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# Outside

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**59 TOOLS & IDEAS THAT  
WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

SEPTEMBER 2008



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## THE WEEKEND PLAN

**In the Field with Ben Harper**

Some of the most memorable concerts I've been to have taken place under the stars (and even the rain). Here are my favorite outdoor venues in America.

**1.** California's Santa Barbara Bowl ([sbbowl.com](http://sbbowl.com)) looks over the city, and the shows start at sunset. When you show up, they're cooking out—the soup's on. **2.** Go to Red Rocks ([redrocksonline.com](http://redrocksonline.com)), outside Denver, during a full moon and it becomes another world: Planet Red Rocks. **3.** The more trees, the better the sound. Stubbs Bar-B-Q ([stubbsaustin.com](http://stubbsaustin.com)), in Austin, is lined with huge oaks. **4.** Central Park's SummerStage ([summerstage.org](http://summerstage.org)) is an intimate venue in the middle of Manhattan. **5.** The Berkeley Greek Theatre ([calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://calperfs.berkeley.edu)) is set up like an ancient amphitheater, with marble pillars in the background. (Also, whenever we play there, Carlos Santana sits in.) **6.** The last time I played the Les Schwab Amphitheater ([bendconcerts.com](http://bendconcerts.com)), in Bend, Oregon, I hiked in the Deschutes National Forest and my kids rafted the Deschutes River. You go from the woods to the stage. **7.** You've got to see the Gorge Amphitheatre ([livenation.com](http://livenation.com)), near Washington's Columbia River gorge, to believe it. When there's a concert, the campground becomes a city. **8.** The Hollywood Bowl, because it's the Hollywood Bowl ([hollywoodbowl.com](http://hollywoodbowl.com)). **9.** At the Los Angeles Greek Theatre ([greektheatre-la.com](http://greektheatre-la.com)), you're surrounded by oaks and redwoods. The Greek sings back at you.



For concert schedules at these venues, go to [outsideonline.com/harperpicks](http://outsideonline.com/harperpicks)



Sampling Denver's finest flavors

**> Breaking with Convention**

The DNC horde has left and Denver is its old relaxed self again. Use it as your launchpad for a weekend in Grand County. BY MIKE KESSLER

**Ride**

Step one: Land in Denver. Step two: Make like the Democratic National Convention gadflies and get out of town. The 60-mile drive from downtown Denver to Grand County takes an hour and change; once you roll over Berthoud Pass on Highway 40, you could stop to ride the 28 miles of freeride trails at Winter Park ski resort, but you'd do better to head another ten minutes to the town of Fraser, near the Arapaho National Forest. Check into a private cabin at the Wild Horse Inn (dou-

bles, \$245; [wildhorseinn.com](http://wildhorseinn.com)). The owner, John Cribari, is a former trainer for Trek, Cannondale, and Gary Fisher who knows all of the 600 marked trails in the area. For an epic, have Cribari send you from the Fraser Valley floor to the High Lonesome Trail (average elevation: 10,000 feet), where you can ride a 30-mile loop while gasping at the mountain views in every direction (rentals from \$50 at Totally Wired Cyclery, in Fraser; 970-726-6923).

**Hike**

The Indian Peaks Wilderness is like a satellite office of the Alps that few know about: The 76,000-acre wilderness stretches north from the Grand County line all the way to Rocky

Mountain National Park. For a warm-up, hike from Junco Lake Trailhead, seven miles north of Fraser, to Columbine Lake on a mellow, six-mile trek. If you want something a little more brawny, try the 20-mile, 2,000-vertical-foot out-and-back hike from the Monarch Lake trailhead (about 15 miles from the intersection of U.S. 34 and 40 in Granby) to the incisor-like peaks along Lone Eagle Cirque (maps available from Totally Wired Cyclery). From the tops of 12,000-foot Apache and Navajo peaks—or anywhere else in the range—you'll feel like you can touch the planes heading to and from Denver.

**Heckle**

Back in town, catch fair weather—and fair-weather fans—at Coors Field. A miracle like the Rockies' 2007 World Series run is unlikely this year, so you probably won't see a

game with playoff implications. But you will see next year's hot prospects playing in the National League's most spectacular natural setting: the peaks on the horizon may trump the on-field action. Walk up to the park just before the first pitch and grab sub-\$10 seats in the centerfield bleachers with rowdy Coors-swillers ([rockies.mlb.com](http://rockies.mlb.com)). Post-game, check in to the Curtis, about ten blocks from the stadium, a new hotel with a hip-for-Denver bar and pop-culture kitsch in the hallways—the ninth floor is an homage to big-hair bands (from \$180; [thecurtis.com](http://thecurtis.com)). Next up: Platte Street, a quiet retail-and-restaurant 'hood. Fill up on thin crust at Proto's Pizzeria Napoletana ([protopizza.com](http://protopizza.com)), then walk down the street to My Brother's Bar, an unpretentious den that's perfect for grousing about the home team (303-455-9991).

