

WHERE BEER LOVE MEETS WANDERLUST



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ALL ABOUT BEER
MAGAZINE

BEEER

Traveler

150 Perfect Places to Have a Beer



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A Taste of Adventure in an Elevated State

BY DAN RABIN

WHAT IS IT ABOUT COLORADO that attracts travelers with adventurous spirits? It isn't complicated. With jaw-dropping landscapes, reliable sunshine and near-limitless activities that pique the senses, a Rocky Mountain getaway is a sure cure for the mundane. Add a flourishing craft beer scene with beer stops galore and you've got the makings of a road trip of the highest caliber.

DAY 1: Fort Collins

Your suds-sational Colorado adventure begins in Fort Collins, an upbeat college town and one of the country's most beer-centric small cities. Tour New Belgium's showcase brewery (reserve ahead to assure a spot) and learn the story behind the company that was practicing sustainability years before it became fashionable. Toast a successful kickoff to your Rocky Mountain retreat in the bustling Liquid Center. Don't linger too long as you're fortuitously close to two other fine tasting rooms. Your next stop is Odell Brewing, a Fort Collins fixture for over two decades. Continue your sampling at Fort Collins Brewing then head into Old Town for a meal at CooperSmith's brewpub. Top

off the day with beer and billiards in the pub's pool hall next door to the restaurant.

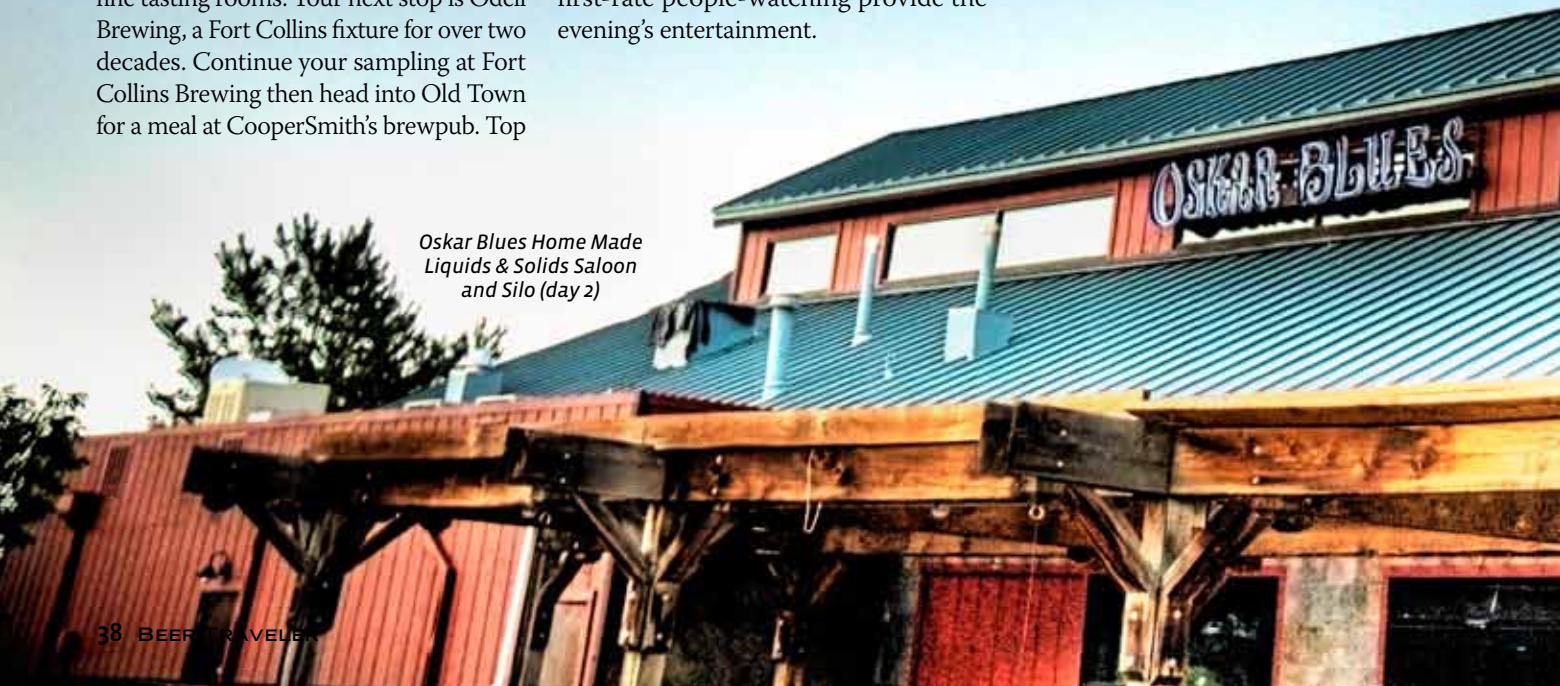
DAY 2: Longmont and Boulder

Drive south to Longmont about 40 miles away. Stop for lunch at the Pumphouse Brewery on Main Street or at Oskar Blues Liquids & Solids on the way out of town. Make a note that the Left Hand and Oskar Blues brewery taprooms open later in the day. Continue another dozen miles to downtown Boulder. Check in at the Hotel Boulderado (circa 1909), a block from the lively Pearl Street Mall. Rent a bicycle from University Bicycles and head east on the Boulder Creek Path. Boulder Beer, Redstone Meadery and Avery Brewing are all accessible along flat, paved pathways. After returning your bike, join the local hopheads for a beer at Mountain Sun, one of Boulder's four downtown brewpubs. End the day on the Pearl Street Mall where shops, restaurants, street performers and first-rate people-watching provide the evening's entertainment.

DAY 3: Boulder, Golden and Denver

Head to Chautauqua Park for a leisurely breakfast on the porch of the Chautauqua Dining Hall. Work off your meal with a hike below the impressive rock formations known as the Flatirons. Bid adieu to Boulder and drive south along the foothills for 20 miles to the town of Golden. Tour the behemoth Molson Coors facility, the world's largest single-site brewery. Regain your sense of scale at the diminutive Golden City Brewery, just a few minutes away. Get acquainted with the locals over a pint or two in the laid-back beer garden of this friendly neighborhood brewery. Make the short drive to downtown Denver and check in at the quirky The Curtis Hotel. Take the free shuttle down the 16th Street Mall, and then walk a few blocks to your dinner destination, the Wynkoop brewpub. If the Rockies are in town, take in a ballgame


Oskar Blues Home Made Liquids & Solids Saloon and Silo (day 2)



ROCKY MOUNTAIN PALE ALE



HANDCRAFTED
BEERS

 PACK IT IN. PACK IT OUT

LONGMONT, COLORADO



Jax (day 2)

at nearby Coors Field. No ballgame? No worries. Great Divide Brewing, the Falling Rock Tap House, Breckenridge Brewery and Rock Bottom are all close by.

DAY 4: Denver and Morrison

Prepare for your upcoming trek into the high country with a morning shopping stop at the REI flagship store. Get a taste of Denver's Asian culture with lunch at New Saigon. Broaden your cultural horizons with a visit to the DAM, Denver's off-kilter art museum. Regain your equilibrium with some authentic English ales brewed in-house at nearby Pints Pub.

As the afternoon winds down, drive 15 miles west to Morrison and Red Rocks Park. If there's a concert scheduled, experience a show at the country's most beautiful outdoor amphitheater. If not, hike a trail through the striking red rock formations in the parkland surrounding the theater.

Day 5: Rafting on the Arkansas

The Front Range cities have been a blast, but the mountains are beckoning. Following a power breakfast at Sam's No. 3, a block

from the Curtis, head uphill on Highway 285 on a 2.5-hour drive to Buena Vista. Plan an early afternoon arrival in time for a half-day whitewater rafting trip on the Arkansas River. With adrenaline still pumping, chill out over a beer at the E-dyline brewpub. Drive south 25 miles to the artsy riverside town of Salida following the 14,000-foot peaks of the Collegiate Peaks Range. Stroll through downtown Salida, visit a few galleries, and then head to Amicas brewpub for some well-crafted designer pizza and beer.

DAY 6: Salida to Pagosa Springs

Before leaving Salida, pick up some lunch supplies. Drive 90 miles south to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and frolic like a child on the surreal mountains of sand. Photo ops will abound. Choose a picnic spot with views of the dunes and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains as a backdrop. Continue your

journey west for 125 miles over 10,550-foot Wolf Creek Pass to Pagosa Springs. Melt away your stresses with a long soothing soak in the local hot springs. Finish another exhilarating day with a meal at Pagosa Brewing, home to one of the nicest beer gardens in the state.

DAY 7: Durango

Drive 60 miles through rural Colorado to Durango and settle in at the Rochester Hotel, built in 1892. Explore Durango's Victorian downtown on a cruiser bike provided by the hotel. Your Durango itinerary includes stops at the town's two brewpubs



(Steamworks and Carver's) and two breweries (Ska and Durango Brewing). There's no need to rush, however, as you have two days to visit them all.

DAY 8: Ride the Narrow Gauge

From the hotel, it's a short walk to the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad depot where you'll embark on one of the country's most scenic railroad trips. On the two-hour layover in Silverton, explore the old mining town that was once home to 2,000 people and 32 saloons. Have lunch at the Silverton Brewery, the local brewpub. Back in Durango, continue your pub crawl where you left off yesterday.

DAY 9: Durango to Telluride

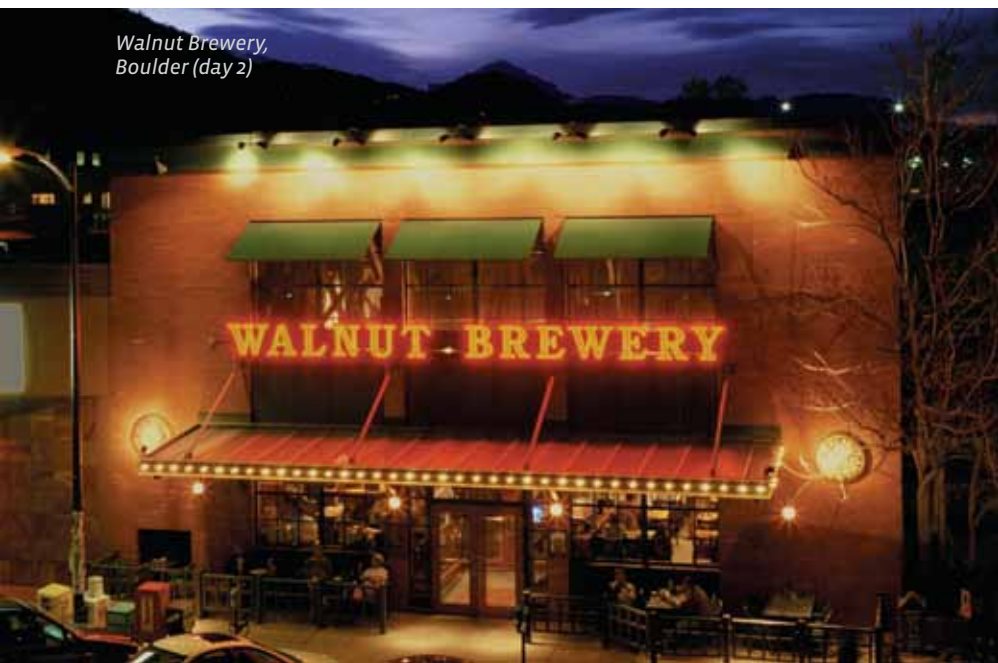
It's a spectacular 120-mile drive from Durango to Telluride along the San Juan Skyway. Take your time and drink in the sights of some of the country's most rugged mountain terrain. In tiny Ridgway, stop for a sandwich and a pint at the Colorado Boy Brewery. The town of Telluride resides in

Afterwards, find a table on the patio of Smugglers Brewpub and discover that everything tastes better in the thin mountain air 8,750 feet above sea level.

DAY 10: Exploring the High Country

Grab a morning coffee from the Coffee Cowboy trailer on Main Street, park yourself on a nearby bench and decide how you'll spend your final hours in the Colorado high country. If you're feeling energetic, a four-mile round-trip hike to the waterfalls up Bear Creek Canyon will get your heart pumping. For thrills and awesome scenery, a four-wheel-drive jeep tour is the way to go. For a more sedentary outing, take the free gondola from the middle of town to Mountain Village, the resort located high above Telluride.

The mountains slowly fade into obscurity on the 2.5-hour drive to Grand Junction, the terminus of your 10-day tour. Relive your many adventures over beers at the Rockslide and Kannah Creek brewpubs. With your



Walnut Brewery, Boulder (day 2)

a fairy tale setting at the end of a long box canyon. Snow-covered mountains, dripping with waterfalls, rise behind the Victorian downtown of this former mining outpost. At the visitors center, pick up a map and meander through town on a self-guided walking tour of historic sites including the site of Butch Cassidy's first bank robbery.

journey at an end, find some solace in the fact that there are dozens of beer stops left to visit and new destinations to explore on your next Rocky Mountain road trip. **B**

Dan Rabin is a beer and travel writer who finds his Boulder, CO, home the perfect jumping-off spot for brew-themed travels in the Rocky Mountains and beyond.