



## **Denver's 12 for 2012**

### ***A Dozen Top Tourism Events in Denver this Year***

**DENVER, CO – February 8, 2012** – With two new museums, major international shows, world-class sporting events, and huge new animal exhibits, Denver is going to experience a phenomenal tourism year in 2012. "Any city would be thrilled to have half the things that we have going on in 2012," said Richard Scharf, president & CEO of [VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau](#).

Scharf noted that the new Clyfford Still Museum, History Colorado Center and Toyota Elephant Passage at the Denver Zoo alone represent close to quarter billion dollars of new attractions. "When you add the 100th Anniversary of the Titanic sinking and its significance to the Molly Brown House, the NCAA Woman's Final Four and the only North American showing of *Yves Saint Laurent: The Retrospective*, this is really going to be a big tourism year for Denver," Scharf said.

In 2012, Denver will be even more accessible for European travelers with a new direct service from Reykjavik through carrier Icelandair beginning on May 10. Icelandair services 22 cities in Europe, and is expected to bring more than \$19 million in tourism spending to Colorado.

In addition, Scharf noted that Denver will once again host the final day of the U.S.A. Pro Cycling Challenge with international television coverage, and Denver will host the first presidential debate between the major party candidates, with an estimated 3,000 international media covering that event. "For all these things to come together in one year is a relatively rare occurrence. This will definitely be Denver's year to shine in the international tourism spotlight," Scharf said.

## 1. [Clyfford Still Museum now open](#)

**Opened:** November 2011

**Description:** Clyfford Still is considered to be one of America's most influential modern artists, and yet not many people are familiar with his works. Four of his paintings recently sold at auction for \$114 million, including one that went for \$61 million, the fifth highest price ever paid at auction for a contemporary work. Born in 1904, Still was a leading figure in the development of Abstract Expressionism, a post-World War II artistic movement that many consider to be the United States' greatest contribution to the art world. His peers included Jackson Pollock, William de Kooning and Mark Rothko – all rule-breaking artists who were interested in abstract forms, monumental scale and intensely expressive brushwork. Still's bold, angular paintings juxtapose colors and shapes in eye-opening and highly emotional ways.

Still visited New York for extended stays in the late 1940s and lived there for most of the 1950s, the height of Abstract Expressionism. However, over time, he became increasingly critical of the art world and eventually severed ties with commercial galleries, removing himself from the art world. After the artist's death in 1980, the Clyfford Still Estate was sealed off from public and scholarly view. Still's will stipulated that his estate be given in its entirety to an American city willing to establish a permanent museum dedicated solely to his work, ensuring its survival for exhibition and study.

In August 2004, the City of Denver, under the leadership of then Mayor John W. Hickenlooper, was selected by Still's wife, Patricia Still, to receive the substantial collection, most of which had never been seen by the public. Almost two dozen cities competed for the honor. In 2005, Patricia Still also bequeathed to the city her own estate, which included select paintings by her husband as well as his complete archives.

### **A Bold and Iconoclastic Building**

Located adjacent to the Denver Art Museum, The Clyfford Still Museum's collection includes almost 2,400 of Still's paintings, drawings and prints – roughly 94 percent of this influential artist's total output. The museum also contains the artist's archives, including personal letters, photographs, journals and sketchbooks. Virtually all of this material has been sealed off from public and scholarly view since 1980.

In late 2006, Allied Works Architecture, led by Brad Cloepfil, was selected to create the museum's look and feel. The resulting design is bold and iconoclastic – a perfect fit for an artist like Still. The building's dense, cantilevered, two-story structure, is unified through the use of a single building material—a highly textured and resurfaced concrete, designed to modify light on both the exterior and interior of the museum. The 31,500-square-foot museum is generously lit through natural lighting, filtered into the museum through a clerestory on the second floor. The textured concrete walls diffuse, refract and capture natural light in the museum galleries so that the paintings look different at different times of the day and in different seasons. Visitors approach the museum through a landscaped forecourt, which provides a transition from the city to the experience of viewing the phenomenal art inside. Built also with meetings and events in mind, the museum can do receptions for 250 or sit-down dinners for 60.

## **2. 100th Anniversary of the Sinking of the Titanic at the Molly Brown House Museum**

**Dates:** February 15, 2012, additional events throughout the year

**Description:** The "Unsinkable" Molly Brown is the most famous survivor of the greatest sea tragedy in modern times, and a central character in the film *Titanic*, the second largest grossing film in history. 2012 marks the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, and the Molly Brown House Museum will roll out multiple events throughout the year. The *Heroine of the Titanic* exhibit, opening Feb. 15, allows guests to explore Margaret Brown's Titanic experience from bow to stern with accounts, artifacts and photographs from that fateful voyage. See replicas of the medal Mrs. Brown presented to Captain Rostron and the Egyptian talisman carried in her pocket for good luck.

## **1. Dale Chihuly Venetians at the Foothills Art Center**

**Dates:** April 7 – June 30, 2012

**Description:** The Foothills Art Center will be exhibiting a selection of Venetian inspired pieces from the world's most famous glass artist, Dale Chihuly. The Chihuly Venetians: from the George R. Stroemple Collection will showcase more than 45 works from Chihuly's most innovative and unusual series inspired by Art Deco Venetian art. The highlight of the exhibition is the famous Laguna Murano Chandelier which has more than 1,500 separate pieces of glass that make up five separate elements. The exhibition also features a number of Bottle Stoppers, Putti and Piccolo Venetian glass vases and a number of original drawings by Chihuly related to the Venetians.

## **4. Yves Saint Laurent: The Retrospective at the Denver Art Museum**

**Dates:** March 25 – July 8, 2012

**Description:** Coming from wildly successful showings in Paris and Madrid, the exhibition features a selection of 200 vintage couture outfits designed by Yves Saint Laurent, along with numerous photographs, drawings, and films that illustrate the development of Saint Laurent's style and the foundations of his work. The Denver Art Museum is the only U.S. venue for this sweeping panorama of Saint Laurent's 40 years of haute couture creativity. The museum will also have an interactive fashion studio that will be part fabric store, part seamstress shop and part design studio so visitors can try their hand at the creative processes behind the world of fashion. Hotel packages with VIP, undated and untimed, tickets to the exhibit are also available through the [YSLDenver website](#).

## **5. NCAA Woman's Final Four Tournament at the Pepsi Center**

**Dates:** April 1 – 3, 2012

**Description:** Approximately 5,000 women's basketball student-athletes from 336 NCAA Division I institutions will compete for the opportunity to participate in the 2012 Women's Final Four and ultimately win the national championship that will be decided on April 3 in Denver.

ESPN and ESPN2 will broadcast all 63 games of the 2012 Division I Women's Basketball Championship, which will also be distributed to 177 countries around the world.

The FREE "Tourney Town" refreshed by Coca-Cola Zero in the Colorado Convention Center will be the "host city" and epicenter for all Women's Final Four fan and community activities, anchored by the Center Stage concert venue. Free and open to the public, visitors will enjoy entertainment, concerts, food, licensed merchandise, autograph sessions, basketball clinics, exhibits, games and interactive displays celebrating the games.

Other activities include: A Battle of the Bands, mascot competitions, a fun 4Kay run and special in-school activities through the Denver Public School system.

## **6. History Colorado Center opening**

**Opening:** April 28, 2012

**Description:** This entirely new \$110 million experiential museum will make Colorado history fun. Visitors will enter by walking on a gigantic map of Colorado, where they will push a "Jules Verne-like" time machine that will tell the history of various towns in the state as the machine is placed over "hot spots" on the floor. The time machine will use video, historic photos and sound to tell the stories. Other experiences will include: traveling across the plains in a Motel T Ford; donning a headlamp and descending into a hard rock mine; soaring off the world's first ski jump in Steamboat Springs; arriving at a 19th Century train station; a trading mission at Bent's Old Fort with Chief Yellow Wolf and Kit Carson, and much more. Colorado's colorful history, from 10,000 years ago to the present comes to life in this fully interactive museum.

## **7. Mile into the Wild walkway at the Wild Animal Sanctuary**

**Opening:** Spring, 2012

**Description:** The 720-acre Wild Animal Sanctuary is the largest carnivore sanctuary in the Western Hemisphere with more than 290 lions, tigers, bears and wolves, including 70 tigers and some 30 lions that were recently rescued from circuses in Bolivia. All of the carnivores have been rescued or confiscated from illegal or abusive situations. The Sanctuary is located on high, rolling plains, 30 miles northeast of Denver, near the town of Keenesburg. The Sanctuary is the oldest in the nation, having been in operation since 1980. The Sanctuary is unique in that it provides large acreage natural habitats for its animals to live freely in large social groupings. The facility is open daily to the public for educational purposes and has a system of observation decks and walkways that allows visitors to see the animals in natural habitats. In one direction, people look down on a field filled with grizzly bears, while from another vantage they see a field of tigers.

**News:** The Wild Animal Sanctuary is currently building a *Mile into the Wild* walkway, a mile-long path 20 feet above the ground that will provide visitors with unprecedented views of more than 290 lions, tigers, bears, wolves and other large carnivores.

### **Facts:**

- The walkway is being built with more than 90 sections in multiple phases
- It will be more than 5,000 feet in length and connect the Sanctuary's southern facilities with current and future facilities to the north.
- The first phase of the walkway has been completed and is open to the public
- The second and third phase connecting the current facilities is projected to be completed by early 2012
- When the third phase is complete, the walkway will give visitors access to the Sanctuary's 21 large acreage habitats
- The walkway will connect visitors to a 4,000 square foot observation deck inside the state-of-the-art Bolivian Lion House
- The sanctuary recently acquired 400 acres - allowing continued expansion of the walkway on the new property as more habitats are developed



## **8. Icelandair direct flights from Reykjavik**

**Start Date:** May 10, 2012

**Description:** Icelandair, the flagship carrier of Iceland, will introduce direct flights from Reykjavik to Denver beginning on May 10, 2012. From Iceland's capital city, the carrier offers non-stop flights to more than 20 destinations in Scandinavia, England and throughout Europe. The new air service is expected to bring more than \$19 million in tourism spending to Colorado, and is the first new carrier to initiate transatlantic service at DIA in 10 years.

## **9. Toyota Elephant Passage at the Denver Zoo**

**Opening:** June 1, 2012

**Description:** The Denver Zoo's new \$50 million Toyota Elephant Passage (formerly Asian Tropics), is a landmark exhibit that will occupy 10 acres on the southern edge of the zoo, making it the largest new exhibit in the zoo's 100 year history. The exhibit will include the largest bull elephant habitat in the U.S., capable of housing up to 12 male pachyderms. The five new habitats are seven times larger than the zoo's current pachyderm exhibit, and will provide new homes for Asian elephants, Indian rhinos and Malaysian tapirs.

Animals will rotate among the different habitats throughout the day. Sometimes elephants will walk over visitors on a special elephant bridge. At other times, visitors will have to stop while elephants walk by them at eye-level at special "elephant crossings." Observation platforms will make it possible to look down on the vast complex, while water features will make it possible to be just a few feet from the pachyderms, separated just by water. Mud wallows, sand pits and scratching trees will encourage physical and psychological health for the elephants. Every day at Toyota Elephant Passage will be different for both animals and zoo guests alike. The 18,000-square-foot "Elephant Barn" will accommodate 8-12 elephants and include private "bedrooms" as well as a communal "parlor" for public viewing.

Toyota Elephant Passage is being designed following the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) system. The zoo is currently testing an innovative "gasification" system that will convert elephant poop and other zoo waste into the energy needed to heat and light the Toyota Elephant Passage.

## **10. USA Pro Cycling Challenge to finish in Denver**

**Dates:** Aug. 20 – Aug. 26, 2012

**Description:** The wildly successful USA Pro Cycling Challenge drew more than 1 million fans and produced \$83.5 million of economic impact in the inaugural year of 2011. For seven consecutive days, from August 22-28, 2011, 135 of the world's top athletes raced across 518 miles through the majestic Rockies, reaching higher altitudes than any race in history. As a virtual postcard for Colorado, the 2011 race received 25 hours of national television coverage on NBC and Versus, in addition to airing in 161 countries and territories internationally. Denver received two hours of live, national NBC coverage during the 2011 finish stage.

2012 Race: Once again, the race will finish in Denver, but this year, the final day will be an Individual Time Trial, which will keep fans holding their breath to the very end to see who will be awarded the overall victory. Fans in Denver will have multiple opportunities to cheer for any given rider with the benefit of both start line access to riders along the traditional team "pit row" and the thrilling finish line excitement.

The 2012 race will be the most demanding bike race ever held on American soil, with racers experiencing breathless altitudes, day after day. Traveling from Durango to Telluride; Montrose to Crested Butte; Gunnison to Aspen; Aspen to Beaver Creek; Breckenridge to Colorado Springs; Golden to Boulder and finishing in Denver, the race will bring the high speeds, danger and adrenaline rush of professional cycling to elevations more than two miles high in some of the most picturesque terrain in the world – the Colorado Rocky Mountains.

#### **Facts from 2011:**

- Spectators made this event a family affair. Party sizes for traveling spectators were large, averaging five+ people per party.
- At 94% responding likely or very likely to return next year, the number of people who plan to watch the race again is solid, a good preliminary sign for the event's future.
- Among out-of-state visitors, 71.6% said the USA Pro Cycling Challenge was the reason for their trip to Colorado.
- Spectators' experiences with the USA Pro Cycling Challenge positively influence their view of the State of Colorado, and the likelihood of returning to the state in the future. Nearly 85% of out-of-state visitors said they are more likely or much more likely to visit Colorado again based on their experience at the USA Pro Cycling Challenge.
- The 2011 race attracted spectators from at least 39 states in the nation, and at least 16 other countries. It also proved an unprecedented following among Colorado residents, one of the significant contributing factors to the level of enthusiasm displayed by spectators along the entire 518-mile course.
- More than \$67 million came in the form of direct spending by traveling spectators. Both those fans from outside the state and Coloradans traveling 50 miles or more to take in an event stage contributed \$67.4 million on lodging, food, transportation and entertainment. The remaining economic impact comes in the form of team, staff, sponsor and vendor spending, employment created by the event, and the resulting tax effects of the race.

#### **11. Presidential Debates: First Round at the University of Denver**

**Dates:** Oct. 3, 2012

**Description:** The first of three 2012 presidential debates will be held at the University of Denver (DU) on Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2012. The debate will be held in Magness Arena at the Daniel L. Ritchie Center for Sports & Wellness on the D.U. campus. This will be the first presidential debate ever to be held in Colorado, and the only debate held west of the Mississippi River in 2012. Approximately 3,000 national and international media is expected to be in attendance for the debate.

#### **12. Becoming Van Gogh at the Denver Art Museum**

**Dates:** Oct. 21, 2012 – Jan. 20, 2013

**Description:** *Becoming Van Gogh* at the Denver Art Museum is an exhibition of 70 paintings and drawings which traces the post-impressionist's artistic development from his arrival in Paris in 1886 to his final years in Provence. The exhibit will feature loans from more than 60 public and private collections in Europe and North America, and will be exclusive to the Denver Art Museum.

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### **About VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau**

Celebrating more than 100 years of promoting the Mile High City, VISIT DENVER is a nonprofit trade association that contracts with the City of Denver to market Denver as a convention and leisure destination, increasing economic development in the city, creating jobs and generating taxes. A record 12.7 million visitors stayed overnight in Denver in 2010, generating \$3 billion in spending, while supporting nearly 50,000 jobs, making Tourism the second largest industry in Denver. Learn more about Denver on the [VISITDENVER](#) website and at [TOURISMPAYS DENVER](#), on Twitter [@iknowdenver](#) and the [VISIT DENVER Facebook page](#), or by phone at 800 2 DENVER.

## **VISIT DENVER LAUNCHES NEW FOODIE BLOG, EATDRINKDENVER.COM**

***Site Celebrates the Fresh, Local Food Scene In and Around the Mile High City***

**DENVER, CO – February 23, 2012** – From the microbrewery explosion to the rise in farm-to-table dining and a whopping 300 newly-opened restaurants in 2011 alone, the Denver culinary scene has grown immensely in the past decade. In response to this growth, [VISIT DENVER, the Convention and Visitors Bureau](#), launched [EatDrinkDenver.com](#), a blog devoted to “all things food and drink” in and around the Mile High City.

"We've learned through studies that some Denver visitors like sports, some like museums and some like shopping. But everybody eats and everybody loves food," said Scharf, president & CEO of VISIT DENVER. "Culinary tourism is on the rise because visitors want to eat and drink local - they want to shop at farmers' markets, taste local cheeses and breads, or sip a local beer. Visitors and locals alike want to know about the innovative local chefs and regional specialties. Farms, ranches, wineries and distilleries all have a strong local market, but they also understand they are part of the tourism industry, and are creating tours to capture this audience."

Westword "Café Society" editor Lori Midson, a fixture on the Denver food scene for many years, is the editor of EatDrinkDenver.com. Content is provided by a host of Denver's most in-the-know food writers and bloggers.

The site features regularly updated information, articles and news about food-centric festivals, farmers' markets, specialty food stores, street food, beer, wine and spirits, chefs and more – all in one place. "There are sites that deal with local beers, with farm-to-table food, farmer's markets or international food festivals, but no site deals with all aspects of local food. Our site fills that need," said Richard Scharf, president & CEO of VISIT DENVER.

[EatDrinkDenver.com](#) is divided into five categories:

- **Farm Fresh / Specialty Food Stores:**

Dedicated to produce and dairy products in Colorado, including tips on where to get the best, freshest items

- **Beer / Wines / Spirits:**

Offers extensive coverage of the ever-expanding world of Colorado microbreweries, wineries and distilleries

- **Food Festivals / Events:**

A comprehensive roundup of the city's best food events, including everything from signature events like Denver Restaurant Week and Denver Beer Fest to cultural/culinary festivals like the Greek Festival and Oktoberfest Denver

- **Chefs:**

Shines a spotlight on the men and women behind the city's best restaurants, including chef Q&A's, recipes and more

- **Street Food:**

Covers the Mile High City's burgeoning street food scene, including local food truck events such as Civic Center EATS, and much more

The EatDrinkDenver website is interactive, offering readers the chance to share their discoveries and pass along food tasting adventures experienced around the Mile High City. The site does not include restaurant reviews. Instead, it provides comments and information about unique Denver and Colorado food products; food, beer & wine festivals; and other food-related experiences that will introduce locals and visitors to the region's rich and bountiful opportunities to eat and drink.

"Denver has had a boom in the distillery and brewery scene, and many of the products can only be sampled in Colorado tasting rooms and bars. EatDrinkDenver tells you where to find these one-of-a-kind locales," stated Scharf. "Tours of farms where goat cheese is made or buffalo ranches where bison roam free are an interactive – and educational – way for visitors to immerse themselves in the region's culture. There are farmers' markets and fruit stands, neighborhood bakeries, international supermarkets where you can buy obscure products from Asia or Mexico, and there are chefs discovering the delight of cooking local slow food who will share recipes and techniques. All of these and more are featured on our site."

For more information, visit [EatDrinkDenver.com](http://EatDrinkDenver.com).





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## FEATURED STORIES



Recipe: Ring in Fat Tuesday with chicken gumbo from Moe's Original BBQ



A run club for Colorado beer drinkers at Highland Tap and Burger



On the table for this week: Pancakes, Soup for the Soul and Denver Restaurant Week

## STREET FOOD



### Recipe: Ring in Fat Tuesday with chicken gumbo from Moe's Original BBQ

Posted: 2012/02/21 by Andra

It's Fat Tuesday, and you know what that means: rowdy celebrations in New Orleans, green, yellow and purple decorations and rich Creole cuisine, like

gumbo, which is the ideal indulgence before the next forty days of fasting. We snagged a killer gumbo recipe from Moe's Original BBQ, a Denver food truck that's got its gumbo down to a science. [Read more](#)

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