

*United States Air Force Academy*

*Graduation Planning Information  
and Tips*



Each graduation is a personal experience. How it should be planned, money spent, and guests invited should reflect your cadet and family desires. The most important thing is to enjoy and treasure your cadets graduation experience!

Prepared by  
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January 2017

United States Air Force Academy  
Graduation Check List  
Graduation May 24, 2017

**Action**

**Timing**

**\*Register online**

**Mid-March**

<https://www.usafa.edu/superintendent/graduation/index.cfm?catname=graduation>

Graduation information will be e-mailed to parents/guest who register via the Graduation Registration site. You will need your cadet's name and email address to verify the registration. Especially helpful for guests because they will be emailed parking passes, schedule of events and Graduation week brochure that can be printed.

**\*Senior photos** (reserve 1 for orientation meeting) packet from Academy in Fall

**\*Official graduation photos** (Fly-over/hat toss, diploma) After graduation mailer Professional photographers will take pictures of your graduating Firstie, which they will then market to you. If you have a good camera, you can take shots as well. The AFA will also upload pictures on their website – which are excellent. There may not be any of your cadet, but they will give a good sense of the “moment in time”.

**\*Graduation announcements**, Thank-you cards, etc. Academy packet in Fall

**\*Graduation tickets**- each cadet gets 20, if your cadet needs more they need to ask other cadets who don't need as many. Be aware that if the weather is too severe for outside graduation, it will be moved to the Cadet Field House, and each cadet will be limited to 3 tickets. Additional alternate viewing locations for the inclement weather ceremony will be in Arnold Hall and the Clune Ice Arena - cadets will have an additional 5 tickets for these venues.

**Saber and case**

April

It is thirty inches long and comes with a sheath and packaged in a cloth bag. The saber has "U.S. Air Force Academy" engraved on the blade. Gift for any graduate of the Academy. Cost for cadet during 'Firstie year' \$150, after graduation \$355. Rarely used except during weddings, special ceremonies

**U.S Air Force Academy commemorative pistol**

Feb

cost \$1360. Only available until March 1<sup>st</sup>, limited production. For display only, cannot be fired

**Pavers** (<http://www.usafa.org/Heritage/Pavers>)

April

A statue of Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology and a symbol of the Air Force Academy, stands in front of Doolittle Hall. The area around the base of Pegasus is paved with granite bricks inscribed with the names of Academy graduates, family members, and friends of the Academy. Placing a commemorative brick at the paver park provides a unique and lasting way to honor someone's life and achievements and to continue the heritage and traditions of the Academy. For a gift of \$250, a 4" x 8" granite brick inscribed with your loved one's name will be placed in the paver park for all to see. Pavers are placed twice a year, in May and September.

## Guest Related Actions

## Timing

### **Invitations-** mailing

**Feb**

As early as possible get lodging information to attending guests. If you are making lodging arrangements for a large group, try to make reservations at least a year in advance. See lodging options listed at end.

### **Important Graduation Information**

**April**

Send email or letter covering clothing needed (formal wear for ball and commissioning ceremony, clothes for both hot and cool weather as well as rain, Comfortable walking shoes)

Here is a web site listing dress requirements for each event.

[http://www.usafa.edu/superintendent/graduation/data/Grad\\_week\\_dress.pdf](http://www.usafa.edu/superintendent/graduation/data/Grad_week_dress.pdf)

Send details for Rendezvous information upon arrival, Map of Academy, list of graduation events, recommendations about avoiding altitude sickness, local tourist attractions, reminder to bring sunscreen, chapstick, water bottle, tips to prevent altitude sickness, binoculars

### Arrival packet for guests

**Upon Arrival**

**List of Graduation activities and events**, can print off of the website, highlight the ones you will be attending \*\*\*remind guest to arrive early

**Personal Agenda** listing plans for meals, individual parties or celebrations, tourist sites you are visiting.

### **Map of Academy**

**Useful items** chapstick, inexpensive rain poncho,

**Welcoming gift** for guests, Squadron or Air Force T-shirt that you can all wear during graduation ceremony, AF hat, key chain, water bottle, Ect.

**Information packet about Air Force Traditions, monuments, Thunderbirds.**

See information sheets listed at end.

## General Graduation Information

### Graduation Security

All non-DOD visitors must enter through the North Gate.

Graduating cadets can provide their guests information (full name, date of birth and driver's license number/state of registration) to request base access passes for up to 5 guests/family members. Security Forces will provide completed base passes to cadets in late April and early May and cadets then send or give these passes to their guests. Passes will allow the designated guest to escort up to 10 other guests to access all parts of the base and will permit them to escort one additional vehicle through the entrance gates.

You will need your driver's license or a military ID. \*\*\*MN drivers license may not be accepted. You may also be asked to show proof of insurance and a valid vehicle registration. All vehicles entering the base are subject to inspection, in order to avoid delays, refrain from bringing large bags, coolers, backpacks.

\*Also print and bring with you the USAFA Grad parking Pass, and place it in your driver's side dash. Be aware the Grad Parking pass does not allow access to the base but only serves to identify cadet guests in the designated parking areas.

**Grad Week Registration** Grad week information will be e-mailed to parents/guests who register via the Graduation Registration site (registration will be active in March). There is no restriction as to who can register, however you must have your cadet's name and email address to verify the registration. You will receive an email with attachments, including the Graduation Week brochure, schedule of events, Superintendent welcome letter, parking pass and event flyers. Registration is not required. To register click on the link near the bottom of the left hand column.

[http://www.usafa.edu/superintendent/graduation/gradSchedule.cfm?  
catname=graduation](http://www.usafa.edu/superintendent/graduation/gradSchedule.cfm?catname=graduation)

### Parking and Transportation

Please plan to arrive early for all Graduation Week events, especially the Graduation Parade and Graduation Ceremony. Parking for events in or near the Cadet Area is at the Cadet Field House, Reservoir and Stillman Field parking lots. Parking for graduation is at the Falcon stadium. Parking for each event will be noted on the Air Force listing of events.

**Shuttle bus** service will operate from the visitor parking lots on day before Graduation, but not on graduation day itself. Bus stops are clearly marked with signs and benches.

\*Buses do not go to the Visitor Center. Guests wishing to enter the Terrazzo, academic buildings or dormitories must be escorted by a cadet at all times. Shuttle buses will be handicapped accessible.

**Handicapped Guests-** Air Force does not issue special parking passes, bring your own handicapped placard to access handicapped parking (immediately North of Stillman Parade Field for most events) For graduation handicapped parking is at the stadium in lot 5 on North and lot 1 on South). Golf carts will be available for transport to stadium but be aware golf cars will not be able to transport standard wheelchairs. Someone else would need to walk the wheelchair to the stadium. Wheelchair and handicapped seating is located at the top of the L, M and U sections. These seats are not ticketed and are first come, first serve. There are no elevators in stadium.

For those guest who cannot attend graduation in stadium due to health concerns, there is a live broadcast in Richter Lounge in Arnold Hall.

**When should you tell guests to arrive in Colorado Springs.** Graduation is normally on a Wednesday. The next most important event, the commissioning ceremony is on Tuesday afternoon or evening, the day before graduation. Another fairly significant event is the graduation parade held on Tuesday morning. If you have guests that are only coming for a short stay and not making a vacation week of it, then suggest that they arrive Monday night and depart late Wednesday night or early Thursday morning. It can take quite a while to get off the base after graduation, so plan flights accordingly. We like to arrive on a Friday night so we have the weekend to relax and see the local area and not feel rushed right into Graduation activities.

### **Photos**

Ask someone in your group to take photos for you so you can participate and enjoy the events and not focus on picture taking.

Class Crest – If you want to take pictures of/by/with your class crest, you need to do so before Wednesday. During the grad ceremony, the current class crest is removed and the rising class crest is installed. If you wait until after graduation – it will be too late. A good time to do this would be on Sunday if you go to chapel, or on Monday or Tuesday after the parades. At the moment “hats fly”, the 2 degrees are officially FIRSTIES, and everything on campus reflects this.

The one thing my daughter regrets from Graduation time is not having more pictures taken with her friends during the week and after the commissioning ceremonies, and with friends and family after graduation in the stands.

Professional photographers are there to take pictures of your Firstie during graduation, Also the AFA will upload pictures of the graduation event on their website.

## Graduation schedule of Events

**\*\*\* Be advised this is information is tentative. The 2017 schedule of events, is not yet officially posted.**

**Schedule of Events**, go online to website, register, and print out <http://www.usafa.edu/superintendent/graduation/index.cfm?catname=graduation>

Give your guests the schedule of events, and then let them take responsibility to get to events on their own. DO NOT try to be responsible for everyone else and then miss your cadet's events because someone in your party is late or has car trouble.

Several events are mandatory for cadets, but many are optional. Let your cadet guide the decisions on which ones you all want to attend together.

### Saturday before Graduation 1500-1700

**Commandant's Fiancé(e)s reception** A social opportunity for all fiancés/fiancées to be welcomed into the Air Force family; hosted by the Commandant of Cadets' spouse and attended by other senior officers' spouses. Location is the Otis House.

### Sunday before Gradation

**Baccalaureate Services**-in the cadet chapel. Baccalaureate Ceremonies honor our graduating cadets and celebrate their completion of the rigorous Academy program. No tickets are required for Baccalaureate services. Would recommend this if you are able to attend, beautiful service. Different times for different religious services.

**Superintendents reception**- At the Carlton House(DouglassValley near High School). It is an opportunity for cadets and their families to meet the Academy's senior staff. Time slots are designated by squadrons.

**Bluebards production**- Bluebards Theatre Troupe, the cadet theatrical performing club give various performances during graduation week. No tickets are required and all cadet guests and the public are welcome to attend. Location is Arnold Hall Theater

**Weekend if possible** - Lunch or Dinner with sponsor family- is a nice gesture – but up to you and your cadet. It is less stressful to do this over the weekend before you are busy with important graduation events.

### Monday Before Graduation

**Graduation Awards Ceremony**- Mandatory for cadets. Open to all families and guests. At this ceremony, the organizational (Squadron) and individual (graduating cadet) awards will be presented and nationally competitive scholarships will be announced. Seating is first come, first served. The Cadet Sabre Drill Team will perform prior to the start of the ceremony. Location is Clune Arena, Cadet Field House

**Academic Department Award Ceremonies-** Various times in early afternoon and locations within Fairchild Hall. Styles of presentation vary. See the website in May 2016 for complete listing

**Special Recognition awards-** Scholars program, Tapping ceremony, ME awards, Cadet leadership, Sports, Wings of Blue, ect. See website for complete listings. By invite only

**Graduation Concert-** Open to cadets, their guests and the general public. Cadet performing groups such as the Cadet Chorale, Cadet Orchestra, Catholic Choir and Show Choir will perform for the audience, highlighting performances by senior cadets. Tickets are not required. Location is Arnold Hall Theater

### **Tuesday Before Graduation**

**Graduation Parade-** Mandatory for cadets and open to their families and guests. Seating is first come, first served. Make sure to arrive early to get a seat and also to view aerial demonstrations from our cadet flying teams including glider landings and Wings of Blue. This is where the Firsties march OUT from their squadrons and leave the Cadet Wing, after having marching INTO their squadrons and the Cadet Wing as a 4 degree at their Acceptance Parade 4 years ago. Very moving to watch.

Location is Stillman field

**Thunderbirds Practice Show-** Usually from 2-3 p.m. Terrific to see this if you have the time. It does not take away from the Wednesday air show in any way whatsoever. Very interesting to see from a different angle, Best place to view is down by Falcon Stadium.

**Commissioning Ceremonies-** For graduating cadets, their families, and guests. Individual squadrons will determine locations and times (either later afternoon or early evening). At this "ceremonial" event, the graduates will take the Oath of Office and will be sworn in by an active duty or retired commissioned officer. If you or any relative is going to administer the oath of office make sure you get your military mess dress ready. Parents or guests are welcome to go up and pin on the shoulder boards if the cadet should so choose. Do practice this before you do it!

Following the Commissioning Ceremony on Wednesday, graduates must remove their active duty rank until after the Graduation Ceremony. The formal commissioning will take place at the Graduation Ceremony. Dress for this event is formal.

Silver Dollar Tradition with the First Salute for the newly commissioned 2nd Lt – A silver dollar coin is given to the first non-commissioned officer who salutes them.

**Superintendent/Graduation Formal Reception** The Graduation Reception is a formal, heavy hors d'oeuvres reception for graduating cadets, their families and guests. Guests have the opportunity to meet and mingle with senior USAFA staff and the USAF Thunderbirds pilots and staff. There is no limit to the number of guests per cadet; however, due to the popularity of this event, recommend you purchase tickets when they become available (1 Apr 2016). Tickets may be purchased from Academy Concerts

located in Arnold Hall or may be purchased in person or by phone at (719) 333-4497, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. Graduating cadets attend at no charge but must pick up their free tickets from Academy Concerts. Purchased tickets may be picked up at "Will Call" at Mitchell Hall (center doors). Cost per ticket is \$18.00 Location is Mitchell Hall. Time 5-8 p.m

**Graduation Ball** - The Graduation Ball is open to graduating cadets and their guests. Children are welcome to accompany their parents to this event. Refreshments will be available. There will be no receiving line. Tickets are not required. Location Arnold Hall, 8-11 p.m.

### **Graduation Day**

Graduating cadets will receive as many tickets as they need for their family and guests through their squadrons; contact your cadet to make arrangements to get the tickets from him/her upon your arrival at USAFA. All guests (including children and babies in car seats) must have tickets to enter the stadium. Stadium gates open at 7:00 a.m Event 9:30-1300 \*\*\*If you are late and the ceremony has started, you will not be allowed into the stadium. Once you are in the stadium, you will not be allowed to leave until after the air show. So plan your travel accordingly. The Thunderbirds Air Show is supposed to start at noon. \*\*Can rent seat cushions, is well worth it. Remember that if the weather is too severe for outside graduation, it will be moved to the Cadet Field House, and each cadet will be limited to 3 tickets. Additional alternate viewing locations for the inclement weather ceremony will be in Arnold Hall and the Clune Ice Arena - cadets will have an additional 5 tickets for these venues. Dress nicely but be comfortable, you will be walking a bit.

Typically the graduation speakers rotate between the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Air Force.

### **Hat Toss**

Takes place at the end of the ceremony, after the Commandant of Cadets issues the Oath of Office and as the Thunderbirds roar overhead! Children (ages 7-10 only) will be allowed on the stadium floor to retrieve hats from the graduates' hat toss. Cadets will usually put money into their hats, The typical amount would be \$20.17 for a 2017 grad. These hats are not retrieved by the new 2nd Lts, as they are not part of any uniform they will ever have to wear again.

### **Thunderbirds Performance**

The USAF Thunderbirds Demonstration takes place over Falcon Stadium immediately following the graduation ceremony. The team is comprised of selected pilots assigned to demonstrate the coordination, discipline and flying ability that combat capable pilots require to fulfill their vital role in our nation's defense. For your own safety and to comply with FAA regulations, guests will not be permitted to leave the stadium until after the Thunderbirds' performance ends.

\*\*After the ceremony. Stay in the stands. Your cadet will come to you. You are not allowed down on the field. Tell them your seat numbers.

### After Graduation

**Luncheon or Dinner** (make sure you have reservations)

**The move** (coordinate this with your cadet, more than likely you'll play a big role in it)

**Packing the room** (try to encourage Cadet to complete before graduation) Advice to Cadets - don't pack service dress it might be needed for the Awards Parade on Monday if the field is muddy and also it will be needed if you attend the Superintendent's Reception on Sunday.

**Shipping articles to first assignment.** Do not to ship uniforms, computers, anything else needed soon after you arrive because the military shipment could takes weeks to months to arrive. Cadets can choose to either have the military ship their belongings, or transport it themselves and be reimbursed. From the Academy only, cadets will be allowed 2 separate shipments, one from Academy and one from home of record.

Weigh car/truck/etc. before loading and after (certified). Public weigh station, Diamond Shamrock truck stop, 1310 Baptist Rd. Colorado Springs, 719-481-3628. Have 5 days for reweigh. Also if doing self move from home, need to weigh uhaul before and after loaded.

**Out-processing-** Out-processing the Academy is the last official act required for newly commissioned officers. It may take from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on the length of the line. Traffic after the ceremony can move very slowly. Please make sure to include this time in your post-graduation and departure plans. Location: Sijan Hall and Vandenberg Hall

\*\*\*\*\*New 2<sup>nd</sup> LT's need to be off Cadet area by end of Graduation day usually 5 p.m.

### Miscellaneous tips

Schedule some downtime

Have your guests go to visitors center and watch film about the Academy

Beware that your Cadet may have some other parties they want to attend and be flexible.

Some of your Cadets friends may not have family present so think of inviting them to some of your celebrations

Remind your guest to drink plenty of water to prevent altitude sickness. The academy is 7,300 feet above sea level and they may need a day or two to acclimate. Avoid alcohol and physical exertion the first day.

Don't forget what this is about...

Celebrating and honoring your cadet's  
phenomenal accomplishment!

Regardless of what you do or don't do in preparation, planning and  
accomplishing for your cadets graduation,  
remember to absorb the moment ...

Your son or daughter will graduate.  
Your guests will love it.

**Air Force Graduation was one of the most memorable and emotionally moving experiences that I have ever had. It was an amazing ending to four years of ups and downs, and highs and lows.**

The next few pages are information about the Air Force and the Air Force Academy your guest may find interesting. I printed them off to put to give to our guests.

USASA CLASS OF 2017, 59TH GRADUATION CLASS  
CLASS COLOR: SILVER  
EXEMPLAR: COLONEL 'BUD' DAY  
MOTTO: RESPECT ALL, FEAR NONE

**USAFA'S Core Values**

Integrity First  
Service Above Self  
Excellence In All We Do

**USAFA'S Honor Code**

“We will not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate among us anyone who does. Furthermore, I resolve to do my duty and live honorably, So Help me God.”

**The Cadet Prayer**

Lord God of Hosts, life is a stewardship in your sight. Grant the light of Your wisdom to the path of our cadet days. Instill within us an abiding awareness of love to You, our country, and our fellow man.

We seek humility, that knowing self, we may rise above human frailty. We ask for courage, that we may prove faithful to duty. We ask unfailing devotion and personal integrity, that we may preserve honor without compromise.

Make us instruments of Your peace in defense of skies that canopy free nations. So guide us in our thoughts, our words, our deeds, --that we may fulfill Your will. May these graces abide in us, in those we love, and all who share our country's trust.

This we ask in the name of our Master and Leader, Amen

**Oath of Allegiance to the United States:**

I, *Cadets name*, have been appointed a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. SO HELP ME GOD.

**Graduation Parade** You will find the color guard behind the U.S. and Air Force flags. They carry the colors of the 4 classes at the Air Force Academy. On the right, in the position of honor, will be the color silver for the class of 2017. This is then followed by the red, gold and blue flags for the successive classes. After the class of 2017 leaves the Cadet Wing, the silver flag will be furled and cased, awaiting the Acceptance parade of the class of 2021. At the Acceptance parade, after the class of 2021 joins the Cadet Wing the silver colors will be unfurled, and symbolic of that class joining the wing. The class color works its way from left to right, year by year until graduation.

## **The Air Force Hymn**

Lord, guard and guide those who fly  
Through the great spaces in the sky;  
Be with them traversing the air  
In darkening storms or sunshine fair,

You who support with tender might  
The balanced birds in all their flight.  
Lord of the tempered winds, be near,  
That, having you, they know no fear.

Control their minds with instinct fit,  
What time adventuring, they quit  
The firm security of land;  
Grant steadfast eye and skillful hand.

Aloft in solitudes of space  
Uphold them with your saving grace  
O God, protect those who fly  
Through lonely ways beneath the sky.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQffNVPpXs0>

## The United States Air Force Song

Written by Captain Robert Crawford in 1939, and inspired by a song-writing contest sponsored by General Hap Arnold. \*\* Arnold Hall-aka: A-Hall is the AFA cadet recreation center \*\*Note: The third verse has a different melody, and a more reverent mood than the rest of the song to commemorate those who have fallen in the service of the Air Force and the United States. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHOq6S19u38>

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,  
Climbing high into the sun;  
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,  
At 'em boys, Giver 'er the gun!  
Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,  
Off with one helluva roar!  
We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!  
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!!

Minds of men fashioned a crate of thunder,  
Sent it high into the blue;  
Hands of men blasted the world asunder;  
How they lived God only knew!  
Souls of men dreaming of skies to conquer  
Gave us wings, ever to soar!  
With scouts before And bombers galore. Hey!  
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!!

Bridge: "A Toast to the Host"

Here's the toast to the host  
Of those who love the vastness of the sky,  
To a friend we send a message of his brother men who fly.  
We drink to those who gave their all of old,  
Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold.  
A toast to the host of men we boast, the U.S. Air Force!!  
ZOOM!

Off we go into the wild sky yonder,  
Keep the wings level and true;  
If you'd live to be a grey-haired wonder  
Keep the nose out of the blue!  
Flying men, guarding the nation's border,  
We'll be there, followed by more!  
In echelon we carry on. Hey!  
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!!

### **High Flight By John Gillespie Magee**

John Gillespie Magee was an American aviator and poet who died at the age of 19 fighting in World War II while serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was inspired to write the poem when he was flying a high altitude (30,000 feet) test flight in a newer model of the Spitfire, V and as he orbited and climbed upward, he was struck with the inspiration of a poem—"To touch the face of God." He completed the poem later that day after landing. Magee enclosed the poem on the back of a letter to his parents and his father, then rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC reprinted it in church publications. Less than 2 months later, John Magee was killed in a midair collision.

High Flight is one of the world's best-known poems. President Ronald Reagan quoted from it in his broadcast to the nation following the Challenger shuttle disaster.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qqVRBZO5gc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGj6deaINxM>

#### **High Flight**

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;

Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds, - and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of...wheeled and soared and swung

High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air.

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark nor ever eagle flew-

And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

**Memorial Day** was originally called Decoration Day, which is the day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. During the Civil War, Southern women's groups and Northern townspeople began decorating graves to honor the dead. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by General John Logan and was first observed on May 30, 1868. Flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Air force Academy Cadet wing holds a Memorial Day parade and the Cadets march onto Stillman Parade Field. This is also an Organizational Awards Parade.

The Cadets march onto Stillman field and the guidon (flag) bearers approach the reviewing officers and the ribbons are placed on the guidons. Awards are given for academics, spirit, and marching and other achievements. Last fall semester's Cadet Commander leads the parade. All the squadrons will pass in review of the reviewing stand. Note: The General's blue flags with the appropriate number of stars on the reviewing stand (which is supposed to be the Class color) The Honor Guard performs a 21-gun salute and Taps is played as F-16's zoom overhead and execute the "Missing Man" formation. One jet will veer away from the others to represent the missing man.

## Airport Shuttles

**Colorado Springs Shuttle** - shuttle service to and from Colorado Springs to the Denver International Airport operates every day of the year. Office hours are daily 5:00am to 9:00pm 719-687-3456 or toll free at 877-587-3456.

Highly recommend making a reservation a few days in advance. Discounted rates for military, seniors, children, couples, groups and round trips. Anywhere from \$25-\$50 for one way trip to Denver Airport depending on pick up point and discounts. Private pick up also available. <https://www.coloradoshuttle.com/>

**Front Range Shuttle** - shuttle service to and from Colorado Springs to the Denver International Airport operates every day of the year. 719-237-2646 .

Highly recommend making a reservation a few days in advance. Discounted rates for military, seniors, children, couples, groups and round trips. Anywhere from \$25-\$50 for one way trip to Denver Airport depending on pick up point and discounts. Private pick up also available.

## Lodging

Garden of the Gods

- Holiday Inn (719) 598-7656)
- Hyatt Place (719) 265-9385
- Quality Inn & Suites (719) 593-9119

Rockrimmon Blvd

- Hyatt Summerfield Suites (719) 268-9990 (very nice, small kitchenettes)
- Colorado Springs Marriott 1 (719) 260-1800

Woodmen

- Fairfield Inn Colorado Springs North (719) 533-1903
- Holiday Inn Express Hotel Colorado Springs-Air Force Academy (877) 863-4780

Academy Blvd (closest)

- Academy Hotel Best Western (719) 598-5770
- Days Inn Hotels: Colorado Springs (719) 266-1317
- Comfort Suites North Academy (719) 536-0731

Briargate Parkway

- Homewood Suites by Hilton North (719) 265-6600

Other options : VRBO.com HomeAway.com Airbnb.com Able to rent a home.

**Cheyenne Mountain Resort** – about 15-20 minutes south of the main gate – depending upon traffic. A lovely resort with a great Sunday brunch available. There is a significant cadet discount as long as the cadet makes the reservations and stays at the Resort.

## Tourist Attractions

These are but a few of the many attractions in the Colorado Springs Area.

### Free Attractions

#### **Starr Kempf's Metal Sculptures,**

2057 Pine Grove, Colorado Springs, CO

After leaving Gold Camp Road or driving to/from 7 Falls, you can drive by the house that holds these magnificent works of art. It is private property so be respectful. Kempf's vision blossomed into the creation of elaborate steel wind sculptures, each of which took him up to three years to construct. His kinetic wind sculptures were designed to exhibit graceful movement and interaction with the wind, and took the form of birds and wind vanes, often soaring to more than fifty feet in height. The slightest breeze can set the gigantic wind sculptures into motion.

**Garden of the Gods-** Garden of the Gods is a Public Park that is a registered National Natural Landmark. Both the Park and Visitor & Nature Center are free and open to the public. Imagine dramatic views and 300' towering sandstone rock formations against a backdrop of snow-capped Pikes Peak. The Visitor & Nature Center and museum has a new Geo-Trekker movie that shows how the amazing red rocks got there, shown every 20 minutes.

**Broadmoor Hotel** – A 5 star luxury resort. You can walk the gardens and go into the hotel to view the artwork. Has many restaurants, but my favorite for lunchtime is The Natural Epicurean- Freshly prepared meals made from locally sourced ingredients with a variety of healthy, wholesome, organic, and natural choices. Dine amidst a living wall and patio garden.

Spencer Penrose, who also founded the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, created this multi-faceted resort. Construction began on May 20, 1917. Skilled artisans were brought from Europe to create The Broadmoor's elaborate moldings, embellishments and paintings.

**Peterson Air and Space Museum** – Great aviation museum. Due to security conditions, access to the Museum is restricted to Visitors with military identification or visitors escorted by DOD cardholders. But there are instructions for non - military to gain base museum access on their website.

**Hiking – Eagles Peak** By the visitors center at the Academy is the start to the Eagle Peak hiking trail. At the peak is an amazing view of the Academy. Ask in the visitors center for directions. **Helen Hunt Falls Trail** – located in North Cheyenne Canon Park. This is the most popular trail and can be crowded, there are many other great trails there. Can stop at visitors center and get maps of trails. **Manitou Incline** - originally built as a cable car to carry materials to build pipelines on Pikes Peak. 1 mile and 2,000 feet

climb, difficult hike, 30 minutes for elite athletes to over two hours depending on your fitness level. Parking is limited in the Incline Parking lot and along Ruxton. It is highly recommended to take advantage of free parking in the lot by the Tahine Restaurant in Manitou Springs and then take the free shuttle to the Incline trailhead. **Hours of use:** Dawn-Dusk,

### **Paid Attractions**

#### **Will Rogers Memorial Shrine of the Sun and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo Zoo**

4250 Cheyenne Mountain Zoo Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

After the day at the zoo, head up the hairpin turns to the Shrine for some history and awesome views. It's included in your zoo entry fee. The shrine built by and for Spencer and Julia Penrose from 1934-1937 is an impressive engineering feat standing 114 ft tall near the top of Cheyenne Mountain. Plan at least an hour to drive up to the shrine and look around and drive back down. Peak Season Tickets (May 1st through Labor Day): Adults \$17.25; Children (3-11) \$12.25; Seniors (65+) \$15.25. The zoo is well done with recent improvements, so plan 2-3 hours to enjoy all they have to offer.

**Pikes Peak-** Pikes Peak is the highest summit of the southern Front Range of the Rocky Mountains at an elevation 14,114. Take the 19-mile highway or the Pikes Peak Cog Railway to the clouds to explore Colorado's most famous peak. Cost to drive up is \$10 per Adult, \$4 per child for max cost of \$35. Cog Railway \$35 per adult.

**Dinosaur Resource Center** - a museum devoted to dinosaurs and fossils. Located at the corner of US Highway 24 and South Fairview Street in Woodland Park, Colorado. More than 30 full size skeletons and life restorations, RMDRC is packed with awe-inspiring displays. See a working paleo lab where ongoing fossil preparation, restoration, molding, casting and mounting can be viewed as part of your tour. Make sure you take the great guided tour. Cost Adults \$11.50 Children \$7.50

**Manitou Cliff Dwellings** - The authentic Manitou cliff dwellings of the Anasazi Indians were built more than 700 years ago. Preserved under a protective red sandstone overhang, you and your family can explore inside each dwelling, touch the sandstone and roam free through these architectural remnants of American Indian culture. Also is a museum. Cost adult \$9.50 Child \$7.50

**Western Museum of Mining and Industry** - Colorado's western mining heritage. Colorado's mining history comes to life at the museum that works featuring operating multi-ton steam engines, mining equipment, gold panning, live burros and nature explorations. Make sure you take the guided tour. This museum is more geared toward adults. Adult \$9 Military \$8 Child \$5

**Cave of the winds** - The Discovery Tour tells of the history and discovery of Cave of the Winds. For the more adventurous, the Lantern Tour takes you to the darkest parts of the cave with only a candle while learning of ghost stories, frightening folklore, and background history. The Caving 101 tour, explores undeveloped sections by climbing and crawling through passageways lit only by flashlight.

Outside the Cave, The Wind Walker Challenge Course is a three-story obstacle course

balanced on the rim of a 600-foot drop into beautiful Williams Canyon. Thrill-seekers of all ages can navigate a challenging maze of steel beams, swinging ropes and ladders. The truly brave at heart can try the extra challenge and climb out over the cliffs of Williams Canyon for the Bat-a-Pult, an epic, 1,200-foot round-trip flight across Williams Canyon at speeds of nearly 40 mph.

### **Miramont Castle Museum**

9 Capitol Hill Ave, Manitou Springs, CO 80829

The castle was built by a French priest for his very wealthy mother. After living there for only 4 years, the castle became a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients. Beautiful old building with fascinating history. Well worth the reasonable admission fee and time.

You're able to take a self guided tour and

take your time discovering Manitou Springs history. Although we didn't visit the tea room, the wonderful smells coming from there made me wish that we had.

Adults \$8, seniors \$7, active duty military free

Memorial Day Weekend though Labor Day

Daily: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

### **Broadmoor Seven Falls**

2850 S. Cheyenne Canyon Road. Colorado Springs.

It is a series of seven cascading waterfalls, reaching a total height of 181 feet.

Visitors can view the scenic wonder of Seven Falls from either the top of the 224 step staircase or from the Eagle's Nest viewing platform which can be accessed via elevator.

Admission is \$14.00 per adult and \$8.00 per child, children under 2 years old are free of charge. Parking is free of charge; parking is now located at the Broadmoor Hotel with shuttle service to the Park.

### **Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center, 1 Olympic Plaza | Colorado Springs,**

**CO** - Guided tours of the OTC facilities are available throughout the year. Each tour begins with a video presentation, followed by a walking tour of the complex. The video and tour lasts approximately one hour. Adults: \$12.00 Military and Seniors: \$10.00

Children: \$8.00