



BRIEF GO



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** the Pearl Street Pedestrian Mall; a beet burger at The Kitchen Boulder; a chocolate-malt shake with a chocolate biscotto at Frasca Food and Wine

## STREET SCENE: Pearl Street

**BOULDER, COLO.'s** free-spirited Pearl Street is part foodie haven, part public-performance space — and a completely delightful destination.



**SUMMER FUN:** During the summer, the action fans out from Pearl Street all across Boulder. The **Colorado Shakespeare Festival** brings the bard's works to life at the University of Colorado Boulder's Mary Rippon Outdoor Theatre (visit [www.coloradoshakes.org](http://www.coloradoshakes.org) for show and ticket information). The summer series is in full swing at **The Colorado Chautauqua Association**, a Boulder institution that has encouraged visitors to "escape, engage and elevate" since 1898 ([www.chautauqua.com](http://www.chautauqua.com)). And in August, tea lovers converge for the annual **Rocky Mountain Tea Festival** at the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse, constructed by hand in Tajikistan and bestowed on Boulder as a gift of international friendship ([www.boulderteahouse.com](http://www.boulderteahouse.com)).

**G**IVE US YOUR FOODIES, your fitness buffs, your philosophers and your festivalgoers yearning to breathe free. They'll find liberty and the pursuit of happiness along Pearl Street in Boulder, Colo. This free-thinking college town of 101,000 nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains has long prided itself on its fiercely independent spirit and wildly creative bent. That anything-goes attitude is on full display in the street performers, inventive restaurants, convivial bars and eclectic shops that line and define Pearl Street as it stretches from the East End to the West End, with the colorful Pearl Street Pedestrian Mall in between.

**SEE:** People-watching reaches a Rocky Mountain high on the **Pearl Street Pedestrian Mall**. Veteran buskers like Ibashi-i (a Rastafarian contortionist) and Derek Derek (a fire-flinging juggler) compete

for tourists' spare change. **Bands on the Bricks** brings free live music to the mall on summertime Wednesday nights, while the **Boulder Cruisers** deck out their bicycles with themes each week for their Thursday-night rolls down Pearl Street.

**EAT:** Foodies consider **Frasca Food and Wine** a to-dine-for destination. Chef Lachlan Mackinnon-Patterson

worked at The French Laundry in Napa Valley, Calif., before earning a James Beard Award here for his inspired dishes from the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region of Italy. **Riffs Urban Fare** pulls off an impressive (and nearly impossible) feat: It's beloved by red-meat lovers and vegetarians alike, thanks to a fantastic cheeseburger and inventive variations on the veggie theme. **The Kitchen Boulder's** fresh farm-to-table menu packs 'em in for weekend brunch as well as on Mondays for Community Night, when this broad-minded bistro donates 20 percent of sales toward installing organic gardens in local schools.

**DRINK:** Snag a rooftop table at **The West End Tavern** and settle in for a stunning view of the sunset over the foothills. The tavern's two dozen beer selections on tap vie with the 75 available bourbon varieties for your drinking dollars. From there, detour from Pearl Street two blocks south to **The Bitter Bar**, a cozy speakeasy where the award-winning cocktails are as fun to order (Smoke and Mirrors, anyone?) as they are to sip.

**SHOP:** For a grand visual feast, stop at **Into the Wind**. Since 1980, this kite store has sold colorful flights of fancy that can survive not only the

 Find contact information for all of the places mentioned in this story on [aa.com/americanway](http://aa.com/americanway); search keyword **Boulder**.

fiercest winds but the most inexperienced pilots. **Peppercorn** can help you recreate Pearl Street's gastronomic delights with elegant dinnerware, top-quality cookware and made-in-Colorado gourmet goodies. **Boulder Arts & Crafts Gallery** — one of the nation's oldest art cooperatives — also proudly waves the Colorado flag by representing dozens of artists from the Centennial State.

**SLEEP:** The 160-room **Hotel Boulderado** has hosted poets (Robert Frost) and politicians (Franklin Delano Roosevelt) since opening its doors just north of Pearl Street in 1909. While the hotel's original Victorian splendor has been well preserved (the hotel is on the National Register of Historic Places), its modern amenities and service have kept pace with the times.

FROM TOP: PAUL BOUSQUET/BOULDER CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU; COURTESY THE KITCHEN BOULDER; GLENN ASAKAWA