Denver is known as the Mile High City, Denver, the capital of Colorado, is located a mile above sea level. Originally settled by prospectors as a mining camp after gold was found in 1858, Denver is one of the few cities that was not built on a road, railroad, lake, navigable river, or body of water.

Denver’s Neighborhoods

Downtown Denver, with its mix of historic and contemporary buildings, has historic, retail, cultural, entertainment, and residential components. Attractions include the 6 sports teams that play at Coors Field, Pepsi Center, and INVESCO Field at Mile High; an amusement park; aquarium; many museums; and parks. The Denver Art Museum, Colorado History Museum, Byers Evans House, Molly Brown House Museum, Kirkland Museum, Denver Firefighters Museum, and Mitzel Museum are concentrated in the Golden Triangle Museum District. The U.S. Mint, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and Ellie Caulkins Opera House are located nearby. Historic mansions share space with newer condos and apartments in the Capitol Hill area, which is also home to the Denver Botanic Gardens. The LoDo and Larimer Square areas feature shopping, nightlife, and dining options. The Uptown section of downtown is Denver’s oldest residential neighborhood and home to City Park, which contains the Denver Zoo, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, gardens, playgrounds, a lake, and a golf course. Other housing options are available throughout the downtown area, including the recently converted railway yards of the Central Platte Valley.

Denver is a city of diverse cultures. Located on the other side of the South Platte River, the Highland neighborhood has a distinct Hispanic heritage and is characterized by hilly, tree-lined streets and an eclectic mix of housing. The Sante Fe neighborhood, south of downtown, features authentic Mexican culture and has the largest concentration of art galleries in Colorado; The Museo de las Americas, with exhibits of Latino art from all areas of Central and South America, is located here. Northeast of downtown, Five Points, one of Denver’s oldest neighborhoods, has Victorian homes mixed with luxury lofts and new housing developments. The Stiles African American Heritage Center and the Black American West Museum & Heritage Center tell the story of the African-American cowboys and pioneers who helped settle the West. Five Points also has been referred to as the “Harlem of the West” for its long-standing jazz history.

Parks and Recreation

Denver has more than 200 city and mountain parks, rivers and trail areas, public golf courses, and recreation centers. Urban parks offer athletic fields for sand volleyball, soccer, football, tennis, baseball, softball, and rugby. Skate parks are also available. Mountain park facilities include Red Rock’s Amphitheater, Buffalo Bill Museum, Genesee Ropes Challenge Course, and a Braille trail.

Denver’s professional sports teams include the Colorado Rockies (baseball), Denver Nuggets (basketball), Colorado Avalanche (hockey), Colorado Mammoth (lacrosse), Denver Broncos (football), and Colorado Crush (arena football). The Colorado Rapids (soccer) and Denver Barbarians (rugby) play in the nearby Dick’s Sporting Goods Park.

Education

With an enrollment of about 75,000 students, the Denver Public School System comprises 152 schools—68 elementary, 18 K–8, 16 middle, 15 high, 21 charter, 6 alternative for students with special needs, and 8 other. Montessori, International Baccalaureate, dual-language, fundamentals, gifted children, and arts curricula are among the special school and magnet programs offered. Denver also has religious and nonsectarian private schools.

Denver offers many opportunities for higher education. The Auraria campus, located in the heart of downtown, provides shared classroom space and general services to the Community College of Denver (2-year), the Metropolitan State College of Denver (4-year undergraduate college), and the University of Colorado at Denver (undergraduate and graduate degrees). In addition, the University of Denver, Johnson and Wales, Regis University, and National American University offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Health Care

Denver is served by 6 acute care hospitals with a total licensed bed count of approximately 3,100. Specialty hospitals include a facility that focuses on respiratory illnesses, another that provides orthopedic and surgery care, a rehabilitation facility for brain injuries, a Veterans Administration medical center, and 3 long-term acute care hospitals.

Denver City Stats


| City | 566,974 |
| Metropolitan Statistical Area | 2,411,836 |
| Per capita personal income, Denver-Aurora MSA (2006) | $44,691 |

Photo courtesy of Ron Ruhoff for the Denver Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau