

SUNSHINE GUIDE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK (EASTERN SLOPES), COLORADO

LOCATION: Rocky Mountain National Park is located in north-central Colorado. The Park is situated astride the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains, some forty miles northwest of Denver. The community of Estes Park services the eastern slope of the Park. Elevations range up to 14,256 feet above sea level. Major visitor's facilities are generally between 7,500 and 9,300 feet in elevation.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
HOURS OF DAYLIGHT	9:39	10:39	11:55	13:16	14:24	15:01	14:45	13:47	12:31	11:11	10:00	9:22
HOURS OF SUNSHINE	6:30	7:13	7:52	8:27	8:49	10:19	10:16	9:27	8:51	7:48	6:29	6:01
AREA OF BLUE SKY	50%	47%	44%	42%	40%	50%	53%	52%	57%	57%	52%	51%
LOW FOR MONTH	-12°	-11°	-3°	4°	19°	31°	38°	37°	20°	9°	-3°	-6°
SUNRISE TEMPERATURE	15°	17°	20°	26°	34°	40°	46°	45°	37°	30°	22°	18°
AFTERNOON TEMPERATURE	37°	40°	44°	53°	62°	73°	78°	76°	70°	60°	46°	40°
HIGH FOR MONTH	49°	54°	57°	68°	76°	84°	88°	86°	80°	73°	61°	52°
FROSTY MORNINGS	90%	90%	91%	80%	38%	4%	0%	0%	27%	63%	80%	87%
AFTERNOONS OVER 90°	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
AFTERNOON HUMIDITY	48%	46%	43%	40%	40%	37%	35%	35%	35%	37%	46%	49%
DRY DAYS	83%	79%	74%	70%	67%	72%	67%	70%	79%	82%	83%	84%
REASONABLY DRY DAYS	97%	95%	92%	90%	87%	85%	80%	82%	89%	94%	94%	94%
5-DAY PRECIPITATION	0.08	0.12	0.17	0.31	0.35	0.26	0.39	0.32	0.22	0.17	0.13	0.11
LIKELY SNOWFALL	7.5"	9.4"	13.7"	13.0"	4.3"	0.4"	0.0"	0.0"	1.6"	5.5"	8.6"	9.7"
SNOWY DAYS	17%	21%	26%	21%	7%	1%	0%	0%	3%	9%	17%	16%
THUNDER DAYS	0%	0%	0%	6%	21%	33%	38%	32%	13%	3%	0%	0%
FOGGY DAYS	4%	6%	5%	5%	4%	3%	1%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%

COMMENTS: Bright sunshine is probable on 67% of the year's daylight hours. This might range from a low of 61% in May, to a high of 71% in September. The year's lowest temperature should be close to -15°, and the highest might well be near 89°. Sensible afternoon temperatures (the ones you actually feel) will be up to four degrees cooler than actual ones. This summary is for the Estes Park elevation. Trail Ridge Road (US-34) connects the eastern and western slopes of the Park. It climbs to 12,183 feet, and some eleven miles of it are above 11,000 feet in elevation. Remember that your car's engine will lose half of its power at the higher elevations. Make sure that the remaining power is sufficient to pull your load up some very steep grades. Under the best of conditions, you can cross in about three hours. However, you should allow a whole day for the trip. This road, and most other service roads in the Park are closed from the first heavy snows in October until "digging-out" time around the end of May. The higher slopes will often be clear and sunny while the lower slopes are cloud-covered and foggy. Keep in mind that the high-elevation sunshine is extremely intense. Sunglasses and sunscreen are recommended.