

Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta & Best of New Mexico Itinerary

Friday, October 7, 2022



Depart for Albuquerque. Upon arrival we will meet our driver and be transferred to our hotel, the renowned Sandia Resort & Casino. After a lunch on our own, we will have time to relax or take advantage of the many resort amenities before departing for the Special Shapes Glowdeo at Balloon Fiesta Park with over 100 Special Shape Balloons lighting up the evening sky. Enjoy dinner while watching the magnificent New Mexico sunset at the included exclusive Private Chasers Club which includes food and beverages as well as premium seating (cash bar for alcoholic beverages). The evening concludes with a brilliant firework

display over the Balloon Fiesta Park. Transfer back to Sandia Resort & Casino, ideally located just minutes from the Balloon Fiesta Park hotel for a good night's rest.

Meals: D

Saturday, October 8, 2022



Your driver will pick you up in the early morning and transfer you to Balloon Fiesta Park for the Morning Mass Ascension. This world-renowned event where hundreds of balloons are launched into the crisp New Mexico sky is considered the most magnificent display of color in all of aviation. Enjoy breakfast at the included exclusive Private Chasers Club which includes food and non-alcoholic beverages as well as premium seating. In mid-morning, meet the driver in the coach lot for transfer back to the hotel to rest or continue to The Sandia Peak Tramway for an included tram ride on the longest tram in America where you will witness spectacular views of Albuquerque and the

surrounding landscapes. Then you will be transported to Albuquerque's Old Town. You'll have free time to explore this historic district and have lunch on your own. Then transfer back to our resort with time to freshen up or take advantage of the resort amenities before departing for the exciting Night Glow where balloons are fired up after dusk like giant holiday ornaments. Enjoy dinner while watching the magnificent New Mexico sunset again at the included exclusive Private Chasers Club which includes food and beverages as well as premium seating (cash bar for alcoholic beverages). The evening concludes with a brilliant firework display over the Balloon Fiesta Park. After the fireworks we meet our driver for transfer to Santa Fe. Upon arrival, check into the historic La Fonda on the Plaza, a Four Diamond Rating Luxury Hotel which is celebrating their 100th Year Anniversary.

Meals: B, D

Sunday, October 9, 2022



After an elegant sit-down breakfast at La Fonda's La Plazuela Restaurant where you will have the chance to order off the menu from a delightful array of Southwest breakfast favorites, hop on the Santa Fe Shuttle to view the fascinating history, art and architecture of the downtown historic district, Museum Hill and Canyon Road. Spend the remainder of the day enjoying the sites, shopping, artisan galleries and delicious Southwestern food at one of America's most "artsy" towns. Evening is at leisure. Perhaps enjoy the magnificent sunset at one of Santa Fe's popular rooftop lounges.

Meals: B

Monday, October 10, 2022



After another delicious sit-down breakfast at La Fonda's La Plazuela Restaurant, meet in the hotel lobby for departure to Bandelier National Monument. The Native Pueblo people settled in the sculpted canyons and mesa tops of the Pajarito Plateau west of Santa Fe. This unique volcanic landscape is among the most beautiful places in the Southwest.

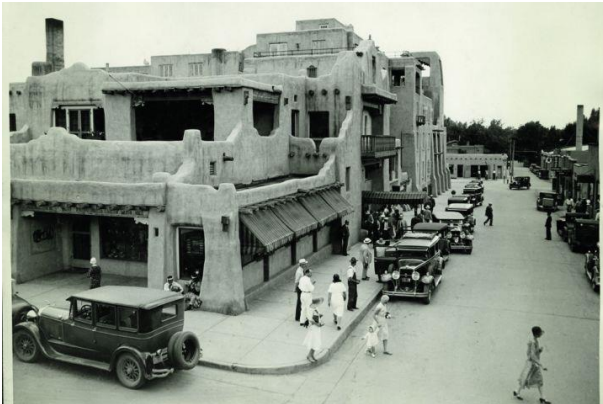
On this trip we will visit the National Monument (managed by the National Park Service) which holds cliff dwellings and expansive ruins of Pueblo villages dating to the 1500s. The drive to and from Bandelier is scenic and your guide will share information about the rich cultural and natural history of this region. We'll travel across the Rio Grande near San Ildefonso Pueblo and then drive up the ash plateau formed by huge volcanic eruptions a million years ago. Once at Bandelier, we'll split into smaller groups for a guided walk to visit the remnants of what was a thriving community hundreds of years ago. There are options for shorter or longer walks, with the possibility to climb a ladder to peek into a cliff dwelling and get up close views of petroglyphs (rock art carvings). There will also be time to enjoy the National Park Visitor Center, housed in buildings that were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.

After our walk, we'll travel back across the Rio Grande valley and north to visit the Spanish village of Chimayo with its legendary church, chiles, local arts, and beautiful setting. We will have an included lunch at Rancho De Chimayo, one of the most distinguished New Mexican native food restaurants in a beautiful rural setting.

Finally, we will visit a 7th generation weaving studio to delight in the colors of the creative works of the weavers in the region, before we return to Santa Fe.

Meals: B, L

Tuesday, October 11, 2022



After a final delicious sit-down breakfast at La Fonda's La Plazuela Restaurant, spend your final morning in Santa Fe further exploring the Plaza or area surrounding the hotel, or take the complimentary *Art and History Tour* of the iconic La Fonda Hotel. During this one hour Docent Tour, the only docent-led hotel tour offered in Santa Fe, you will discover the Inn's celebrated 400-year-old beginnings; and how past elements of the Hotel have been intricately woven into its modern-day ambiance. You will learn a variety of interesting facts and information about the Hotel, glimpse rare photographs from its early days, and enjoy the unforgettable collection of artwork that will fascinate you at every turn.

Then transfer back to the Albuquerque airport for your flight home, bringing back wonderful memories of your trip to New Mexico.

Meals: B