

Mile-High Magnificence

Written by Katarina Kovacevic

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Denver's Western roots have long made it a destination of choice for the free-spirited, but a recent revitalization has added a touch of luxury to this once understated artist's town.



LoDo and the Four Seasons Hotel Denver The Lower Downtown Historic District, or "LoDo" to adoring Denverites, is a 23-block, mixed-use neighborhood that is a major hub of activity and the heart of downtown Denver's theater and business corridor. In October 2010, The Four Seasons Hotel Denver opened at the very edge of the district, breathing new life into the area with its luxury amenities and sleek design. Housed in a 45-story landmark building, the 239 guest rooms at the Four Seasons Hotel Denver sprawl throughout 16 stories and are topped with private residences. Its contemporary style is warmed up with natural earth tones that are evident throughout all of downtown, thanks to the Colorado Rocky Mountain vistas.

On any given night, the signature EDGE Restaurant and Bar is packed with chic locals who come for a happy hour of cocktails and tapas, and stay for a gourmet steakhouse dinner with items like Wagyu carpaccio, buffalo rib eye and lobster risotto. EDGE's drink menu is a highlight, too, with handcrafted cocktails named after local attractions. A favorite, not surprisingly, is the LoDo with Beefeater gin and blackberry liqueur. Also playing off of Denver's natural environment is The Spa at Four Seasons, a 9,000-sq.-ft. destination spa with a full range of facial and body treatments, a separate nail salon and a fitness center. Many of the treatments here are tailored to Colorado's high altitude, so if you're feeling the effects of the mile-high city, make an appointment for the 5,280-gemstone relaxation massage that uses herb-infused oil and Azurite to ease tension.

And while the Four Seasons Hotel has enough to keep you busy, it's also within walking distance of two of the city's biggest attractions: Larimer Square and the 16th Street Mall. With nearly 40 mostly independent shops, restaurants and bars, Larimer Square is an entertainment playground. Make reservations at TAG, a chef-owned restaurant, for a taste of "continental social food," and enjoy a dessert of wine flights and artisan cheese plates at Crú Food & Wine Bar. During the day, the 16th Street Mall, a pedestrian-friendly outdoor shopping and entertainment district that stretches a mile long, is the best place for people-watching.



Golden Triangle Museum District

In 1988, the Denver Public Art Program began directing one percent of any capital improvement project more than \$1 million to the inclusion of art in its design and construction. Today, Denver has more than 150 public art works installed throughout its city limits, many of which can be found in the Golden Triangle Museum District. This is also where you will find eight of its top museums.

Perhaps the grand daddy of them all, the Denver Art Museum is made up of two separate buildings and 11 floors of exhibits ranging from American Indian Art to photography and textile installations. Exhibits change on a regular basis and locals will tell you that no two trips to the museum are ever the same. A must-see if you're planning a visit before the fall is the oil painting exhibit, Western Horizons: Landscapes from the Contemporary Realism Collection.

With more than 50 galleries and studios, restaurants and coffeehouses, exploring the Golden Triangle by foot can be an all-day adventure. Denver Story Trek, an interactive multimedia tour, is a good way to hit all of the district's major spots like the Colorado History Museum and the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art. The latter is a member of the Historic Artists' Homes and Studios and known for its nationally-recognized display of international deco art. The gallery features more than 170 artists at any given time.

Uptown

It's been called one of Denver's hippest neighborhoods because of its progressive vibe and lively mix of dining and retail establishments. But the true beauty of Uptown is the blend of Victorian and Queen Anne homes that line the same streets as modern high-rise apartments, perfectly illustrating the area's recent revitalization.

Restaurant Row, a long stretch of bistros, taco bars, fine dining establishments and bars, is a major draw with its outdoor patios. The best stop on the tour, though, is Il Posto with its daily-evolving menu. You won't want to miss the seasonally-inspired Italian fare.

But besides the gastronomical exploits, Uptown is worth a visit because it is home to Denver's largest green space, City Park. Stroll through the tree-covered square and take in the sights of the Denver Zoo before hitting the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, two of the city's best family-friendly destinations. At the right time of year, miles of jogging and biking paths offer spectacular panoramic views of 120 miles of snowcapped peaks.

To Learn More

Denver Art Museum www.denverartmuseum.org.

Denver Museum of Nature & Science www.dmns.org.

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Denver Zoo www.denverzoo.org.

Four Seasons Hotel Denver www.fourseasons.com/denver.