

In the foothills of the Rockies, Colorado's mile-high capital is a city on the ascent



24 hours in... Denver

A mile above sea level, with the Rockies rearing up to the west and the high plains of the Midwest trailing away to the east, the Colorado capital is a city on the up. A decade ago the centre mainly comprised a grid of deserted warehouses surrounding

a railway junction where passengers changed trains and kept moving, while Denver residents occupied its vast suburban sprawl. Not any more. Downtown Denver is now abuzz with bars and restaurants frequented by local loft dwellers and refugees from LA and New York who appreciate the space, clean air and scenery. Its annual average of 300 days of sunshine is another draw.



HOW TO GET THERE

British Airways flies daily between London Heathrow and Denver International, from £450. 0870 850 9850. www.britishairways.com

EAT

1 RIOJA

Handily central near Larimer Square and the city's vibrant Performing Arts Complex, Rioja offers a Western take on pan-Mediterranean cuisine, with an injection of locally farmed elk and buffalo to supplement the beef. The restaurant has a historic dining room and a patio for the alfresco crowd. www.riojadenver.com



2 NINE 75

"Hip, eclectic, comfort food with a rock'n'roll twist" is how this casual but smart downtown joint undersells itself. Serving everything from miso black cod to miniature hamburgers. Nine 75 is a great place to graze before or after a night out. The Kobe beef sliders and lobster tacos (*above*) highlight its international style. For thirsty eaters, the grapefruit *mojitos* are a house speciality. www.nine75-restaurant.com

DRINK

3 DAZZLE

Bang in the middle of the city's Golden Triangle just to the south of the downtown area, Dazzle (*below*) is a popular hang-out and the place to come for martinis and other cocktail classics as well as house specialities. You can eat here, too, while listening to live blues and jazz music in a venue that counts as Denver's equivalent to Ronnie Scott's. www.dazzlejazz.com



4 LOLA

Named one of the top five places to drink tequila in America by *Food & Wine*, Lola (*above*) offers more than 100 versions of the stuff. It also serves wicked *calpirinhas*. The cuisine derives from the coastal regions of Mexico and features guacamole hand-mashed before your eyes. www.loladenver.com

SHOP

For the shop-till-you-drop experience visit Cherry Creek, a mall 15 minutes from the city centre. www.shopcherrycreek.com

5 REI

For a store reflecting the outdoor nature of a city that serves as a base camp for the Rockies, check out REI. Housed in the 1901 Tramway building, it has everything for the happy camper, climber or skier. www.rei.com



SLEEP

6 HOTEL TEATRO

This landmark building's rooms (*above*) have earth-toned Art-Deco furnishings. The bathrooms come with deep tubs and the staff will run an aromatherapy bath ready for your return from a day's shopping. Chef Kevin Taylor's restaurant is one of Denver's finest. Rooms from £130. www.hotelteatro.com RS