LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

Stunning landscapes, culture and adobe villages await on this 1,789-mile adventure.
If you follow a lonely road through the rolling hills of northern New Mexico, you’ll catch sight of the Pedernal. Stretching 9,862 feet into the blue sky, it’s the mountain that captured artist Georgia O’Keeffe’s attention, repeatedly making cameos in her paintings.

“It’s my private mountain,” O’Keeffe said. “God told me if I painted it often enough I could have it.” Her words provide a window into the New Mexican ethos where people share a deep relationship with the earth—a connection some call sacred—that stretches back more than 1,000 years. At Acoma, one of the nation’s oldest continuously occupied settlements, you’ll find a sun-baked Native American adobe village built 1,000 years ago. In El Santuario de Chimayo church, people have collected dirt believed to have healing powers for more than 200 years.

In Santa Fe, soft adobe buildings and homes climb hillsides and line streets like spectators at a parade. In Las Cruces, green chiles harvested nearby transform classic dishes into sensory experiences.

To the east, the earth turns blinding white as it sprawls across 275 square miles to form White Sands National Monument. Next to this stark beauty lies White Sands Missile Range where the first atomic bomb was dropped in 1945. Herein lies the magic of New Mexico—for every breathtaking turn in the road, there’s a story. It’s your turn to uncover them in this intriguing land.

PHOTOS OPPOSITE PAGE: Depositphotos | White Sands National Monument; view of Santa Fe, New Mexico
BORDER SECRETS

While most people tend to associate El Paso, Texas with the U.S.-Mexico border, there’s so much more to this flavorful city. From desert adventures to historic missions, here are our top four things to do.

By Tori Peglar

EL PASO MISSION TRAIL

The nine-mile El Paso Mission Trail connects two of the nation’s oldest continuously operated missions: Ysleta Mission built in 1682 and Socorro Mission built in 1691. Amid fire and perennial flooding from the Rio Grande floodplain, Ysleta Mission is one of the nation’s longest continuously occupied religious buildings. It’s filled with symbols of the Tigua Indian community that settled in the area after the 1680 New Mexico Pueblo Revolt. Look for the statue of Kateri Tekakwitha, the Catholic Church’s sole Native American saint. Don’t miss San Elizario Presidio Chapel where the presidio, a Spanish fort, was built in 1789. Call ahead to each mission for hours of operation as they differ.

HUECO TANKS STATE PARK + HISTORIC SITE

This gorgeous state park is world-renowned for its bouldering [a form of climbing large boulders without ropes] and ancient rock paintings. It’s well-worth visiting to watch the climbers and to see the park’s Native American art. Hundreds of years ago, Native Americans sought water in the boulder’s huecos [naturally occurring holes]. Because the park limits the number of people who enter the North Mountain area every day to 70, call ahead up to 90 days in advance to reserve your spot, especially during peak climbing season that runs from October through February. The permit phone number is (512) 389-8911.

RED SANDS

Thirty-four million years ago, an ocean covered the Red Sands area west of Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site. Today, it’s a fantastic off-road desert riding area. Stop by Rent A UTV Off-Road Adventures located at the Red Sands entrance to rent a UTV or to go on a 1.5 or 2.5-hour guided tour. Afterwards, have some of the best steak in the region at the family-friendly Cattleman’s Steakhouse at Indian Cliffs Ranch. It’s on a working ranch in the Texas desert, but you can also spend time at the petting zoo, see horses, bison and longhorns and go on a hayride while you’re there. It’s just 35 minutes back to downtown El Paso.

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS STATE PARK

Explore the Chihuahuan Desert landscape dotted with cacti, calliope hummingbirds and golden eagles by visiting Franklin Mountains State Park. Put on sturdy walking shoes and explore amazing hiking trails, including the 1.2-mile out-and-back trail to Aztec Cave, which you can stand in. Very experienced hikers will enjoy El Paso’s most challenging hike: the half-day trek past two caves on the Ron Coleman Trail via McLellon Canyon. At the top, you’ll see into two countries and three states. Hike from south to north to use the chain assists on your uphill rather than your downhill on a near-vertical rock face.

Learn more at visitelpaso.com or at The Union Depot Visitor Information Center, 400 W. San Antonio.
REACH
New HEIGHTS
in El Paso
COME CONQUER THE LARGEST URBAN STATE PARK IN THE NATION.
LAND OF ENCHANTMENT
EL PASO, TEXAS, TO CARLSBAD, N.M.
164 miles, 2 hours and 44 minutes

There's more to see beyond Carlsbad National Park.

By Tori Peglar

In 1898, when 16-year-old cowhand Jim White first entered what would become Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the Texas-born teen discovered another world.

Once part of a reef in an inland sea, Carlsbad Caverns has more than 119 limestone caves, including the Big Room, which is as large as six football fields. While it’s disputed whether White was the first Anglo to enter the caves, one thing is clear: this national park is stunning. And the good news is unlike White’s days where people were lowered into the caves in guano buckets, there are elevators and stairs to access the caves today.

Use Carlsbad, N.M., just 18 miles away, as your base to explore Carlsbad Caverns, as well as Guadalupe Mountains National Park, 40 miles across the New Mexico-Texas border. Because of its mineral springs, the city was named after the famous Karlsbad spa in Bohemia (now Czech Republic).

Today, frolic in the calm water of the Pecos River when you rent kayaks or stand-up paddleboards and paddle up and down. Or, stroll along nearly five-miles of paved trails along the beautiful shores.

In a land known for its artists, Carlsbad is home to perhaps the state’s most unique painter. You’ll find her at the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park. Bear Maggie Oso, who was near death before being rescued from a Georgia compound, paints with her paws in private one or so times per week, using non-toxic paints. Her pieces have been exhibited in Carlsbad and are sold in the park’s gift shop. In addition to Maggie, there are more than 40 species of animals and hundreds of species of plants native to the Chihuahuan Desert at the state park.

Learn more at CarlsbadNMtrue.com.

EAT UP

BLUE HOUSE BAKERY
Located on a quiet side street next to the Fiddler’s Inn, Blue House Bakery is the perfect place to start your morning. Order a handcrafted espresso beverage and a breakfast bowl and enjoy it on their beautiful patio. Don’t forget to check out their baked goods.

GUADALUPE MOUNTAIN BREWING COMPANY
Stop by Guadalupe Mountain Brewing Company after a day recreating in Carlsbad for craft beer and a full menu, including wood-fired pizza. There’s even cauliflower crust alternative. Choose from over a dozen beers on tap, including seasonal brews like Green Chile or Coconut Porter.

PJ&B RIO CAFÉ
Located in the old Carousel House, which is now the Pecos River Village Conference Center, PJ&B Rio Café is a must-stop for brunch when exploring the Pecos River Recreation Area. Grab a coffee and one of their popular breakfast burritos and take a moment to gawk at the architecture.
Sitting Bull Falls Recreation Area

All oasis, no mirages. [TRUE]
SPACE OUT

Just minutes from White Sands National Monument, Alamogordo, N.M., offers some must-see attractions.

Get a cup of coffee at Mad Coffee or Plateau Espresso and pick up lunch to go at the Hi-D-Ho Drive-In, home of the locally famous Tiger Burger, before heading to White Sands National Monument. More than 275 square miles of glistening white dunes await you, so stop at the park visitor center for its interpretive exhibits before setting off on the scenic 16-mile round-trip Dunes Drive. Along the way, stop at a covered picnic area to eat your lunch. Back in town, head to the New Mexico Museum of Space History where you can see a mock-up of the International Space Station, learn about life in space and see a large format film in the planetarium, home to the world's first Spitz Scidome 4k Laser full-dome planetarium projection system.

Then focus on earth, specifically the area's propensity for growing pistachios and pecans. Heart of the Desert is the state's first and largest producer of pistachios. Stop for a free guided walking tour and then sip wine on the Tuscan-inspired patio overlooking the pistachio groves. At McGinn's PistachioLand, take a motorized tour of its vineyards and pistachio orchards. There's also a wine tasting room, pistachio bar and ice cream shop. It's home to the world's largest pistachio, a 30-foot nut made of cement. Farther up the road, see Three Rivers Petroglyph Site where Jornada Mogollon people used stone tools to etch images in rocks. Learn more at alamogordo.org.
TAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE TO MONUMENTAL HEIGHTS

Follow prehistoric footprints that date back 280 million years. Blaze a trail on white gypsum sand dunes. Trek along historic and archeological sites. Explore three national monuments within 45 minutes, and find pure enchantment when you discover our unique natural treasures.

REQUEST A FREE VISITORS GUIDE  VisitLasCruces.com
Once part of Mexico, the Las Cruces, N.M., area offers an incredibly rich culture woven together with strong strands of traditional Mexican influences. Here are the top seven things to do while visiting this university town.

By Tori Peglar

1 WALK OF FLAME GREEN CHILE TRAIL

WHY GO: Sample the vegetable that serves as a cornerstone in southern New Mexico cuisine. Taste everything from vanilla custard with green chile marmalade at Caliche’s Frozen Custard to a New Mexico pecan green chile roll at Aqua Reef.

TIP: If your mouth is burning from chiles, drink milk, say researchers at New Mexico State University’s Chile Pepper Institute. Milk has a protein in it that neutralizes the capsaicin in the peppers that makes your mouth feel like it’s on fire.

2 COAS BOOKS

WHY GO: This used bookstore is so incredible that Lonesome Dove author and book shop owner Larry McMurtry allegedly stopped through here on road trips to browse the collection.

TIP: Filled with books from every genre, find this local institution at 317 North Main St.

3 RIO GRANDE THEATRE

WHY GO: See the nation’s only operating two-story adobe theater (built in 1926), plus get additional information at the Las Cruces visitor center there.

TIP: The 426-person theater is home to an art gallery that showcases local artists, along with entertainment like classic films, children’s matinees and local, regional and national acts.

4 FARMERS & CRAFTS MARKET OF LAS CRUCES

WHY GO: If you want to experience Las Cruces and have limited time, head to this market lined with fresh produce and vibrant handmade crafts.

TIP: Started in 1971, the market takes place every Saturday year round from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on seven city blocks along Main Street. On Wednesdays, you’ll find it at Plaza de las Cruces from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. year round and at night from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. May through October.

5 ORGAN MOUNTAINS-DESERT PEAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

WHY GO: Established in 2014, this relatively new national monument has four areas to explore. Bring extra water and sunscreen while hiking.

TIP: Just 10 miles east of Las Cruces lies Dripping Springs Trail where you can take a leisurely 2.7-mile, out-and-back walk to ruins. Take University Avenue to Dripping Springs Road to get there. It costs $3/vehicle for day use.

6 MESILLA

WHY GO: Founded in 1848, this charming village about a 10-minute drive from Las Cruces has a traditional plaza surrounded by boutiques and restaurants, some of which occupy the town’s original adobe buildings.

TIP: Eat lunch or dinner at La Posta, which serves delicious authentic Mexican food, or Double Eagle, home to the only dedicated beef-aging room in New Mexico, which is probably why the venue’s locally sourced steaks are so good. Try the green chile cheese wontons with pineapple jalapeno salsa as an appetizer.

7 WHITE SANDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

WHY GO: The sparkling white sands of the world’s largest gypsum field are mesmerizing. Hike or sled down them to experience them.

TIP: Start at the historic visitor center in a 1930s-era Pueblo Revial building to see exhibits, get information on daily activities and watch a great film, A Land in Motion.

To learn more lascrucescvb.org.
ALBUQUERQUE
VS.
SANTA FE

You’re headed through New Mexico en route to the Grand Canyon. Do you spend more time in Santa Fe, the oldest capital city in the country, or the state’s largest city, Albuquerque? Take this test to figure out where to go.

If your answers fell mostly in the Santa Fe column, visit this enchanting place and discover there may be an artist in you.

If Albuquerque rose to the top, take time to explore this sprawling metropolis and its hidden gems.

**ALBUQUERQUE**

Ride the Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway to 10,378 feet to hike or take in the views. Dress in layers as the top can be 20 degrees cooler than the valley; sandiapeak.com

Flying high in a bright-colored hot air balloon, an activity that makes city residents proud to claim the unofficial title “hot air ballooning capital of the world;” rainbowryders.com

National Museum of Nuclear Science & History where the evolution of nuclear capabilities comes to life in exhibits about nuclear power and bombs; nuclearmuseum.org

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center with world-renowned historic and contemporary Pueblo art and textiles, plus dance performances; indianpueblo.org/museum

ABQ BioPark, home to a zoo and botanical garden summer concert series featuring everything from Irish music to jazz; cabq.gov/culturalservices/biopark

Range Café, a local favorite since 1992, where the menu blends southwestern fare with typical American fare; rangecafe.com

Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm, a 25-acre lavender farm, featuring a farm-to-table restaurant, store and elegant rooms; lospoblanos.com

**SANTA FE**

Hike to the top of Picacho Peak, just under 4 miles round trip. From the top, you’ll see a number of mountain ranges, including a bird’s-eye view of Santa Fe.

Strolling Canyon Road where you can wander in and out of art galleries and cafes tucked in quaint adobe houses along the road, a several-minute walk from La Plaza.

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum to see the colorful flowers and landscapes that helped shape the American Modernism movement; okeeffemuseum.org

Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, which showcases pieces from contemporary Native American artists; iaia.edu/iaia-museum-of-contemporary-native-arts

The Santa Fe Opera where views of the sunset and Sangre de Cristo mountains rival the summer performances in this open-air theater with a roof; santafeopera.org

Café Pasquale’s, a downtown mainstay for 38 years that uses local and organic food. Don’t leave without trying the sinful hot chocolate; pasquale.com

La Fonda built in 1922 on the Plaza and furnished by architect Mary Colter with original artwork and hand-crafted furniture in every room; lafondasantafe.com

**IT’S TIME TO CATCH AMAZING VIEWS. WHERE DO YOU GO?**

**YOUR PERFECT DAY INCLUDES**

** WHEN YOU THINK OF A MUSEUM, YOUR MIND GOES RIGHT TO**

**YOU WANT TO SEE MODERN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE, SO YOU VISIT**

**YOUR IDEA OF A GREAT MUSIC SCENE IS**

**THE BEST BREAKFAST EVER IS WAITING FOR YOU AT**

**YOUR FAVORITE HOTEL IS**

If your answers fell mostly in the Santa Fe column, visit this enchanting place and discover there may be an artist in you.

If Albuquerque rose to the top, take time to explore this sprawling metropolis and its hidden gems.

MyGrandCanyonPark.com • 31
In 1930, 24-year-old Clyde Tombaugh took photos through a telescope at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Ariz. It had been built specifically to track down the elusive Planet X, a theoretical ninth planet.

Later the new observatory assistant looked at a set of glass negatives. “There were two steps in identifying new planets: taking photos and analyzing them,” says Kevin Schindler, the observatory’s historian. “Clyde searched the photos that were basically filled with tiny dots and looked for something that changed position.”

What Tombaugh saw was stunning: an unfamiliar planet.

“Of all the traditional nine planets, only Pluto was discovered in this country, so it’s a neat piece not only of scientific history but American history,” Schindler says.

In 2006 Pluto was reclassified as a dwarf planet. Stop by Lowell Observatory to see the Pluto Discovery Telescope, one of the most famous in American astronomy research. At night, you’ll be able to look through the 32-foot-long Clark Telescope to view planets, star clusters and possibly even Saturn’s rings. The Clark Telescope is older than the state of Arizona, built and completed in 1896. The telescopes are housed in curious buildings that pop up like mushrooms from the forest floor.

You also can visit during the day and tour the observatory’s beautiful grounds with friendly, knowledgeable guides. You’ll experience the universe though widescreen multimedia shows, exhibits and live presentations. On Oct. 5, 2019, the Giovale Open Deck Observatory opened, which is a public observing plaza featuring six advanced telescopes for viewers to see star clusters, galaxies and more.

Visit Lowell Observatory at 1400 W. Mars Hill Rd. in Flagstaff. Find out more at Lowel.edu/GCJ.
tall peaks | deep canyon

A peak 12,633 feet in elevation and highest point in Arizona
A canyon 6,000 feet deep and only 80 miles from Flagstaff

discoverflagstaff.com

PICK UP A FREE VISITOR GUIDE AT THE FLAGSTAFF VISITOR CENTER | ONE E. ROUTE 66
Soar past towering cliffs and raft through huge rapids when you watch the IMAX movie Grand Canyon: The Hidden Secrets at the Grand Canyon Visitor Center in Tusayan, Ariz. Pronounced “Toos-ayin,” the town is located minutes from one of the South Rim’s park entrances.

The 34-minute film projected on a six-story high screen is a fantastic start to your Grand Canyon adventure as it carries you on a journey spanning 4,000 years of Grand Canyon history. It begins with the native people who lived there and includes a re-creation of John Wesley Powell’s 1869 daring boating expedition through the Grand Canyon.

But the visitor center is also a place to learn more about area attractions, get a bite to eat and pick up a souvenir. You can also purchase your park pass at the Grand Canyon Visitor Center, which will help you avoid waiting in longer lines at the park entrance.

**TIP:** Buy your IMAX tickets online to save up to 20 percent at exploretocanyon.com.
Wish you had a guide while touring to and inside the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park or Grand Canyon West? Download the GyPSy Guide App.

"We recognized that travelers preferred to set their own pace and itinerary but still enjoyed a fun, informative and educational guided experience" says Rick Bulich of GyPSy Guide. "That became our inspiration. How do we re-create that experience for people who want to remain independent and self-tour in their own vehicle?"

The app uses your device’s location service to automatically play entertaining commentary about the behind-the-scenes stories, historical events and notable geologic formations as you drive. In doing so, it tells you about upcoming sights, so you have time to make an informed decision as to whether you want to stop. Because the app relies on your phone’s GPS signal, not cell towers, no cell, network or WiFi is required while touring.

Visit gypsyguide.com to learn more.
When you stay at the Yavapai Lodge in Grand Canyon National Park, you’ll experience a piece of the park’s history, but you’ll also be actively participating in its future.

Located about a mile from the rim, the lodge was built in 1958 during the National Park Service’s building boom to prepare for its 50th anniversary. It was part of the so-called Mission 66 program, designed to increase park infrastructure to serve the crowds of post-World War II visitors. The lodge itself is reminiscent of Route 66 motels. Today, all rooms have been upgraded, including air-conditioning in every unit, new in 2019.

Nestled in a ponderosa pine forest, you’ll see wildlife, such as elk, deer and squirrels on your visit.

“It’s so peaceful here in the woods,” says Yavapai’s lodging director Amy Neil. “There’s something very special about being in the middle of the bustle of the park and still having this sense of solitude.”

Staying in the lodge, you’ll feel its commitment to the park’s future. It starts the second you pull in. With plenty of parking, you can leave your car at the lodge and take the park’s shuttle to get to all the stops you want to see, lowering your carbon footprint.

You can join Yavapai Lodge and the National Park Service in giving back on the South Rim every Thursday morning to pick up litter, including micro trash, and to learn more about why trash matters.

After a day exploring the park, head back to the lodge to relax. Outdoor games like cornhole give you an excuse to connect with other travelers. Stop by the Yavapai Coffee Shop for a scoop of ice cream with flavors like Grand Canyon Caramel Crunch and Moose Tracks.

Or head to the Yavapai Tavern where you’ll find a beautiful patio, equipped with heaters for chilly nights, a fire pit and a Southwestern-inspired menu from Chef Justin Warnat with a focus on local ingredients and sustainability. Try the Loaded Elk Burger made from elk raised in Colorado and topped with local poblano peppers. Or, go plant-based with the Power Plant Burger. The locally made 100-percent vegan patty packs 16 grams of plant-based protein and is covered with Hatch green chile cheddar cheese and homemade Southwestern sauce. Wash it down with one of several locally brewed beers on draft.

Book a room today or learn more at visitgrandcanyon.com. Sign up to volunteer with the lodge and park service at nps.gov/grca/getinvolved/dnps-litter.htm.

BY THE NUMBERS

1958 Year built

20 Percentage of Grand Canyon’s waste stream comprised of single-use plastic

90 The percentage of food ingredients sourced within 190 miles

2025 The year the Yavapai Lodge will be at zero waste

26 The number of shuttle stops accessible from the lodge
LIFE IS GRAND AT YAVAPAI LODGE

The view at the Grand Canyon is extraordinary. So is the impression it will make on you. Nearby Yavapai Lodge and Trailer Village RV Park give you the perfect vantage point, within Grand Canyon National Park and just a short walk from the South Rim. Enjoy easy access to Yavapai Restaurant, Yavapai Tavern, Yavapai Coffee Shop and Canyon Village Market & Deli. Here, your family has a comfortable basecamp for adventure. If it feels like a different world, that’s because it is.

Book your bucket list escape today.
Go to VisitGrandCanyon.com or call 877-404-4611.