

Rocky Mountain National Park

Trail Ridge Road Guide



succeeded more than 80 years ago in bringing water from Never Summer streams through the Grand Ditch and La Poudre Pass to irrigate the semiarid lands east of the Rockies. He failed to find sufficient precious metals in Lulu City diggings to establish profitable mines. Broken stone chimneys and rotting foundation logs are all that remain of this once bustling mining camp. This country is also a favorite home of the beaver.

Sign No. 12 Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area



Shadow Mountain Lake and Lake Granby are two reservoirs of the Colorado — Big Thompson Project, built and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior. From here water flows through Grand Lake and the 13.1-mile Adams Tunnel to Estes Park. There, east of the Continental Divide, it stairsteps down through penstocks and turbines producing electric power and finally emptying into reservoirs and irrigation canals east of the Front Range. The campgrounds, launching ramps, campfire circles, and information stations are the responsibility of the National Park Service, which is mostly concerned with you, your safety, and your opportunities for a rewarding vacation.

We hope you have found this auto tour a helpful addition to your visit, but remember it is only a beginning. Conducted walks and hikes, evening campfire programs, and the personal lure of the wilderness on foot trails can continue to add to your enjoyment of Rocky Mountain National Park and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area.

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The Rocky Mountain Nature Association is a nonprofit organization cooperating with the National Park Service in the interpretation and management of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Sign No. 9 Medicine Bow Curve (11,640 feet)



The sign here points northwest to the Medicine Bow Mountains which extend into Wyoming, 44 miles away. The Cache la Poudre River twists through the glacial gorge before you, separating this point from rounded, brownish Specimen Mountain to the west. Its color provides a clue to the mountain's origin, as a volcano, and the cliffs at Iceberg Lake

are of lava from this source.

Sign No. 10 Continental Divide, Milner Pass (10,758 feet)



Surprise! You thought the Continental Divide would be the highest point on your trip. But this delightful spot where an undecided raindrop might flow either to the Atlantic or to the Pacific is more than a thousand feet below the Alpine Visitor Center, and 1,425 feet below the summit of Trail Ridge Road! Look around. Poudre Lake is a gem which lends it-

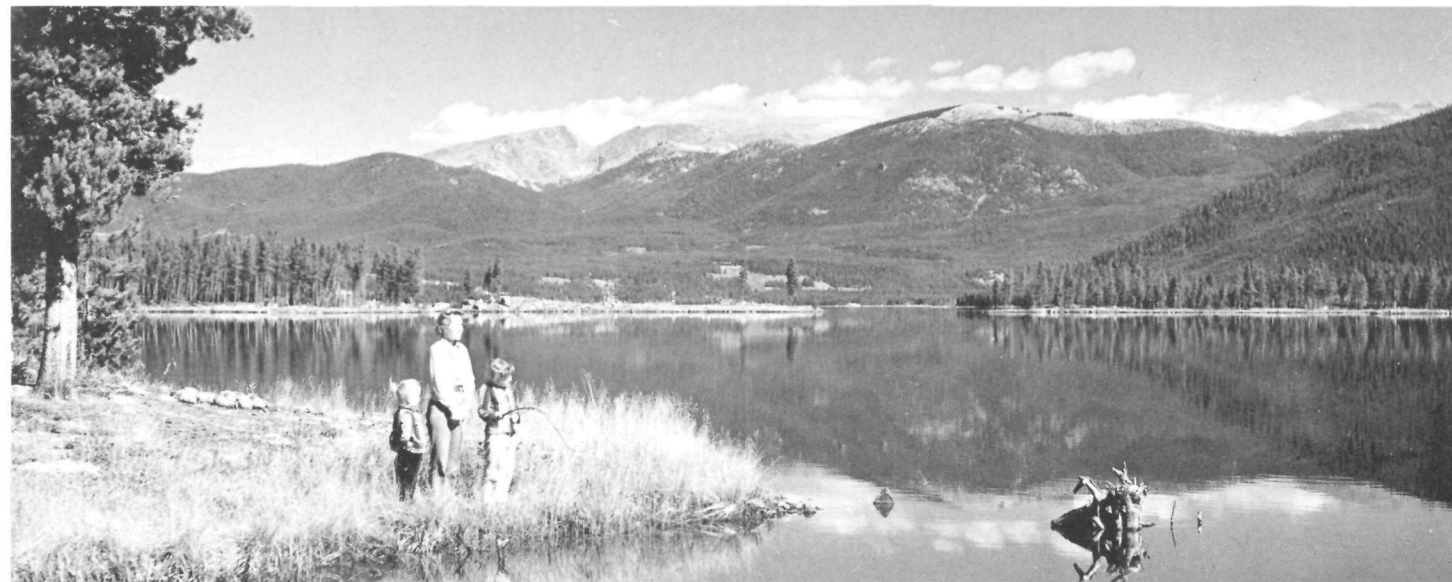
self to exciting scenic compositions. Here the summer wildflowers are gorgeous. From here you can take the trail which winds up the slopes of Specimen Mountain, favorite summer haunt of bighorns and elk.

Sign No. 11 Farview Curve (10,120 feet)



Here the chipmunks and ground squirrels will steal your attention from the scenery if you are not on guard. The same Colorado River that carved the Grand Canyon in Arizona flows through Kawuneeche Valley below you. It originates five miles north below La Poudre Pass and empties into the Gulf of California. On the beautiful Never Summer Mountains

across the valley are marks of man's success and failure. He





SELF-GUIDING AUTO TOUR OF TRAIL RIDGE ROAD

Your trip over Trail Ridge Road can be an exhilarating experience if you make it so. Do you realize that in the next 40 miles you traverse life zones equivalent to a round trip to the Arctic Circle? Why not let this be a test of your powers of observation and your understanding of the things of nature? The notes included here can start you off toward your own "voyage of discovery".

Watch for the arrowhead insignia with the numeral on it. They correspond to the numbers in this pamphlet. If you enter the park from the east (either Fall River or Beaver Meadows Entrance), start the tour at Sign No. 1. If you enter from the west (Grand Lake Entrance), begin with Sign No. 12 and follow the guide backward.

Sign No. 1 Deer Ridge Junction



Although there is no parking area at Sign No. 1, the road junction ahead marks the eastern end of Trail Ridge Road, an excellent seasonal road through the park. It partially follows a trail used by the Ute and Arapaho Indians many years ago, therefore its present name "Trail Ridge". From it you will see many of the 107 named peaks in the park that are over 11,000 feet in elevation. Through forest and across tundra, it offers many vistas into the wilderness world of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Note: Beaver dams and lodges are abundant in the park. Look for them along the streams in this area.

Sign No. 2 Hidden Valley (elevation 9,240 feet)



Nestled in the valley on the side road just ahead is Hidden Valley, center of a winter use area from December through April. Skiing, ice skating, platter sliding, and snowshoeing are enjoyed by thousands each year. The summer visitor will find a lounge and restrooms. A fine stand of spirelike spruce and fir, typical of the subalpine zone forest, can be seen near the lodge. The valley is "hidden" from Horseshoe Park, into which it drains — diverted by a glacier-formed ridge or moraine.

Sign No. 3 Many Parks Curve (9,620 feet)



Unfolded before you in this fine panorama are several "parks" (mountain-enclosed meadows). Note the long forested ridges that separate these parks—they are moraines—great heaps of rock debris deposited by glaciers of the ice age. This is also a good place to watch at close range the chipmunks and ground squirrels. Can you identify the common birds: Steller's jay, gray jay, and Clark's nutcracker?

Sign No. 4 Rainbow Curve (10,829 feet)



Lowell Thomas recently remarked that he returned to Colorado to "recharge his batteries". We believe this may be one of the places he had in mind. You are near treeline here, and the limber pines, alpine firs and Engelmann spruces show scars of their battles with the elements. On the ridge above are trees with limbs on one side of the trunk only. Why? On a windy day the answer would be obvious. Twenty-three

hundred feet below you Fall River makes horseshoe bends through Horseshoe Park. Can you picture this meadow as a lake left here long ago by the receding glacier? Today the meandering river lures the fisherman to try his skill with the brook trout. Cutthroat, brown, and rainbow trout are also found in the park. Remember, a Colorado fishing license is required.

Sign No. 5 Forest Canyon Overlook (11,716 feet)



An ideal stop to see how glaciers — now vanished — helped sculpture this mountain landscape centuries ago. Imagine the great U-shaped valley before you, partially filled with a river of ice — moving slowly down the valley — carving the landscape much as you see it today! A 5-minute walk along the path will bring you to a breathtaking view into the depths of Forest Canyon and across to the rugged walls of Hayden Gorge. Here, too, you can see the tundra vegetation. If you see a little animal that looks like a guinea pig darting among the rocks it is a pika. He is related to the rabbits and spends his entire life on the tundra. In the winter he lives on hay which he gathered and dried during the summer.

Sign No. 6 Rock Cut (12,110 feet)



Here is your opportunity to learn about the tundra by hiking the 30-minute round trip trail to the Roger Toll Memorial. The trail begins at the lower (west) end of the parking area. (Be sure to pick up a trail guide.) Here, too, is a superlative view, 2,000 feet down, into Forest Canyon, across to the Gorge Lakes Canyon, and to the peaks along the Continental Divide. Hundreds of white-tailed ptarmi-

Sign No. 7 Iceberg Lake View (12,080 feet)



This small lake gets its name from the mass of compact snow, resembling ice, which remains throughout most of the summer. The lake lies in the bottom of what geologists call a cirque — a rock basin quarried by a glacier that has melted away. In recent years the lake has been decreasing in size, perhaps because ice concealed within the moraine dam is melting. The reddish cliffs are of lava from a volcanic eruption and are much younger rocks than the widespread ancient granites of the park.

Note: Between Iceberg Lake and Fall River Pass, you cross the highest point on Trail Ridge Road — 12,183 feet above sea level.

Sign No. 8 Fall River Pass (11,796 feet)



Everyone stops here, and for good reasons. The views down Fall River Canyon, flanked by Mt. Chapin (left) and Sundance Mountain (right) are tremendous. The old road up this glaciated gorge has been reopened (July 1, 1968) for uphill travel. Alpine Visitor Center perching atop the cliff at the head of the canyon contains displays interpreting the tundra country. Often elk or bighorn sheep can be observed from this point. The nearby store and lunchroom shares the view, and provides food, film, and souvenirs.

