


Adventure in Carbondale

By Savannah Nelson



There are few things more alluring than Carbondale's expansive spread of outdoor adventure. With Mount Sopris towering in the distance and beautifully rugged land in-between, Carbondale is an unparalleled Colorado playground with abundant recreation opportunities.

Check out the best ways to experience adventure in Carbondale during the summer and fall.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Carbondale's identity is rooted in mountain biking, thanks to the town's vast network of trails.

The crown jewel for local loops is the Red Hill Recreation Area, home to various trails that wind through red sandstone cliffs, with breathtaking views from start to finish.

Other considerations include the Prince Creek Trail system, The Crown and Coal Creek Trail, each with diverse terrain and conditions to enjoy while shifting gears.

ROCK CLIMBING

For those who appreciate a little risk and high reward, Carbondale is great for rock climbing. The Red Hill Recreation Area has rugged cliffs, though Thompson Creek's limestone rockface is esteemed for moderate-to-difficult sport climbing routes.

HIKING

Hiking in Carbondale is an easy choice for outdoor adventure. Local spots meander through diverse landscapes—from forest-framed trails alongside babbling creeks to sweeping valley views.

The steep but quick Mushroom Rock Trail is a popular hike that ends at an iconic rock formation and panoramic valley views. Another option is the Avalanche Creek Trail, which travels through forests, wildflowers and cliff settings.

Additionally, Thomas Lakes Trail is near Mount Sopris and impresses with the surrounding Elk Mountains, as two alpine lakes await at the end of the moderate-to-strenuous trail.

Photos by David Clark



CAMPING

Spending a night under the stars is another iconic Carbondale adventure. Avalanche Creek, Redstone and Bogan Flats are nearby, spacious campgrounds with designated sites for car, tent, and RV camping. For a more remote experience, campers can immerse themselves in nature with dispersed camping in secluded spots along roads and trails in the White River National Forest that surrounds Carbondale.

FISHING

Anglers have long considered Carbondale paradise, as it lies in the heart of the Roaring Fork Valley's finest fishing conditions. Carbondale sits at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Crystal Rivers and is a quick drive to both the Colorado and Frying Pan Rivers.

Local fishing outfitters offer guided fishing trips and expert advice to ensure a successful day on the water; check out Crystal Fly Shop and Alpine Angling.

ON THE WATER

Rafting Carbondale's Roaring Fork and Crystal Rivers is highly recommended to thrill and impress. Guided commercial rafting trips are available for all experience levels (including family-friendly options) May through September.

Additionally, The Roaring Fork Valley is a diverse and reliable area for kayaking. Fed by snowmelt from the heart of the Rocky Mountains, the Colorado and Roaring Fork Rivers satisfy

whitewater enthusiasts of all skill levels throughout summer and fall.

For those who love stand-up paddleboarding, nearby Ruedi Reservoir has pristine water, perfect for serene and calm water paddling.

With its endless recreation opportunities, Carbondale beckons adventurers to explore its natural wonders and experience the thrill of outdoor pursuits.

