



Garden of the Gods (West Side Route)



Hike Information

Rating: 4 - Easy/Moderate

Distance: 2.6 Miles

Total Elevation Gain*: 430 feet

Starting Elevation: 6,238 feet

Hike Time: ~1.5 Hours

Total Event Time: ~1.5 to 2.0 Hours**

Dog Friendly: Yes (on leash)

* Total Elevation Gain includes total feet climbed throughout hike and does not represent difference between low and high points.

** Total Event Time includes Hike Time plus transportation to and from the initial meeting point.

Hike Description

This is a 2.6-mile loop hike which visits several interesting rock formations on the western end of Garden of the Gods park near Manitou Springs.

Hikers begin at the Garden of the Gods Trading Post and proceed north and then west toward the Balanced Rock formation. This fascinating rock is about 35 feet tall and weighs almost 1.4 million pounds, yet balances on a small perch to give it a precarious appearance. Not to worry, it's quite safe to explore and photograph.


From here, hikers proceed northeast along the Cabin Canyon Trail toward the Siamese Twins, an iconic formation of sandstone hoodoos which give the appearance of conjoined twins. Visitors are rewarded with excellent photo opportunities, including a view of Pikes Peak through the "keyhole". Hikers continue northeast, eventually crossing the road and continuing back to the Trading Post via the Strausenbach Trail.

This hike consists of dirt and rock, sometimes involving stepping up and around obstacles in the rougher places of the trail. The views are excellent along the entire route, including the main Garden of the Gods formations, Pikes Peak, and the surrounding front range mountains.

Although desert-like in appearance, this hike boasts numerous trees, including Ponderosa Pine, Gambel Oak, Piñon Pine, and Juniper, plus Plains Prickly Pear Cactus and variations of drought-tolerant plants. Hawks, falcons, and kestrels are common, and visitors occasionally spot bighorn sheep within this park. Although rare, prairie rattlesnakes can be found here, so hikers are discouraged from venturing off-trail.

This is a fantastic hike which can be done by hikers of nearly all ability-levels. With ample parking and a visit to the Trading Post at the conclusion of the hike, this is sure to provide a memorable adventure!

What To Bring

- Water:  = 20 ounces
- Food: Light, Healthy Snack
- Clothing: Breathable Layers (adjust for daily temps)
- Footwear: Comfortable hiking boots or shoes
- Headgear: Hat
- Safety: Sunscreen, Sunglasses
- Optional: Hiking Poles



To learn more about this location, visit:
<https://gardenofgods.com/>

See Next Page for Maps and Meeting Point Information

Hikers may meet at the carpool meeting point or the hike location
(Both meeting times are indicated on the Event Schedule)



Carpool Meeting Point

Buffalo Lodge Resort

2 El Paso Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80904



Buffalo Lodge can be a little tricky to navigate the first time you visit. This is a 5-acre self-enclosed lodge with numerous buildings. As you first pull into the property, you will see the main Lodge Office on the right...**this is where the group meets for the hike.**

However, please do not park up front as this is only for lodging guests. Instead, drive through the lot to the rear area and park in the large dirt lot marked "Event Parking". You will then walk to the front of the lot and meet us at the main Lodge Office.

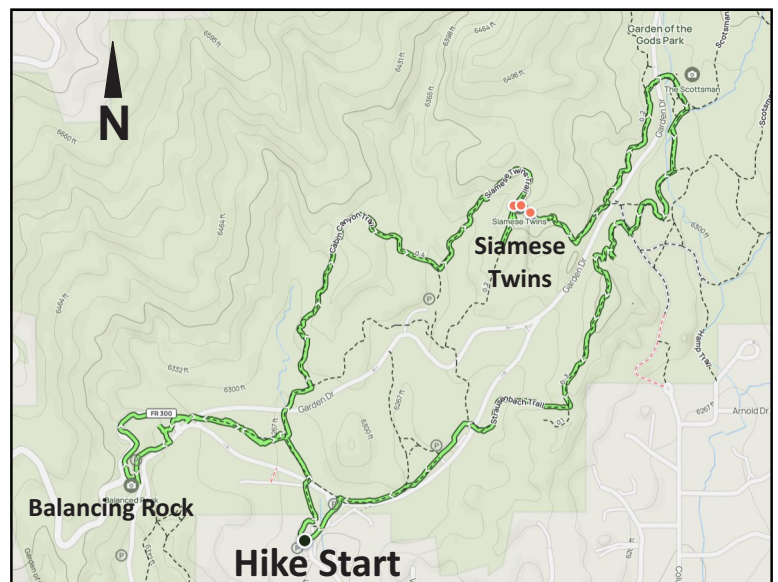
Mountain Trails members may choose to ride with someone, offer a ride to other hikers, or simply follow the caravan in their own vehicle. The priority for this hike series are the Buffalo Lodge guests; if any guest needs a ride, we will provide them with transportation.

Regardless where you choose to meet the group (Buffalo Lodge or hike meeting point), hiking club members are encouraged to visit Buffalo Lodge as they have a lounge with interesting decor, a variety of activities, a bicycle shop, and live music most nights of the week.

About the Buffalo Lodge Hike Series:

This hike is part of a partnership with the Buffalo Lodge Resort, offering guided hikes to lodge guests and members in the Manitou Springs area. Mountain Trails members are encouraged to meet here and learn more about Buffalo Lodge before proceeding to the hike (but may also choose to meet the group at the hike as shown below.)

Hike Meeting Point & Map



This hike begins and ends at the Garden of the Gods Trading Post (324 Beckers Ln side, Manitou Springs, CO 80829). Hike participants are asked to park across the road in the overfill lot as indicated on the photo above (do not park in the Trading Post primary lot.)