Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arr Denver, dinner and evening on your own

Arrive anytime today at the Denver airport. We'll be staying at a nearby hotel with an airport shuttle so you can arrive whenever it's convenient. Our first formal get together will be tomorrow although everyone who's arrived can get together for dinner.

DAY 2

Drive to Shadowcliff, acclimatization hike on North Inlet Trail to Cascade Falls

We'll leave Denver at 8AM for a three-hour drive to Shadowcliff Mountain Lodge, located right on the western edge of Rocky Mountain National Park. For many people, the biggest challenge to hiking in the Rockies is the altitude. Shadowcliff is at 8,370' so we'll be following the maxim of "sleep low, hike high" to aid our adjustment. We'll start adjusting with a hike on North Inlet Trail, part of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, to Cascade Falls. Starting on a relatively flat old dirt road that skirts a montane meadow where wildlife sightings are frequent, the trail then starts climbing steadily to the Falls, a spectacular, multi-tiered cascade that drops roughly 50 feet through a narrow granite chute. We'll settle into our rooms in Shadowcliff where we'll eat dinner. Hiking: 6.8 - 7 miles, 4 - 5 hours, elevation gain/loss: 430'/430'

DAY 3

Hike on East Inlet Trail to Lone Pine Lake

After a hearty breakfast today, we'll hike out and back to Lone Pine Lake on the East Inlet Trail. Along the way we'll stop at spectacular Adams Falls, where a rocky outcrop looks down on the rushing falls that are surrounded by small rocky cliffs. We then continue through a beautiful aspen and lodgepole pine forest, classic Rocky Mountain flora and past beautiful outcroppings of grey-black rock. While at Shadowcliff, we'll eat our meals in the Compassionate Kitchen, the name of Shadowcliff's dining facility. The staff at the Compassionate Kitchen specialize in sourcing seasonal, local, and organic food and know how to refuel hungry hikers. Hiking: 10.8 miles, 6 - 8 hours, elevation gain/loss: 1500'/1500'

DAY 4

Hike from on Ute Trail from Milner Pass to Alpine Visitor Center, move to eastern side

Today we will head to the alpine and then the eastern part of the Park. An hour's drive brings us to the Milner Pass Trailhead. We'll hike up the Ute Trail onto the tundra and then continue up to the Alpine Visitor Center, all the time keeping our eyes open for yellow-bellied marmots and pika. Not only are there spectacular 360 degree views across the Continental Divide from the Center, it also has a wealth of information about the fragile alpine ecosystem. We then continue our drive across the spectacular Trail Ridge Road, to the eastern part of Rocky Mountain National Park. Our lodging is quite different! We'll spend tonight and the next three nights in a huge 8 bedroom reunion cabin at The YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park. We'll enjoy a spectacular setting with access to both great hiking and home-cooked meals by the guides. Hiking: 4.5 miles, 3 - 3.5 hours, elevation gain: 950'

DAY 5

Hike Hallett Peak
Now that we're fully acclimated, we're ready for the higher and more challenging hikes of the eastern side. We'll start with an ascent of Hallett Peak. The Arapaho Indians called Hallett Peak "banah ah netaieux", which means Thunder Peak, a reference to the storms that frequent the mountain. We'll definitely be keeping an eye out for storms and be ready to turn around if necessary.

At 12,718 feet, and thus not a "fourteener", Hallett Peak is considered one of the most beautiful alpine hikes in the Park. Starting at Bear Lake it traverses the side of a valley that was carved out long ago by a glacier. Today the only remnant is the Tyndall Glacier, which we pass on the way to the summit. Needless to say, the views are stunning both on the way up and at the top. Famous Longs Peak is visible, as well as Otis and Taylor Peaks. You will even be able to see Grand Lake off in the distance. It's an out and back hike. Hiking: 10.4 miles, 7 - 9 hours, elevation gain/loss: 3240'/3240'

**DAY 6**

**Hike to Chasm Lake at base of Long's Peak**

Today's hike is to one of the most beautiful lakes in the park, Chasm Lake. And though we're not climbing a peak today, there is still plenty of climbing to get to it. We'll get another early start today and go for another beautiful hike, this time to Chasm Lake. Chasm Lake sits in a deep cirque at the base of Longs Peak and Mount Lady Washington. The famous east-facing wall of Longs Peak, known as the "Diamond", rises more than 2,400 feet above this stunning alpine lake, and Longs Peak climbers start from the same trailhead. Our trail starts in a thick forest of lodgepole pine, spruce and fir, crosses the familiar subalpine landscape of krummholz and continues through a stretch of boulders with some easy scrambling and rewarding, spectacular mountain views. Hiking: 8 miles, 6 - 7 hours, elevation gain/loss: 2524'/2524'

**DAY 7**

**Hike Twin Owls Loop to Gem Lake**

While many of our hikes have been out and backs, today we hike the Twin Owls Loop. This loop circles and scales Lumpy Ridge, a massive granite rock complex sculpted by wind and erosion over the last 2 billion years and popular with technical rock climbers. We hike through ponderosa pine forest, along riparian corridors, past montane and lower-subalpine forests. This trail is one of the most ecologically diverse trails in the Park, with abundant wildlife, terrific views, and mature aspen groves. About 1.5 miles from the end, we reach Gem Lake. Most people hike to Gem Lake from the same trailhead going the opposite way and it is one of the more popular destinations in the park. The lake has the distinction of having neither an inlet or outlet stream. Instead, the lake is formed by trapped snowmelt and rainwater that collects in the basin at the base of the granite cliff walls that surround the lake. Hiking: 11 miles, 7 - 9 hours, elevation gain/loss: 2615'/2615'

**DAY 8**

**Depart for Denver airport**

Today after breakfast we'll pack up, sadly bidding farewell to each other and this gorgeous Park. We'll be back at the Denver airport by 11:00 am and you can plan flights out anytime after 1:00 pm.