Boulder: A pillar of correctness

If you visit Colorado's eco-oasis, plan to bike (not drive), eat healthy foods and sip herbal tea

WELCOME TO Boulder, the most politically correct city in America. Environmentalism, health, animal rights—name the latest lifestyle or cause, and Boulder's out there on the cutting edge. Or just out there.

But don't laugh. With the new emphasis in Washington, D.C. on the environment and health, Boulder's trends may hit your town soon.

For now, though, "Boulder is the ultimate health-and-fitness town," says Norman Ford, the author of a book about the best places to live (book box, right). "I've looked at a lot of towns and didn't find any that compete."

If you want to check out the Republic of Boulder (as the city is known elsewhere in Colorado), don't drive. One-passenger car trips are frowned upon. Take a bus but 30 miles from Denver. Leave smokers and meat-eaters at home, and pack your sweats and your in-line skates.

WHAT TO SEE

Start your tour at the Boulder Theater, a distinguished concert hall that's home to the city's own symphony orchestra. Pick up some goat yogurt and whey grass juice as you browse the cornucopia of organic produce.

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And you're never too young to be politically correct. Children at one Boulder elementary school decided not to observe politically incorrect Columbus Day last fall.

"We have police on bikes with radar guns in the summer," says Public Works director Dave Rhodes. "But Boulder wants to encourage cyclists. Far from it. It spends more than $1 million a year to subsidize bike paths, bus passes and other alternatives to autos."

From the creek it is just a short walk to Alfalfa's, the premier health-food store in a town brimming with them. Pick up some goat yogurt and whey grass juice as you browse the cornucopia of organic produce.

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