

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Meet in Albuquerque and hike in Petroglyph National Monument

The trip begins at 1 p.m. in Albuquerque, where we meet as a group at our hotel. We have the afternoon to meet each other and hike in the Petroglyph National Monument. The site has hundreds of petroglyphs that were created by both the earliest and the most recent inhabitants. Our hike on the Mesa Point Trail passes lots of petroglyphs as it winds its way to the mesa top. From here a 360-degree view provides views of Albuquerque and the Sandia mountains to the east, the Sangre de Cristos to the north, and the extinct volcanoes to the west. We will have a picnic dinner and watch the sunset over Albuquerque.

Included Meals: Dinner

Accommodations: Best Western Plus Rio Grande Inn or similar

Daily Activities: Hiking (0.3 mile loop, 88 feet of elevation gain/loss)

DAY 2

Walk Old Town, Visit the Pueblo Cultural Center and El Malpais National Monument, Kayaking the Rio Grande (2026)

After breakfast we will walk and explore Old Town known for its charming streets full of artisan shops selling jewelery, rugs, and pottery. We will then visit the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. Here we will learn about Pueblo culture from ancient times to the present and get to experience a traditional Pueblo dance. In the afternoon, we will head to El Malpais National Monument and explore one of the newest lava flows in the area at just 3,000 years old.

Please note Day 2 activities will be different in 2026: After breakfast we will pack up and head out for kayaking on the Rio Grande River. The Rio Grande is the reason Albuquerque is located where it is, and our paddling trip is down a stretch of river that encompasses the area where the Coronado campaign wintered in 1540. We will put in among a beautiful stand of cottonwoods in Algodones, then traverse approximately 8 miles of remarkably secluded Rio Grande valley. The river is wide, and the waters are gentle in this section of the river. After finishing our float, we will head to the El Malpais National Monument for another type of river. This time, it's an ancient lava flow. We will explore one of the newest flows just 3,000 years old.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Grants Best Western or similar

Travel Time: Driving (1 hour)

Daily Activities: Cultural Activities, Hiking (1.1 mile loop, 29 feet elevation gain/loss), Kayaking (2026: 8 miles)

DAY 3

Visit and hike in Chaco National Historic Park and learn about the Ancient Puebloan culture

We get an early start this morning so that we can have a full day at Chaco Culture National Historic Park. Chaco Canyon, the focal point of Ancient Puebloan culture, contains over a dozen major pueblo ruins. While the Ancient Puebloans lived over the entire Four Corners area, their civilization is generally regarded as having reached its pinnacle in Chaco. Advanced building techniques, irrigation systems, and astronomical observations, are all evidence of a very advanced civilization that flourished

there around 1000 AD. That civilization collapsed after 1200 AD for reasons that are still unclear, and the people dispersed to become the forefathers of today's Rio Grande Pueblo people. The isolation and vastness of the Canyon contribute to its sense of mystery and majesty. We start at the very informative Visitors Center. From there we can visit some of the ruins. There is more to see than we can fit in, and we'll leave with a much better appreciation of this amazing culture. This afternoon we will depart for Ghost Ranch Retreat Center with dinner along the way.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Ghost Ranch or similar

Travel Time: Driving (5 hours) Note: The drive to Chaco Canyon takes almost 2 hours each way on rough roads, the reason why it receives fewer visitors than you would expect. Is it worth it? We think so!

Daily Activities: Cultural Activities (Guided Tour: 5 hours, 1.5-2 miles)

DAY 4

Appreciate the stunning vistas and rich history of Ghost Ranch

Wake up to a leisurely morning surrounded by the colorful rock walls and endless skies of Ghost Ranch Retreat Center. The Ranch, made famous by Georgia O'Keeffe, offers its 21,000 acres as a place to disconnect and explore what feeds your soul. The day is yours to explore the stunning natural environment and rich geologic and cultural history however you see fit. Our guides will offer 3-5 mile hikes on the property including a short but steep climb to the stunning panoramic views of the Chimney Rock Trail, or you can choose from the Ranch's many offerings, including historic tours and trail rides, and museums. We'll gather for meals indoors or out at the Ghost Ranch Dining Hall. End the day together around a crackling campfire.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Ghost Ranch or similar

Daily Activities: Hiking (3-5 miles, ~350 feet of elevation gain/loss), Free time to sign up for additional activities offered by Ghost Ranch

DAY 5

Visit Bandelier National Monument, Walk through ruins, and tour Santa Fe

In the morning we head to Bandelier National Monument, home to the Ancestral Pueblo people from the 12th to the 16th century, modern compared to those who lived in Chaco Canyon. We'll start with a hike outside the main canyon, the 1.5-mile Tsankawi Loop trail that goes over the top of an unexcavated large Ancestral Pueblo Ruins site on a mesa top and passes some cliff dwellings along the cliff face. We then continue to the main section of Bandelier, Frijoles Canyon. After stopping by the Visitor Center we'll hike out on a paved trail through the middle of Frijoles Canyon that showcases not only several well-preserved, easily accessible ruins but also the beauty of this red rock canyon. After spending time exploring the trails and ruins of Bandelier, we head for Santa Fe, our home for the next three nights. In the afternoon we will have a walking tour of Santa Fe which will get us oriented to the city and introduce us to some of the famous sites.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: La Fonda or similar

Travel Time: Driving (2.5 hours)

Daily Activities: Hiking (1.5 miles, 242 feet elevation gain/loss), Walking Tour (3 hours)

DAY 6

Exploring Taos Pueblo, hike near Taos, visit Santuario de Chimayo, Whitewater Rafting (2026)

We'll depart early and head off to Taos Pueblo. The Pueblo is featured in the paintings of many of New Mexico's artists, it has been continuously inhabited for over 1000 years and its multi-storied pueblo buildings are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Afterwards, we will go on a hike with great views of the Rio Grande river. The river was designated as an American Heritage River in 1998 and the 1,800-mile river is as beautiful as it is long. After hiking and a few more cultural stops, we will visit Santuario de Chimay which is a small 1813 shrine near the Old Spanish Trail. Dinner is on your own tonight to explore one of Santa Fe's other culinary options.

Please note Day 6 activities will be different in 2026: We'll depart early for Taos Pueblo. The Pueblo is featured in the paintings of many of New Mexico's artists, it has been continuously inhabited for over 1000 years and its multi-storied pueblo buildings are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Before lunch we will head out to our rafting put-in spot for a picnic along the beautiful and graceful Rio Grande River. The river was designated as an American Heritage River in 1998 and the 1,800-mile river is as beautiful as it is long. After a picnic lunch, we will get ready for our incredibly fun whitewater rafting on the class 2 and 3 rapids of a section of the Rio Grande called the Racecourse. Dinner is on your own tonight to explore one of Santa Fe's other culinary options.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: La Fonda or similar

Travel Time: Driving (3 hours)

Daily Activities: Hiking (3-4 miles, 250 feet of elevation gain/loss), Whitewater rafting (2026)

DAY 7

Hike in the forest near Santa Fe, free time to explore Santa Fe

Today we hike in the mountains behind Santa Fe on a 4.5-mile loop that drips down into a shady valley full of aspen, fir and pine trees. After stopping for lunch and a break at a beautiful spot along Tesuque Creek, we will head back up onto the ridge along sweeping switchbacks to complete the loop. At an elevation of 8,900 feet we will certainly take time to enjoy the scenery. When we return to town you have the rest of the afternoon free to explore Santa Fe's many museums and galleries or the option to visit Ten Thousand Waves, a Japanese-style health spa with hot tubs situated on the side of the mountain. Your guides will coordinate rides to the spa. You can also book a 'treatment' for yourself anytime between 2 PM - 5:30 PM. If you prefer to stay in town, we recommend wandering the galleries of Canyon Road, or visiting the Museum of International Folk Art, or Georgia O' Keeffe Museum. Tonight, we will get our final taste of New Mexican cuisine at a nearby restaurant.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: La Fonda or similar

Travel Time: Driving (45 minutes)

Daily Activities: Hiking (4.5 mile loop, 1,240 feet of elevation gain/loss)

DAY 8

Depart for home

It's our last morning in Santa Fe and we'll continue to savor every minute! We'll enjoy our last breakfast together before making our way back to Albuquerque. We'll return you to the Albuquerque airport by 10:30 AM for a flight out after 12:30 PM.

Included Meals: Breakfast

