

9-day (8-nights) New Mexico Tour

Alamogordo elevation 4,300 feet

Albuquerque elevation 5,300 feet

Santa Fe elevation 7,200 feet

Day 1, Albuquerque: Arrival at the Albuquerque (ABQ) airport. You will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel in Albuquerque. Activities for the day depend on arrival time and choices are those which are listed for the second day of the itinerary.

Day 2, Albuquerque: There is a long list of things to do in Albuquerque. Activities for the day include Petroglyph National Monument, which has four locations, where there are numerous trails and great birding. Petroglyph National Monument protects one of the largest petroglyph sites in North America, featuring designs and symbols carved onto volcanic rocks by Native Americans and Spanish settlers 400 to 700 years ago.

Other options depending on the group's interests include: Sandia Peak Tramway, Albuquerque's Old Town, Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, ABQ Bio-Park, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Unser Racing Museum, Rio Grande Nature Center, Elena Gallegos Open Space, and the American International Rattlesnake Museum

Day 3, Alamogordo: From Albuquerque, it is a 3-hour drive, to Alamogordo. Along the way there are numerous stops. Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, and the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

Day 4, Reasons to travel to Alamogordo:

1) White Sands National Park: Completely surrounded by the White Sands Missile Range. The park contains about nearly 60,000 acres of sand dunes composed of gypsum crystals, which is about 40% of the entire park. This gypsum dunefield is the largest of its kind on earth with a depth of about 30 - 60 feet.

2) White Sands Missile Range Museum (WSMR): Established in 1994 to collect, preserve, and exhibit artifacts and other materials relating to the history of WSMR and the Tularosa Basin. The museum includes the history of the surrounding lands' native peoples and cultures, its flora and fauna, and natural geology and landscapes.

3) Oliver Lee Memorial State Park and Historic Ranch: Set against the dramatic Sacramento Mountains, this park features hiking trails in the Chihuahuan Desert and is a unique oasis of pools of water under the cottonwood trees of Dog Canyon; park elevation 4,400 feet.

4) New Mexico Museum of Space: A Smithsonian-affiliated complex containing a museum and planetarium. The museum was created to preserve and display artifacts and exhibits related to the space age and the history of space flight.

5) International Space Hall of Fame: Honors those individuals who have put forth effort, imagination, and hard work into advancing our knowledge of the universe and space exploration. The program began in 1976 and is the only institution that

recognizes both men and women from around the world who have played a significant role in space exploration.

6) Organ Mountains – Desert Peaks National Monument: Established to protect significant prehistoric, historic, geologic, and biologic resources of scientific interest. Great birding and hiking.

Day 5, Santa Fe: In the afternoon it is a 4-hour drive back to Santa Fe. We would spend the morning visiting sites in the Alamogordo area, and then drive directly back to the hotel in Santa Fe.

Day 6: Getting to know the nature and culture of Santa Fe. Stops include the Randall Davey Audubon Center, Santa Fe Botanical Garden, historic Santa Fe Plaza, museums and galleries along the plaza, La Cieneguilla Petroglyphs, and Aspen Vista ski area, Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve, Santa Fe Canyon Wetlands, Hyde Park, and visiting the historic plaza, museums, and galleries in Santa Fe.

Day 7: Visiting the nature and culture that is north of Santa Fe. These locations are about a 1-hour drive north of Santa Fe. Stops include Echo Amphitheater, Abiquiu, Georgia O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch, White Rock, Tsankawi Prehistoric Sites, Valles Caldera National Preserve, Bandelier National Monument, and the Los Alamos area. There are numerous museums and cultural sites in Los Alamos to visit including the Los Alamos Nature Center, Manhattan Project National Historical Park, and the Bradbury Science Museum.

Day 8: Visiting Albuquerque and significant sites south of Santa Fe such as Galisteo Basin Preserve, Pecos National Historic Park, Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, Cochiti Lake, La Bajada Hill, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, and Albuquerque International Balloon Museum. Some of these stops can be visited at the start of the trip. On this day it is possible to take a balloon ride.

Day 9, Drop off at ABQ: Transfer to the Albuquerque (ABQ) airport for departure.