



Denver Delights

The Mile High City will welcome the 2007 Junior National Hereford Expo July 7-14, and while cattle events will be the star of the show, here's a quick guide to some of Denver's fun — and educational — entertainment options.

by **Kindra Gordon**

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Denver Zoo



Denver Museum of Nature & Science



Red Rocks Amphitheatre

Much of Denver's appeal is its scenic setting with the Rocky Mountains as a backdrop. Climate also makes Denver a crowd pleaser — it boasts an average of 300 days of sunshine yearly.

Enjoy the outdoors with a visit to the **Denver Zoo**, which is rated one of the top five in America with more than 3,000 animals at its picturesque grounds. The **Butterfly Pavilion & Insect Center** is also a unique outdoor experience with a tropical forest setting filled with 1,600 free-flying butterflies.

Colorado's beauty is breathtaking at the **Red Rocks Amphitheatre**, a 9,000-seat natural outdoor arena

carved out of huge 500-foot-high red sandstone cliffs. Located 12 miles west of Denver, the park is open to the public daily (unless there is a scheduled performance) and is a perfect site for hikes and picnics.

Thrill seekers should plan a day at **Six Flags Elitch Gardens**, Denver's year-round amusement park located very close to downtown. The facility is actually two parks in one — one side with more than 40 thrill rides, including Mind Eraser, an inverted roller coaster, and the other side a complete water park with tube rides, wave pools and river rafting. **Hyland Hills Water World** is another popular amusement park

Neat to eat

For a fond family memory of your visit to Denver, have dinner one evening at **Casa Bonita**. This 52,000-square-foot restaurant recreates a Mexican village complete with waterfalls, cliff divers, strolling mariachis and of course Mexican food. It is located at 6715 W. Colfax Ave., (303) 232-5115.

For an Italian feast, **Cinzetti's** will transform you to a Tuscan Villa. The buffet-style restaurant lets you roam throughout while trained chefs are preparing fresh Italian food at 14 exhibition-cooking stations. Up to 80 items are featured and allow you to experience the flavors of Italy. And, save room for the rich desserts, which include a gelato station with 12 flavors of ice cream. It is located west of Interstate 25, just north of 104th Ave. at 281 W. 104th Ave., (303) 451-7300.

Another fun restaurant is the **Trail Dust Steak House**, located on U.S. Highway 36 at Sheridan, (303) 427-1446, where the walls are covered with neckties. Bring along your own and you'll find out why. Refuse to remove them and the waiters will snip them off — they don't believe in formality! Kids find this especially amusing. Enjoy! **HW**

devoted entirely to water fun; see www.waterworldcolorado.com.

If time allows, catch a major league baseball game at **Coors Field**, home of the Colorado Rockies. Or if it's not game time, tours of the 50,000-seat facility in downtown Denver are worth the stop; call (800) 388-ROCK for more information.

Also while downtown, be sure to visit the **16th Street Mall**, a mile-long pedestrian promenade lined with shops and outdoor cafes, including **The Cheesecake Factory**. Shuttles on the mall are free and offer an interesting way to tour downtown.

Kid stuff

Above all, Denver boasts some neat attractions for kids. The city's **Children's Museum** has a 9,000-square-foot playground, a child-size supermarket and the famous KidSlope, the only year-round ski mountain for children.

The **Denver Museum of Nature & Science** is known for its outstanding collection of dinosaur bones in the massive exhibit called Prehistoric Journey. A special interactive space exhibit and the larger-than-life IMAX films are also highlights of the museum.

Colorado's Ocean Journey is a world-class aquarium where visitors follow two rivers at their headwaters in the mountains on their paths to the ocean. The experience includes sharks and colorful tropical fish along the way.

Just 30 minutes west of Denver on U.S. Highway 285, kids will delight in **Tiny Town**, a kid-sized village with dozens of "Old West" buildings built at one-sixth scale in a scenic mountain location. Best of all, an authentic toy steam locomotive circles the park giving children and adults a ride past the miniature town.

Take a tour

Another unique adventure is a tour of the **U.S. Mint** in downtown Denver. More than 10 billion coins are made there each year. Free tours of the facility are offered on weekdays and include an overview of the history of money, and a chance to see the making of coins, from stamping and sorting to bagging. Advance registration is required for tours. Sign up by visiting www.usmint.gov.



Coors Field, home of the Colorado Rockies.

Visit the **Celestial Seasonings Tea Co.** in Boulder, (303) 581-1202, where tours include tea tasting and then a walk through of the production area to see how tea is processed and packaged.

Lastly, Denver is chock full of museums from modern art to Western ways. For the history buff, consider visiting these:

The **Black American West Museum** tells the forgotten story of African American cowboys, and the many contributions they made in settling the West.

The **Denver Art Museum** has what is considered to be the world's best collection of American Indian artworks covering all tribes of North America.

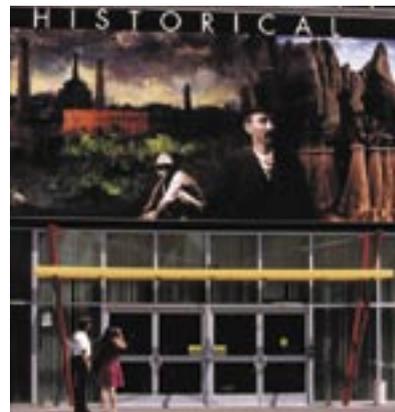
The **Leavin' Tree Museum of Art** (as in the Cowboy-themed greeting cards of the same name) has the nation's largest private collection of contemporary Western art. Located in nearby Boulder, Colo., the free museum is open to the public with more than 200 paintings and 85 bronzes by some of the best-known Western artists.

Buffalo Bill's Grave & Museum features memorabilia honoring the famous showman and Pony Express rider, including posters from the Wild West Shows.

The **Colorado History Museum** provides exhibits that trace the colorful history of the Indians, explorers, gold miners, cowboys and pioneers who have called Colorado home.

The **Molly Brown House** is the home of "Unsinkable Molly Brown," who made an imprint in history when she survived the Titanic sinking. Costumed guides give tours of her Capitol Hill mansion, which is filled with mementos from her life.

For more information visit www.denver.org. **HW**



Colorado History Museum

Denver trivia

- Denver truly is one mile high. The 15th step on the west side of the State Capitol building is 5,280 feet above sea level. The purple row of seats at Coors Field are also exactly one mile above sea level.
- In 1935 the cheeseburger was born in Denver when Louis Ballast melted a slice of cheese on a hamburger at a Humpty Dumpty drive-in restaurant. He patented his invention and the rest, as they say, is history.
- Denver has all four major league sports — the National Football League (NFL) Denver Broncos; National Hockey League (NHL) Colorado Avalanche; National Basketball Association (NBA) Denver Nuggets and Major League Baseball Colorado Rockies. Denver also has a professional soccer team, the Colorado Rapids.
- Denver is a city that prides itself on its Western heritage. It hosts the National Western Stock Show and Rodeo each January, and is home to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. **HW**

