

FAMILY ROUTE · DENVER, CO

DENVER MADE EASY FOR FAMILIES

Denver for families: mile-high sunshine, free parks, and museums that keep kids busy when the afternoon turns stormy.

Start with a morning downtown, save the foothills for a clear day, and pick sights that suit your kids' ages and the forecast.

LoDo · RiNo · Highlands · Red Rocks · museum-district parks

AT A GLANCE

Your Denver family guide, in one glance

Check these patterns first, so altitude, weather, and nap times fit into your plan.



First visit, first morning

Begin at Union Station or Civic Center Park, then add a shady bench or a playground stop.



Toddlers and preschoolers

Keep walks short, choose flat paths like Cherry Creek Trail, and favor play-based museums.



Mixed-age crews

Pair one hands-on museum with an easy riverside stroll at Confluence Park.



Afternoon storm plan

Keep one indoor museum or play space on your route, ready for a summer thunderstorm.

ORIENT YOURSELF

Denver at a Glance

Plan around one neighborhood a day, so little ones get shade, snacks, and naps between stops.

ZONE	WHAT'S THERE
Downtown & LoDo	Union Station, Denver Art Museum, the Denver Mint, and the car-free 16th Street Mall.
RiNo & Highlands	Mural-covered blocks, studio doors, and riverside paths at Confluence Park.
Museum District & City Park	Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Denver Zoo, Children's Museum of Denver, and Denver Botanic Gardens.
Foothills & Red Rocks	Red Rocks Park's sandstone trails and big views, a short drive west of the city.
Practical tips	Drink water and pace yourself at altitude, and build in time for snacks, naps, and afternoon storms.
Transit & parking	Walk downtown, use rideshare or light rail for longer hops, and check parking rules at each attraction.

Which major attraction fits your family?

DESTINATION	WHY IT WORKS
Denver Museum of Nature & Science	Dinosaur halls, a planetarium, and hands-on science; plan a full morning.
Children's Museum of Denver	Play-based exhibits built for the youngest kids; short, easy visits.
Denver Art Museum	Galleries and a calm indoor break; pick one wing to keep the visit short.
Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance	Animal habitats on wide, stroller-friendly paths.
Meow Wolf Denver	Immersive art rooms with hidden passages; a favorite for curious older kids.
Denver Botanic Gardens	Shaded gardens and a quiet outdoor break between activities.
Denver Mint	See coins being made; check tour availability and ID rules first.
Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre	Red sandstone trails and views; go early and bring water.
Denver Union Station	A historic station with shops and easy walking for stroller days.
Confluence Park Denver	A riverside park where two waterways meet; a relaxed picnic spot.

Before you book, check each attraction's official site for current hours, timed tickets, stroller rules, and closures.

THE BIG LIST

20 Paid Family Attractions

1. **Denver Museum of Nature & Science** for dinosaurs, space shows, and hands-on labs.
2. **Children's Museum of Denver** for play zones built for little kids.
3. **Denver Art Museum** for galleries and a calm indoor pause.
4. **Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance** for animal habitats and wide paths.
5. **Meow Wolf Denver** for immersive art rooms and hidden passages.
6. **Denver Botanic Gardens** for themed gardens and shaded paths.
7. **Denver Mint** for a look at how coins are made.
8. **Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre** for red rock views and trails.
9. **Denver Union Station** for a historic hall with dining and shops.
10. **Confluence Park Denver** for riverside space and an easy picnic.
11. Downtown Aquarium for an ocean-themed tank walk and a rainy-day stop.
12. Elitch Gardens for rides and a summer water area.
13. Lakeside Amusement Park for classic rides close to the city.
14. Butterfly Pavilion for a warm room full of free-flying butterflies.
15. Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden for historic trains to explore.
16. Denver Museum of Miniatures, Dolls & Toys for tiny rooms and vintage toys.
17. A mountain scenic train ride for a seated trip with views.
18. Horseback trail ride in the foothills with a guide.
19. Family ice rink for winter skating.
20. Guided bike rental tour along the river trails for older kids.

Before you go, check age guidelines, timed-entry slots, stroller rules, and closures on official sites.

LOWER-COST DAYS

10 Free & Budget-Friendly Places

Pair one paid highlight with a free park or walk, and the day stays easy on the budget.

01 **Confluence Park Denver** for a riverside lawn where two waterways meet.

02 **Denver Union Station** for a historic hall to wander, free to walk through.

03 **Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre** for trails and views; check parking rules first.

04 **Denver Mint** for a tour, if you check schedule and ID rules first.

05 Civic Center Park for shaded lawns and the Greek Amphitheatre steps.

06 Washington Park for lake loops and playgrounds for every age.

07 Cherry Creek Trail for a flat, stroller-friendly paved path.

08 16th Street Mall for a car-free stroll with street performers.

09 Sloan's Lake Park for a lakeside path and open grass.

10 RiNo's street murals, best spotted on foot in a slow morning loop.



A Denver local day: mountain light, a riverside walk, and a snack break.

OFF THE BEATEN TRAIL

Local Favorites & Hidden Gems

1. RiNo for murals, studios, and a relaxed neighborhood walk.
2. Highlands for historic streets, cafes, and stroller-friendly sidewalks.
3. Larimer Square for a historic block of shops and restaurants.
4. Wash Park for playgrounds, lake paths, and easy neighborhood strolls.
5. Denver Central Market for an indoor food hall and a rainy-day snack.
6. Stanley Marketplace in Aurora for a relaxed lunch with a cluster of shops.
7. Golden for a small-town main street and a railroad museum.
8. Pearl Street Mall in Boulder for a car-free stroll and street performers.

Choose one neighborhood per day; shade, a snack, and a short walk keep everyone happy.

WEATHER BACKUP

Rainy-Day & Indoor Picks



For curious scientists

Denver Museum of Nature & Science for dinosaur halls and planetarium shows.



For game-loving kids

Meow Wolf Denver for immersive rooms and a lively indoor break.



For grown-ups

Keep a cushion in the schedule for snacks, a dry layer, and one indoor highlight such as the **Denver Art Museum**.



For the littlest ones

Children's Museum of Denver for play zones and an easy pace.



For a brief break in the rain

Denver Union Station for indoor shops, dining, and seating.

Confirm each museum's hours, timed entry, and stroller access on its official website before you go.

BEFORE YOU GO

Denver Area Map, Pitfalls & Source Notes

Denver Area Attraction Map

ZONE	HIGHLIGHTS
Downtown & LoDo	Union Station, Denver Art Museum, Denver Mint, Meow Wolf Denver, 16th Street Mall
Museum District & City Park	Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Denver Zoo, Children's Museum of Denver, Denver Botanic Gardens
River & Creek Paths	Confluence Park Denver, Cherry Creek Trail, Washington Park lake loop
RiNo & Highlands	Street murals, studio doors, Denver Central Market, Highlands cafes
Foothills & West	Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre, Golden, Colorado Railroad Museum

Common Planning Mistakes

1. Packing too many stops into one day with toddlers; save the big walk for the cooler morning.
2. Underestimating altitude: at about 5,280 ft, the first day can leave kids and adults tired and thirsty.
3. Hiking Red Rocks trails at midday in summer without shade, water, or sun protection.
4. Assuming every museum, tour, or attraction is open on Mondays or public holidays.
5. Skipping sunscreen; UV is strong at elevation, even on cloudy days.
6. Having no plan B for the afternoon thunderstorms that build over the mountains in summer.