

BEAUTIFUL BOULDER

SKIP THE SNOW AND ENJOY THIS ROCKY-MOUNTAIN TOWN IN THE SUMMER SUN.

By Becca Hensley

Who needs snow? Savvy travelers know Boulder, Colo., best as a summer retreat. A sun-drenched university town, this hip, mountain-fringed village lies just 40 minutes from Denver. With cool summer nights and temperate days, it draws its denizens outdoors to play. Come hungry for its rising food culture and fitness-ready for its high-energy mountain pace. On the Pearl Street (pedestrian) Mall, you'll listen to street musicians and peruse independently owned shops. On the grassy lawn at Chautauqua State Park, you'll picnic into the wee hours. And at night, you'll sit beneath the stars while Shakespeare thrills you with each soliloquy. That's the Boulder way.



ALFRESCO DINING Gorgeous gardens are just one of many amenities at the St Julien.

ROOM WITH A VIEW

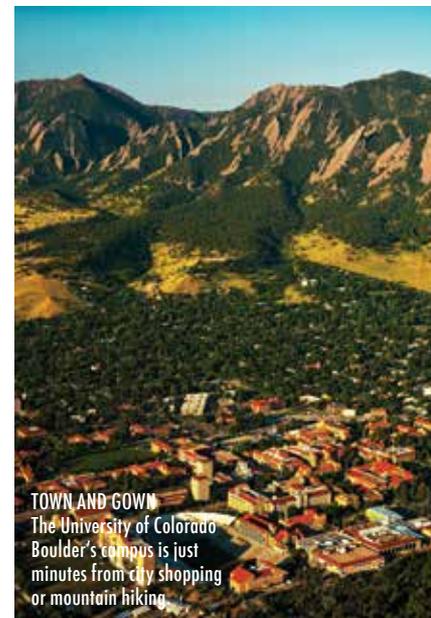
Sheathed in pink sandstone, the award-winning St Julien stakes out an exclusive corner just a block from Pearl Street Mall. Relaxed yet elegant, as befits the Boulder vibe, the hotel has spacious rooms with heart-stopping mountain views. This AAA Four Diamond property has a bustling martini bar, indoor lap pool and 10,000-square-foot spa. The staff are no slouches when it comes to service, as the hotel's concierge has just received membership into the coveted Les Clefs d'Or. Book the Boulder Adventure Package, which immerses you into the town's active culture with a hiking, biking or rafting outing. *Rates from \$250, stjulien.com*

COOL HISTORY

The oldest hotel in Boulder remains one of the swankiest. Ensnored amid the bustle of downtown, the 160-room Hotel Boulderado pays homage to Boulder's mining wealth heyday with Italianate and period touches, but stays contemporary with first-class amenities. Sit in the graceful lobby to admire the canopy ceiling or retire to the just-renovated subterranean speak-easy, License No. 1, for a classic libation. *Rates from \$289, boulderado.com*

GET EDUCATED

Locals used to refer to the town as the People's Republic, and the University of Colorado Boulder stands as its centerpiece. Constructed with local pink-and-red sandstone and slanted red-tile roofs, the original architect designed the buildings to evoke Tuscany, Italy, but locals will tell you that the campus architecture mirrors the iconic Flatirons—the huge stone slabs on the mountain above, which are symbols of the city. Campus tours and information sessions are Monday through Friday, reservation requested. *colorado.edu*



TOWN AND GOWN The University of Colorado Boulder's campus is just minutes from city shopping or mountain hiking.



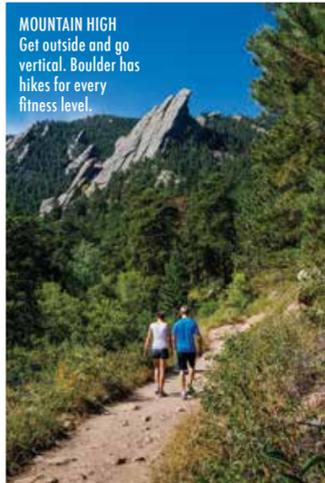
PEDAL POWER

Bikes rule the road in Boulder. Rent one and join the fun. Thirty-eight B-Cycle stations (boulder.bicycle.com) dot the town and offer 250 cruiser bikes (\$8 for one-day rental). Or get fitted for a road or mountain bike by the experts at University Bicycles (ubikes.com), conveniently poised on the Pearl Street Mall. Spin along countless paths and routes suitable for all levels of road warriors.

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POUND IT

Some say Boulder has a reputation as a party school, but you won't believe it when the sportswear-clad locals leave you in the dust. This is one fit city. Put on some hiking boots and join the fun. Myriad trails twist into the mountains above the town. Others extend through a carpet of grassland to the east. A must-conquer for first-time visitors? Royal Arch—a pine-scented ascent from the mountain's base at Chautauqua State Park to a scenic overlook, shadowed by a dome-shaped rock. chautauqua.com



MOUNTAIN HIGH
Get outside and go vertical. Boulder has hikes for every fitness level.

CAST AWAY

Get Zen with Rocky Mountain Anglers, Colorado's top fly-fishing shop and angling school. With top-of-the-line casting products, the store can make a fishing aficionado out of anyone. Stellar summer youth camps and adult courses instill a passion for this relaxing, patience-teaching sport. Past the beginner phase? Sign up for a guided excursion to a fast-flowing mountain river or high-altitude lake. *Guided trips from \$195, rockymt anglers.com*



CHEERS!
In this food-forward college town, Boulder's bar scene swings year-round.

TIPPLE HAPPY

Boulder boasts 20 craft breweries, six wineries and four distilleries—not to mention some cocktail-canny bars and pubs. New in 2014, Boulder Wine Studios (boulderwinestudios.com) contains three separate wineries at one site. Tasting rooms welcome you Thursday-Sunday, 1-6PM. Prefer beer? The building also encompasses Upslope Brewing Company (upslopebrewing.com). For bespoke potations, grab a bar stool at Salt (saltthebistro.com), where bartenders put unexpected ingredients to the mixology test.



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT
Float above Boulder in a hot-air balloon for a new view of this college town.

UP, UP AND AWAY

Sure, you can climb a mountain. But why not float above it? Board a hot-air balloon at dawn and watch the bright Boulder morning unfold. Aflame with golden light, Boulder Valley glitters while the storied Flatirons are rendered nearly psychedelic. Alternatively, rent a glider. Starting at the town's tiny airport, you'll get towed by a plane, then released to hover like a butterfly in the clouds. *Rates from \$219, hotairballoonridescolorado.com; milehighgliding.com*

BAR PHOTO BY CHRIS PARKER/BOULDER CVB; BALLOON PHOTO COURTESY OF BOULDER CVB; HIKING PHOTO BY DENISE CHAMBERS/BOULDER CVB



HIGH TEA
The ornate building sets the mood at Dushanbe Tea House.

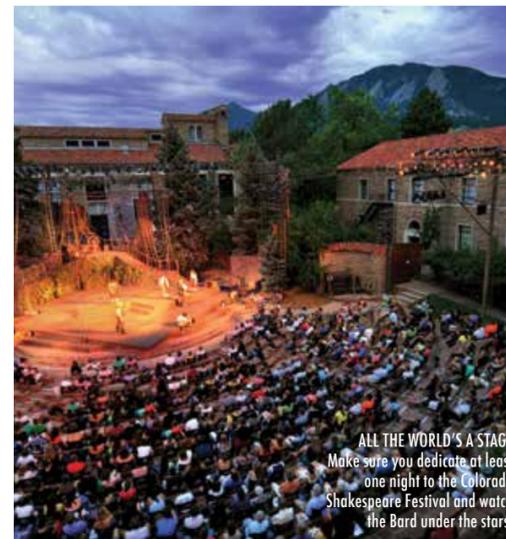
TEA PARTY

At the Dushanbe Tea House (boulderteahouse.com), you'll sip as you savor in surroundings so serene and ornate, you'll want to wear your silkiest shift. But it's Boulder, so the dress code is anything but *Downton Abbey* formal. The hand-carved, hand-painted and hand-adorned structure was a gift from Boulder's sister city, Dushanbe in Tajikistan. It took 40 Tajik craftsmen more than three years to build it in the fashion of their homeland. Serving more than 100 types of tea and gastronomic cuisine, you'll find it downtown near the university. *Afternoon tea \$22 per person*

DUSHANBE PHOTO BY STEPHEN COLLECTOR/BOULDER CVB; FESTIVAL PHOTO BY CASEY CASS/UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO; THE KITCHEN PHOTO BY DAVIS TILLY PHOTOGRAPHY

A DREAMY MIDSUMMER NIGHT

A summer ritual since 1958, Colorado Shakespeare Festival (coloradoshakes.org) brings top actors from across the globe to perform Shakespeare's works each summer. With the mountains as a backdrop and the stars as a canopy, the plays occur nightly June through August at the Mary Rippon Outdoor Theatre, an intimate amphitheater on the CU campus. This year, indulge in *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Henry V*—among others. *Tickets \$10-\$64*



ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE
Make sure you dedicate at least one night to the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and watch the Bard under the stars.

FOODIE FORAY

Active people need sustenance. Maybe that's why Boulder keeps showing up on everybody's best list for epicurean delights. Hosea Rosenberg exemplifies the scene. After his win on *Top Chef*, season 5, the now-famous chef returned with a novel concept. His Blackbelly Market (blackbelly.com) takes farm-to-fork to new heights with chef-raised livestock and chef-plowed gardens. Don't miss the charcuterie plate (\$50). On Pearl Street, The Kitchen (thekitchen.com) is the granddaddy of gourmet Boulder. Sustainable and innovative, the tasting menu (\$48) is the way to go to try everything. News flash: The Kitchen just opened an outpost in Chicago at 316 N. Clark St. For dinner with a view, drive up to Flagstaff House (flagstaffhouse.com), located midmountain. Not only does it vaunt a jaw-dropping panoramic view, but it also woos oenophiles with one of the best wine lists in the country.



SEE FOOD
The Kitchen raises the bar on beautifully presented and pristinely fresh sustainable seafood.

GOOD ART HUNTING

The shops on Pearl Street open many a wallet with their temptations. Experience some of the newest, such as Voss Art + Home (exclusivelyvoss.com), which sells furniture, crafts and artwork. Just to keep things interesting, it offers a pop-up shop within a shop, which rotates vendors every two weeks. Vilona Gallery (vilonagallery.com) is chock-full of sculpture and functional art pieces. Get multifaceted with Todd Reed (toddreed.com), who has only two studios in the world; one in Boulder and the other in Venice, Calif. His bold work with rough diamonds takes the romantic gem to another dimension. ■