



Colorado is home to the Rocky Mountain National Park, where you can drive on Trail Ridge Road, the highest continuous highway in the U.S. It is also home to Black Canyon National Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and Great Sand Dunes National Park. We just returned from our trip to Colorado and totally loved it.

### Rocky Mountain National Park:

#### Rainbow Curve Overlook



Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

#### Trail Ridge Road

Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

Rocky Mountain National Park is located in the north-central region of the Colorado. It features beautiful mountain views, lots of wildlife, and different climates and environments—from wooded forests to mountain tundra—and easy, moderate and strenuous trails. The park is split by the Continental Divide, and it contains over 60 peaks higher than 12,000 feet. The quaint town of Estes Park is at the eastern entrance of the park.

General information: <http://www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/index.htm>;  
<http://rockymountainnationalpark.com/>  
Estes Park – <http://www.estesparkcvb.com/>

Accommodations: Solitude Cabins in Estes Park

<http://www.solitudcabins.com/>  
[http://rockymountainnationalpark.com/pages/where\\_to\\_stay\\_estes\\_park.html](http://rockymountainnationalpark.com/pages/where_to_stay_estes_park.html)

### Black Canyon of the Gunnison:

#### Painted Wall shows ancient lava flow.



Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

#### Black Canyon's wild flowers.



Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

Black Canyon National Park is so named because of its steepness which makes it difficult for sunlight to penetrate very far down the canyon, and as a result, the canyon walls are most often in shadow, so this

causes the rocky walls to appear black. The Gunnison River is primarily responsible for carving the Canyon into that extreme steepness and depth. This Park is the least visited of all National Parks, and on any given visit, it can feel and seem like you are the only one there. You can see a vast variety of wild flowers there, as well as wild life. The main attraction of the park is the scenic drive along the south rim.

General info.: <http://www.nps.gov/blca/planyourvisit/index.htm>  
[http://www.americansouthwest.net/colorado/black\\_canyon\\_gunnison/national\\_park.html](http://www.americansouthwest.net/colorado/black_canyon_gunnison/national_park.html)

Accommodations: <http://blackcanyonofthegunnison.areaparks.com/hotels.html>  
<http://www.go-colorado.com/Montrose/Hotels/>

### Mesa Verde National Park:

#### Cliff Palace



Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

#### Mesa Verde Plateau

Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

Mesa Verde National Park was established in 1906 as concern grew over the archaeological well being of its ruins. The Park features numerous ruins of homes and villages built by the ancient Pueblo people known as the Anasazi, who made these stone villages their home in A.D. 1200s. The Park is best known for several spectacular cliff dwellings, these structures built within caves and under outcroppings in cliffs. One of these dwellings, Cliff Palace, is thought to be the largest in North America.

General information: <http://www.nps.gov/meve/>  
<http://www.visitmesaverde.com/>

Accommodations: <http://www.visitmesaverde.com/lodging-dining/index.cfm>  
Inside the Park accommodations:  
<http://www.visitmesaverde.com/lodging-dining/far-view-lodge.cfm>

### Great Sand Dunes National Park:

View of the dunes from the Visitor Center      View from atop one of the dunes



Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

Photo by CCPerez. Copyright © 2008 Connie Perez. All rights reserved.

Great Sand Dunes National Park contains the tallest sand dunes in North America. They rise about 750 feet from the floor of the San Luis Valley, and cover about 19,000 acres. The dunes, which are believed to be about 12,000 years old, were formed from sand deposits of the Rio Grande flowing through the San Luis Valley. Over time, west winds picked up sand from the river and as the wind lost power before the range, the sand was deposited on the east edge of the valley. This process continues today, and the dunes are slowly growing. The shape of the dunes change dailey because of the winds.

General info.: <http://www.nps.gov/grsa/planyourvisit/index.htm>

[http://www.americansouthwest.net/colorado/great\\_sand\\_dunes/national\\_monument.html](http://www.americansouthwest.net/colorado/great_sand_dunes/national_monument.html)

Accommodations: <http://greatsanddunes.areaparks.com/hotels.html>

Share this:

- [Click to share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\) Facebook](#)
- [Click to share on X \(Opens in new window\) X](#)
- [Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\) Pinterest](#)
- [Click to print \(Opens in new window\) Print](#)