

Great Escapes

BY JOI KUSH



This month I celebrate “Greater Colorado.”

This is the term the CBA uses to describe that part of Colorado outside the Denver

metro area. While the CBA is headquartered in Denver, the association represents lawyers throughout Colorado.

As a native “Greater Coloradan” (born on Fort Carson in Colorado Springs), I’ve had the privilege to explore so much of this great state, from Fort Morgan to Grand Junction, Fort Collins to Trinidad, Lamar to Grand Junction, and everywhere in between. I may be biased, but I’m sure Colorado is the best state to live, work, and play in. From prairies to swamps, sand dunes to glaciers, canyons to mountains, Colorado has so much to offer. While I’ve traveled the world and have briefly considered leaving, this great state always calls me back home.

To share some of my favorite places in Greater Colorado, I’ve put together a few 24-

hour itineraries that are perfect for a weekend getaway. Perhaps you’ll even be inspired to move to one of these great locations.

24 hours in Olympic City USA: Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs is just an hour drive south of Denver. It’s home to the US Olympic Training Center, the Garden of the Gods, the US Air Force Academy, and the infamous “Manitou Incline” hiking trail. If you’re looking for breathtaking views, fresh air, and a quirky getaway, book a “camp deck” room at Kinship Landing,¹ where you can pitch a tent and hang a hammock yet still enjoy the comfort of a heated private bathroom. This new boutique hotel has received international recognition and offers grand views of Pikes Peak. What’s more, downtown Colorado Springs is right at your doorstep.

When you crawl out from your tent in the morning, head across the street to Loyal Coffee.² Grab a caffeinated drink to go because you have a lot to see. Walk north on the main drag, Tejon Street, and enjoy all the eccentric, fun, and city-funded sculptures and art. Be on the



Above: Pueblo Riverwalk.

Left: View from my deck in Colorado Springs.

lookout for the Humpty Dumpty statues; there are quite a few.

After working up an appetite, stop at Odyssey Gastro Pub, IV by Brother Luck, Poor Richards, East Coast Deli, or any of the other dozens of locally owned restaurants on Tejon for lunch. Once your belly is full, head to the brand-new, state-of-the-art US Olympic and Paralympic Museum to work off some of those carbs in their interactive exhibits.³ Pro tip: there are some stunning rentable event spaces, one of which features the actual scoreboard from the 1980 “Miracle on Ice” hockey game.

If you’re looking for a good cocktail to sip on after perusing the museum, head to Happy Hour at Cork and Cask⁴ or check out COATI food hall for a beer and a nosh.⁵

Once hunger strikes, take an Uber/Lyft to dinner at Ambli⁶ or Cowboy Star.⁷

If you aren’t too tired, head back downtown and check out some live music at the Wild Goose,⁸ grab another cocktail at Shame and Regret,⁹ watch a movie at the historic Kimball’s Peak Three Theater,¹⁰ or grab some ice cream from Josh and Johns.¹¹

After a long day, enjoy the stars back on your camp deck. The next morning, eat some grub at Urban Steam¹² or King’s Chef Diner¹³ before heading back home on I-25.

Let me know if you plan on visiting so that I can cater an experience that fits your needs and maybe even a Bloody Mary on my deck made by the fabulous chef Corey Wilson (aka, my husband).

24 Hours in the Home of Heroes: Pueblo

Pueblo is just south of Colorado Springs and has a lot to offer. From history to art, from great food to nature, Colorado's Home of Heroes has it all. I suggest booking a suite at the Abriendo Inn (a four-story mansion built in 1906).¹⁴ When you wake up from a nice slumber, head over to Grind Haus for breakfast.¹⁵ This quaint coffee shop offers a variety of delicious options, including the "Starving Artist," "Flaming Lips," "Buddha Bagel," and "Popeye Burrito."

After scarfing down some grub, take a walk on the Pueblo Riverwalk (weather permitting), and then head over to the El Pueblo History Museum to learn about the region's many cultural and ethnic groups.¹⁶

You'll work up an appetite from all the walking, so grab lunch at Dee Tacko, where there are so many taco selections you won't know where to begin.¹⁷ For non-taco lovers, try a specialty plate. Who doesn't love loaded fries or a quesadilla?

Next, resist the urge to nap and head over to the Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center.¹⁸ If the littles are with you, check out the innovative, hands-on exhibits at the Buell Children's Museum.¹⁹

Now that you've spent the afternoon appreciating the finer things in life, it's time to enjoy an authentic dinner at La Forchetta da Massi.²⁰ If you have a little bit more energy left, head over to the Flip A Coin Arcade Bar for dessert and pinball.²¹ Your inner kid will thank you.

Bonus: if you haven't been to the annual Pueblo Chile and Frijoles Festival, you are missing out. Hatch chile has nothing on Pueblo chile.

Don't forget to say hello to local CBA leaders Kyle Aber, Danita Alderton, Jim Croshal, and Kathleen Hearn Croshal.

24 Hours in the River City: Grand Junction

Grand Junction is west of Denver and is an easy drive on I-70. You could stay at one of the many chain hotels, but why would you with so many B&Bs to choose from? I suggest Two Sisters Winery and Chateau.²²

In the morning, stay for breakfast or immediately head downtown to Main Street Bagels.²³



Above: Goat at the Grand Mesa, Grand Junction.
Left: The Colorado River, Glenwood Springs.

If you're looking for a java jolt, a drip coffee at Kiln Coffee Bar should do the trick.²⁴

After breakfast, explore the many antique stores along Main. You cannot leave Grand Junction without visiting A Robin's Nest of Antiques and Treasures.²⁵

In the afternoon, book a tour with Pali-Tours.²⁶ If you're in the mood to unwind, opt for a personal tour of the Palisade orchards or wineries. For a more active endeavor, sign up for a snowshoeing or rafting adventure.

You'll want a good dinner after a long afternoon in Palisade. While many suggest Bin 707 Foodbar,²⁷ I'm a huge fan of 626 on Rood—try the crispy calamari and squid ink pasta.²⁸

Next, drop by Gelato Junction²⁹ for an after-dinner sweet or head back home for some stargazing. The next morning, take a jaunt at



Las Colonias Park and enjoy a great view of the Colorado River.

For additional recommendations, consider contacting Mesa County Bar Association President Brian Burns or CBA leaders Sam Starritt, Judge Lance Timbreza, and Lauren O'Dell.

24 Hours in the Spa in the Mountains: Glenwood Springs

Glenwood Springs is more known and traveled than the other three cities, but it remains a little gem outside of Aspen.

You cannot go wrong with staying at Hotel Denver.³⁰ When you wake up, drive to Sweet Coloradough for a doughnut.³¹ You'll be greeted

by a joke, a smile, and an amazing fried concoction made with love. No dieting here.

Now that you're riding a sugar high, it's time to hit the water. Book a rafting trip or do a private float down the Roaring Fork River, where you can enjoy some Class II-III rapids. Your private float will end at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Colorado—rafting two rivers with one boat. A word to the wise: only attempt a private float if you're experienced.

After a day on the river, you'll need a good lunch and a soak. Head to Slope and Hatch for a bite to eat³² and then to Iron Mountain Hot Springs for a spectacular view of the Colorado River and the canyon.³³

If you're not too tired, book a table at the Pullman for some fantastic cocktails and food.³⁴ You won't be disappointed in the quality, service, and atmosphere.

The next morning, grab breakfast at the Bluebird Café³⁵ and explore the surrounding shops before heading home.

If you get stuck on where to eat or what to do, contact CBA leaders Christopher Bryan or Amy Goscha for ideas.

24 Hours in the Heart of the Rockies: Salida/Buena Vista

Located in the Heart of the Rockies, Salida and Buena Vista are a nature lover's paradise.

This is one of my favorite summer retreats, but to have a true local experience, trust Daniel Tom, president of the Heart of the Rockies Bar Association. He suggests that you book some lodging at www.colorfulcolorado.com.

When you wake up in Salida or Buena Vista, you'll be greeted by the majestic Sawatch Range. Head to town and grab a coffee, burrito, or pastry at Buena Vista Roaster, Loback's Bakery, Midland Stop, or Brown Dog Coffee Company.

After getting your coffee jolt, take a scenic drive to Cottonwood Pass, the highest paved mountain pass over the Continental Divide—or better yet, make it a bike ride. From Buena Vista, you'll head west on Main Street/County Road 306 and travel approximately 19.2 miles and 4,320 feet of elevation to the summit at 12,126 feet (about 40.5 miles and 4,500 feet of elevation round trip).

If you're biking to the pass, please plan accordingly. Weather in the mountains changes dramatically depending on the time of year, and there are no services after you leave Buena Vista. Bring plenty of water and food for the 2- to 4.5-hour round trip, and if it's early spring, plan to leave early to beat the headwinds going up. The last bathroom stop is at Denny Creek around mile 10.

When you reach the summit, break out a lunch and enjoy the views.³⁶ President Daniel Tom is always up to ride the pass if you can't convince your friends or loved ones that riding a pass is a good idea. Depending on the year he may be slow, slower, or very slow, but contact him regardless, anytime, at heartofrockiesbar@gmail.com.

Once you complete your trek, stop by Midland Stop³⁷ for a post-ride affogato or head to Cottonwood Hot Springs for a soak.³⁸ Those who are looking to splurge should consider Mt. Princeton Hot Springs.³⁹

After your soak, head to dinner at Eddyline Brewery⁴⁰ and Taproom or Shallots for fancier fare.⁴¹ If you still have some energy after dinner, catch a movie at the Comanche Drive In Theater—a must during crisp summer evenings.⁴²


P.S. I heard that CBA member Miles Cottom may have a spare bedroom, so I encourage you to connect with him if you're in the area. Sorry, not sorry, Miles. And don't forget that

past CBA President Dick Gast lives in the area. Please reach out to him for additional recommendations.

Ready, Set, Explore!

There's so much more that I could recommend in other parts of Greater Colorado. For example, in Lamar, check out BJ's Burgers and Fries for a

memorable drive-through experience. The Surf Hotel in Buena Vista is a must—the soothing sounds of the river will rock you to sleep.⁴³ And if you want an exceptional coffee and baked good in Durango, try Hermosa Café.⁴⁴

I hope you consider a mini jaunt soon. And while you travel, please connect and share your story. 

NOTES

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