high-definition show. With names like three graces, kissing camels, rocking chair, weeping rock and steamboat rock, the formations will captivate your imagination. In fact, they look as though they’re the playthings of giants. The park provides endless photographic opportunities and three hundred million years of geology to explore.

Banjo Billy’s Bus Tours

California and 14th Streets

Denver, CO

80202

www.banjobilly.com

www.facebook.com/pages/Banjo-Billys-Bus-Tours/74498842022

720-938-8885

What started as a regular school bus took a demented twist when a civil engineer tried to fashion it into a log cabin. His friend took one look at the pitched wooden roof, then peeked inside and saw mounted saddles, recliners and sofas. “It looks like a hillbilly shack,” he said. And Banjo Billy was born. Now Banjo Billy and his entertaining crew guide riders on 90-minute tours through downtown Denver and Boulder. But this isn’t just any field trip. They spill all the town gossip. You’ll learn why people in Victorian clothing wander through Cheesman park, how Denver earned its name for the price of a barrel of whiskey, and the real story about Molly Brown — before and after the Titanic. Plus, you’ll hear about Denver’s corrupt past, its current bad guys and the ghosts who haunt its streets and buildings. Get ready for one crazy trip.

Pearl Street Mall

Pearl and 14th Street

Boulder, CO

80302

www.boulderdowntown.com/

[www.facebook.com/downtownboulder](http://www.facebook.com/downtownboulder)

<https://twitter.com/#!/downtownboulder>

303-449-3774

Boulder shows off the best of Colorado: the mountains and the metro. The Flatirons wows kids and parents with its jagged rock faces — a unique mountain formation with plenty of hiking trails. Outside Magazine recently ranked Boulder the No. 1 sports town in the nation, so you’ll find plenty to keep the family busy. But whatever you do, don’t miss Pearl Street Mall. The shops and restaurants cater to a mix of hippies, trendsetters, college students and outdoor enthusiasts. Kids will love kaleidoscope kite shops like Into the Wind and paint-your-own-pottery studio Color Me Mine. Outside, kids scramble on a rock garden made of boulders between 13th and Broadway, squeal as water pops up through the pavement at Pearl and 14th, and delight in whimsical bronze statues. Then, at 1345 28th Street, explore carp and trout swimming along Boulder Creek at the Underwater Fish Observatory.

Englewood, CO 80112