

# Denver Becoming America's Crime Capital

## Property, Violent Crimes Soar Past New York City, Chicago; With 100 Cars Stolen Daily, Auto Theft Is Nation's Second Highest

by Glen Richardson

Once amazingly safe, crime in the Mile High City is now worse than New York City or Chicago, and growing increasingly dangerous as the new year begins. Ranked on a scale of 1 (low crime) to 100 (high crime), Denver outranks New York City in violent crimes by 2.5 points. Denver's property crime has doubled that in New York City. Chicago continues to edge Denver in Violent Crime (19.2 points), but property crimes in Colorado's capital are 4.5 points greater than in the Windy City.

Denver's violent crime rate has been rising over the last 10 years and especially the last two. Furthermore, police don't believe the pandemic triggered the crime spike. *Denver Police Department* records show 6,810 aggravated assaults, robberies, and homicides through mid-December, up from just



**Surge In Violence:** Photo, left, by Denverite's Kevin J. Beaty is of memorial where six people were shot on E. Colfax Ave. on Nov. 2, 2022.



At right, people wielding guns recorded 6,810 assaults, robberies, and homicides through mid-Dec. 2022.

4,924 in 2019. Property crimes during the same period totaled 42,100, up from 26,133 in 2019. Most come from just a portion of the city's 78 neighborhoods. The higher-income neighborhoods located east of Broad-

way and south of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard have lighter violent crime numbers than Denver's urban core and southwestern neighborhoods.

Auto theft is now an epidemic in Denver and the second highest in the nation. Denver Police Department data as of Dec. 5, 2022, showed auto theft had skyrocketed 71% compared with the city's three-year average. The car theft rate in Denver is now averaging 19.8 crimes per 1,000 residents. Nearly 100 vehicles are stolen every day in Denver. Furthermore, Colorado now

leads the nation in auto theft per capita.

### Least Safe City

Denver now also ranks as one of the nation's least safe cities, according to data from website *WalletHub*. The study analyzed 182 U.S. cities for home and community safety, natural disaster risk, and financial safety, then gave each city an overall score and reported the results. Denver is sandwiched in between Little Rock and New Orleans in terms of overall safety.

Colorado's largest city ranked 166th for *Continued on page 7*

### DENVER VS. NY & CHICAGO CHARTS:

	New York, NY	Denver, CO	United States
<b>Violent Crime</b>	28.2	30.7	22.7
<b>Property Crime</b>	24.9	50.8	35.4

	Chicago, IL	Denver, CO	United States
<b>Violent Crime</b>	49.9	30.7	22.7
<b>Property Crime</b>	46.3	50.8	35.4

# February Fans Cupid Flames As Valentine's Day Looms Again

by Glen Richardson

The cupid countdown has begun as fans cherry-pick February choices to make their crush feel special so they can catch or connect, be it girlfriend, boyfriend, or spouse. Even the cynical admit February fans the flames of their heart-strings. To help young and old alike make it through the next 28 days, the *Chronicle* has collected cool choices for the romantic and not so romantic. Here's how to impress your soulmates, sidekicks, buddy, or beau, so you survive with your sanity intact:

### Entertaining Romance

The *Clocktower Clockettes* present *Cupid's Delight*, a Valentine burlesque, variety & comedy show at *The Clocktower Cabaret*, Feb. 10-14, 7 p.m. & 9:30 p.m. Cast sets hearts aflame with aerial acts, singing, dance, and comedy. Information: 303-293-0075.

Sounds of the *Denver Brass* and *Colorado Dance Company* present *Fiesta*, a sizzling



blend of rhythm & romance, blazing brass & fiery dance in the *Newman Center*. Your heartbeat will keep time to the rhythms Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. Information: 303-871-7720.

**Fiery V-Day Dance:** For a sizzling blend of rhythm and romance take your Valentine to see *Fiesta* Feb. 11 as the *Colorado Dance Company* and *Denver Brass* entertain at the *Newman Center*.

"So This Is Love," is a night at *Dazzle@Baur's* listening to the foremost musical ambassadors of romance: Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, and Nat King Cole. The *Legacy Valentine's Day* eve-

ning is Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m. Information: 303-839-5100.

Pianist Jeffrey Siegel plays *Musical Valentines* by Schumann, Chopin, and Mendelssohn at the *Arvada Center* Feb. 15. The pianist who has been a soloist with the world's great orchestras entertains at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Information: 720-898-7200.

### Flower Power

Shop for Valentine's Day flowers at *Newberry Brothers Florist* located at 5301 Leetsdale Dr. Longtime local artisans create unique arrangements to inspire, celebrate, and bring people together using the freshest flowers. Information: 303-322-0443.

Learn to create a floral centerpiece during a *Valentine Centerpiece Workshop* hosted by *Brooks Floral & Co.* at 1489 S. Broadway, Feb. 9. Evening of designing, fun, and connection is from 6-8 p.m. Drinks and snacks provided. Information: 720-296-2431.

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# The Luggage Crisis Of 2022 Continues Into The New Year

by Laura Lieff

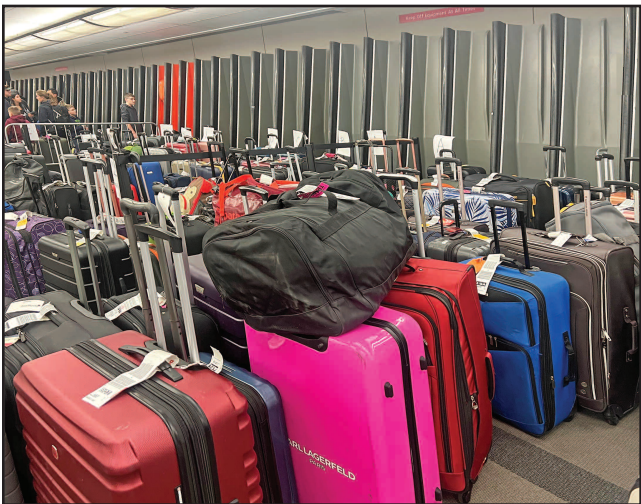


Photo by Chelsea Rummenie

**DIA In Disarray:** A sea of luggage remained in January 2023 as weary travelers searched for their lost belongings from delayed or cancelled holiday flights.

There is a new way of traveling and it doesn't include checking your bags at the airport. During the week of Christmas, thousands of flights were cancelled across the country, but the largest meltdown happened in *Southwest* terminals in cities like Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, and Chicago, causing travelers to miss family dinners, ski trips, and time with friends. Additionally, those weary travelers had no idea where their luggage was or if they would ever see it again.

Media outlets all over the United States showed photos of seas of baggage accompanied by headlines such as "Horror stories, misery at LAX and Burbank airport as

*Southwest* meltdown strands thousands" (*Los Angeles Times*), "1,000 Southwest flyers slept overnight at Denver airport amid 'nightmare' flight cancellations" (*USA Today*), "Unclaimed luggage piles up at airports following Southwest cancellations" (*NPR*), and "Long lines, unclaimed baggage, and frustration" (*The Denver Post*), among many others.

According to *The New York Times*, "more than 2,500 flights, or 62 percent of [Southwest's] planned flights" were cancelled on December 28, and that continued for the next several days. In addition, "some passengers, unable to re-book Southwest flights, rented cars, or spent hundreds of dollars *Continued on page 9*



# The Luggage Crisis Of 2022 Continues Into The New Year

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to buy tickets on other airlines.”

### Hunting For Lost Luggage

Longtime Vail Valley residents and seasoned travelers Chelsea and Matt Rummenie dealt with four flight cancellations over the course of a few days. They drove to Denver International Airport from Vail on December 23 and spent hours on an airplane that never took off. They booked a hotel near the airport only to be told upon arrival that there were no rooms available. Hundreds of dollars and many days of frustration later, the couple never got out of Colorado. They missed spending the holidays with their families — a trip that had been planned for months — and they didn’t see their bags until 2023.

“We’re still trying to get our money back for all the cancelled flights, Ubers that we took to and from hotels that didn’t have space for us, and time spent driving up and down I-70 to locate and retrieve our belongings,” says Chelsea.

On January 2, Chelsea and Matt drove back to DIA to locate their belongings. After rummaging through mountains of bags, they finally found their luggage, which thankfully still had the thousands of dollars in gear, clothes, and Christmas gifts inside. “We couldn’t believe what we were seeing,” Chelsea explains. “Thousands of bags piled up and very few employees available to help. It’s a bigger issue than just delayed and cancelled flights.”

### Something’s Gotta Give

Following the nightmare that was the luggage crisis of the 2022 holiday season, more and more people around the country are choosing alternative methods of getting their bags to and from their desired locations. Carly Fields, a Los Angeles resident who flies at least once a month for work, says she refuses to check a bag because she fears that it will get lost. Instead, she makes sure everything she needs fits in her FAA-approved carry-on.

“I’ve had too many issues with cancelled flights and lost luggage so now I only carry-on my bag,” says Fields. “It doesn’t matter how long I’m out of town — I would rather pack fewer clothing choices or find a place to wash my clothes than risk being without my belongings.”

For those who travel with gear, and therefore don’t have the carry-on option, shipping luggage and equipment is becoming a popular alternative. Greenwich, Connecticut, resident Stephanie Spooner travels to Colorado with her family every year and has learned that, with two kids and a ton of stuff, shipping their ski equipment and clothing gives her peace of mind.

“Flying across the country is already stressful, so the last thing we need is dealing with lost luggage,” Spooner explains. “Also, if our skis and equipment get lost, our ski trip is ruined.”

Spooner uses *TripHero* — a locally owned and operated company out of Edwards, Colorado, that ships luggage and sports gear — because it saves her time, money, and aggravation. Other options are *Paradise Baggage* out of Englewood, Colorado, which is family owned and operated, as well as *ShipGo*, which is headquartered in West Palm Beach, Florida.

### More Choices And Flexibility

Although flights can always get cancelled and bags can get lost any time of year, traveling during peak times — such as the December holidays, President’s Day weekend, and March spring break — is when shipping luggage has become more of a necessity. In 2023, many have said that shipping luggage and equipment is going to be their new method of travel as it alleviates frustration, saves time that would be spent standing around at baggage claim, and allows for more autonomy if flights are cancelled.

TripHero COO Patrick Mcilvain adds that their goal is for “people to start their vacation the moment they leave their home and experience traveling in a way that is hassle-free.” He continues, “By shipping bags rather than lugging them around airports, travelers have more flexibility and peace of mind that their luggage will be



Photo by Chelsea Rummenie

**Ten Days:** It took ten days for Vail residents Matt and Chelsea Rummenie to locate and retrieve their bags from a flight that never left Colorado.

waiting for them at their hotels, vacation rentals, or homes rather than the other way around.”

For more information visit [www.gotriphero.com](http://www.gotriphero.com), [www.paradisebaggage.com](http://www.paradisebaggage.com), or [www.shipgo.com](http://www.shipgo.com).

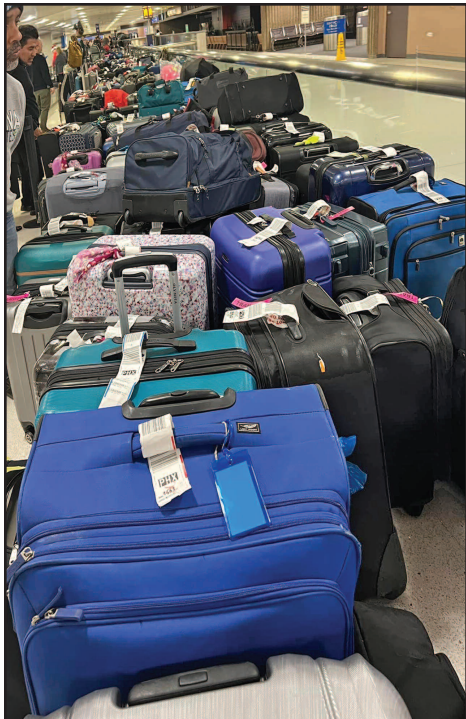


Photo by Storm Gloor

**Phoenix Airport:** Rows of unclaimed baggage went on for miles due to thousands of cancelled Southwest flights.

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