

Enchanted Adventures

From ancient pueblos and supervolcanoes to historic road trips and national monuments, New Mexico is ripe for exploring

There’s a reason New Mexico is nicknamed the Land of Enchantment. The state feels enticingly magical, thanks to dramatic high-desert landscapes, brilliant turquoise skies, and seemingly never-ending outdoor activities and iconic landmarks. (Not to mention the state’s killer green chile breakfast burritos.) Here you’ll find excursions of every type, from family getaways to the otherworldly caves of Carlsbad Caverns and adventure-laden outings like paddling through the Rio Grande Gorge. You can sand-sled at White Sands National Monument, hike among traditional pueblos, or bike around ancient supervolcanoes. Or just cruise historic Route 66, with pit stops that include the 81-foot-deep Blue Hole and vintage hotels and diners straight out of the 1950s. Put it all together and you have a trip worth taking, and one you’re not likely to forget.

NEW MEXICO *True*

Farmington: Basecamp of the Four Corners

Farmington, New Mexico, sits literally at a crossroads. This thriving town in northwest New Mexico serves as the commercial hub of the culturally rich Four Corners area, and it’s at the confluence of three major rivers: the San Juan, the Animas, and the La Plata. Because of its pristine location, there are endless places to visit and things to do when you visit. Start by mountain biking among sagebrush and junipers on an extensive network of singletrack that crosses sandy arroyos, massive sand dunes, and perfectly buff sandstone. (Stop by the Farmington Visitor Center for rental and

trail info.) Or head out for a hike into the remote badlands of Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness, a unique and eerie landscape that was once a coastal inland sea swamp and is now dotted with otherworldly rock formations, hoodoos, spires, pinnacles, and arches. With five nearby lakes in addition to the three rivers running through town, there’s plenty to do



Biking at Lions Wilderness

on the water, too. Anglers can stalk trout in a river or cast for kokanee salmon or largemouth bass in one of the lakes. Everyone else can set out by raft or kayak on the fast-flowing Animas, surf waves in the downtown Animas River White Water Park, or head out on a stand-up paddleboard from the sandy beaches of Lake Farmington. Southwest history runs deep here, too. You can explore ancient pueblos at Salmon Ruins, visit prehistoric relics in Aztec Ruins National Monument and Chaco Culture National Historical Park, or check out early Navajo rock art up close at the Dinéyah Rock Art and Pueblitos. FarmingtonNM.org

Outdoor lovers and active families thrive in Farmington, New Mexico



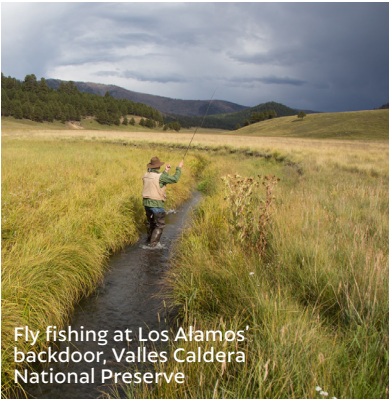
Fishing the San Juan River



Hiking Chaco Culture National Historical Park

Los Alamos: Where History and Nature Meet

High in the mountains above Santa Fe, set on the mesas of the Pajarito Plateau, you’ll find the quirky, science-driven town of Los Alamos. Known as the birthplace of the atomic bomb, Los Alamos also serves as the gateway to some of northern New Mexico’s most stunning wilderness, including three national parks. At Valles Caldera National Preserve, rangers will guide you around a 13-mile-wide caldera formed by a volcanic explosion 1.25 million years ago, which has since turned into a rolling grassland. At Bandelier National Monument, you can hike among ancient petroglyphs, cliff dwellings, and gushing streams or gaze at the starry night sky with a trained astronomer. Back in town, learn the fascinating history of the atomic bomb at the Manhattan Project



Fly fishing at Los Alamos' backdoor, Valles Caldera National Preserve

National Historical Park, where you can take a guided tour through the once-called Secret City that preserves the legacy of the 6,000 people who harnessed atomic energy. Not enough? Don’t miss the Bradbury Science Museum for a window into the history of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. VisitLosAlamos.org

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The 2018 Santa Fe Thunder Half Marathon will be held September 16

Santa Fe Thunder

Santa Fe Thunder: A Truly ‘Different’ Half Marathon

With historic churches, famous Canyon Road galleries, and rich history down every narrow, maze-like street, Santa Fe is unlike any town in America. So it should come as no surprise that its signature running event, the Santa Fe Thunder Half Marathon, held the third Sunday in September for the past seven years is every bit as unique, funky, and steeped in history. For starters, the air is thin. The race starts at an elevation of 7,000 feet, and runners steadily climb 300 feet over the first two and a half miles. Thankfully, that’s it for going up, and the rest of the course gradually descends 1,300 feet, finishing in the Pueblo of Pojoaque. Then there’s the roadside entertainment and multicultural

traditions. The race begins when a Kalenjin warrior from Kenya sounds his grandfather’s kudu horn; African drummers energize the crowds at the start and finish; and, near the five-mile mark, local belly dancers shimmy and shake in front of the beloved Tesuque Village Market. (Locals’ tip: Return to this eclectic café after the run for house-made tamales and some of the best green chile stew in the state.) The mountain views along the course are worth the race fee alone, with the Jemez Mountains to the west and the Sangre de Cristos rising dramatically from the east. You’ll run past the famous open-air Santa Fe Opera and alongside the iconic and appropriately named Camel Rock, ending in the red-rock Rio Grande Valley at the sprawling oasis that is Pojoaque Pueblo’s Buffalo Thunder Resort. Another cool thing



Handmade medals



A start like no other

about the event is its ties to both local organizations and the international running community. The race is organized by and raises money for the Santa Fe-based nonprofit Global Running Culture, which aims to improve the lives of young people through sports and education in three mainly indigenous communities where running is a vital part of the culture: northern New Mexico; Matunget, Kenya; and Copper Canyon, Mexico. Every finisher is awarded a unique medal designed by renowned Jemez Pueblo artist Bernice Gachupin, and the top three finishers from each age group receive handmade medals created by the Gachupin family on the pueblo, where long-distance running has been a tradition for generations. Proceeds from this year’s half marathon, Lightning 5K, and 1-mile fitness walk are being dedicated to construction of a much-needed new school building in the remote village of Matunget, perched high above the Great Rift Valley in northwestern Kenya. The school will provide the next generation with tools to create a brighter future. This year’s half marathon takes place September 16, 2018. santafethunder.com

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