



HIGH SCHOOL COLORADO

Free Day Guide

A special feature of HSCO is the “Free Day” on Thursday which provides a great opportunity to enjoy bonding time with your group. Keep reading this guide to learn about activities you can do with your group, where to do meals, and more.

Activities ---

Explore the following list for some ideas to do with your group:

- **Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP):** If you plan to go into RMNP, there’s some time sensitive requirements you need to read [HERE](#).
- **Hikes Offsite:** Most groups try to get outdoors for a hike. For more information about spots within RMNP or others outside of the national park, check out the [Hiking Guide](#) section below.
- **Hikes Onsite:** Information about hikes at the YMCA, guided and self-directed, can be found [HERE](#).
- **White Water Rafting:** Information about white water rafting on the Poudre River can be found [HERE](#).
- **Water World Colorado:** Information about visiting this water park can be found [HERE](#).
- **Open Air Adventure Park:** Learn about vising the Open Air Adventure Park in Estes Park [HERE](#).
- **YMCA Activities:** There are numerous activities offered by the YMCA. Many are free and some require a fee. In addition, you may need to register ahead for certain activities. Learn more [HERE](#).
- **Hang Out at the YMCA:** Some groups decide to just hang out at the YMCA together...maybe sleep in a little, play putt putt, have a picnic, sit on the porch and read, play games, etc.

Meals

- **Lunch:** Sack lunches will be provided Thursday morning for pick up in Assembly Hall.
- **Dinner:** You are responsible for your group's dinner on Free Day. There is no right way to do it, just have fun! Each year groups do a variety of things such as:
 - Go simple and order pizza!
 - Do fast food in Estes Park.
 - Make reservations at restaurants in Estes Park.
 - Larger groups are advised to split up if possible.

Hiking Guide

- **Rocky Mountain National Park's "Timed Entry Permit System"**
 - [Timed Entry Permit System - Rocky Mountain National Park \(US National Park Service\)](#)
 - [Rocky Mountain National Park Timed Entry, Rocky Mountain National Park](#)
- **General Info on Hiking Trails Inside Rocky Mountain National Park**
 - [List of Hiking Trails - Rocky Mountain National Park \(US National Park Service\)](#)
 - [Rocky Mountain National Park hikes | RockyMountainHikingTrails.com](#)
- **Hikes off Trail Ridge Road (the main road up into and through RMNP):**

Just slowly making your way up to the top of Trail Ridge Road is fun, stopping along the way to do some of the short walks to scenic spots, etc. There is a store/gift shop with coffee and snacks at the top. The two hikes below are "longer" hikes off Trail Ridge Road:

 - [Deer Mountain – Hike Deer Mountain in RMNP](#) (~6 miles round trip)
 - [Ute Trail - Hike the Ute Trail in RMNP](#) (~4 miles round trip - out and back option)
- **Colorado River Trailhead**
 - [Timber Lake Trail Hiking Trail, Grand Lake, Colorado](#) (~10 miles round trip - far West side of RMNP)
- **Lily Lake/Mountain Area**
 - [Lily Mountain – Hike Lily Mountain in RMNP](#) (~4 miles round trip)
 - [Twin Sisters Peak - Hike to Twin Sisters Peak in the Rocky Mountains](#) (~7 miles round trip)
 - [Estes Cone – Hike the Storm Pass Trail to Estes Cone in RMNP](#) (~7.5 miles round trip)

- **Bear Lake Road Corridor**

Specific Reservation is required! Additionally, please note that the Bear Lake Road Corridor is typically crowded. That being said, people do move through/spread out fairly well—Just a heads up.

- **Upper Beaver Meadows Trailhead**

- [Hike the Upper Beaver Meadows Loop in RMNP](#) (~5 miles round trip)

- **Fern Lake Trailhead**

- [The Pool - Hike to The Pool in RMNP](#) (~3.5 miles round trip)
- [Fern Lake - Hike to Fern Lake in RMNP](#) (~7.5 miles round trip)

- **Glacier Gorge Trailhead**

- [The Loch - Hike to the Loch Vale in RMNP](#) (~6 miles round trip)
- [Sky Pond - Hike to Sky Pond in RMNP](#) (~9 miles round trip)
- [Black Lake - Hike to Black Lake in RMNP](#) (~10 miles round trip)

- **Bear Lake Trailhead**

- [Dream Lake - Hike to Dream Lake in RMNP](#) (~2 miles round trip)
- [Emerald Lake - Hike to Emerald Lake in RMNP](#) (~4 miles round trip)
- [Odessa Lake – Hike to Odessa Lake in RMNP](#) (~9 miles round trip)

- **Trails outside of RMNP**

- [Lake Estes Trail](#) (~4 miles round trip - very easy, no elevation)
- [Button Rock Trail Hiking Trail, Lyons, CO](#) (~2 miles round trip)
- [Moose Meadow Trail Hiking Trail, Estes Park, CO](#) (~3 miles round trip)
- [Lion Gulch Trail #949 Hiking Trail, Estes Park, CO](#) (~7 miles round trip)
- [Kruger Rock Trail Hiking Trail, Estes Park, CO](#) (~3.6 miles round trip)
- [Gem Lake - Hike to Gem Lake in RMNP](#) or [Gem Lake and Balanced Rock Hiking Trail, Estes Park, CO](#) (~7.5 miles round trip)
 - **NOTE:** Gem Lake is actually in the park. You don't have to go through a park entrance to get there, but the timed entry is usually enforced at the Lumpy Ridge Trailhead as well.
- [Mount Olympus](#) (~2.5 miles round trip)
- [Palisade Mountain Summit Hiking Trail, Estes Park, CO](#) (~2.5 miles round trip)

- **[Brainerd Lake Recreation Area](#)**

It's National Forest land and also requires a timed entry, but you can usually get a reservation the next day if you need it. One big benefit is that it's not nearly as crowded as RMNP yet is just as beautiful! The [Lake Isabel Trail](#) (~4.5 miles round trip) is particularly stunning.