



## *An American Tour: 37*



### **Colorado's Royal Gorge**

The Royal Gorge is a canyon on the Arkansas River near Cañon City, Colorado. With a width of 50 feet at its base and a few hundred feet at its top, and a depth of 1,250 feet in places, the 10-mile-long canyon is a narrow, steep gorge through the granite of Fremont Peak. It is one of the deepest canyons in Colorado. About 3 million years ago as the mountains began to rise from the surrounding plains, the Arkansas River--then only a small rivulet--began to wear away at the stone it flowed across. Over the millennia, this small stream grew, cutting a deep channel for itself through the surrounding granite. The gorge's peculiar shape, contrasted to broad canyons such as the Grand Canyon, can be attributed to this long, direct erosion through hard rock.

In 1929, Cañon City authorized the building of the Royal Gorge Bridge, which at 1,053 feet above the river is the highest suspension bridge over water in the world. The bridge forms the kernel of Royal Gorge Park, a theme park owned and run by the city. In the summer months, whitewater rafting is a very popular activity in the Royal Gorge. Tourists travel from around the world to tackle the Class IV rapids of the Arkansas River and enjoy the scenery of the gorge. Named rapids in the Royal Gorge include Sunshine Falls, Sledgehammer, Wallslammer and Boateater. River recreation in the royal gorge is regulated by Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) and daily user fees are required to launch at all of the recreation sites upstream of the Royal Gorge. There are many commercial rafting companies. Base jumping, bungee jumping, and rock climbing are generally not permitted at the Royal Gorge.

On November 24, 2008, 45 year old Eric Scott, of Denver, crossed the Royal Gorge at a point near the bridge using a back-mounted jet pack.

[[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\\_Gorge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Gorge)]

