

PLAYTIME Santa Fe/ Albuquerque

The blend of Spanish, Mexican, and American Indian cultures—not to mention the cowboys—makes northern New Mexico feel, and sometimes speak, like a different country. Start in Albuquerque, home to progressive new eco-businesses such as electric car maker Tesla Motors and entertainment ventures like filmmaking's Albuquerque Studios. Wind up in 400-year-old Santa Fe. Round-edged adobe architecture, rich artistic traditions, and colorful chile (that's chee-lay) make it the only UNESCO-deemed "Creative City" in the country. Museum-go, hike, tour, and toast—get balanced the New Mexican way.

[READ CLOCKWISE FROM THE "START HERE" SQUARE]

■ SPOILING YOURSELF
 ■ WINING AND DINING
 ■ FOOD FOR THE SOUL
 ■ EDUCATION
 ■ MOVING ADVENTURE

DAY TWO A.M.

MUSICAL MEAL
Wind up your Canyon Road stroll with wine and song at beloved El Frijol. Share plates of andouille sausage (sweetened with onion), local, and garbanzo (lentil) rather than French fries while listening to live music in 1845-built adobe rooms. Make a Wednesday reservation to catch the weekly flamenco show.

ART HUNT
Walk along the Santa Fe River until you reach Canyon Road, an ancient gem-walk-turned-art gallery in one gallery-lined street. Santa Fe is the nation's second largest market for fine art. After New York. On Friday evenings, this street is a frenzy of open-air art with wine and cheese, as well as art offered inside the galleries.

MIRACLE CLIMB
Cross the Plaza and walk up the Santa Fe Trail to the Loretto Chapel and its "miraculous" staircase, which spirals up to the choir loft without any clear means of support. Backtrack to the Plaza and stop by Señor Murphy for a ride-re-ride-up of a piñon brite at this candy shop with a New Mexican accent.

SLOW LANE
Motor the Turquoise Trail (Highway 14), the historic path to the region's rich turquoise mines and the scenic route between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Stop by the lovely Mesa Staff Tavern in the artist town of Madrid (pronounced MAAD-ud) and relax in booming mining years circa 1946, when the tavern opened its doors.

SUNSET SALUTE
Reaching Santa Fe before sunset, trek to the rooftop Ball Tower Bar at historic La Fonda Hotel at the end of the Santa Fe Trail, the way western adventurers originally reached the Spanish capital. Toast the high-altitude sun with a margarita, and you'll understand why emigrants here say they moved for the light.

TÍAMO, MARIA
You'll be spoiled for choice when it comes to dining in Santa Fe. For casual, convivial fare—and legendary margaritas—grab a table at Maribó's. New Mexican food education is a regional food education with live-cook-and-observe (or fajitas with a side of piñon) a kind of hominy stewed-Mexican style.

TRIP!
Enter a contest to win a \$10,000 travel package. Go to www.visit-santa-fe.com for details. Prizes include a round-trip flight to Santa Fe, a hotel stay, and a rental car.

ART ICON
Seek out the nearby Georgia O'Keeffe Museum for a look at the landscapes and still lifes by a painter synonymous with the state. The Wisconsin-born O'Keeffe spent the last half of her 98 years near Santa Fe, painting in a desert palette. The museum celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, culminating in an Aug. 25 gala.

SQUARE DANCE
Walk off the calories (or at least some of them) by strolling the Plaza, Santa Fe's historic city center bordered in part by the 1610 Palace of the Governors made of adobe—a mix of sand, soil, straw, and water. American Indian vendors, vetted for authenticity, line the Plaza's north portal, selling jewelry, leather belts, pottery, and more.

FOOD SKINNY
Rise and shine and think chile—New Mexican style—by enrolling in a demonstration cooking class at the Santa Fe School of Cooking, which covers the Southwestern gamut from breakfast to barbecue. Learn the secrets of green (fresh) and red (ripened) chile, posole, and sopapillas. Lunch on the results. Don't leave without buying a tortilla press.

ROOM KEY
Go back in time with a room key at the Old Town Inn. The inn is a historic adobe building in the heart of Santa Fe.

CHEAT CARD
Let a local expert guide you to the best of Santa Fe. Go to www.visit-santa-fe.com for details. Prizes include a round-trip flight to Santa Fe, a hotel stay, and a rental car.

MOUNTAIN HIGH
Clear your mind and your lungs by hiking the 4-mile Borrego/Bear/Wallow Trail, a former sheep-herding route in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains (drive 8.5 miles out of town along Hyde Park Road to the marked trailhead). The Alpine scenery of towering ponderosa pines, meadow wildflowers, and a mountain creek provides a stark contrast to the desert below.

HOT TUBBING
Retrace your route down Hyde Park Road to reach Ten Thousand Waves Spa and resort, a Japanese-style spa with onsen hot tubs. Rent a private outdoor tub and watch the stars come up. Don't miss the signature Japanese Nigirigata facial that uses—no kidding—a Japanese droppings (sanitized, of course) to make you as pretty as a giraffe.

LAST CHILE
Save your send-off dinner for an evening at the Shed, lodged in a rambling 1692 adobe near the Plaza courtyard. Don't miss the green-chile chicken corn chowder or the red-chile enchiladas. The restaurant has its chiles grown in the famed pepper farming town of Hatch, N.M.

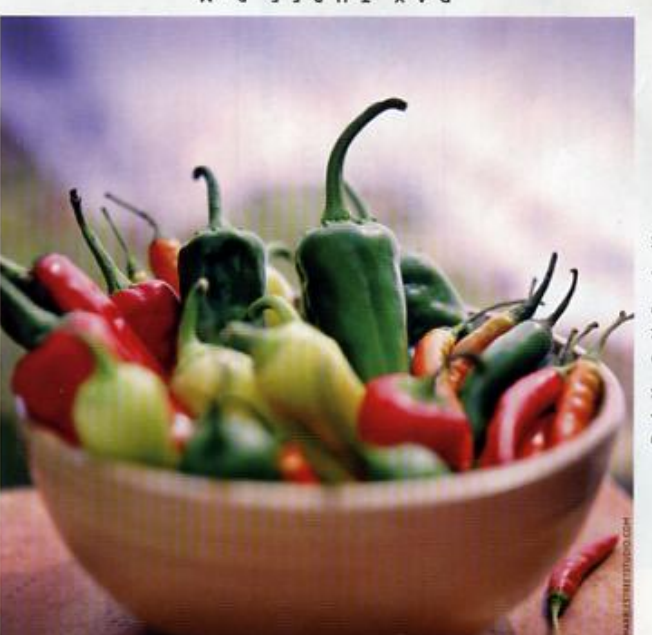
PLAYTIME
START HERE
Save the desert mountains from Albuquerque.

MORNING SPICE
Burritos for breakfast? Now you're eating like a New Mexican. Head to To-So's for budget-friendly green-chile burritos, known as burrititos, enchiladas, and if you must, perches in the Plaza district. Unless you're up there by 7 a.m., expect to wait on weekends at this popular spot.

WORLDLY GOODS
Drive the Santa Fe Trail up and out of the town center to Museum Hill, home to four museums arranged around a hilly plaza. First stop, the Museum of International Folk Art, host to a record 135,000 works from around the world, such as colorful Brazilian woodblock prints, African quilts, Chinese shadow puppets, and Cameroon hats.

SPANISH LESSONS
Buck up with a coffee from the company's Museum Hill. Call before hitting the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art. See a traditional furniture and tapestry-making demonstration on wood, including the style of Santa Fe, founded in 1610 as a Spanish capital, the oldest in America.

DAY THREE P.M.



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HOT CHRISTMAS
Have lunch just off the Plaza at Church Street Café, lodged in the oldest house in town. Patios in front and back allow direct to take in the Albuquerque climate—warm and dry. Order the homemade tamales with red or green chile ("Christmas" in local lingo means you want a bit of both).

SHOPPING TOUR
Browse the Old Town galleries on the Plaza. Check out Saints and Marys for antique religious statues and paintings. Gettrude Zachary for American Indian jewelry. Nichol Mosses for precious Pueblo pottery and antique Navajo weavings, and the large artists' co-op Arroyo Gallery for pottery, painting, baskets, and more.

SAINTS AND SNAKES
Head straight to Albuquerque's Old Town Plaza where the city was founded 301 years ago. The 1793 San Felipe de Neri Church anchors the square surrounded by adobe buildings. Browse the neighborhood's quirky American international Balthusville Museum, which boasts the broadest collection of rattlers in the world.

**START
HERE**
Serve the
desert mountains
from ABQ

Save your sand-off dinner for an evening at the Shed, lodged in a rambling 1692 adobe near the Plaza. Try to snag a table on the romantic courtyard. Don't miss the green-chile chicken corn chowder or the red-chile enchiladas. The restaurant has its chiles grown in the famed pepper farming town of Hatch, N.M.

Park Road to reach Ten Thousand Waves Spa and Resort, a Japanese-style spa with onsen hot tubs. Rent a private outdoor tub and watch the stars come up. Don't miss the signature Japanese Nightingale Facial that uses—no kidding—nightingale droppings (sanitized, of course) to make you as pretty as a geisha.

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Cheat Card
Let us help with
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click on Santa Fe
and Albuquerque.

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DAY ONE A.M.

Head straight to Albuquerque's Old Town Plaza where the city was founded 301 years ago. The 1793 San Felipe de Heil Church anchors the square surrounded by adobe buildings. Brave the neighborhood's quirky American International Rattlesnake Museum, which boasts the broadest collection of rattlers in the world.

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SAINTS AND SNAKES

SHOPPING TOUR

HOT CHRISTMAS

HIGH

SPANISH LESSONS

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