

MOSQUITO RANGE
Leadville East Side
Alpine
SAWATCH RANGE
Low Routes
12k' Plus
SOUTH TO BUENA VISTA
Granite
Buena Vista
NORTH OF LEADVILLE
Tenmile Range
Southern Gore Range



\$45

THE LEADVILLE RUNNER
A Guide to Runs Near Leadville, CO

TALBOT 2019

THE LEADVILLE RUNNER

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THE LEADVILLE RUNNER:

A Guide to Runs Near Leadville, CO

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DISCLAIMER: Mountain running is dangerous. Sound judgment is required. There are many inaccuracies in this book and the author and everyone associated with its creation are not liable for the consequences of your actions.

COVER PHOTO: Summit of Mt Harvard

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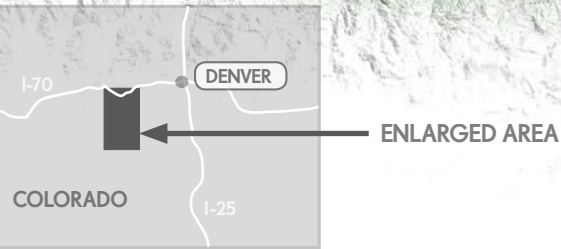


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SAWATCH RANGE



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INTRODUCTION

Runners, I love Leadville but have come to enjoy running here by accident. I moved to the Cloud City twelve years ago as an obsessed rock climber, and I began systematically scouring every drainage, cirque, and boulder field in Lake County for any sign of a cliff or boulder worth climbing. These scouting missions usually involved a fair bit of running to get to the remote corners of the county. Unfortunately, some of the best climbing I found was in the middle of nowhere, requiring that I keep my legs churning through the high country.

I now relish the runs out and back from the crags and boulders and have realized that, although Leadville will never become a climbing mecca, the mountain running is top notch. The Sawatch and Mosquito Ranges that frame Leadville are a runner's dream. What our mountains lack in craggy, dramatic skylines is made up for by runnable terrain even on the top of high ridges. Old mining roads and forest service trails are cut at a mellow grade, and most off-trail travel is relatively straightforward compared to other places.

My intention for this book is to provide inspiration by outlining some of my favorite long adventure runs. Some are shorter routes that have become routine; some are just fun to dream about from the comfort of your couch and perhaps realize after putting in some miles over the course of the summer. I have run most of the routes in this book, although there are still a few on my to-do list that have been recommended by friends. I've left out a few interesting routes because of the constraints of space. Each map features one main route, and some include a variety of alternate options for extending or lessening the main route. You probably aren't going to stick this book in your running shorts so consider downloading free digital maps for your phone from 40minutesfromleadville.com.

Many thanks to all who offered information and their perspectives on running in and around Leadville.
Enjoy the mountains!
Justin Talbot

LEADVILLE

Most of these stores are within walking distance of downtown. Check them out online for location and hours.



LEADVILLE OUTDOORS: A local gear shop that sells a variety of running gear including shoes, socks, packs, and nutrition. They also offer trailhead shuttles and crew support for larger running and hiking projects.
COMMUNITY THREADS: A consignment shop that often has used running packs and belts in addition to offering a selection of new Hoka and Salomon shoes.



MELANZANA: Home to local's favorite fleece hoodies and other fleece clothes; they have awesome clothes for cold weather running and plenty of other activities. Due to extreme popularity, products are now only available in the Leadville store and not online (as of early 2019, for the most up to date information check their website).



CYCLES OF LIFE: The bike shop in town that sells and services bikes as well as offering fat bike and nordic ski rentals.
CLOUD CITY WHEELERS: A 100-year-old non-profit cycling club that builds trails and organizes local bike races.
LIFETIME FITNESS: The organizers of the bulk of the mountain bike and running races in town.



SUGAR LOAF'N: This campground has full hook-ups and bathrooms.
TURQUOISE LAKE CAMPGROUNDS: These USFS campgrounds have pit toilets and water. Be sure to sign up months in advance to get a spot.
UNOFFICIAL USFS & BLM CAMPING: There are plenty of places to camp on pullouts off of USFS and BLM roads in Leadville and Buena Vista. Please clean up after yourself.



CITY ON A HILL: The most social coffee shop in town. Not only does it provide an abundance of seating and serves as a popular meeting spot, but also offers great lunch options.
COOKIES WITH ALTITUDE: A cafe with great breakfast sandwiches and coffee. Be sure to try the lemon bars and cake.



TREELINE KITCHEN: The nicest eatery in town with a spectacular rooftop dining option in the warmer months.
THE GRILL: Leadville has about six Mexican restaurants and this one is a favorite for comfy booths, good food, and margs. If looking for Mexican eats on a budget, check out the El Mexicano food truck in the Safeway parking lot.
SAFEWAY: The only grocery store in town.



HIGH MOUNTAIN PIES: The best pizza in town; eat in, take out, and delivery with great summer seating out back and beer now available.
TENNESSEE PASS CAFE: This spot has pizza and the best burgers in town. In addition to great beer on tap and by the bottle, the deep fried brussels sprouts are delightful.



THE PASTIME: A historic bar and cafe that also serves food.
PB BREWING: As of 2019, the only brewery in town.
THE SCARLET: The go-to bar for the local 20-somethings, home to a fun atmosphere and inexpensive drinks.

RESOURCES



TRAIL RUN PROJECT

Crowd sourced running map-based information that can be downloaded and available offline. The app has trail information from around the country with growing info for the Leadville area.



STRAVA

A popular app for tracking your mileage and running routes. It's fun to be able to check out your friends' adventures and explore various runs people in your area have done. This app offers a simple and free way to track your training if you are getting ready for a race.



FRIENDS OF THE DILLON RANGER DISTRICT

The FDRD has 60 downloadable pdf hiking maps that can be found at <http://fdrd.org/resources/trail-hiking/>. These maps are a great starting point for a run or hike in Summit County and are formatted to be printed on one page.



14ERS.COM

A heavily used site useful for checking 14er trail conditions in the spring. The pictures of lesser used 3rd and 4th class routes provide guidance for trip planning. The site also has great information on 13ers and other prominent mountains.

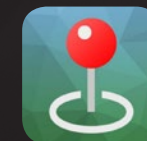
KARTA MAPS

A Leadville based map company that allows you to create, customize & order maps online at www.kartamaps.com. Their DIY process lets you choose your base map, size, paper type & features. They print & ship for free straight to your door or device.



AVENZA

A very nifty app for viewing georeferenced maps on your phone, showing you exactly where you are even when you are out of cell service. The app is free and you can load three maps at a time. Georeferenced PDF versions of marked maps that can viewed on Avenza are available at 40minutesfromleadville.com.



CALTOPO

A powerful tool for trip planning that allows you to create georeferenced pdf maps that can downloaded to Avenza or similar apps. The expanded profile feature is handy for viewing percentages of the route spent at different aspects and elevations.



40MINUTESFROMLEADVILLE.COM

Check out my photography website where you can find more Leadville adventure and landscape pics. You can also find information there on running, climbing, and skiing in Lake County. Find free georeferenced PDF maps on the running page.



RUNNING SEASONS

Winter has a firm grip on Leadville from December through March. Depending on the day, running in Granite and Buena Vista can be a great escape. Four wheel drive vehicles often compact the snow down south making running possible on unplowed roads.

Even after storms drop snow on the lower Arkansas Valley, the sun and temps just above freezing can quickly melt out south facing trails and roads. Check a BV webcam to get a sense for how much snow is on the ground.

If you don't have time to head down south, there are a few plowed Leadville roads with relatively little traffic. Whenever you are looking for free groomed trails, you will find plenty in the area. Be sure to wait a few days after the last snow before trying to run on them so as not to trash the groomed trails.

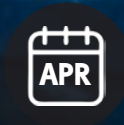


Granite	114
Collegiate peaks 25/50	120
Midland Hill	124
Mineral Belt (groomed)	24

Although storms clobber the high country in April and May, lower areas that get sun near Leadville melt out quickly.

If you are into ski running, April is the time to cover ground fast in the high mountains and enjoy the ride down.

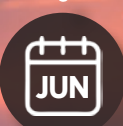
By the end of May you can usually run on most of the Colorado Trail from BV to the North Elbert trailhead.



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Turquoise Lake	44
Mineral Belt & CMC	24

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Horseshoe - Empire	32
Buffalo Peaks Loop	118
Sherman - Evans	28
Buckeye - Zion	136

Yale - Harvard Loop	128
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Galena - Homestake	90
La plata - Hope Pass	70
Indy Pass	74
Lost Man Loop	78
Holy Cross Loop	98
Camp Hale Loop	140
Arkansas - Evans Gulch	142
Peaks Traverse (Breckenridge)	150
Eccles Pass Loop (Frisco)	154



More melting in June opens up areas below 11,000' such as the fish hatchery trails in the Northern Sawatch. Some high routes in the Mosquito range are also runnable as the ridges are typically free of snow. Early morning starts are advisable to stay on top of the remaining snow fields.

By early July, snow is rarely an issue and typical running limitations in the high country include lightning storms and your own willingness to suffer. Marshy areas may also be a hindrance if traveling off trail in July and can also slow you down significantly.

If you are running ultras, most of the races in the Colorado mountains take place in July and August. If not sufficiently tired of running by September you will be treated with breathtaking fall foliage in the first half of the month and more frequent stable weather periods with few, if any, thunderstorms.

The sometimes dry, stable conditions of September can make for perfect timing for your biggest mountain ridge traverses and any other adventure you can dream up.

Snow moves into the high country for good sometime in October but oftentimes coming in fits and starts. A late September snow is not uncommon and often makes you feel as though running in the high country has ended for the season.

When September and early October snows are followed by a week or two of warm weather, the high country tends to open back up. It is not unheard of to be able to run above 12000' until some time in November, but it all depends on the day and the year.

BUCKEYE - ZION

MAP KEY

PROFILE DASHBOARD ICON KEY

typical season
months the route can be run with minimal snow
often possible to run alpine routes later in the fall

overall aesthetic
zero = lodgepole pines and no views
three = stop for sound of music frolicking

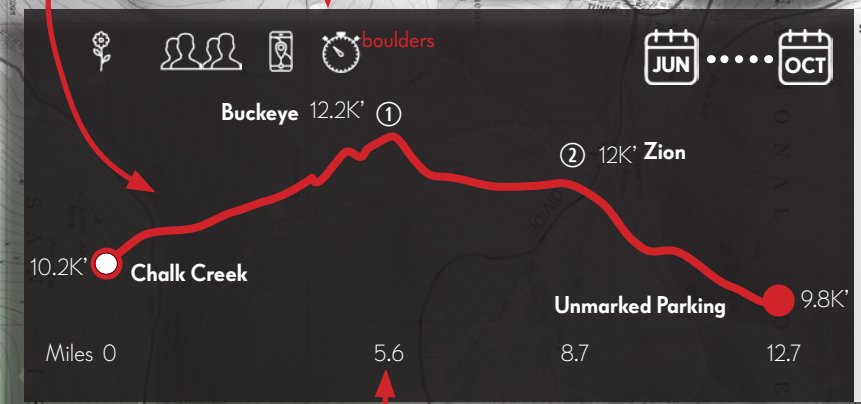
crowds
zero = hardly any people
three = crowded 14er

slow travel
sometimes but not always marked with a pin
rocky trail = rocks make it difficult to run
boulders = boulder field
3rd = 3rd class, barely climbable with coffee cup
4th & 5th = exposure, bring skills & rope

tricky navigation
sometimes but not always marked with a pin
zero = simple (any navigation can be tricky!)
three = georeferenced map useful
- get marked digital maps at 40minutesfromleadville.com

BASE MAP INFO
Base maps are made from USFS (16) images. Those images are altered with photo software to adjust color and shading. Areas that are not critical to route descriptions have been faded out.

DISTANCE ACCURACY NOTE
In most cases distances have been checked via GPS and by using map software. Due to the possibility of error and the variability of actual routes **plan on 5% error or more in route length.**



MOSQUITO RANGE

Going on a sweet run out your front door is every runner's dream. If you live in Leadville, the Mosquitos are your backyard where trail, off-trail and secluded road adventure runs are only minutes away. The winding, wooded trails at the Colorado Mountain College are fun and accessible, typically melting out by mid-May. Running the roads in the mining district provides some of the most quintessential Leadville flavor as you run by the beautifully dilapidated mining structures from the late 1800s. Surprisingly, the mining roads wind their way near the top of many high peaks in the range. Horseshoe Mountain, which is just a few feet shy of 14k', even has a relatively intact mining structure almost at its summit!

MOSQUITO RANGE

NORTH

HAYDEN MEADOWS p38

MINERAL BELT & CMC p24

LEADVILLE

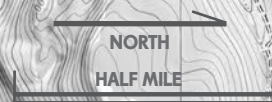
HORSESHOE - EMPIRE p32

MINING DISTRICT p18

SOUTH PEAK TRAVERSE p36

SHERMAN - EVANS p28

NATIONAL FOREST



The rough dirt roads of the Leadville Mining district wind through ruins from the late 1800s and early 1900's. This route will take you by many of the old structures, Ball Mountain and Lake Isabelle. There are many variations of routes that meander through the area; get out there and explore!

