



**Salida “Our Colorado” hike and Colorado Springs No Trip Report
July 11 – 20, 2020**

Another trip bit the dust.

This COVID-19, aka The Virus, aka The Coronavirus, aka the rona, etc etc that we’re all sick of just won’t go away. No – we are NOT calling it the Wuhan Flu or the China Virus. Only sick folks go there, and Americans are the last ones to blame anyone else.

Again, I waited to cancel until almost the last minute. New Jersey was doing well. Colorado was doing well. I’d be out in the open mostly hiking. But the getting there, through airports and crowded planes, concerned me.

Then some of my smart friends were courageous enough to advise me to NOT go. Tom never ventured an opinion. Better safe than sorry. But I’m sure bummed out and bored as hell.

I’m calendared to do the same trip next year at about the same time.

Itinerary

Sat Jul 11

12:41pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#1486
There are many more flights afterwards if needed

2:54pm Arrive Denver DEN

Shuttle to hotel

Hotel La Quinta Denver Airport – 1 night by PPH
6801 Tower Road, Aurora, CO 80249 Tel: 303 371 0888
Told PPH yes for La Quinta Saturday July 11 only and no hotel needed at end

From www.ParksPlusHiking.com - *Since the idea for Parks Plus first blossomed, we knew we would want to share the wonders of our home in Salida, Colorado, and the mountains that surround it. With “This is Our Colorado,” that dream has been fulfilled as we hike in the stunning (and challenging) Sawatch Mountains, including a signature hike along the Continental Divide. To soothe our bodies along the way, we stay (and soak) at fabulous Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort. We also spend time in the heart of vibrant and picturesque Salida at the historic Palace Hotel. We love our home and think you will too. Note: This tour is currently scheduled to be led by Steve Meckstroth and Megan Ballard. Megan is an extremely knowledgeable and highly qualified guide who will be filling in for Nola Stewart while Nola thru-hikes the Colorado Trail.*

Sun Jul 12 – Day 1 of hike

9:00am Start of hiking tour at La Quinta Hotel

Midland Trail - Distance: 5 mi - Difficulty: 3

After departing Denver, we will make our way south and west across Kenosha and Red Hill Passes past historic Fairplay, stopping along the way to pick up lunch. We'll then stretch our legs on a portion of the Midland Trail, a former railroad grade and now popular outdoor recreation destination. Luxury awaits us as we proceed to our hot springs haven for a two-night stay.

Lodging: Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort – 1st of 2 nights

Mon Jul 13 - Day 2 of hike

Colorado Trail/Browns Creek - Distance: 11 mi - Difficulty: 5

After breakfast, we hit the trail in earnest, climbing the famed Colorado Trail to views of 14,196' Mt. Princeton. Following an equally challenging descent, we make our way past the foot of 14,245' Mt. Antero to a lovely waterfall along Browns Creek. Numerous soaking options and perhaps even a massage greet our return to Mt. Princeton followed by dinner and the spectacular star-filled sky—if you can stay awake that long.

Lodging: Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort – 2nd of 2 nights

Tue Jul 14 - Day 3 of hike

Ptarmigan Lake/Ptarmigan Pass - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

Having acclimated to the elevation, we head up towards 12,000' Cottonwood Pass, stopping just short of the summit for our hike to Ptarmigan Lake. The lake makes a great lunch and turnaround point; views of 14,199' Mt. Yale will wow us at our sub-alpine destination. Not quite enough? Motivated hikers may wish to continue on (and up!) to Ptarmigan Pass before returning to the trailhead. However far you hike, we're headed home to Salida for the night.

Lodging: Palace Hotel – 1st of 3 nights
204 N. F. Street, Salida, CO 80201 Tele: 719 207 4175
www.salidapalacehotel.com – Vicki owner

Wed Jul 15 - Day 4 of hike

Great Sand Dunes National Park - Distance: 6 mi - Difficulty: 4

Today we're off on a "road trip" of sorts to fascinating Great Sand Dunes National Park. After an educational stop at the Park's Visitor Center, we will learn first hand the meaning of two steps up, one step back (and often the reverse, sad to say) as we climb nearly 750' to one of the tallest of the ever-shifting dunes. After emptying the sand from our shoes, socks, pockets, etc., we'll enjoy a picnic lunch, then head back to the relaxing Palace Hotel. A very full day!

Lodging: Palace Hotel – 2nd of 3 nights

Thu Jul 16 - Day 5 of hike

Monarch Crest - Distance: 14 mi - Difficulty: 5

Several times over the course of our season, our travels take us near or even across the Continental Divide. Today, however, we hike along the Divide on the Monarch Crest Trail, which unsurprisingly is a short but scenic stretch of the famed 3,100 mile Continental Divide Trail (CDT) . From the crest, we'll scan the trail's edge for tiny alpine wildflowers and expand our view outward to include several "fourteeners" in the nearby Sawatch Range and down towards Monarch Pass at 11,312'.

Lodging: Palace Hotel – 3rd of 3 nights

Dave and Dana at Loyal Duke Lodge in Salida

Fri Jul 17 – Day 6 of hike

Arkansas Hills Trails - Distance: 6 mi - Difficulty: 2

For our final day in the Salida area we stay even closer to home as we hike part of the local Arkansas Hills Trail system directly above town, specifically the North Backbone, Lil' Rattler, and

FrontsideTrails. Although this is one of our favorite running routes, we promise to stay with the group lest we miss our final lunch together prior to our return to Denver.

2:00pm End of hike in Salida, after lunch at The Boat House, or at 6pm in Denver. Pack out in morning. Store luggage?

Drive with Dave and Dana to Colorado Springs

Hotel Hyatt House on Delmonico – 3 nights
5805 Delmonico Drive, Colorado Springs, 80919 Tele: 719 268 9990
Conf#54629103

Mon Jul 20

11:20am Depart Colo Springs COS via UA#1116
12:05pm Arrive Denver DEN for plane change
1:35pm Depart Denver DEN via UA#749
7:43pm Arrive Newark EWR

Uber since its dark?

Hiking Participants

Bill Peters