

Denver: A Great City for Everyone Else

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For Amusement

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Let me start by saying that I love Denver. I love the people, I love the architecture, I love the night life, I love, love, love this city.

But in my two months of interning in Colorado's capital city, I have learned one very important fact: I do not fit in here. Denver's populace consists of three primary groups: nature-loving outdoors-folk, marijuana-loving hippies, and Powerbar-loving work out-aholics. Anyone that does not fit into these categories is either a) visiting, b) homeless, or c) me, thus supporting my thesis—I do not fit in here.

Think I'm being a bit drastic?

Let me start by explaining Colorado's embassy, REI, or Recreational Equipment, Inc. This outdoor sporting goods store sells everything you need to film your own episode of "Man vs. Wild." The rock-climbing behemoth in the center of the store stands as testament to REI's prominence in Denver's society: This store is so important, there is a mountain INSIDE of it. Also, the door handles are ice picks because you can't have regular door knobs at REI. That's just stupid.

The first—and only—time I set foot in REI was for exploratory reasons, and I immediately regretted that decision. As soon as I pulled on that ice pick handle, all sun-bronzed heads of hair turned toward me and simultaneously thought, "You don't belong here." Maybe it was the lack of a stubbly beard, or maybe it was because I haven't had a single ounce of muscle on me since second grade, or maybe it was because I asked the clerk how many of REI's products could withstand Mordor's intense heat waves. Whatever the reason, I was not welcome in REI.

I also was not welcome in Denver's next most important place, the medical dispensary. This magical place rewards anyone that has a gullible doctor eager to write prescriptions for medical marijuana. Stores like The Cannabis Station and Rocky Mountain High (both real places) provide paraphernalia for the dispensary's "healing powers."

Seeing as I personally don't enjoy said "healing powers" of the dispensary (not to diss those who do—to each his own bowl) and that I don't have dreadlocks, this crowd, like the mountaineers of REI, is not my cup of hemp-based tea.

The final sub-population of Denver, the ones I am least-connected to, are the people that prefer a good work out to a good rerun of "Ace of Cakes."

The headquarters of Denver's fitness freaks is not a store or a dispensary. It is every single square inch of the city. That's right: The Vitamin Water posse treats this city like their own personal gym. It's like every person in Denver secretly has biking spandex suits underneath their day clothes, and are just waiting for a call from the commissioner saying, "Denver Citizen, it's time for your afternoon workout" so that they can rip off those boring 9 to 5 outfits, strap on a bike helmet, and cycle sixteen miles through town before the afternoon meeting.

And if they aren't bicycling, they're doing yoga in Confluence Park or running stairs at Millennium Bridge. Meanwhile, I'm riding the elevator, stuffing my face with Oreos. And not

bye to your title as Skinniest State in America, because this Midwesterner is single-handedly bringing your fat index up. Way, way up.

So, I guess my Oreo-eating self will just keep on with the “not fitting in” thing until my internship is over. Then I get to go back to Miami and not fit in there because, and this may be shocking, I don’t own Sperrys, a Vera Bradley bag, or a J. Crew cardigan. I pretty much suck.



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