

New Mexico

Includes ➔

Albuquerque	240
Santa Fe	257
Los Alamos	282
Taos	291
Farmington	317
Gallup	319
Grants	323
Roswell	344
Carlsbad	347

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Adobe Deli (p333)
- ➔ The Curious Kumquat (p331)
- ➔ Love Apple (p300)
- ➔ Pie-O-Neer Cafe (p325)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Ellis Store Country Inn (p344)
- ➔ Riverbend Hot Springs (p328)
- ➔ Inn at Halona (p322)
- ➔ Los Poblanos (p248)
- ➔ La Fonda (p272)

Why Go?

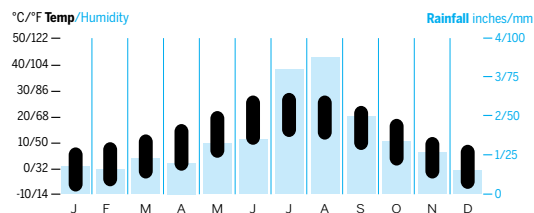
They call this the 'Land of Enchantment' for a reason. Maybe it's the drama of sunlight and shadow playing out across juniper-speckled hills; or the traditional mountain villages of horse pastures and adobe homes; or the centuries-old towns on the northern plateaus, overlooked by the magnificent Sangre de Cristos Mountains; or the volcanoes, canyons and vast desert plains spread beneath an even vaster sky. The beauty casts a powerful spell. Mud-brick churches filled with sacred art; ancient Indian pueblos; real-life cowboys and legendary outlaws; chile-smothered enchiladas – all add to the pervasive sense of otherness that often makes New Mexico feel like a foreign country.

Maybe the state's all-but-indescribable charm is best expressed in the iconic paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe. The artist herself exclaimed, on her very first visit: 'Well! Well! Well!...This is wonderful! No one told me it was like this.'

But seriously, how could they?

When to Go

Santa Fe



Mid-Aug–mid-Oct New Mexico at its best: gorgeous weather, wild sunflowers, chiles, fiestas.

Christmas Ski the Sangres, walk Canyon Rd on Christmas Eve, join in local traditions.

Jun–mid-Aug Prime time for outdoor activities – but beware monsoon storms.

TIME ZONE

New Mexico is on Mountain Time (seven hours behind GMT). In summer, when it observes daylight saving time, it's one hour ahead of Arizona – otherwise they're the same.

Fast Facts

- **Area** 121,599 sq miles
- **Population** 2.1 million
- **Sales Tax** 5–9%
- **Albuquerque to Las Cruces** 223 miles, 3½ hours
- **Gallup to Tucumcari** 311 miles, 4½ hours
- **Santa Fe to Taos** 70 miles, 1½ hours

State Bird

The roadrunner can run nearly 20mph. It kills and eats rattlesnakes.

Resources

- **New Mexico Department of Tourism**
(www.newmexico.org)

New Mexico Planning

Thanks to major differences in altitude, when it's comfy in the lower, southern part of the state, it may well be freezing in the northern mountains. Likewise, when the weather's perfect in Santa Fe, it's scorching in Carlsbad. If traveling around the state, bring a versatile wardrobe. With rare exception, casual dress is the way to go in New Mexico.

If you're afraid of spicy foods, order your chile (green, red or 'Christmas') on the side – but do try it. If you enjoy hot foods, look out: New Mexican chile has addictive properties.

DON'T MISS

Steeped in Native American and Hispanic cultures, soulful **Santa Fe** has world-class art, gourmet restaurants and great local food, adobe architecture and famous festivals. An hour-and-a-half north is **Taos**, art colony and alternative haven, known for its historic Pueblo and world-class ski area. These two towns feel like nowhere else in the USA. Both sit beneath the **Sangre de Cristo Mountains**, laced with hiking/mountain biking trails and wilderness backpacking routes. Further south, tiny **Lincoln**, set in a scenic valley along the meandering Rio Bonito, oozes Wild West history as the former stomping ground of Billy the Kid.

Among the state's most fantastic natural features are **White Sands National Monument**, a playground where gleaming white dunes ripple, swell and curl through the Tularosa Basin; and **Carlsbad Caverns National Park**, a colossal subterranean fantasyland of stalagmites and stalactites. Most beautiful of all might be the **Ghost Ranch** area, where you can explore the landscape that inspired Georgia O'Keeffe.

Tips for Drivers

- New Mexico's main arteries are I-40, which cuts east–west from Texas to Arizona via Albuquerque; and I-25, running north–south from Colorado, via Santa Fe and Albuquerque, to Las Cruces. I-40 is sometimes closed by windstorms in spring; heavy blizzards may close both interstates in winter.
- Along highways in the south, you'll hit Border Patrol checkpoints with dogs (think twice before bringing your cannabis prescription down from Denver).
- Interstate speed limits are 75mph, while state highways may go to 70mph.
- For road conditions, call ☎ 800-432-4269 or visit www.nmroads.com.