

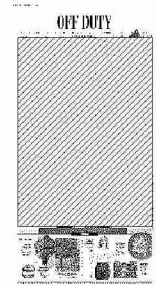
THE OFF DUTY 50

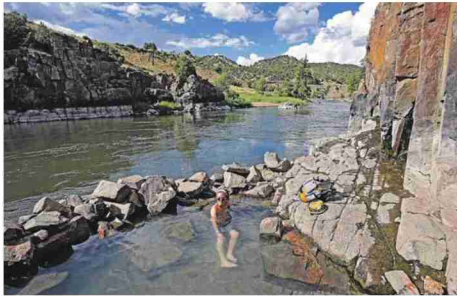
Fifty Reasons Fall Is the Best Season

From sweater weather to fondue, hammock camping and suddenly empty beaches, here's why we're glad summer is history



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...hot springs and cool air mix nicely.

LONG BEFORE the swanky ski resorts and craft breweries arrived, **Colorado** was a place health-conscious tourists mobbed, drawn to its dry mountain air and multitude of mineral

springs. By the mid-1800s, spring-fed sanitariums had sprung up all over the Rocky Mountains, so many that this summer the state designated a 720-mile historic hot-spring loop, encompassing eight thermal regions. The springs vary in size and facilities. At the foot of Mount Princeton, in Nathrop, they're the centerpiece of a resort (with 140 rooms and a spa) where you'll want to stay awhile. Strawberry Park Hot Springs, in Steamboat, merits a brisker day visit. But if you feel like earning your salubrious soak this fall, consider one of the dozens of undeveloped, hike-in hot springs, such as Rainbow Hot Springs, with its multiple natural pools and a steaming waterfall, hidden at the end of a 5-mile trek into the Weminuche Wilderness. A much shorter but not effortless hike leads to Radium (left), a cliff-side thermal pool on the Colorado River. It's just a mile-long trail, but it's a steep incline and then a rocky descent to the pool. —*Brigid Mander*