



Garden of the Gods Driving Tour

CASE STUDY:

Using a Mobile Audio Tour to Deepen Visitor Engagement & Boost Local Spending

IMPACT & RESULTS

90,500+

TOUR USERS

From all around the U.S.

3,000+

CLICKS

On tour-sponsor banner



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Local experts contributed content



REPUTATION

Rave reviews from visitors

BACKGROUND

Garden of the Gods is a 1,341-acre public park located in Colorado Springs, Colorado. More than 5 million people visit it each year to experience the extraordinary rock formations, wildlife, and history that earned it a designation as a national natural landmark.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2020, the city of Colorado Springs decided to build a mobile audio tour to enhance the visitor experience with:

- Audio wayfinding guiding drivers through the park
- Useful visitor information, such as picnic area rules, parking lot time limits, and Leave No Trace guidance to protect landscapes and wildlife
- Fascinating, place-based history and natural history stories curated and presented by Garden of the Gods experts



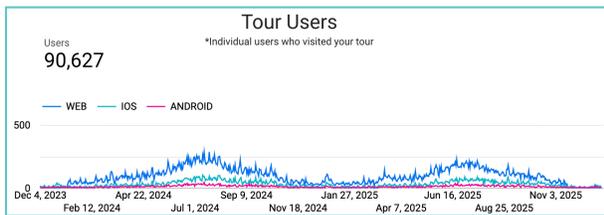
THE SOLUTION

Partnering with TravelStoriesGPS, the city launched a GPS-triggered mobile audio tour that:

- Plays automatically on visitors' phones along the drive
- Features local voices and knowledge
- Includes interactive maps, text, and images
- Is accessible on-site and remotely via the free TravelStories™ app, as well as online

“Our TravelStories audio tour has been a great success. We connect with more visitors and, in turn, they have an enhanced connection to our site. Our in-tour plug brings more people back to our visitor center and gift shop.”

— Bret Tennis, Park Operations Administrator, Garden of the Gods



PROOF OF IMPACT

Tracking visitor usage data over a two-year period through TravelStoryGPS' customized analytics portal demonstrated the Garden of the Gods tour's strong seasonal usage patterns and consistently high listener engagement.

Tour users interacted thousands of times with in-app tools that enabled them to learn more about the tour sponsor and share the tour with friends and family, thus generating significant organic reach. Listeners also left glowing reviews, extending the tour's impact well beyond on-site visits.

“Great use of technology for us with mobility struggles.”

— Garden of the Gods Visitor

“Excellent tour and even more beautiful views!”

— Garden of the Gods Visitor

This tour inspires new visitor-engagement experiences across Colorado by:

- Providing a tested and successful framework other destinations and communities can easily adapt
- Educating and entertaining visitors through immersive storytelling that goes beyond brochures and static signage



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Mobile audio drives engagement, learning retention (+24%), and spending

- **Longer stays = higher spend:** In tourism contexts, increased dwell time is directly linked to increased on-site spending—every 1% increase in stay duration correlates with **~1.3% higher visitor spend**.
- **Audio drives action:** Audio is a uniquely trusted medium; nearly **50% of listeners** take action after hearing audio content, and many go on to make purchases.
- **Stories stick:** Narrative storytelling is remembered up to **20x more** than facts alone, strengthening brand recall and repeat visitation.
- **Authenticity matters:** **75% of travelers** actively seek authentic, local experiences—exactly what community-voiced audio tours deliver.

SOURCES

Skift Research (Traveler Experience & Authenticity Trends); Stanford Graduate School of Business (Narrative Persuasion & Memory Retention); Stanford Social Innovation Review (Storytelling in Mission-Driven Engagement); Nielsen Audio & Edison Research (Audio Trust, Action & Listener Behavior); Tourism Economics & retail behavior studies on dwell time and spending correlation.

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